

The Bible, A True Book

By Medford Caudill
of Goshen, Indiana

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

It has been said that a good way to deliver a sermon is to tell what you are going to say, then say it, and then remind everyone of what you just said. Following that form of logic, what I intend to do after stating that the Bible is a true book, is to show why it is true, what we mean when we say it is true, and then finish up with, if the Bible is true then how does it apply to our daily lives.

Psalms 119:129 tells us that, **"Thy testimonies are wonderful."** The Bible tells us wonderful truths about wonderful things. It is an amazing book. You can read it through several times a year for many years and still be fascinated, in awe, and even surprised by it.



I would hate to contemplate life if the Bible was not a true book. What would I know about God? What could I know about salvation? What could I know about the destiny of my

eternal soul? If the Bible is not a true book then I am lost and undone. I am not able to understand these matters of eternal importance without this book to guide me.

I. WE SAY FIRSTLY THAT THE BIBLE IS A TRUE BOOK BECAUSE IT IS THE WORD OF GOD.

It claims to be such. Jesus certainly thought that it was. In our text Jesus

in the midst of prayer to His heavenly Father calls it **"thy word."**

Numerous times the various prophets claimed the same ground as Zephaniah who begins his book with: **"The word of the Lord which came unto. . ."** They said over and over with Isaiah, **"Thus saith the Lord God."** Psalms 119:152 says: **"Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever."**

If God has not given us the Bible it must be for one of two reasons. If God has not given us the Bible it may be because He cannot communicate with His creation. In which case, He is not God. Do we really believe that an all-powerful, all-wise, all-knowing Creator is incapable of communicating with His creation?

It is either He cannot or He will not
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The Abomination of Abortion

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive" (Ex. 1:22).

"Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men" (Matt. 2:16).

These Scriptures disclose two of the greatest atrocities ever committed by earthly rulers against the human race. The
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The Gospel of Amusement

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"Woe to them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isa. 5:20).

In the last hundred years churches have become social centers instead of religious centers. The traditional religious institutions have become basketball courts, bingo parlors, dance halls and liquor stores. Houses of worship are good places for funerals and wedding dinners. Men ordained as preceptors of right and wrong turn out to be a jazz monger or a street demonstrator. The church is no longer concerning herself with people's salvation from sin. She seeks man's salvation from poverty and social discrimination. In all of this, the church has put darkness for light. She

has called evil good and good evil.

Even the most short-sighted spiritual men can see that the church has enforced what I am pleased to call the gospel of amusement.

Professed Christian leaders believe the providing of recreation for the carnal desires of men is a necessary part of Christian work. The devil has seldom done a more clever thing than causing the Lord's church to think entertainment for people is the best way to win them to Christ and the church. The rough old cross has been exchanged for a costume with the benevolent purpose of elevating the



people to higher spiritual plains.

NO WHERE COMMANDED

Providing carnal pleasures for unconverted men is nowhere commanded in the Scriptures as one of the functions of the church. If the Lord intended for His church to be an entertainment center, He would hardly have left so important a branch of service unmentioned. When Christ said: **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,"** He spoke very clearly. So would He have if He had added, "And provide amusement for those who have no relish for the Gospel of the Son of God." However, no such utterance ever fell from His holy lips.

We learn from Ephesians 4 that the ascended Christ gave His church specially qualified men for carrying out His work. The Bible says: **"He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and**

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Hard of Hearing and Hard of Seeing

By Raymond Bennett
of Ithaca, New York

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:3-23).

Matthew 13 is well known as the "parables of the kingdom" chapter. It is the chapter where Matthew gathers together in one place a number of related parables that, with one exception, all have to do with the "Kingdom of heaven." **"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto..."** (It should be noted that the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are not necessarily the same.)

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A Bible in the hand is worth two on the shelf.

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

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communicate with His creation. If He will not then he is not the God who **“so-loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”** Can we really believe that the God who gave His Son for the sins of His people would not inform them of that fact? Can we believe that a loving God would not tell us how to shun Hell and gain Heaven?

God is true and therefore His Word is true. Once again Jesus said so in our text. These words are given us **“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. . .”** (Titus 1:2). Truth is part of His essential nature. **“The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure”** (Ps. 111:7).

John Gill said of God's work in the giving of the Scriptures to man; “Now since God is the author of them, who is a perfect Being, in whom is no darkness at all; not of ignorance, error and imperfection: they coming from Him, must be free from everything of that kind; He is a rock and His work is perfect; as His works of creation, providence, redemption; so this work of the scriptures.”

II. WHAT WE MEAN BY THE STATEMENT; THE BIBLE IS A TRUE BOOK?

Everything in it is true. The science is true and correct. The arithmetic is true, if it says there was a certain number of anything there was exactly that number. Everything adds up correctly. The history is true, from the names of the first man and woman to the names of the churches in Acts. The history is true right down to the conversations taking place exactly as recorded. No guesses about who said what. The words spoken by various people were exactly as the Scripture records them.

We also mean when we say that the Bible is a true book that it is inerrant, that is without error. Earthly books can be without error but mostly aren't. It is difficult for even two eyewitnesses to an event to recall it in exactly the same way. Yet, the Bible, because, **“holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”** (II Pet. 1:21), is without error. Men may make errors, the Holy Spirit does not.

We mean also when we say that the Bible is a true book, not only is it inerrant but it is infallible. A man may write a book that is error free but he is still capable of writing error. The wit said one time, “I never made a mistake in my life. I thought I did once but I was wrong.” The Bible cannot be wrong. Due to its unique nature as the Word of God and being preserved by God, it is incapable of containing error.

III. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO US IF THE BIBLE IS A TRUE BOOK?

First of all, if the Bible is a true book it means that those who don't believe it are cursed. **“Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments”** (Ps. 119:21). Unbelief in the Bible is a very serious thing. In fact it is a great sin and will not go unpunished. **“Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood”** (Ps. 119:118).

If the Bible is a true book then read it. Everyone should read through the whole Bible at least once a year. If every word of it is true then read every word. Start where God started in Genesis 1:1 and read through to where God ended in Revelation 22:21.

Don't just read it but study it. Think about what you read each day. Make notes about it. Read what others have to say about it. Memorize it.

Finally, practice what it says. In everyday life put it into practice. If the Bible says don't steal, then don't steal. If the Bible says to love your neighbor, then love your neighbor. If the Bible says to confess your sins, then confess your sins. If the Bible says to repent, then repent.

Practice what it says not just in your everyday life but in your church life also. If the Bible says to be baptized, then be baptized. If the Bible describes a certain kind of church with certain officers and certain ordinances organized in a certain way, then seek out such a church and join it. If the Bible says forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, then forsake not the assembly.

The Bible is a true book. We urge you to read it, believe it, and put it into practice.



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some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, For the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-12). There is no mention of the “public entertainers.” As to these the Scriptures know nothing.

If providing recreation be a part of the church's work, where is God's promise to encourage her in the toilsome task? The Bible records the Lord has said: **“My Word,” it “shall not return unto me void.”** I find the heart-rejoicing declaration concerning the Gospel: **“It is the power of God.”** But never do I read where the Scriptures say: “church socials and midnight hay rides are the power of God unto salvation.” The Lord has promised those who rouse the wrath of the world a blessing. **“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.”** The gospel of amusement has no martyrology. In vain

does one look for a promise from God for providing recreation for a godless world. That which has no authority from Christ, no provisions made for it by the Spirit, no promise attached to it by God, can only be a lying hypocrite when it lays claim to being a branch of Christian service.

NOT APOSTOLIC

Providing amusement for the unsaved is in direct antagonism to the teaching of Christ and His inspired apostles. Jesus Christ ever maintained strict separation from the world. He taught His disciples to maintain uncompromising hostility toward the world. He taught: **“Ye are the salt of the earth.”** Yes, the salt, not the sugar-candy nor the lump of delight. The Christian is to be something the world will be more inclined to spit out than swallow with a smile. Something more calculated to bring water to the eye than laughter to the lip.

Short, simple and sharp are the words of Christ in John 15:19: **“I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”** Then again in John 17:14 He declared: **“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”** These passages are hard to reconcile with the modern idea of the church providing recreation for those who have no taste for more serious things. If these passages teach anything at all, they teach that fidelity to Christ will bring down the world's wrath. They reveal that Christ intended for His disciples to share with Him the world's scorn and rejection.

What method did Jesus Christ, the **“faithful witness”** use? Let us look to Him as the Christian worker's model for all time. He introduced His ministry by saying: **“Repent ye, and believe the gospel.”** In the same chapter He told His disciples: **“Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth.”** In answer to the question of John the Baptist: **“Art thou he that should come?”** He replied: **“Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”** There is no item in the catalogue after this sort: “And the careless are amused, and the alien sinners are provided with innocent recreation.”

Where ever people gathered together Christ “preached the Word unto them.” He never changed His methods nor learned by experience of a better plan. His first word of command to His evangelists was: “As ye go, preach.” His last: “Preach the gospel to every creature.” He never stopped preaching and turned aside to entertain and attract the people.

When many of His disciples went back from following Him, I do not find that He attempted to increase a diminished crowd by resorting to something more

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pleasant to the flesh. I do not read where He said: "John, we must hold our crowd. Run after our friends and tell them we will have a different style of service tomorrow. A short sermon with a few good jokes to be followed with a big meal and pleasant games in the afternoon. Be quick, John, we must keep the people some how, even if not by the gospel; otherwise we will not have sufficient funds to send in to the program." Such foolish nonsense never fell from the lips of our Lord. He simply turned to the twelve, and asked: "**Will ye also go away?**" Jesus pitied sinners, pleaded with them, sighed over them, warned them; but never sought to amuse them. He comforted Himself with the thought: "I have given them thy word."

In vain will you search the epistle for a trace of the gospel of amusement. Instead we find such statements as in James 4:4: "**The friendship of the world is enmity with God. . . whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.**" John wrote a whole epistle of which the gist is: "**Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.**" But in the face of these plain teachings, what do we see in the churches of today? A friendly compromise between the church and the world, an insane effort to work in partnership for the good of the people. God help us, and dispel this strong delusion.

THE EARLY CHURCH

How did the Lord's inspired apostles carry on mission work. Let the acts of the apostles tell us. The early church had boundless confidence in the power of the gospel and employed no other weapon in the salvation of the lost. Pentecost followed plain preaching. In Acts 4:29 Peter and John prayed for boldness that they might "speak the Lord's Word." They did not pray for more policy that by a wise use of innocent recreation they might avoid the offence of the cross.

Acts 5:42 reveals that daily the early church "**ceased not to teach and preach, Jesus Christ.**" If they ceased not from this work, they did not have time for arranging for entertainments. They gave themselves continually "**to the ministry of the word.**" Scattered by persecutions the early disciples "**went everywhere preaching the word.**" Philip brought great joy in Samaria by preaching "**Christ unto them.**" There is no mention of some pleasant evening for unbelievers.

AMUSEMENT FAILS

The mission of amusement utterly fails to affect the desired end among the unsaved. It brings about churcharnity, but not Christianity. The gospel of amusement has no real converts. Is there a truly saved man who will tell me that church socials brought about his conversion? Yet there are ten thousand voices ready to declare that the plain preaching of the Word was,

first and last, the cause of their salvation.

The mission of amusement is the Devil's half-way house to the world. Church socials in the guise of Christ's work are accomplishing the Devil's own work. Under the pretence of going out to reach the world, it is carrying our sons and daughters into the world. Professing to win the world for Christ, it is turning the Church of God into a public recreation ground. It is no wonder that the Holy Spirit has left the church!

Dear Christian Brother, grasp the Book of God. Trust the Spirit Who wrote its

pages. Cease to amuse and seek to arouse. Shun the clap of a delighted audience and listen for the sobs of a Holy Spirit convicted one. Give up trying to please men who have only their ribs between their souls and Hell; and warn, and plead, and entreat, as those who feel the waters of eternity creeping upon them.

Let the church confront the world; testify against it: meet it only behind the cross; and like her Lord, she shall overcome and share with Him the victory.



According to the Pattern

By Raymond Bennett
of Ithaca, New York

"AND LOOK THAT THOU MAKE THEM AFTER THEIR PATTERN, WHICH WAS SHEWED THEE IN THE MOUNT" (EX. 25:40).

We were recently asked to address the question of why we maintain 'closed' communion. After addressing the issue we were encouraged to put the message in print. We readily admit that we cannot address the issue to the full satisfaction of those who adamantly hold to the position of a mystical, invisible, universal church. Indeed, the very issue hinges on a mystical, invisible, universal church.

There are some who hold to closed communion with good reason, but still do not see the connection of open communion and a universal church, or closed communion and the local church. I fear it would take volumes to fully explain that connection to anyone clinging to the universal church theory.

Many of the practices practiced by the Lord's churches find their impetus in a pattern shown in Scripture more than by a direct command. This, we suspect, is the major impediment to those outside of the Lord's churches understanding such issues as the local church, church succession, local church authority (as opposed to board or association authority), and the question of this article, closed communion. To many of these there is a need of a direct command, i.e.: thou shalt or thou shalt not.

We do not speak with pride, but with a heart felt gratitude to our Lord, when we say that it requires a willing and close walk with the Lord to understand these doctrines. There are always a number of things that are more 'privy' between a man and wife, or a bride elect and the groom elect, than with others of their acquaintances or even family. We suggest that the communion relationship falls into that category.

Closed communion is more of a scriptural 'pattern' than a direct command, but that is also why it is a closer and more intimate ordinance than baptism. Baptism, if done scripturally,

is the believer identifying with the Lord in His church – as His bride. A man and woman only get engaged once, or married once, but after that, in a good marriage, they grow more and more intimate. That is part of what the communion, or Lord's Supper, is.

THE PATTERN

Therefore, let us look at some of the patterns we are given in the Bible.

FIRST, THE PATTERN FOR SACRIFICE – Gen 3:21. "**Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.**"

As far as the scriptural record reveals, there were no commands or instructions for offerings and sacrifice prior to the Law of Moses. Nevertheless, we see both offerings and sacrifices, and a pattern developing, giving us those examples.

As early as Genesis 4, we see men, voluntarily, bringing an offering to Jehovah – *without prior command or specific instruction*. Abel's offering was accepted while Cain's offering was not. Was this just some arbitrary whim on the part of God? *God forbid we even think such a thought!* Obviously, there had to have been some pattern for them to follow or God's words to Cain, "**If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?**" would have been meaningless.

That pattern was the blood offering of Genesis 3:21, requiring the death of an innocent animal, picturing the substitutionary, vicarious death of Christ. Abel followed that pattern; Cain did not. Abel's offering was accepted of the Lord; Cain's was not. Abel's worship was pleasing to the Lord; Cain's was not.

From this first pattern, and this first incident, we get still another pattern; one expressed in our text, "**And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount,**" and exemplified throughout the first seven chapters of Leviticus. "...**If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer**

it of his own voluntary will...before the LORD" (Lev. 1:2-3). The offering was *voluntary* but it was still to be done *according to God's instructions!*

Cain was not wrong for bringing an offering, even a copycat offering, but his sin was in doing it *his* way, according to what *he* thought best, not God's way.

SECOND, THE PATTERN OF GOD'S SEPARATE PEOPLE FOR SEPARATE WORSHIP – Ex. 12-14 with 1 Cor. 10:1-4 and Ex. 8:26.

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Exodus 8:26, "**And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God.**"

First we observe that God's called out people are called out to be a *separate* people, identified, in part, by their worship. Their sacrifice, their worship, and their ordinances (which Paul makes the Exodus experience to be a type of) were separate from that of the world. (The reader is expected to understand that Egypt, in Scripture, stands as a type of the world.)

Israel was given the ordinances before she was given the law. The church is given the ordinances before she is given further biblical knowledge – *for the same reason* – "**that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no**" (Ex. 16:4).

This, by the way, is why baptism is the *first* step of Christian obedience, and we suggest that proper observance of the Lord's Supper fits there as well. If we will not be faithful in these *first* things, He will not trust us with greater things.

Second, we observe that the offerings expected of Israel were not only *different* from the worship of Egypt, but that they would be an *abomination* to Egypt. What a picture of 'closed communion', the 'blood of Christ', and the doctrine of 'free grace'! All three are an abomination to the 'love everybody', 'bloodless sacrifice', and 'I must do *my* part, no manner how small' worship of the religious world around us.

Israel could not worship while mingled among the Egyptians. The church could not worship while mingled among apostate Israel. The proper local church cannot worship in communion while mingled with apostate, disobedient, or professing Christians.

THIRD, THE PATTERN OF UNITY – Ephesians 4:16. "**From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint**

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supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

What a picture of unity! All the pieces: i.e.: people, working together, each selflessly doing their own part, *in one accord*, with unity of purpose. Need we say more? Our Baptist history, here in the North East, records churches abstaining from the communion because of doctrinal and practical disunity within the church. The pattern should be obvious! We cannot have true communion when the partakers are of opposing doctrinal views and practices, and are out of fellowship with the Lord.

Read the Old Testament, where polygamy abounded, even among the saints. There was always disunity and resentment among the wives. Read these verses from Proverbs, and make a spiritual application.

Proverbs 21:9, **"It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house."**

Proverbs 21:19, **"It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman."**

Proverbs 25:24, **"It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house."**

The Lord will have no 'brawling' in His household. He will not have a 'contentious' woman at the table when He sups with His bride.

The strength of the apostolic church was, of course, the Holy Spirit. Do we not have as much of the Holy Spirit today as they did then? We could argue that point I suppose, but if we *don't* have as much of the Holy Spirit as they did then, then for some reason He has been withdrawn and Ichabod is written over our door.

If Ichabod is written over our doors we suggest the primary reason is the absence of unity in the church. We don't refer to the unity that the liberals and Arminians talk about that lays aside sound doctrine and practice for the modern 'feel good and get along' theology, but rather the *disunity* that is bred by that false unity, with various factors within the church holding different doctrine and practices. No, dear reader, the unity that marked the apostolic church was a unity of faith, doctrine, and practice. Eight times, in the book of Acts, it is mentioned that the believers (church) were **"in one accord"** or acting **"with one accord."**

Indeed, it was the *absence* of that Paul rebukes the Corinthian church for in their abuse of the Lord's Supper.

APOSTOLIC STATEMENTS: II Peter 2:13, **"Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you..."** Jude 1:12, **"These are spots**

in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear..."

FINALLY, THE PATTERN OF CHURCH STRUCTURE – Acts 2:41-42. **"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."**

There is a clear pattern for the order of events given here: belief unto salvation; baptized (brought into the church); faithful members in good standing; *then* the Lord's Supper. If we would just simply follow *this* pattern, there would be no question about closed communion. But here, again, the issue doesn't really arise over 'closed communion,' as per 'church members only.' The question arises over the issue of the so-called 'universal' church – which has no membership requirements, never meets, and doesn't even know who its members are.

There is an abundance of material available for the reader who would honestly desire to know why we take such an adamant stand against the so-called universal church; written by men like Orchard, Mink, Anderson, Cockrell, Carrol, Graves, Best, Jarrel, and Williamson, to name just a few.

The proper understanding of the New Testament church is the real issue, in this question and many others as well.

If you honestly believe in a so-called mystical, invisible, universal (dispensational) church, consisting of all believers between Pentecost and the rapture, without any other distinction, then the 'local' church becomes nothing more than a convenience and a matter of personal preference, and 'closed' communion is no question to you.

But if you honestly believe in the New Testament church, as founded and built by our Lord, consisting of regenerate, baptized believers, then closed communion is not only an important question, but it is a logical conclusion.

NEW TESTAMENT ABUSES OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Even a casual study of 1 Corinthians reveals the abundance of errors that were being practiced and tolerated in that church. Among them was the abuse of the Lord's Supper.

Chapters 1 & 3 deal specifically with the factional disunity and spiritual pride that existed in the church. Chapters 5 & 6 deal indirectly with disunity as the church was tolerating gross sin (Chap. 5) and taking each other to court (Chap. 6). The existence of disunity was certainly evident in Paul's statement, **"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you"** (1 Cor. 1: 11). As Paul begins his discussion of the abuse of the Lord's Supper, (1 Cor. 11:18) he

introduces the subject by saying, **"For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it."** That disunity became glaringly evident in their conduct at the Lord's Table.

The unity of the local church demands a closed communion; and the closed communion demands unity. That unity, if proper, transcends 'members only' but demands a unity of faith, doctrine, and practice, among the members. It should be obvious, therefore, that those outside of our membership, of whom we have little knowledge and over whom we have no church discipline, may have no part in our communion service.

The logical question then arises, what about those (visitors, etc,) from *like* churches; who believe and practice the same as we do? That very designation of '*like churches*' gives us the answer. They do not expect or desire to take communion with us, nor us with them – even though we are both in good fellowship (by virtue of faith, doctrine, and practice) with our Lord.

Allow an illustration! This writer is a missionary, 1100 miles from his home church. We find some fellowship with a similar church about 40 miles away, but we are not, and for some doctrinal and practice reasons cannot be, members there. But one thing we do have in common is that they practice closed communion, and know that this missionary also practices closed communion. Therefore, whenever I am there on a communion service, there is no problem and there are no hard feelings.

THE INTIMACY OF GROOM AND BRIDE

Allow one last analogy from a good marriage relationship.

We suggest that the Lord's Supper is the most intimate service of the gathered church, with her Lord and with fellow members. (This in no way detracts from that especially close intimacy of secret and individual prayer!) A man or wife, in a good marriage, may still find occasion to properly hug, and/or in some way demonstrate love, for another of the opposite sex, other than their spouse.

But sexual intercourse is the supreme intimacy of a man and wife! That intimacy is reserved and protected for the man and wife! No one else may share that intimacy, despite having the same values, beliefs, and practices – even other family members! In fact, just having the same values, beliefs, and practices, and especially being members of the same family, would militate against sharing that same intimacy.

We also recognize that, that intimacy is strained when there is some value, belief, or practice that may temporarily break that fellowship.

We suggest that the Lord's Supper is likewise!

CONCLUDING NOTES

1. Open communion is the result

of the universal church theory propagated by Rome, the Reformers, and Protestantism.

2. The Reformation is the result of good intentioned but human morality trying to reform a corrupt and apostate pseudo-church.

3. Protestantism is the sum total of man-founded churches; 'off-shoots' of the Reformation.

4. That *true/proper* churches (The Lord's churches) have existed from the time of Christ, outside of Rome, and have been persecuted by both Rome and Protestantism.

5. A study of church history reveals that the so-called 'heretics' persecuted by Rome, actually believed, taught, and practiced the biblical doctrines that Baptists believe and teach today.



Abomination of

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abominable and outrageous slaughter of Pharaoh and Herod is recorded in the Bible to their everlasting shame and contempt. Both of these committed a bloody and barbarous piece of work. But I fear that modern abortionists are not a wit behind these two men. The only difference is Herod and Pharaoh killed the infants after they were born and abortionists of today murder them before they are born.

COURT CORRUPTION

The U.S. Supreme Court after two years of deliberation by the justices, issued a ruling on January 22, 1973, which barred the states from interfering with the decision of a woman and her doctor to end pregnancies within the first three months. The ruling came by a 7 to 2 vote.

The decision overruled laws in all but four states---Alaska, Hawaii, New York and Washington---which already had liberalized laws. In some states the court's decision was well received, especially in Arkansas and Virginia.

The decision removed much of the social stigma associated with the operation and has taken abortion out of the hands of the backroom abortionists and brought them into the mainstream of the modern medical profession. Abortion has now been made a constitutional right. We have now come, in America, to a day of abortion on demand.

Justice Blackmun, who wrote the majority decision, said on the point of fetal personhood: "The unborn have never been recognized in law as persons in the whole sense." The court specifically decided that in the early stages of pregnancy a fetus is not a person entitled to human rights, but in later stages he is entitled to some human rights. This was in opposition to many state laws which had recognized that human life and

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personhood existed from conception.

Women of today have taken to abortion like ducks to the water. Abortion is rapidly becoming the world's largest growing industry. In New York where the operation has been legal since 1970, some shocking facts come to light. In 1972 New York State had the honor (dishonor?) of killing more babies before their birth than they permitted to be born. Official statistics released by the State Department of Health revealed that in 1972 there were 252,278 babies born and 278,000 murdered by abortions.

What has the world come to when a state murders more babies than it gives birth to? Has the world become possessed with a spirit of murder as was Cain of old? Are not such murderers walking according to the course of the one who was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44)?

The major cities of America are becoming the centers of mass murder. Atlanta, Georgia, has 7 abortion clinics, some of which perform 100 cases a week. Detroit, Michigan, has 22 abortion clinics.

The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that expenses for abortions are tax deductible. This means added tax burden to all the people, and who in a sense must help pay the murder bill.

ENGLISH EMBRYOLOGY

In England and Wales abortion topped 100,000 in 1971 and went to 160,000 in 1972. It is estimated the number will soon reach 250,000 annually, or about one-third of the birth rate. Gynecologists are making a financial windfall out of abortion over there. Some in London do nothing else and net \$12,000 per week in cash.

HOODLUMS IN HUNGARY

The bloody knives of the Communists enforce abortion in Hungary. This has been the case since the Oct. 23, 1966 Hungarian Revolution. In the 16 years following the revolution, child abortion has reached the 3 million mark. The result of this slaughter of the unborn is terrible and tragic. In Hungary the majority of suicides are women, Hungary leads the world in female alcoholics. Under the Communist regime the home-loving Hungarian women are deprived of their children, kill themselves, or drink to forget their deep sorrow.

FACTS ABOUT THE FETUS

When does life really begin? at birth or conception? Is the human fetus a pawn or person? Is it to be disposed of according to personal convenience? The medical, philosophical and theological experts have debated this question for years.

The human fetus is human life. Even at conception an embryo contains the full potential of a human being. About

16 days after conception, the heart begins to beat. In a matter of weeks, human features are recognizable from fingers to toes.

In 8 to 10 weeks of age, the human fetus moves its tiny limbs. It propels itself around the womb by feet and legs. It can respond to pressure and touch. It can be startled by noise. This is no placid, dependent, fragile vegetable developing quietly in preparation for life that starts at birth! This is no inanimate jelly to be sucked out by a vacuum pump through a narrow bore tube to be thrown away.

At birth the main thing that changes is the baby's environment. It has been alive and active many months before this. If a man has the right to destroy the life in its early stages of the process, who can say he cannot do so at any stage? And if at any stage, then why not after birth?

LIFE AT CONCEPTION

The medical profession and philosophers may argue about when life begins, but the theologian has no business doing so. The Bible plainly teaches that life begins at conception. The Scriptures reveal that the moment of conception the total human being is present. The Psalmist cried: **"In sin did my mother conceive me"** (Ps. 51:5). Notice the **"me"** existed at conception. Job 3:3 reads: **"Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived."** Observe again the man existed from conception. In Luke 1:36 the angel told Mary: **"Thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her."** John the Baptist was considered a son from conception, and he is said to have been filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15).

The innocent unborn, unwanted life is recognized by God as human life if not by the Supreme Court or in the heart of its mother. The unborn fetus is a real person and should be entitled to the protection of the state as much as a person who is born.

THE RIGHT TO LIFE

The Bible teaches man's life is holy, and that it should be in the hands of God only. Psalms 68:20 declares: **"Unto GOD the Lord belongs the issues from death."** When someone usurps God's authority and kills an innocent person, God's justice is offended. The only way it can be satisfied is for the offender to forfeit his life in exchange for the murder victim. God told Noah: **"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man"** (Gen. 9:6).

Human government exists to protect life and property. When ever a government legalizes the murder of the unborn, she displays great degeneracy and disorder. There is no *life*, liberty, and pursuit of happiness to an aborted child. When a government fails to recognize

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the right to live, she has ignored man's greatest fundamental right.

Our permissive society is taking the prerogative to interfere with the right of life. The value of life has become relative. Now the mother decides whether or not her baby lives or dies. Defenders of abortion contend the slaughter of the unborn is a highly personal decision to be determined by an individual's conscience, not by the dictates of church or state. Some doctors believe it is obscene and immoral for a woman to have a child she doesn't want.

Such reasoning displays a depth of depravity unexcelled in human history. By the same reasoning we could say that it is obscene and immoral for a woman to feed and bring up an unwanted child after it is born. What is the difference in killing a child before it is born and killing it after it is born?

Does the state or individual have the constitutional right to dispose of the chronically ill, the physically handicapped and mentally deranged whose lives can have far less potential than an unborn child? How can people speak of the civil right of a mother to murder her unborn babe, and then allow no rights whatever to an unborn infant? How can the liberal religious crowd favor the elimination of capital punishment and favor abortion on demand at the same time? How can doctors who are under oath to preserve life deliberately take the life of an unborn child?

THE HARM OF ABORTION

Abortion is legalized murder. Matthew 19:18 says: **"Thou shalt do no murder."** This forbids us doing anything hurtful or injurious to health, ease, and life of another person. It certainly does forbid the brutal murder of unborn children. Anyone who asks for an abortion or performs the act does not believe this Scripture. They have no business belonging to any Christian church or society in the world. They belong in the camp with the bloody Communists and the inquisitionists of the thirteenth century.

What would have happened to the nine justices of the Supreme Court if their mothers had been aborted in a safe hospital? Where would our country be if the mother of George Washington had demanded an abortion? Where

would the world be today if Mary had aborted Jesus Christ three months after conception?

EASY MORALS

Easy abortion encourages easy morals. If a woman gets into trouble today, she knows the solution is just around the corner. If present trends continue women will come to look on abortion as being physically and mentally no more serious than having a tooth out. School girls will look upon sexual intercourse as the normal behavior after finishing their homework. An age of fornication and adultery such as the world has never seen is soon to take the world by storm.

IRRESPONSIBILITY IN MEN

Abortion has the effects of increasing irresponsibility in men. Many of the male sex favor abortion to shed their responsibilities. Marriage and supporting a family takes hard work, and this is something more than a few men are afraid of. Many men (I like to have said mice) do not want to be responsible to a woman, or a child, or the state, or least of all to God. Nevertheless, God has made man a responsible creature. Man and woman are responsible to plan their families and avoid promiscuity, rather than shift the penalty to the innocent if they fail in their task.

LIBERAL DOCTORS

One of the tenets of the Declaration of Geneva, drawn up by the World Medical Association, says: "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception; even under threat. . ." Abortion has made this a meaningless oath. It has made the doctors of medicine damnable murderers like Herod and Pharaoh. How can any man believe this oath and murder an unborn child?

If doctors are going to be subjected to abortion on demand, soon conservative-minded individuals who are Christians will gradually disappear from the medical profession. Christian nurses who find abortion repugnant will quit nursing. This is to eventually leave the medical profession in the hands of godless men and women who are too liberal to be trusted. Who wants to go to a doctor who murders unborn babies? Who wants to put his life in the hands of one who has no respect for life?

ABORTION NOT SO GOOD

Doctors confess that abortion is a blind procedure. You can't see what you are doing. You can perforate the uterus without knowing it and then have to go back and repair the damage you have done. If the suction curette gets outside the uterus, intestines can be sucked out. Abortions are no method of contraception.

In the salting out procedure, the doctor injects 150 to 200 cc (about a half pint) of saline solution into the uterus through the abdomen. The solution kills the baby in the womb. Then the mother

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must go through labor and finally, 24 to 36 hours later, exhausted, she delivers a dead baby.

I can see how such procedures can prevent the mother from a self-inflicted miscarriage and save her life, but I am unable to see how it does anything for the unborn babe who dies in the process. Abortion, in most cases, just permits the mother to get rid of her child without killing herself at the same time. The Supreme Court and the doctor cannot keep the mother from crucifying herself with guilt feelings after the murder is performed.

CONCLUSION

I, for one, believe the mother who permits her unborn child to be

slaughtered is no better than the Israelites who offered their children in burnt sacrifice in the Old Testament (II Kings 16:2-3; 17:17, 31; Jer. 32:35; Ezek. 16:20-21). These people have no respect for life, especially the life of their own flesh and blood.

Thank God that many Christian doctors oppose abortion and refuse to perform them in spite of the decision of the Supreme Court. Thank God for those in the medical profession who are crying out against this slaughter of the unborn.

Every Christian in America should join with the National Right to Life Committee in their attempt to push for a constitutional amendment in Congress to guarantee the right of a fetus, thereby nullifying the Supreme Court's decision.



The Martyr-Deacon

By George C. Baldwin
(1817 - 189?)

*"When persecution's torrent-blaze
Wraps the unshrinking martyr's head;
When fade all earthly flowers and bays;
When summer friends are gone and fled;
Is he alone in that dark hour
Who owns the Lord of love and power?"*

*"Or waves there not around his brow
A wand no human arm may wield?
Fraught with a spell no angels know,
His steps to guide, his soul to shield---"*

*"Foremost and nearest to his throne,
By perfect robes of triumph known,
And likest him in look and tone,
The holy Stephen kneels."*

There is one class of men whose connection with any enterprise gives to it the highest sanction, and helps more to spread and perpetuate its fame than perhaps any thing else. To what class, think you, do I refer? Is it composed of the rich or the learned? Of men of lofty positional eminence, statesmen, artists, poets or conquerors? No. It consists of *martyrs*---men who have proved their devotion to the cause they espoused by dying for it. In all ages and lands, amid all stages of civilization, from the rudest barbarism to the highest refinement, the memory of martyrs has been held sacred, and real and traditional relics of their careers preserved with the greatest care. Indeed, the heroic element developed in such constancy and fortitude as they manifest naturally commands the admiration of their enemies and the profoundest love of their friends. Science has her list of martyrs, and, today, points with honest pride to the monuments which she has erected to keep their fame fresh in the heart of the world. Liberty has her long, long list of martyrs, whose



names were not born to die--- whose dust is found wherever she has struggled with her foes; and in the wreath which a grateful humanity has twined about her brow, the most imperishable

flowers are the ones which have been gathered from the cherished graves of those, who have freely offered up their lives on her hallowed altars. Christianity, too, has her martyrs innumerable, yet glorious, whose remains are frozen in the ice of the North, mouldering in the sands of the South, beneath the whispering leaves of western forests, and beside the crumbling ruins of eastern antiquity; yea, in cold, damp dungeons, on bleak, desolate mountains, and in wild Asiatic jungles; while far down in ocean depths their white bones glitter through tangled sea-weeds. These form the crown of her earthly glory. These are the richest jewels in her earthly diadem. True, she has been able to preserve the names of comparatively few of them, and therefore she sings,

*"The kings of old have shrine and tomb
In many a minister's haughty gloom;
And, green, along the ocean's side
The mounds arise where heroes died;
But show me, on thy flowery breast,
Earth, where my nameless martyrs rest!
They sleep in secret, but their sod,
Unknown to man, is marked of God."*

Of this catalogue I cannot tell you who is the last; nay, at this moment, crushed by despotic power, or murdered by lawless violence, some martyr man or woman may be breathing out their final breath. But I can tell you whose name,

since the organization of the Christian church, stands first; I can tell you who, from that point, stands the foremost of this mighty army of martyrs. It is the representative man whose history and character form the subject of our present meditation.

To understand the history and character of this first Christian martyr, it will be necessary for us to review the record of the period in which he lived.

The effect of the retributive death of Ananias and Sapphira, the news of which spread like wildfire among the gathered thousands of Christians, was very great. The record says, **"And great fear came on all the church, and upon as many as heard these things"** (Acts 5:11). But the apostles, as if they had received fresh inspiration, wrought with renewed energy **"signs and wonders wrought among the people;"** (Acts 5:12) and while the rich and honorable stood aloof from them through pride, the mass of the people **"magnified them,"** (Acts 5:13) and **"believers were the more added to the Lord multitudes, both men and women"** (Acts 5:14). Deeper and wider the excitement spread, until it dashed over the walls of Jerusalem and flowed to all the surrounding cities. The enemies of Christianity could remain quiet no longer. Through the influence of Caiaphas the High Priest, the Sanhedrim issued an order for the apprehension of the apostles. The command was obeyed, and they were arrested and cast into prison. But one of God's angels opened the prison doors, and bade them go into the temple and preach the gospel. Conceive if you can the amazement of those persecutors when the news was brought to them in the morning, that the men whom they had imprisoned on the preceding night had escaped, and, in opposition to their command, were preaching in the public place to the people. Speedily they were again seized and brought before the Sanhedrin, when the High Priest arrogantly asked, **"Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled all Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us"** (Acts 5:28).

Ah, they thought that when they had secured the crucifixion of Christ they had put down Christianity; but now they find that His death has given life to His cause, and their guilty souls tremble in fear of

the vengeance which His innocent blood calls down upon them. But Peter arises, and, addressing that august body with the calm dignity and heroic intrepidity of the true martyr-spirit, utters these immortal words, **"We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him"** (Acts 5:29-32). What a speech that was under the circumstances! Tell me, can this be the Peter who once in the presence of this same Caiaphas, quailed before the inquisitiveness of a servant girl? It is the same man, acting out his real manhood, permeated now by a divine religion. What, think you, was the effect of this intrepid speech?" They were cut to the heart and took counsel to slay them." Deterred from this, through the advice of an eminent lawyer, they merely scourged the apostles, gave orders that they should not speak in the name of Christ, and let them go. How, think you, did Peter and his brethren feel after this cruel scourging, and act in respect to this authoritative injunction? The record says, **"They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ"** (Acts 5:41-42). I have introduced this narrative to show you, at this point, the existence and operation of two antagonistic spirits. On the one hand the spirit of relentless persecution, on the other hand that which was prepared to brave even martyrdom for Christianity.

The record next opens to us an internal view of the church itself. Its numbers were very large, and were made up of two classes: Hebrews, *i.e.*, Jews who lived in Palestine, and Grecians, *i.e.*, Jews elsewhere called Hellenists, who lived among the Gentiles and spoke the Greek language. Between these two classes a murmuring arose, because the latter affirmed that **"their widows were neglected in the daily ministration"** (Acts 6:1). This gave alarm to the apostles. They immediately called a meeting of the

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The Martyr-Deacon

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church, and laid the matter before that assembly, saying, **“It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business”** (Acts 6:2,3). The propriety of this measure at once impressed the multitude and they immediately chose seven men for this purpose. The first one, however, among all the gathered hundreds on whom the thought and the heart of the united church immediately fixed, as deserving the office of deacon, was *Stephen*, our representative man.

Although we have no previous record of him, what a volume this one fact opens to us in regard to him in his social relations, his character for honesty, integrity and wisdom, and his position among them as a Christian! Possessing the confidence and affection of the entire first Christian society, enjoying the personal ministry of the apostles, and encircled by the miraculous energy of the Holy Spirit, he seems to have been worthy in every respect of the distinguished honor thus conferred upon him. As a similar necessity exists in every church in every age, every regularly-organized company of Christians have had, and will have their chosen deacons, but to Stephen will ever belong the honor of having been the first deacon of the first Christian church ever organized.

These deacons, with Stephen at their head, having knelt before the apostles, were, after solemn prayer, consecrated by the laying on of hands, and thus officially set apart to their important work. You now see the church fully organized and equipped for the war--every member fired with holy zeal to spread a knowledge of redemption through the blood of the lately-crucified man of Calvary, **“And the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith”** (Acts 6:7). In the prosecution of this work, Stephen, like a true deacon, worthy of the responsible position to which he had been called, stood, prompt and efficient, by the side of his ministering brethren, and while the record does not tell us that he possessed great talents, it does say that he was **“full of faith and power,”** (Acts 6:7) and did **“great wonders and miracles among the people”** (Acts 6:8).

During all this time the spirit of persecution had increased in bitterness. The increasing spread of Christianity aroused, rather than intimidated its enemies. Hitherto their animosity had only developed itself publicly in threats, imprisonments and scourgings of the disciples, but now it became irrepressible

in its plenitude of wrath, and was prepared and determined to pursue, even unto death, its object. Then commenced a series of direful persecutions against Christians, which even papal malignity, reveling in the license of the dark ages, has not surpassed, the victims of whose ferocity were numbered by thousands. They began thus.

In Jerusalem there was a synagogue made up of foreign Jews from five different countries, who directed their opposition especially toward Stephen. They at first debated the great question with him; but this deacon confounded them in argument, insomuch that they were not able **“to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.”** Vanquished on this manly field, their pride wounded and their hatred increased, they determined on his death. To secure this they suborned, witnessed, apprehended him, brought him before the Sanhedrim and charged him with blasphemy. O! for an artist's power to depict that scene! Alas! I have it not. But you can see the malignant joy in the faces of those in that circle of maddened persecutors, as they glare upon their victim, now entirely in their power. You can see that unarmed, unbefriended, doomed deacon as he stands before them, conscious that his doom is near, conscious that he shall never more mingle with his brethren on earth; conscious that he is never again to hear the ripple of Siloah's brook flowing “fast by the oracles of God;” conscious that the perfumed breezes of Judea's hills shall never again fan his brow; conscious that the last tone of earthly love has fallen on his ear; conscious that the shadow of the dark wing of the death angel is falling on him, and yet standing calm and unmoved among those who pant for his blood. But see! The persecutors, the lying witnesses, the judges are all amazed at something in the appearance of their victim. What is it? Look at him yourself. See! His face is radiant with a glory not of earth; a beam of eternal sunshine has pierced the black clouds and fallen on him, as did the light of Heaven, descending upon Tabor's summit, pour celestial radiance on the face of our Lord, until His disciples were stricken down before its majesty, and therefore the record says that they **“that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.”**

The High Priest speaks. Addressing Stephen he asks, **“Are these things so?”** (Acts 7:1), have you blasphemed--do these witnesses speak the truth? The deacon prepares to give in what he knows to be his last testimony for Jesus. O! how grand is the repose of that mild yet firm face! How bright is the beaming of those eyes as they overflow with a holy, benignant earnestness! How significant is his whole expression of the unspoken cry, which is going up from his heart to his listening Master for help in this his last



time of need! As he commences, I hear no weak faltering in his voice, I detect no evidence of a trembling, cringing spirit in his outflowing sentences. No; his tones are full and clear, his words are bold and fearless as, remembering the official dignity before which he stands, he thus opens: **“Men, brethren, and fathers,”** (Acts 7:2) and delivers that comprehensive address recorded in the seventh chapter of the Acts. John Huss, arrayed before the tribunal of his enemies; Luther, confronting the defenders of hoary error at Worms, come up before my mind while I listen to this defense, with their noble declarations of confidence in the same belief which Stephen boldly avows. Gazing upon him, my eyes grow dim with admiring tears, and all the sublimity of earth is forgotten as I grasp the full grandeur of the position he occupies before that august but guilty tribunal. Here my Saviour stood and felt the hot breath of hate scorch His cheek as the powers of darkness closed sternly around Him; here prophets were encircled before and saints placed after Him, and while the gathered testimony which this bar of judgment has evoked, surges around me and sways my soul, I listen to hear what the prisoner now arraigned shall say.

Sorry am I, that I have not time to quote his entire speech, to delineate in his own words the outlines and features of that noble lifetime, the career of the Hebrew nation which will ever be unparalleled in history, and to point out the train of thought running through the whole, and gradually gaining intensity and force until this burning climax is hurled forth, **“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in**

heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it” (Acts 7:51-53). I can only refer to this, and proceed to the effect which it produced. See how keenly the rebuke has cut them to the heart. They **“gnashed on him with their teeth,”** (Acts 7:54) as the wolf, coward that he is, whets his sharp fangs in hungry ecstasy before he leaps upon his prey. And in contrast to their fiendish attitudes, look at the deacon. He does not return their gaze. He has done with them. He has no more to say. He knows his

doom. He knows earth had no hope for him. He knows that he is as surely bereft of earthly assistance, as if he was within the ranks of heathen, before the secret tribunal of Roman vengeance, instead of being surrounded by his own fellow-citizens, those who profess to worship the God of Heaven and earth. Therefore, he looks away from them to his only refuge and implores aid from Heaven's King. Again, that unearthly glory beams from his face, as lifting his hands, which are soon to be paralyzed in death, he exclaims, **“Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God”** (Acts 7:56). At this his persecutors **“cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city,”** (Acts 7:57-58) where the perjured witnesses having removed their clothes and laid them down at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul, stoned him while he was kneeling down and praying **“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;”** (Acts 7:59) and with his expiring breath, amid the shower of fast and heavy-falling stones, governed by the same spirit which imbued his Master when on the cross, he cried with a loud voice, **“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,”** and the record says that when he had said this **“he fell asleep”** (Acts 7:60).

Their bloody work accomplished, his murderers returned in triumph to the city, leaving the martyr's body bruised, mangled, lifeless in its gory bed beneath its covering of death-dealing stones. Think you that, meanwhile; the church had forgotten their beloved brother

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The Martyr-Deacon

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and deacon? Think you that they were ignorant or reckless of his danger? Think you, that as the crowd, emerging from the Sanhedrim chamber, hurried him along the streets and to the field of death, many Christian men and women did not mingle with it, and with sorrowing hearts watch even to the bitter end, and treasure up the memory of their suffering brother's looks and words and unquailing fortitude, sustained by visions of an opening Heaven, revealing his Lord as having risen from His throne, approaching the very verge of the spirit land, and there waiting to receive the soul of His martyred servant the moment it left the body? Yea, verily. We read that **"devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him"** (Acts 8:2). Those men were doubtless the six remaining deacons, his brethren in office as well as in Christ; these were the appropriate persons to bear the loved body to the tomb, where, embalmed with the tears of the church, they left it to repose until the morning of the resurrection, when it shall rise in immortal beauty, fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, and, reunited with his soul, shall stand on the plains of glory amid waving psalms, sounding harps and choral symphonies, recognized by angels and the redeemed as the first Christian martyr, recognized by Jehovah Jesus as the first who, after Himself, tasted the bitterness of a violent death for the gospel's sake. I present to you:

1. A brief analysis of the character of this representative man. It may interest you to know that many believe that he, like Paul, had studied law with Gamaliel, and that he was at this period about seventy years old. Whether or not he was thus educated, it is certain that he possessed a strong and cultured mind. Consider one proof of this. I refer to that defense before the Sanhedrim. Remember he was charged with blasphemy against the temple and the law of Moses, whereas he had only asserted Christ to be the Messiah, and that if he was rejected the nation would be destroyed. He does not simply deny the charge, but in a most logical manner discusses this proposition: that from the beginning God had in view the dispensation now opening, and that His designs had been uniformly opposed by their impious forefathers. Study his demonstration of that proposition; the perfection of its arrangement, the accumulation of its argument and the tremendous force of its conclusion, and you will be convinced that he must have possessed vigorous intellectual power, and what every man, every Christian, and especially every deacon ought to have, great familiarity with the Scriptures. His possession of the elements of a high virtuous character

among his fellowmen is indicated, by his elevation to the highest office in the church next to the apostleship.

Observe also the *type of his piety*. It was not a large development of natural amiability. It was not a fierce fanatical devotion. It was an intelligent belief of the demonstrated truths of Christianity, together with a personal experience of their transforming power as applied by the Holy Spirit to his own soul. But he had not been satisfied with being a mere recipient of elementary Christianity, he had pressed along the bright pathway of Christian attainment until he reached the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus, a man **"full of faith and of the Holy Ghost"** (Acts 6:5). Moreover, his was an *active piety*. He never seems to have believed that God converted him merely for his own benefit, to go to Heaven on flowery beds of ease, or placed him in the church to enjoy without working or suffering. Nay, you see him ready to meet every call of duty, willing to sustain every burden. The church needed a deacon and chose him, and you hear of no begging off, no excuse, no declinature, but a manly recognition of the call of the church as the voice of God, and a conscientious devotion to his duties as a helper of the apostles. You see him doing wonders in the cause of religion; demonstrating how much can be done by a willing heart and hands in the service of the Master.

And again, note well the *invincibility of his courage*. He dared to meet and discuss the great question with the foreign synagogue. And when arraigned before the implacable ranks of the Sanhedrim, environed by the coils of deadly hate which had been winding about him, he stood as calm and unmoved as did his Lord before the same High Priest, not quite one year before. And when dragged through the familiar streets he had so often traversed, past the market places where his name was known to all, past friends and acquaintances, past, perchance, his own home where his little ones were waiting for their father's return, surrounded by the jeering mob whose voices had yelled around the crucifixion, to that most fearful death---a death by stoning; knowing that escape was impossible and that unutterable agonies awaited him, you see no shrinking, but a fortitude like his Redeemer's, a magnanimity like that of Him Who, as a **"sheep before her shearers"** (Is. 53:7) was dumb, a forgiveness akin to that which prompted the prayer, **"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"** (Luke 23:34). In short, you feel convinced that he was one of those who, though

"Firm orbs convulsed, should all the planets fly,

World crush on world, and ocean mix with sky,

Yet undismayed would view the falling whole,

And still maintain the purpose of his soul."

Thank God for the record of such

a man. Stephen's life left a glorious influence behind it among the Hebrew Christians, but did not end in those first ages of Christianity. It was inscribed upon the pages of the Scriptures by divine inspiration, that, side by side with the record of our Saviour's career, it might outlive the wreck of "empires and eras," and, like it, pass through the web of time a shuttle in the hand of God to weave the bright colors of virtue, of constancy, and of Christian triumph into the fabric of human souls, which is to be unrolled and examined when the Christ shall sit on the judgment seat. So its contemplation affects us; it elevates and expands the mind; it exalts our conceptions of what our humanity may become; it inspires us with ardor to attain to those altitudes of human character which we here see developed; it magnifies the gospel and the grace of God; it demonstrates the divinity of the Christian religion, and in our inner souls enkindles our love, inspires our hope and invigorates our faith!

2. I desire you to study *this exemplification of the martyr-spirit*.

This spirit is the predominating element in Stephen's historic character. What does the term "martyr" mean? Originally it merely signified "a witness." Hence, as all Christians were designed to be witnesses for Christ, in this primitive sense all were to be martyrs. But there were two ways of hearing testimony for the crucified Jesus: one by words and an exemplary life, another by suffering and dying for Him. Soon the latter came to be the exclusive application of this term; it was confined to those who bore witness for Christ by suffering ignominy and death for Him. You can easily see, that it required a higher and stronger faith to enable a man thus to bear testimony, than was needed in the former case. Persecution was, of course, the occasion for the development of this spirit.

Commencing with the death of Stephen, the first great persecution of the Christian church raged at Jerusalem, until it scattered the thousands of Christians there congregated, throughout Judea. During this only one of the apostles suffered---James, the brother of John. He was the first apostolic martyr. The second persecution, whose infernal machinery was set in motion by Nero, occurred at Rome, during which Peter and Paul were slain, and in which Christians were hung up at the corners of the streets, and burned to ashes to give light during the night. The third broke out under Domitian, A.D. 95; the fourth under Trajan, A.D. 145; the fifth under Marcus Aurelius, A.D. 177; the sixth under Maximian, A.D. 235. Persecution also ravaged the church in the years 249, 257, and 274. With the later cruelty of the papal power, who is the woman spoken of in Revelation, as "drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," you are

familiar. All these have in the aggregate, shed the blood of millions of Christian men and women. We call the periods in which the most of these occurred, "the dark ages," and that is an appropriate name. Such deeds are the fit denizens of darkness, moral as well as physical. The spirit that animated Stephen and his numerous successors we call the martyr spirit. What are its elements?

1. A certain knowledge of the truthfulness of Christianity. No man will die voluntarily for that, which he does not know to be true.

2. A deep experience in the heart of the divine power and sustaining energy of the gospel, strengthening the will, confirming the purpose, making spiritual things realities, revealing the temporary and transient nature of all earthly things, producing entireness of consecration to the will of God, and absorbing desire both to do and suffer that will, inspiring every energy of the nature with an enthusiasm not of earth---an enthusiasm embodying such lofty heroism that neither murderous stones, ravenous beasts, consuming flames, nor death in any form, is able to intimidate it. By this, faith becomes invincible, hope firmly grasps fruition, and love glows with the ardor of an eternal flame. Nor is this wild fanaticism. You do not call the martyrs of science, or the martyrs of liberty, fanatics, who have given up their lives for the good of those yet unborn. Why not? Because you know, that with those unselfish and heroic men the love of science and freedom was a passion stronger than the love of life. Why doubt then, that the far higher power and deeper experience of religion, the influence of the Holy Spirit, could, in the similar manner, enable Stephen, the deacon, and millions of others, to do for Christ what He did for them---willingly die? What to a Christian, with such attainments, is death, with all its most terrific pain, but a release from earth to the eternal glory of Heaven? Nothing can be more ennobling to humanity than this spirit; for in its holy trust in the great unseen realities of God, it calls forth and develops the noblest powers of our being.

Over whose death hovers a more transcendent glory than that, which illuminates the features of one who gave up all for the truth? A martyr's character is the ideal of unselfishness. You talk of the glory of a warrior's death, whose couch is broken spears and slaughtered men---the debris of the bannered host, which writhed beneath the steps of carnage. But fierce hatred and desire for blood raged in the dying fighter's bosom; reason's voice was unheard amid the roar of conflict within and without. History tells us that when the great Caesar was assassinated, he first gazed upon the marble countenance of Pompey, and then used his last strength in arranging

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The Martyr-Deacon

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his robes before he fell, that he might lie with becoming dignity in death. It tells us that Nelson, when commencing the battle of Trafalgar, in which he lost his life, said pleasantly, "Now for a peerage of Westminster Abbey." But there is in neither of these instances that of the heroic element, which is worthy to be compared with that developed in the death of Stephen, who, without resistance, died with a heart full of love to God and man, with a prayer for the forgiveness of his enemies on his lips, with his vision fixed upon Christ, and his spirit resigned to the God who gave it. O death, glorious and peerless! Earthly fame grows dim in its luster beside thy triumph!

Has the martyr spirit left the church? Are there none now among the millions of Christians who, if called, would thus seal their testimony? It is to be feared that many of us would shrink in the hour of trial. Alas! instead of the martyr spirit, we are too much filled with the world's spirit. Sometimes we even complain of the crosses which we now have to bear; the paltry sums we pay, the little demands upon our time which our religion makes. We might prove cowardly witnessed if tested to the extreme. But, blessed be His name, our Master has a remnant according to the election of grace. You will find a few scattered through all Christian churches, who could and would endure the trial. The reason is that such have more religion than the rest of us. They are like Stephen, "**full of faith and of the Holy Ghost**," (Acts 6:5) and it is my firm conviction that should persecution again rage, should Christianity again need men and women to bear testimony for it with their blood, needed grace would be given, and many, very many, who now seem weak and trembling, would go boldly to the stake and welcome the flame-shroud and chariot of fire for Jesus' sake. Sure I am, that among our missionaries there have been, and are plain developments of the martyr spirit. O, ascended, triumphant Jesus, bless thy church with more of it! In conclusion I remark,

1. How *glorious is a martyr's record!*

Think once more of this deacon, as with dying eyes he saw Christ waiting to receive him, as after death he was welcomed to Heaven. Who shall describe the exceeding greatness of his reward as he received the plaudit, "**Well done**," (Matt. 25:21) from the lips of his King and heard it echoed by all the hosts of Heaven? You remember that in the sublime visions which were opened to the apostle at Patmos, he saw some who were nearest the throne, and asked, "**Who are these**?" (Gen 48:8)? And the answer was, "**These are they who have come up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they**

before the throne of God. They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more. Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:14-17). Transcendent destiny---what Christian heart does not pant for it? We are not called to suffer as Stephen did, but we may possess in essence the martyr spirit, which will enable us cheerfully to endure the trials to which we may be subjected, and meet dangers to which we may be exposed; faithfully to perform the duties which may be assigned to us in our respective spheres, and then a reward similar to his in nature, if not in degree, shall be ours. Ever remember that our love for the truth, may be always determined by our willingness to suffer for it.

2. How precious is *the legacy of influence which this class of witnesses for Christ has left to the church!* It was said of old that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church." Time continually confirms this statement.

"It is not shed in vain---

*The blood of martyrs! From its freshing rain
High springs the church, like some fount-shadowing palm;*

*The nations crowd beneath its branching shade;
Of its green leaves are kingly diadems made;
And wrapped within its deep embosoming calm,
Earth sinks to slumber like the breakers deep,
And war's tempestuous vultures fold their wings and sleep."*

Mythology relates that Cadmus sowed dragons' teeth in the soil, and from them sprang a race of warriors, fierce and irresistible. A more benignant harvest has attended the implanting of such holy germs as we have contemplated; the early and the latter rains have fostered the plants that grew from such seeds as Stephen's death, and the fruit which is thus to be borne to the great Husbandman can only be estimated, when He shall gather all His wheat into His garner. They who have given up life for their Master have been blessed indeed! They have won for themselves a triumphal entry to Heaven, the richest love of their Redeemer, and a place "nearest the throne." They have realized the desire of their hearts, to do much for Jesus; for their enemies have often been confounded by their fortitude and thus led to the cross; and they have achieved what men during all time have held to be of more value than life---immortal fame; for their existence on earth and departure from it, have been and will be regarded by the mass of mankind, as is the career and disappearance of the sun held in remembrance during the night, by those whose life is yet glowing from the sustenance it has afforded. And who shall compute the value of their influence upon succeeding ages?

Ah! It has been the richest legacy of the sacramental host, whence they have drawn strength in hours of weakness, hope in hours of despair, courage in seasons of discouragement. It has been and ever will be one essential element of their glory, a pledge and precursor of the great triumph of their cause.

3. We learn from the Scriptures, that *a deeper relation than those which we have contemplated, exists between the death of martyrs and succeeding ages.* We learn that they will not only be productive of ever increasing rewards to the sufferers, and of permanent and benignant blessings to the race, but that they will be avenged. John says in Revelation that he saw the seven seals opened, "**and when the fifth seal had opened, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled**" (Rev. 6:9-11). When the day shall come that shall witness the last stage and the end of Time's journey, "*---When time itself shall cease,
And final ruin's desolating peace
Enwrap this wide and restless world of man;
When the Judge rides upon the enthroning wind,
And o'er all generations of mankind*

Eternal vengeance waves its winnowing fan; when the earth shall have completed its weary cycle of sin and sorrow, and shall roll back into the sunshine of purity which bathed its form before it had entered upon its awful orbit of aberration, all of us, as we look back along the perspective of earth's eventful career, which has witnessed the grandest of the works of our God, and shall stand unparalleled in the annals of eternity, shall have reason to say that the blood of martyrs has been demanded at the hand of their enemies, that vengeance has been satisfied; and as we mark the long list of such murders engraven in the book of justice gradually being effaced, as retribution pursued its course, until not one remained to cry out for avengement, we shall to the imploration of Milton,

*"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints,
whose bones*

Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,"

reply that, the Lord God of Sabaoth has wiped away all the indignity which has been offered to His cause, and gloriously fulfilled His pledge and promise to avenge the sufferings, of all those who have gone from earth through much tribulation.



Hard of Hearing

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That one exception is the first parable, commonly known as the "Parable of the sower" (Matt. 13:3-9) although a better title would be the "parable of the soils." The "sower" is only incidental to this parable. The real lesson from this parable is the receptiveness and productiveness (or the lack of it) of the various soils.

The four different soils all received the same seed! The differentiating factors were the depth to which the "soil" (or listener) absorbed the seed and the elements that competed with the seed whenever it was actually received, or absorbed, by the soil or listener. Our Lord placed the responsibility squarely on the listener's shoulders when He closed the parable with, "**Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.**"

Our text, "**For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them**," when properly understood, is a perfect fit with Paul's comment, "**To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life**" (II Cor. 2:16) because some are condemned to a Christ-less eternity by these words but others are shown to be the recipients of eternal life and a productive Christian testimony while here on earth.

The commonly, though wrongly, understood, or expressed, reason that Jesus spoke in parables is, "to illustrate and thereby make His teaching more easily understandable." It is significant that Matthew, by inspiration, has placed these parables in the order that he has put them *and* that this first parable is so distinctly set off from the rest of the parables.

Notice that it is set off by: a) the disciple's question; b) the Lord's answer; and then c) the explanation of the parable. Also notice that as the Lord explains the first parable, and then the second parable, the "seed" in particular takes on a different analogy. We will not be dealing with that at this time, but it is essential that we make that observation.

"**Why speakest thou...in parables?**"

The Lord's answer also accounts for His explanation, "**Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given...For this people's heart is waxed gross...**"

The Lord quotes from Isa. 6:9-10. The message of God's servant is not always a well received and accepted message, and does not always have either the intent or result of what we, today, would call effective evangelism! The Hebrew in

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

Animals are spoken of in the Bible as doing many different things, i.e., speaking, feeding prophets, etc. Do animals have moral character or conscience and is there eternal life for animals? -British Columbia

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The difference between man and animals is that man is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28). Man represents God to the created order and is called to subdue and have dominion over all the earth. It is through dominion that man represents God and bears His image.

Because man is created in the image of God, he has moral character and responsibility before God. This is unique to humanity. The Bible is written to humans, not animals. I cannot think of anything in the Bible that indicates animals are moral beings which may inherit everlasting life.

It was the sin of man that brought the curse upon the earth. Although animals are affected by this, they are not responsible for it. In Jesus Christ, the entire created order is restored to God (Col. 1:20). Again, animals may be affected by this in history but they are not the reason for it.

Jesus Christ did not become an animal to redeem animals from the curse of the law, He became a man to redeem men from the curse of the law (Gal. 4:4-5). The Bible says Christ will judge every man according to his works. There is no Scripture, that I am aware of, which speaks of a judgment of animals.

In Genesis 9:3-6, God gives us liberty to kill and eat animals, but forbids the shedding of man's blood, because man is created in the image of God. This seems like an impossible allowance if animals have moral character like humans.

Because of all this, I would have to answer no to the above question. Animals do not have moral character, moral consciousness, nor eternal life.

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They are also able in some degree to learn how to obey commands and carry out a variety of useful tasks (especially horses, mules, cattle, etc.) However, these abilities do not necessarily mean that they possess a moral conscience in the same respect that their human masters do. I do not believe that there is an eternal life for animals. Eternal life is reserved for those who believe in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Gospel.

The Scriptures are very clear that all the beasts of the field procreate after their kind, distinguishing them from mankind who was made in the image of God. Man, made in the image of God, was created as a trichotomus being equipped with a body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). Man was created as a higher being who was given dominion over the animal kingdom. These distinctions are clearly revealed in Genesis 1:24-28 which declares: **"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; make and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."**

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Animals were spoken of as doing many things in Scripture. However, every one of these instances was out of the ordinary. That is, they were miracles. It is not in a donkey's nature to talk. However, one

miraculously spoke to Balaam (Num. 22:28). It must be noted that **"the Lord opened the mouth of the"** donkey. This is merely one example of an animal being given supernatural ability by God. These types of instances in no way prove that an animal has a moral conscience or a soul. In fact, the fact that the Lord miraculously caused these miraculous instances proves the opposite—that animals do NOT have moral character or conscience.

Let us consider this from another angle. If animals have an eternal soul (and they do not), then they are all doomed to eternity in the Lake of Fire. All creation fell in the Garden of Eden (Rom. 8: 22). However, Jesus didn't die for animals. He died for descendants of Adam. God required a near kinsman to be a sacrifice for a sinner. This is why Jesus took the form of a man (Heb. 2:17). There has been no savior for animals. If indeed animals have a soul, they are without a redeemer and are, therefore, doomed to eternal punishment. This is just another reason that we know animals do not have souls.

It should be mentioned that this doesn't mean that there won't be animals in Heaven. It simply means that those animals in Heaven won't be the resurrected bodies and souls of animals from the past. The animal kingdom will be cleansed and **"made new"** in Heaven just like the **"new heaven and"** the **"new earth"** (Rev. 21:1).

There's nothing wrong with having affection for a pet. God surely made them for our enjoyment and many children of God have grown to love a special pet. However, let us not forget that it is the souls of men we need to be concerned about first and foremost. Let us not miss our command to evangelize the world.

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In a word, no!

Scripture speaks of many 'non-human' things, other than the demons, being particularly used of God in some particular instance, or obeying God's command in the manner that a servant would obey his master, but in no way does that need to imply that animals

have moral character, conscience, or eternal life any more than the stones or the wind and sea.

Numbers 22:22 & 28, **"And God's anger was kindled because he went... And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass."**

1 Kings 17:4, **"And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there."**

Matthew 3:9, **"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."**

Matthew 8:27, **"But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"**

Luke 19:40, **"And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."**

God is omnipotent (meaning that He has all and absolute power) and sovereign (meaning that He has absolute authority and rule). He can – and does, when necessary – completely over rule the normal course of nature to show His glory, benefit His people, and as in the case of Balaam's ass, rebuke shameless and disobedient man.

There are a number of illustrations among animal life that put mankind to moral shame, but that does not impute a moral conscience to animal instinct.

RAYMOND BENNETT



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The West Griffin Baptist Church of Griffin, GA will be hosting a Bible Conference March 3rd -5th.

All are invited to attend.

For more information contact Pastor Jim Walters. The church phone number is (770) 228-7545 or Pastor's phone (770) 412-1575.

The Grace Baptist Church, Fairmount, GA is in need of a sound Sovereign Grace Baptist pastor.

Their former pastor of 35 years recently went home to be with the Lord.

Any interested elder should call Jack Gregory at (770) 796-2354.

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Death and the Hereafter

by Milburn Cockrell

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

What is the "one baptism" spoken of in Ephesians 4:5? -Tennessee

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Ephesians 4:3-6 states: **"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all who is above all, and through all, and in you all."**

The one baptism referred to in this passage has reference to the one and only kind of baptism that is associated with the **"faith which was once delivered unto the saints"** (Jude 3). This is the very same kind of baptism that Jesus received at the hands of God's appointed messenger, John the Baptist (Matt. 3:13-17) as He began His earthly ministry. The Scriptures make it clear that those who reject John's baptism reject the counsel and authority of God: **"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him"** (Luke 7:30). It is the same kind of baptism that Jesus commanded His kind of church to perform once a believer publicly professed his faith and allegiance to Christ as part of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

In light of the above statements it is obvious that the **"one baptism"** as revealed in Scripture is a weighty matter. I believe that the **"one baptism"** has four distinct requirements, all of which are necessary to constitute the only kind of Scriptural baptism. First, baptism must be administered by the **Proper Authority**, namely a New Testament Baptist Church duly organized and authorized for the purpose of carrying out the Great Commission. Second, baptism must be administered by the **Proper Mode**, entire immersion of the believer in water, as opposed to sprinkling and pouring. Third, baptism must be administered upon a **Proper Subject**, namely a believer who has professed personal saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Fourth, baptism must be administered for the **Proper Reason**, as a symbol of his faith in Christ with no saving qualities whatsoever attached or implied to the act of immersion.

The **"one baptism"** as described above is the only one that New Testament Baptist churches are to recognize as valid

and scriptural. Any so-called baptism that does not meet all the scriptural requirements listed above must of necessity be considered unscriptural, invalid, and alien. All false baptisms administered by improper authorities must be rejected by true Baptist churches in order to remain as faithful custodians of the ordinances. This is precisely the reason why Baptists in former ages were called Anabaptists, because they re-baptized all who came into their fellowship and by so doing declared that no other churches had the scriptural authority to baptize. Simply put, the **"one baptism"** may be defined as Baptist baptism.

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"One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph 4:5). This is a reference to water baptism. As far as I can tell, every place in Scripture where some form of the word 'baptism' appears, it refers to water baptism, unless otherwise noted specifically in the context. Luke 3:16 is a good example of where different kinds of baptisms are named and clearly identified, **"John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."**

According to the Scriptures, water baptism is into Christ **"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"** (Gal. 3:27). It publicly marks the entry of a new believer into Christ and into His body (I Cor. 12:13) by symbolizing the believer's union with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. **"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"** (Rom. 6:3-4). Baptism, therefore, represents the believer's death to the bondage of sin, and new, resurrection life in Jesus Christ.

Baptism is similar to the Red Sea crossing of Israel. There God's people, who were in bondage to Pharaoh and

could not free themselves, were redeemed and made free by God. They were baptized in the Red Sea and came out the other side into a new life as the people of God. The people were identified with Moses, while Pharaoh and his army were destroyed. Paul makes this connection in I Corinthians 10:1-2, **"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."** Likewise, in Christ, we are freed from the dominion and power of sin and live new lives as His redeemed people. Romans 6:5-8 goes on to say, **"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."**

All this and more is what the **"one baptism"** of Ephesians 4:5 represents. In a nutshell, it is the way believers show allegiance to Christ, being identified with Him, as they follow Him in the obedience of faith.

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"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:1-6).

Ephesians, like most of Paul's letters to the churches, is divided into two parts, doctrinal and practical. That is to say, he gives us the doctrinal information, then he applies it to our lives and the particular situation that the letter needs to address.

In the preceding chapter Paul had concluded his doctrinal section with the mystery of the church and the union

of both Jew and Gentile believers. The church is special! These Ephesian, Gentile believers were the recipients of a blessing that no Gentile had ever had before, even though there were Gentile believers in the Old Covenant. It is this blessing that Paul points back to with the **'therefore'** of verse 1.

A part of the reasoning involved is the unity of the church. Oh, how many have gone astray here because they can only see some mystical, invisible body in Paul's references in chapter 3. But the series of 'one's' in verses 4-6, if looked at logically, militate against any such entity. There is a unity here that militates against a mingling of the diverse doctrines and practices that mark modern 'Christendom', and could never be in the Lord's bride – the true church.

Paul is addressing a particular local church. They are not an assembly of diverse believers! There is one body, one Spirit (commentators differ whether this is the Holy Spirit or the uniting spirit in the church), one calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God.

Context demands that this 'one baptism' be the properly administered 'water' baptism that each right member of the church had received. As Paul emphasizes **"one"** in this passage we read **"only one."**

As in 'other gods' (cf. 1 Cor. 8:5), which are *not* God, there are other 'baptisms' which are *not* baptisms, but rather the copy-cat attempts of those who, rebelling against scriptural baptism, seek a more worldly convenient way.

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There are two types of baptisms spoken of in Scripture. This question is posed to find out which one this is talking about.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a one time occurrence. It occurred on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when the church, as a body, was baptized in the Spirit. During the first century, members of various churches exhibited the gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, it was all linked back to this specific one time baptizing on the Day of Pentecost. Since this baptism occurred only once, involved only the original church (the church at Jerusalem) and it was a one time occurrence never to happen again, we do not believe this is the baptism referred to in Ephesians 4:5.

The baptism of believers in water by the church is a commandment for our age (Matt. 28:19). All of the Lord's churches are commanded to baptize new converts

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Forum #2

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by Jesus Christ in the Great Commission. All new converts are commanded to be baptized by one of the Lord's churches. This is both the responsibility of the church and the convert. Considering that the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred only once and will never be repeated and baptism in water has been a commandment throughout the church age, the **"one baptism"** in Ephesians 4:5 speaks of water baptism.

It should be noted that this **"one baptism"** is only valid when authorized by the Lord's churches. That is, only the church in Jerusalem was originally commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to spread the Gospel and baptize. That church authoritatively passed the Great Commission on to the churches which were established by her missionary efforts. Men do not have any authority from the Lord. All authority was given to the Lord's churches at the Commission. There is no valid baptism where it is not directly linked back to the Jerusalem church. That is, churches established by men and not by those commissioned by the Lord to evangelize are not the Lord's churches. Baptisms performed by these men-made congregations are not Scriptural baptisms and are not recognized by Heaven and shouldn't be recognized by the Lord's churches.

The **"one baptism"** of today is the baptism of new converts in water by a duly authorized and organized New Testament Baptist church.

TODD BRYANT



Hard of Hearing

(Continued from page 269) ♦

Isaiah reads clearly as translated in the KJV, **"Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."** The meaning is obvious to the reader who will not try to explain away the obvious because it doesn't sit well with that which passes for evangelism today.

Jesus quotes from the Septuagint which uses the exact word for **"is waxed (gross)"**. The word is: a) definite action at a point of time in the past; and b) *passive*, which means the heart *received* the action.

This is the "soil" on which the seed fell but was quickly snatched away. This is the "soil" that refuses to listen to the gospel message or read a gospel tract. This is the "soil" that deletes and militates against the preaching of the gospel.

Then this is the "soil" that quickly, **"with joy receiveth it;"** but as soon as it appears there is not always ease and

comfort; that there must be a turning away from – not just the sinful habits he once had, but from the wrong religion that he had – turns away and leaves the gospel. Many, far too many, of these cling to that "decision for Christ," thinking themselves saved because of that "wrong religion they once had," even though they neither worship nor practice the "religion of born again Christians."

Equally confusing, and spiritually dangerous to both themselves and the world; many try to practice a semblance of Christian living and service, blindly (or perhaps willingly) ignoring the fact that they are neither able nor qualified to be God's servants, at least in the capacity they "proudly" wish to serve. They fall into the category that Paul spoke of in 1 Tim 1:7, **"Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."**

Then thirdly, this is the soil where the "seed" (word) is heard and received, but not received in faith and true conversion. Therefore, not trusting the Lord, and/or not being *obedient* to the Lord, **"the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful."**

"I can't attend worship Sunday because I have to work Sunday." There *are* some jobs that justly require that a man work on the Lord's Day, but we suggest that most of the time when this excuse is used, that work could easily be scheduled otherwise.

"I can't attend worship Sunday because I have this other activity (sometimes disguised as a supposedly Christian service) that I can't make if I go to worship." Matthew 10:37, **"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."**

"I can't attend worship Sunday because I'm sick." But we notice that while they were too sick to go to worship at 11 AM, they *weren't* too sick to make that worldly activity at noon.

"I can't attend worship Sunday because I can't afford the gas." But we notice they can afford to run to town for errands that might better have been during a regular business day – and even though sometimes someone has given them gas money so they *could* go the worship.

But, PRAISE THE LORD, there is that fourth soil where the seed (word) produces good fruit. You can *see* this fruit! You can see it as the church gathers for worship. You can see it as the true and solid believers gather to where the Word of God is properly and well taught. You can see this fruit as these growing, producing believers slowly and steadily live a life that is more and more separated from the world, and its ways and entertainments. **"Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of**

you" (1 Pet. 4:4).

We've saved this one for last because so many of the evidences mentioned above can be, and are, mimicked by pseudo believers.

You can see this fruit as these believers regularly, consistently, and continually gather for worship. They are not "fly by night" temporary worshipers who flit from church to church, wherever the greatest attraction is that particular week.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:19).



THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

STUDY: UP TO 10 MILLION FEMALE FETUSES ABORTED

NEW DELHI--Up to 10 million female fetuses may have been aborted in India over the past two decades after prenatal gender checks, according to a study published in a leading British medical journal.

In a country where many regard daughters as a liability, researchers found second children were less likely to be girls if the firstborn child was a girl. They also found the deficit in the number of girls born as a second child was more than twice as great among educated mothers than among illiterate ones.

Daughters traditionally belong to future husbands' families in India, which maintains the custom of dowry.

According to the report published in the Lancet today, the researchers studied data on female fertility from a continuing Indian national survey, analyzing information on 133,738 births.

Based on the natural gender ratio from other countries, they estimated that 13.6 million to 13.8 million girls should have been born in 1997 in India. However, 13.1 million were reported, the study said.

"We conservatively estimate that prenatal sex determination and selective abortion accounts for 0.5 million missing girls yearly," the study said.

"If this practice has been common for most of the past two decades since access to ultrasound became widespread, then a figure of 10 million missing female births would not be unreasonable," it said. (*Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*, 1-9-06).

MAN GRANTED NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

A man's holiday spirits soared to celestial heights when a judge gave him permission to change his name to Jesus Christ.

Jose Luis Espinal said he was grateful after the judge approved the change, effective immediately.

Espinal, 42, of Manhattan, said he was moved to seek the name change about a year ago when it dawned on him that "I am the person that is that name."

As long as a person with the same name does not object, Manhattan Civil Court Judge Diane Lebedeff said, such changes are typically granted. (*Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*, 12-26-05).

HOUSEHOLD WEALTH HIGHEST IN U.S. HISTORY

You probably wouldn't judge someone's personal finances without looking at his assets, but that hasn't stopped many in the mainstream media from wringing their hands over the average American household's debt while ignoring its rapidly growing net worth.

The Federal Reserve recently released data showing that the cumulative net worth of American households (household assets minus liabilities) is \$51 trillion, the highest in U.S. history. Since the 2003 tax cut (which included cuts in the income, dividend and capital-gain's rates) net worth has increased 16%. It's also roughly 27% higher than it was in 1998, in the middle of the bubble.

In other words, American households may be borrowing more than they used to, but they're also acquiring more assets than liabilities. (*Human Events*, 1-9-06).

FAITH CUTS INMATE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN A STUDY OF MISSISSIPPI PRISONERS

Religion can reduce the incidence of anti-social behavior in prison, an independent study of Mississippi inmates concludes, making faith-based programs an attractive alternative to expensive correctional treatment.

"Religiosity"--believing in a higher power, attending worship services regularly and participating in faith-based prison programs--directly reduces inmate arguments, and thereby the fights that typically follow,

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according to the study published in December in the Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion.

Studies have shown that treatment programs focusing on literacy, general equivalency diplomas and college training, and recovery from substance abuse are promising, but are very expensive, compared with faith-based programs, said the study's lead author, Kent R. Kerley, professor of criminal justice at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The study was conducted at Mississippi State Penitentiary in Parchman, Miss.---one of the largest prisons in the United States, with 5,500 inmates---but did not address the effect religion has on inmates after they are released.

The study found that 74 percent of inmates who do not believe in a higher power engage in at least one fight a month versus 53 percent of inmates who do believe. It also found that inmates who believe God's law determines right and wrong were 58 percent less likely to fight at least once a month.

An official in Florida, the only state that has prisons devoted to faith-based guidelines, said signs of better behavior at two such institutions led to the opening of a third prison.

"It appears we have less discipline reports, and those we have usually are nonviolent, rather than violent. So, we are seeing better conduct in these [faith-based] prisons," said Franchatta Barber, deputy assistant secretary of Institutions and Programs for the Florida Department of Corrections.

Nashville, Tenn.-based Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the largest private prison company in the United States, offers religious programs at the 67 jails and prisons it operates in 29 states.

"You have to start with changes while inmates are still in prison, before you can expect changes when they get out," said Chantel Gurney, a CCA spokeswoman.

As for religiosity, 94 percent of the respondents in the study said they believed in a higher power, 77 percent said right or wrong should be based on God's laws, and 42 percent reported having a conversion experience in their lives. (*The Washington Times*, 1-1-06).

MILITARY CHAPLAINS ARE TOLD TO LEAVE JESUS OUT OF THEIR PRAYERS

To pray---or not to pray---in Jesus' name is the question plaguing an increasing number of U.S. military chaplains. . . . Hoping to persuade President Bush to issue an executive order allowing military chaplains to pray according to their individual faith traditions, the American Center for Law and Justice has gathered 173,000 signatures on a petition seeking an executive order.

Seventy-three members of Congress have joined the request, saying in an Oct. 25 letter to the president, "In all branches of the

military, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Christian chaplains to use the name of Jesus when praying."

About 80 percent of U.S. troops are Christian, the legislators wrote, adding that military "censorship" of chaplains' prayers disenfranchises "hundreds of thousands of Christian soldiers in the military who look to their chaplains for comfort, inspiration and support."

Official military policy allows any sort of prayer, but Lt. Klingenschmitt says that in reality, evangelical Protestant prayers are censored. He cites his training at the Navy Chaplains School in Newport, R.I., where "they have clipboards and evaluators who evaluate your prayers, and they praise you if you pray just to God," he said, "But if you pray in Jesus' name, they counsel you."

Muslim, Jewish and Roman Catholic chaplains are likewise told not to pray in the name of Allah, in Hebrew or in the name of the Trinity, he added. . . .

The lieutenant is not alone in fighting to pray to Jesus. The Navy is facing two lawsuits, filed in 1999 and 2000, by 50 Christian chaplains, saying the Navy discriminates against evangelical and Pentecostal clerics.

Mr. Baugham said the 350 chaplains he oversees are concerned about a new set of guidelines issued in August after complaints about Christian evangelism at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. The Air Force guidelines allow "a brief, nonsectarian prayer" during military ceremonies "to add a heightened sense of seriousness or solemnity, not to advance specific religious beliefs."

"So, to what deity do you address your prayer to?" Mr. Baugham asked. "No one knows. And who gets to write the prayers? Once the government becomes the approving authority, the poor chaplain is forced to be an agent of the state."

Mr. Baugham said he had "just got a call from an Army chaplain in Iraq who says he'd be hammered if he used Jesus' name. Chaplains are scared to death. They must clear their prayers with their commanders, they can mention Jesus' name at chapel services, but not outside that context." (*The Washington Times*, 12-26-05 to 1-1-06).

GOVERNMENT URGED TO END ABSTINENCE-ONLY SEX EDUCATION

Abstinence-only education is a flawed policy that should be abandoned, a trade association for teen health providers says in a paper published last week.

"Although abstinence is often presented as the moral choice for teenagers, the current federal approach to abstinence-only funding raises serious ethical and human rights concerns," the Society for Adolescent Medicine said in its Journal of Adolescent Health.

People have a "basic human right" to complete sexual health information, the paper said.

However, it said, abstinence-only programs don't teach teens about contraception and they discriminate against homosexual youth

by teaching them that sex should be saved until marriage.

Abstinence-only programs "should be abandoned" and its funding reassigned to programs that offer "comprehensive, medically accurate sexuality education," concluded the paper, which was endorsed by the American College Health Association.

Leslee Unruh, president of the National Abstinence Clearinghouse in Sioux Falls, S.D., scoffed at the paper as "the same-old, same-old."

"All the data is there: If you abstain from sex until marriage, you're going to have better outcomes in life, physically, emotionally and financially," Mrs. Unruh said.

What's "ludicrous," she added, is thinking that teenagers can have responsible sex.

Even if they don't get pregnant or get a disease, it's not going to be good for them emotionally or help them achieve better outcomes in life, she said.

President Bush supports abstinence education, and funding for the approach has more than doubled during his administration. Federal funding for abstinence education in fiscal 2006 is expected to increase again, albeit modestly, to \$177 million.

However, the Society for Adolescent Medicine and other health trade groups are dismayed by the federal government's abstinence education approach, primarily because of its strict eight-point definition.

With abstinence-only education, "the problem is not the 'abstinence,' the problem is the 'only,'" said Dr. John Santelli, a health professional at Columbia University and lead author of the paper.

The eight-point definition, created by Congress in the 1996 welfare law, dictates that abstinence education must teach abstinence as the "expected standard" for all school-age children and monogamous marriage as the "expected standard of human sexual activity."

The rules are so strict that federal abstinence grantees cannot teach about "safer sex," even with their own nonfederal funds, Dr. Santelli and his colleagues wrote.

Sexual abstinence is a healthy choice for teens, they wrote, but "few Americans remain abstinent until marriage" and abstinence-only education doesn't offer much to sexually active or homosexual teens. Making abstinence-only messages the sole option for teens is "flawed from scientific and medical ethics viewpoints." (*The Washington Times*, 01/9-15/06).

IN ALABAMA, CREATION BEATS EVOLUTION

Roughly seven out of 10 respondents to a Mobile Register-University of South Alabama survey said creationism and intelligent design should be taught in public school science classes. Fewer than half think evolution warrants the same treatment. Backing for creationism is far higher in the state than the country as a whole. In a recent national survey by the Pew Research Center, a Washington, D.C. polling organization, only 42 percent of respondents signaled support for creationism, compared with 48 percent

who accept evolution. (*Western Recorder*, 12-13-05).

IMPARTIAL PROOF: MAJOR NEWS OUTLETS LEAN LEFT

You've always known that the CBS Evening News and New York *Times* are to the left of mainstream America, but now two college professors have proved it.

"A Measure of Media Bias," by Tim Groseclose of UCLA and Jeffrey Milyo of the University of Missouri published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, demonstrates that 18 of 20 major media outlets studied are to the left of the average American voter.

Groseclose and Milyo developed an impartial way to calculate the liberalness of news outlets by giving them the equivalent of the ratings that the liberal Americans for Democratic Action gives to members of Congress. They did this by counting the number of times a member of Congress uncritically cited a think tank or interest group---such as the ACLU, Sierra Club, NRA or Heritage Foundation---on the floor of Congress. They then counted the number of times media outlets cited the same groups in news stories. News outlets whose pattern of citations matched the pattern of citations of congressmen with a certain ADA score were given the same ADA score.

Between 1947 and 1999, the professors discovered, the mean ADA score for members of Congress was 50.1%, which they assumed was the score of the average voter. It turns out that only two news outlets studied---the *Washington Times* and "Fox News' Special Report with Brit Hume"---managed to score less than 50.1% and thus were to the right of the average voter.

Readers may be surprised to see that the *Wall Street Journal* ranked as the most liberal news outlet of all. But that is because the analysis looked strictly at news stories---where the *Journal* has historically been liberal---not at editorials or opinion pieces, where it is decidedly conservative. (*Human Events*, 1-9-06).

SUPREME COURT DODGES MAJOR ABORTION RULING

(EP)—It was a rare unanimous ruling on an abortion case. The only problem with the Supreme Court's Jan. 18 decision in a New Hampshire case was that both sides say it didn't really decide anything.

In an opinion written by retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the Supreme Court affirmed the principle of parental notification for minors, but also said that some exceptions should be made. An appeals court must now reconsider the law, which requires that a parent be informed 48 hours before a minor child has an abortion but makes no exception for a medical emergency that threatens the youth's health.

The court had been asked to consider whether the 2003 law put an "undue burden" on a woman in choosing to end a pregnancy. O'Connor is an architect of the undue burden standard, and was the deciding vote in the last

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abortion case five years ago, when the justices ruled that a Nebraska law banning a type of late-term abortion was too burdensome. That law did not have an exception to protect the mother's health.

Instead, justices did not deal directly with that question.

The relatively brief 10-page opinion was claimed as a victory by both sides, which some say means that the United States may be headed for an era where abortion remains legal, but has significant restrictions placed on it.

The case returns to the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston.

SUPREME COURT RULING AFFIRMS ASSISTED SUICIDE LAW

(EP)--After more than a decade of legal battles over assisted *suicide*, a Supreme Court ruling affirmed that Oregon has the authority to regulate medical treatment of the terminally ill.

The 6-3 ruling on Jan. 17 came down to a states' rights issue, in which conservatives normally side with the state, and liberals with the federal authority. In this case, however, the roles were reversed, and the court said the Bush administration improperly threatened to use a federal drug law against Oregon doctors who prescribe lethal doses of medicine to dying patients who request it.

The ruling could have a significant impact on other states. At least six other states have proposed, or are considering, some form of an assisted *suicide* law, with bills currently in the legislatures of California and Vermont.

The Oregon law was passed by initiative in 1994 and affirmed by an even larger majority of voters in 1997, within weeks of another Supreme Court ruling in a Washington state case that also backed states as the final authority for regulating medical practice.

Dissenting were Chief Justice John Roberts and Associated Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia, claiming that federal officials do have the power to regulate prescription drugs. In his 25-page dissent, Scalia wrote, "If the term 'legitimate medical purpose' has any meaning, it surely excludes the prescription of drugs to produce death." The head of the Christian Medical & Dental Association, Dr. David Stevens, released a statement saying that doctors now have "a license to kill."

COURT REINSTATES CHALLENGE TO BUSH'S FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE

(EP)--A group can sue the federal government over claims that President Bush's faith-based initiative is an unconstitutional endorsement of religion, a federal appeals court ruled. A three-judge panel of the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals on Jan. 13 reinstated the lawsuit brought by the Freedom From Religion Foundation. The group claims Bush's program, which helps religious organizations get government

funding to provide social services, violates the separation of church and state. "Bush says this is constitutional, but it's never been tried by the courts. So we're pleased," Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-president of the foundation, said Saturday. Bush sidestepped Congress by issuing executive orders to create the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and similar centers in 10 federal agencies during his first term. He said the goal was to help religious and community groups compete for federal funding to fight poverty, substance abuse and other social problems. The Madison-based foundation filed suit against the administration in 2004. A federal district judge dismissed the case, ruling that taxpayers have no standing to challenge funding appropriations made by the executive branch, only those earmarked for specific purposes by Congress. But the appeals panel, based in Chicago, said taxpayers can challenge executive-branch programs that allegedly promote religion using taxpayer funds. George Washington University law professor Ira C. Lupu said the case is the broadest national challenge to Bush's initiative, but the group faces an uphill battle proving it is unconstitutional. Messages left at the White House's faith-based office and the U.S. Attorney's office in Madison were not immediately returned Saturday. The government could ask the full appeals court to rehear the case or appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS

(EP)--Tens of thousands of women marched through Milan to keep Italy's liberal abortion law intact while gays rallied in Rome to push for legal recognition for homosexual couples as both issues heated up in the campaign for the premiership. The Vatican and ministers in Premier Silvio Berlusconi's conservative government were scathing in denouncing the Jan. 14 rallies. "These demonstrators are really nauseating," Reforms Minister Roberto Calderoli was quoted as saying by the Italian news agency ANSA. "Family is a serious thing, based on love between a man and a woman." Milan police estimated that some 50,000 people joined in the abortion march, and there were about 1000 in the homosexual march.

(EP)--In West Africa, First Lady Laura Bush said Jan. 15 that criticism of the President's AIDS-fighting abstinence policy doesn't take into account the facts, The Washington Times reported. "I'm always a little bit irritated when I hear the criticism of abstinence, because abstinence is absolutely 100 percent effective in eradicating a sexually transmitted disease," she said. "In a part of the world where one in three people have a sexually transmitted deadly disease, you have to talk about abstinence, you really have to." "In many countries where girls feel obligated to comply with the wishes of men," she said, "girls need to know that abstinence is a choice."-CitizenLink

POPE HOPES FOR CONTINUED DIALOGUE AMONG CHRISTIANS

(EP)--Pope Benedict XVI said on Jan. 7 that he hoped Christians could surmount the "tragic divisions" that arose in the 16th century following the rise of Protestantism. The pontiff's remarks were directed to representatives of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, who Benedict received in an audience. He noted that representatives from the group had attended the funeral of Pope John Paul II in April and, days later, Benedict's own inauguration. "In these signs of mutual respect and friendship I am pleased to see a providential fruit of the fraternal dialogue and cooperation undertaken in the past four decades, and a token of sure hope for the future," said Benedict, who has made uniting all Christians a priority of his pontificate. "I pray that our meeting today itself will bear fruit in a renewed commitment to work for the unity of all Christians," the pope added. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches, based in Geneva, describes itself as a fellowship of 75 million Reformed Christians in 218 churches -- including Presbyterian -- in 107 countries, with roots in the 16th-century Reformation led by John Calvin and others, according to its Web site.

"... THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS ..." (Rev. 17:5).

NATIONAL BRIEFS

(EP)--A school board approved a curriculum Dec. 20 for an elective course that uses the Bible as its main textbook, a decision opponents fear invites proselytizing and snubs non-Protestant students. Saying it had overwhelming community support, the Ector County Independent School District voted 4-2 to adopt the curriculum offered by the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools. The National Council curriculum uses the King James Bible as its textbook. The other choice before the school board, offered by the Bible Literacy Project, uses the text "The Bible and Its Influence" and includes broader discussions of other faiths.

(EP)--Massachusetts Secretary of State William Galvin announced Dec. 20 that signed petitions requesting a proposed constitutional amendment to protect traditional marriage and rescind court-imposed same-sex marriage -- met requirements and were officially certified, Boston.com reported. Activists had gathered three times the number of signatures required to make sure that far more than enough would be leftover after the usual challenges. Now the new amendment must receive 50 votes in two successive sessions of the Legislature before being placed on the ballot in the fall of 2008.

(EP)--According to the American Family Association (AFA), only five national advertisers placed ads during NBC's "The Book of Daniel," a two-hour series that premiered Jan. 6. The AFA says those advertisers came under fire from consumers

who found the content disrespectful to people of the Christian faith. Immediately, three of the five companies whose ads placed on the show said they would refrain from future episodes. Chattem (Gold Bond, Icy Hot), Combe Inc. (Just For Men) and H&R Block said they would no longer advertise on the program. Mazda and Burlington Coat Factory have not announced a decision in response to consumer requests that they drop the show. One of the companies told AFA that it got a call as late as last Thursday, saying the ads were for sale at a bargain basement price and guaranteed good ratings. Without knowing the content, the company bought it. Another said it was trying to determine why it appeared on the show without their knowledge. "NBC lost a lot of money on this show that got a dismal 2.7 Nielson rating," said Randy Sharp, director of special projects for AFA. "To mainstream corporate advertisers, this show clearly has leprosy written all over it. The healthy thing to do is avoid it."

(EP)--A letter to Ford Motor Company, signed by 42 groups including Focus on the Family and the American Family Association, asks it to make a commitment to family values and stop supporting homosexual activists -- or otherwise face the possibility of another boycott. "We can not, and will not, sit by as Ford supports an agenda aimed at the destruction of the family. We strongly suggest that Ford remove itself from involvement in the culture war and apply its resources to building the best product possible," the letter states. "This policy would benefit not only Ford, your employees and your dealers, but society as a whole." The American Family Association (AFA) began a boycott of Ford last spring after learning that the company advertised in gay publications. At the request of several Ford dealers, the boycott was suspended for six months while the two sides tried to work out a compromise. In early December of 2005, Ford told AFA it would stop running the ads, but a week later the company flip-flopped.

(EP)--The National Education Association (NEA) gives millions of dollars to liberal political causes that have nothing to do with education, according to an analysis published in early January in The Wall Street Journal. In 2005 the NEA gave \$51,000 to the liberal People for the American Way. The nation's largest teachers union also gave \$15,000 to the Human Rights Campaign, a gay-activist group, and The National Women's Law Center, a pro-abortion feminist group which currently has a petition opposing the nomination of Samuel Alito featured on its Web site, received \$5,000. Shaka Mitchell, associate director for policy at the Center for Education Reform, said the NEA should focus money on education causes. "You've got money going to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation and Amnesty International," she said. "Regardless of what you think about those organizations, they certainly have nothing to do with public schools."



Outlines for Country Preachers by a Country Preacher

Sermon Outlines by Milburn Cockrell

HAPPINESS THROUGH PEACEMAKING Matthew 5:9

The God of the Bible is “**the God of peace**” (Heb. 13:20). Christ is “**the Prince of Peace**” (Isa. 9:6). When He was born the angels welcomed Him by singing: “Peace on earth.” He made peace by the blood of His cross. Those who follow Him must also be peacemakers.

I. WHAT IS PEACE?

- The dictionary says: “Freedom from war or civil strife, freedom from disagreement or quarrels; harmony, concord, an undisturbed state of mind; absence of mental conflict.
- The word “peace” presupposes that sin has brought contention and enmity.
 - Otherwise, there would be no need of peacemakers.
 - Man’s nature is in anarchy to God and his fellow men.
 - Men are in rebellion to God. Some openly---infidels---and some secretly---hypocrites.
 - God is against men (Ps. 7:11). God sends war and death.
- This is not peace at any price (Jas. 3:17).
 - Peace must not be sought at the expense of righteousness (Matt. 5:8-9; Isa. 32:17; Heb. 12:14).
 - This is false peace, unworthy to be called peace at all. It is cowardice.
 - We are not to sacrifice truth, compromise principle, or forsake duty.
 - Christ Himself did not do so (Matt. 10:34).

II. HOW DO YOU BECOME A PEACEMAKER?

- Man by nature is at war with God. He is the enemy of God (Jas. 4:4) and at enmity with God (Rom. 8:7; Isa. 48:22).
- Men must have peace with God before they can be peacemakers among men. Consider our unconverted state (Tit. 3:3).
- Christ made peace between God and the sinner (Isa. 53:5; Col. 1:20; Rom. 5:1).
- Peace of mind and conscience is the legacy of Christ to His disciples (John 14:27; 16:33).
- It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22; Rom. 8:6).
- It is the evidence of being in the spiritual kingdom (Rom. 14:17). Obedience to the laws of the kingdom gives peace (Isa. 48:18; Ps. 119:165).
- This spiritual peace keeps our hearts and minds (Phil. 4:7) and it rules in our hearts (Col. 3:15).
- This state of mind causes us to live peaceable with all men (Rom. 12:18; 14:19).

III. WHAT IS IT TO BE A PEACEMAKER?

- Many of Christ’s disciples expected a fierce, warlike kingdom, but Christ set up a peaceful kingdom.
- The Christian is to prevent contention, strife, and war.
 - He is to use his influence to reconcile opposing parties and to prevent hostilities in all places.
 - Conflicts are wasted energy. Strife wears men out, chills the heart. Discord is the nurse of anger, outrage, pride, revenge, and injustice.
- Being a worker for peace is one of the distinguishing marks of a follower of the Prince of Peace.
- We are to be lovers of concord, promoters of unity, healers of breaches. We are to delight to pour oil on troubled waters, to reconcile those who are estranged, to right wrongs, to preserve ties of friendship.
- The work of the peacemaker requires courage. He must take blows from both sides.
- Such is human nature that offence must need come, but we must not be the originators of it (Ps. 34:14; II Cor. 13:11).
- The places where we are to make peace (Mark 9:50).
 - The home (I Cor. 7:15).
 - The church (I Cor. 14:33; Eph. 4:3).
 - The community (Luke 2:14).
 - We are to pray for national peace (Ps. 122:6; I Tim. 2:1-2).

IV. WHAT BLESSINGS CAN THE PEACEMAKER EXPECT?

- God is the great peacemaker. Peacemakers bear the image of their Father (Luke 6:35).

- Believers are called the children of Abraham.
- Wicked men are called children of Belial.
- Angels and men will confess that the peacemaker is a child of God.
- If peacemakers are blessed, then peacebreakers are cursed.
- Peacemakers are happy now and shall be so hereafter (Prov. 12:20).
 - This life shall have a peaceful end (Ps. 37:37; Isa. 57:2).
 - They shall be acknowledged by God as His sons at the resurrection (Luke 20:35-36). Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.
 - They shall enjoy a peaceful kingdom on earth (Isa. 2:4; 9:6-7).

CONCLUSION.

- Christ was a peacemaker. Those who follow Him must be the same.
- We are commissioned to be ambassadors of peace, bidding sinners throw down the weapons of their warfare and enter into amnesty with God (Rom. 10:15).
- The wicked have no peace. They can only have peace by knowing the Prince of Peace (Job 22:21).

Faith, Or Fidelity

By John Harvey

*‘How full the joy that mutual vows impart,
Daily renew’d in offices of love!
How sweet, when adverse seasons bow the heart,
Friendship’s unaltered sympathies to prove!
But sweeter still---from faithfulness divine,
True to its promise at a countless cost---
To learn how love to God and man combine,
And self in pure fidelity is lost.’*

Faith is a word that has sundry meanings in the New Testament. But the faith which is essential to salvation not only implies belief of the revealed truths of religion, but an implicit hope and confidence in God and an unshaken reliance in Christ. Every Christian is a partaker of the divine nature through faith. “**By grace are ye saved through faith**” (Eph. 2:8); and “**Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Rom. 5:1).

The Christian graces, or fruits of the Spirit, are the results of saving faith. It is the great principle upon which the Christian character is established, and by which it is supported.

The constant exercise of faith is necessary to prevent apostasy and promote our growth in piety. “**Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward**” (Heb. 10:35). It is not only requisite to our own happiness, but also to accomplish the objects we contemplate in endeavoring to extend the empire of truth and righteousness. “**What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them**” (Mark 11:24). Splendid are the triumphs of faith recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. In reviewing these moral exploits, the hearts of the warriors of the cross take fire, and, with renewed zest, they push their contests to a triumphant issue.

The faithfulness of Jehovah is a subject worthy of contemplation, and is profitable to the intelligent Christian student and inspiring to the contrite penitent. Fidelity and love mark his proceedings. But the point we must keep in view here is our faithfulness to God and to each

other. Commentators and other writers tell us that the ‘faith’ here spoken of as a fruit of the Spirit may more properly be rendered fidelity. Paul, in his directions to Titus, exhorts servants to show all good fidelity to their own masters, and adorn the doctrine of God in all things; and it is a disposition the cultivation of which is equally incumbent upon all men, in every station of life, but especially upon those professing godliness. Notice---

I. IN WHAT CHRISTIAN FIDELITY CONSISTS.

Man, as a moral agent, is accountable to his Creator for his conduct, for the manner in which he has employed his talents and improved his privileges. A conviction of such responsibility ought to awaken in his bosom an intense desire and prompt determination to act consistently towards God and men. Christian fidelity consists---

- In the improvement of our talents.* (1) In the improvement of our time. “**To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven**” (Eccl. 3:1). Man is neither a cipher nor an insect; but a thinking, acting, rational, and immortal being; capable of performing deeds which may not only attract the notice and admiration of the wise, but also secure the favor and approbation of God; or, on the other hand, his conduct may be such as to draw down the displeasure of the Almighty, and eventually exclude himself from Heaven. In this life there are duties to perform, and sacrifices to make, dangers to escape, and blessings to secure.

Of the many blessings God hath bestowed upon man, time is undoubtedly one of the most precious and invaluable; and to be regardless of such a treasure, and unmindful of so rich a boon, is the extreme of folly and the climax of infatuation. The apostle Paul, being apprehensive of its importance, exhorts the Ephesians to “**Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil**” (Eph. 5:15-16).

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Whatever imperfections and sins have characterized our conduct, we cannot redeem the past; the past cannot be recalled; time once gone is gone for ever. But through the mercy and forbearance of God we may receive forgiveness for those offences, and be treated as though we had never sinned. **“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins”** (Isa. 43:25).

It is the present and future we are to redeem. On the improvement or neglect of time hangs an eternity of inconceivable happiness or unutterable misery. **“For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”** (Gal. 6:7-8).

Christians are servants to God; therefore, He requires obedience, cheerfulness, and fidelity at their hands. We all have a work to perform of vast magnitude and importance. If we view it in relation to our present and future happiness we shall find that it comprehends all that is momentous in time and in eternity. No difficulties, however great, must discourage, and no trifles must divert our attention from the work God has given us to do.

Men of the world aspire after earthly riches and honors with excessive zeal and unwearied diligence; but when they have obtained their object it is only a short and unsatisfying remuneration. The duties of the Christian are paramount, and require great attention and constant application of body and mind; and he who neglects them is unfaithful to himself as well as to his Lord and Master. The work of religion demands every energy of the soul, and claims our undivided regard. Our life is a given period, a short day, in which we have to accomplish this great work, or be lost for ever. There is no time for slumbering, loitering, or trifling. We must arise and shine, not like the lamps in a sepulcher, but as mountain lights. **“Ye are the lights of the world”** (Phil. 2:15). There are many considerations which should induce us to improve our time, but more especially its brevity and uncertainty. Who can compute the rate of man’s progress through life? **“Remember how short my time is”** (Ps. 89:47). **“Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and growth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth”** (Ps. 90:5-6). The Corinthians were reminded of the brevity of time: **“But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though**

they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away” (I Cor. 7:29-31). To these impressive declarations we may add the prayer of Moses: **“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom”** (Ps. 90:12). Christian fidelity consists---

2. *In a proper appropriation of our abilities.* In the days of the apostles there were **“diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord”** (I Cor. 12:4-5). So there are now diversities of gifts, or talent; but whether the talents entrusted to our care be few or many, they must be used properly, or a fearful doom will be inevitable. The man that hid his talent in the earth was termed a wicked, slothful, and unprofitable servant, and was ordered to be cast into outer darkness, where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 25:30). Talents are not to be buried in the earth, and lost to society, nor are they to be exercised improperly. They are designed for use; and those who improve them in the cause of God will be amply rewarded.

It is to be regretted that much time has been devoted, and great talents have been employed, in the advocacy of those doctrines and principles which are opposed to the religion of the Bible. Others there are comparatively neutral, who urge, as a plea for their conduct, the lack of ability to accomplish anything remarkable in a moral point of view. All such ‘will be judged, not merely for doing wrong, but for neglecting to do right.’ We are stewards; and **“it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful”** (I Cor. 4:2). In the vineyard of Christ there is ample scope for powers of mind. In the erection of a stately building, the wisdom of the architect, the genius of the artisan, and the toil of the laborer are all necessary to complete the edifice. So is wise counsel, scriptural discipline, and zealous effort requisite to promote the prosperity of the church of Christ, and accelerate its glorious consummation. If all the talents and influence possessed by the church were brought to bear upon the world’s conversion, what mighty effects and visible results would be produced. The sphere for personal effort is wide and inviting, and all may be useful in the cause of Christ. Let none say, with Cain, **“Am I my brother’s keeper”** (Gen. 4:9)? The church must be active, faithful, and sensible of the importance of her duty and responsibility.

It is generally acknowledged that exercise is necessary to health and comfort: and equally essential is activity in the church to promote a healthy circulation to the extremities of the spiritual system. When Christ ascended on high, **“He gave some, apostles; and**

some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-12).

3. *Influence* is a talent worthy of remark. Influence is powerful. Man is formed for society, to hold mutual intercourse with his fellow-men. He is not only capable of reflection, but is endowed with the power of speech, whereby he exerts an influence, either good or evil, in the circle of his acquaintance. A wicked, skeptical man carries the contagion of death wherever he goes; he not only ruins himself, but tries to ruin others. The influence he attempts to diffuse is pernicious and destructive to the best feelings of the human heart. It may not have the same effect upon all with whom he associates; but frequently it proves effectual in polluting other minds than his own.

How often are children heard uttering oaths and imprecations---conduct and language which, in many instances, they have acquired at home. The street, the field, the shop, the factory, the gambling-house, the tavern, and the deck or hold of the ship are places where multitudes breathe a pestiferous influence around them. ‘One sinner destroyeth much good.’

But the Christian endeavors to counteract those blighting influences by the diffusion of knowledge and the manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit. His prayers, conversation, efforts, and exemplary conduct are influential. By warning, entreaty, exhortation, writing, and argument, he labors to bring souls to Christ. And who can estimate the amount of good which one devoted Christian is able to accomplish by the right exercise of the abilities and influence he possesses! And if one individual is capable of achieving such great things, what a vast amount of good the church is qualified to confer upon the world by the prayerful and united efforts of her members. Christian fidelity consists---

2. *In unreserved devotedness to God.* There are many and cogent reasons why we should devote our life to His service, as well as numerous examples for our encouragement. Devotedness to God implies a confession of the Saviour’s name before the world. **“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven”** (Matt. 10:32). The sincerity of our religion must be maintained by evidences. There are times when the Christian is tempted to abandon his profession, and forsake the Lord who bought him; when the Bible is rejected; when the profane pour contempt upon religion; when the conduct of its professors is incompatible with the true spirit of the Gospel. And when the tide of persecution is high; although such a state of things is deeply to be deplored,

yet such events furnish no plea for retraction, but constitute an argument or show the necessity of cleaving more fully unto the Lord. Devotedness to God is the best guarantee of Christian stability, the most effectual specific for the soul amidst the toils and perplexities of life. In attention to this duty occasioned a sad breach in the conduct of Peter; unwatchfulness was the cause not only of a physical but a moral separation from Christ. He mingles in improper society; becomes a coward; utters a falsehood; and violates the third commandment. **“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”** (I Cor. 10:12). A mature and devoted Christian is not a reed shaken with the wind; but, like the oak in the forest, unmoved and uninjured by the raging of the storm, he is enabled to exclaim, **“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise”** (Ps. 57:7).

Devotedness to God includes something more than a regular attendance at the means of grace; something more than a mere avowal of Christianity, or a public confession of Christ before the world. It comprehends an entire abandonment of sin, a conformity to the sacred precepts of the Bible, and an uncompromising adherence to truth and duty. It implies an outward and visible union with the church. The church is not like a town corporation, composed principally of affluent men; nor like a railway company, of speculative shareholders. It is not wealth, nor any external trappings that will constitute us real members of the body of Christ; but a renewed nature. Neither is the work of religion a system of speculation, but of reality.

The church is an institution of Divine origin, a recognized association of believers, an evangelical body of witnesses for the Lord of Hosts, influenced by the purest motives, and laboring to promote the highest objects. I speak not of those who identify themselves with the church for ‘loaves and fishes,’ or worldly gain; but of those whose hearts God hath touched, and who are actuated by scriptural principles. It is both a duty and a privilege to be associated with the people of God. We ought to be united in church fellowship with some section of the church, if practicable, or we shall neglect our duty, and forfeit the privileges to which Christian fellowship entitles. Some there are who profess religion, but object to unite with the church; but the question is, are their objections and views in harmony with the Scriptures? Who would prefer crossing a wide and dangerous desert alone, rather than go in a caravan with a company? Would it not be unwise to attempt to cross the ocean in a boat, and alone, in preference to a ship, managed by experienced and skilful hands? In a matter of doubt and

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difficulty, who would choose risking important consequences on his own judgment, rather than secure the opinion and counsel of wiser heads than his own? 'In the multitude of counsel there is safety.' These remarks will apply to those who are unconnected with any religious denomination. The Bible says, **"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up"** (Eccl. 4:9-10). Christian fidelity comprehends---

3. *Delight in our Master's service.* We should cherish a disposition like that of the Saviour, when He undertook the great work of the world's redemption. **"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart"** (Ps. 40:7-8).

He is not a hard master, reaping where He hath not sown, and gathering where He hath not strawed; but a kind Father, who loves His devoted and faithful children. Nothing less than a total surrender of ourselves to God and delight in His service can prove the reality of our conversion and the certainty of our fidelity to our Maker. It is not enough that we call ourselves the servants of God, the followers of Jesus Christ, and members of the household of faith; but diligence and delight must characterize our religious pursuits. **"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart"** (Ps. 37:4). We are to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure; to be watchful and sober that we may be found of Him in peace. There is delight mingled with diligent labour; the service of God is not slavery; there is nothing in it despotic or galling; it is perfect freedom. The demands of our Divine Master are not exorbitant, but reasonable and just, and we should rejoice at the distinguished privilege of being a servant to God; **"Thy testimonies also are my delight"** (Ps. 119:24).

'How happy all Thy servants are!

How great Thy grace to me!

*My life, which Thou hast made Thy care,
Lord, I devote to Thee.'*

Having shown that Christian fidelity consists in the improvement of our talents, in unreserved devotedness to God, and delight in His services; we will now view it in relation to our faithfulness to each other, for the effects of genuine piety are always visible. Faithfulness to each other implies---

1. *Sincere friendship.* A deceptive person, whether a professor of religion or otherwise, is either an object of pity or contempt. We have instances both of deception and sincerity on record.



Jael manifested a friendly spirit toward Sisera; she covered him with a blanket or rug and gave him milk to drink, but when he was 'fast asleep' she took a nail and a hammer, went softly unto him and drove the nail in his temples and fastened it into the ground. 'So he died.' Equally tragical was the conduct of Joab, when he took Abner aside to speak with him peaceably, then stabbed him under the fifth rib---a stroke which occasioned his death. Friends sometimes prove faithless. When Job was in affliction and adversity, he said, **"My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God"** (Job 16:20). Again, **"My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me"** (Job 19:14). **All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I love are turned against me"** (Job 19:19). David complained of similar treatment when he said, **"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me"** (Ps. 41:9). **"For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against**

me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance" (Ps. 55:12-13). And how glaring was the deception of Judas, when he approached the Saviour and said, 'Hail, Master; and kissed Him.'

But there are instances of true friendship on record. When Naomi advised Ruth to return after her sister-in-law to her country and friends, no argument could induce her to do so, for while Orpah wept when they separated, Ruth said to Naomi, **"Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me"** (Ruth 1:17). Hear David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, **"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful. . .How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished"** (II Sam. 1:26-27). Sincere was the respect and friendship which existed between David and Barzillai. While the former was at Mahanaim, whither he had fled because of Absalom,

the latter manifested great kindness to him. David afterwards reciprocated the same benevolent and friendly spirit, and invited the Gileadite to Jerusalem, and promised to supply his temporal wants. Barzillai accompanied him a short distance, but on account of his advanced age, a desire to die in his own city, and be buried by the grave of his father and mother, he turned back after receiving a token of true friendship from David. The King of Israel, in his final charge to Solomon, requested him to show kindness to the sons of Barzillai for the friendship their father manifested towards him. How genuine was the attachment which existed between the prophet of Horeb and the son of Shaphat! Elisha accompanied Elijah to Beth-el, then to Jericho, from thence to Jordan, and then exclaimed, **"As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee"** (II Kings 2:2). After they had crossed Jordan, they went on engaged in conversation until **"there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."** And Elisha cried, **"My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."**

Real friendship is both valuable and desirable. In the present world we are exposed to persecution, temptation, and affliction of body and mind. To have in these seasons a confidential friend, to whom we can relate our experience, and from whom we receive sympathy, tends to ease our minds, and mitigate the burden of the heart. Friendship should be cultivated especially among Christians. A man that hath friends must show himself friendly. 'The friendship of a good man is not only sincere but constant.' **"A friend,"** says Solomon, **"loveth at all times"** (Prov. 17:17). **"A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter"** (Prov. 11:13). In all things we must exhibit those traits which are peculiar to the Christian character, and evidences of the sincerity of our profession. Fidelity to men includes---

2. *Punctuality.* Punctuality is one of the best rules extant, the observance of which is highly commendable both in temporal and spiritual matters. It is said that Sir William Blackstone regarded punctuality as a virtue, and could not think very favorably to any one who was defective in this practice. Inattention to a point of such importance is not only detrimental to a man's character, but often occasions considerable trouble and inconvenience to others. Professors of religion should especially be faithful to their engagements and punctual to their promises. Some are very remiss in their business habits. A person, for example, owes a sum of money, and engages to pay it at a stated period; the time arrives, but

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he cannot meet the demand; he ought, then, unless unavoidably prevented, to meet his creditor in person, and assign his reason for the nonfulfilment of his promise. But instead of doing so many evade their creditors as much as possible; and frequently we hear of some purchasing articles of other tradesmen while 'old scores,' or debts, remain uncanceled elsewhere. If you speak to them on the subject, their reply will probably be, 'I had not the money to pay with, or I should have been as good as my word.' But is it business-like, much less Christian-like, not to acknowledge that inability to the proper person at the appointed time? We fear many are guilty of such conduct, and notwithstanding their high pretensions to sanctify, they need not wonder if their motives and profession should be questioned. The Bible teaches us to be faithful and honorable in all our dealings, and prompt in our attention to spiritual duties. We must be 'diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' **"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay"** (Eccl. 5:4-5). To be faithful to others there must be---

3. *Uprightness of conduct.* Honesty, justice, and integrity are included in the Christian's rule of conduct; the manifestation of which is especially important in his intercourse and dealings with others; for a habitual violation of such principles is inconsistent with a profession of godliness, and incurs the displeasure of God. **"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren"** (Prov. 6:16-19).

There are many religious people engaged in commercial pursuits and traffic, buying, selling, and speculating; but in such avocations of life there must be an inflexible adherence to the golden rule, **"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"** (Matt. 7:12). There is much duplicity and imposition practiced at the present day by persons in business. Articles of sale are frequently represented as genuine, cheap, and of superior quality, when they are actually adulterated, dear, and very inferior commodities. Thus the seller takes advantage of the ignorance of his customer. Such conduct is dishonorable and sinful. But a faithful and conscientious Christian views with

the utmost abhorrence whatever is mean, cunning, and deceptive in trade; he treats all with whom he transacts business with due respect and fidelity; for the upright in heart have respect to their words and actions, and are free from those accusations of conscience usually associated with acts of dishonesty; rise superior to selfish motives, maintain their integrity, and are among those to whom the **"LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly"** (Ps. 84:11).

Sincere friendship, a punctual observance of every promise and engagement, and upright conduct, are among the tests and evidences of our fidelity to God and man. Notice---

II. THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH SHOULD EXCITE US TO THE CULTIVATION OF CHRISTIAN FIDELITY.

1. *It is essential to establish our moral character.* The value of Christian fidelity is so well authenticated, and so generally acknowledged, that arguments are unnecessary to commend it; and its importance is so frequently confirmed in the pleasing results manifested in the conduct of devout and earnest Christians that all men should be influenced by so noble a principle. As a tree is known by its fruits, so we form our estimate of characters according to the conduct which is manifested. The elements of character, good or bad, are manifest in the actions of men. In past ages, tests of fidelity between man and man have consisted of some bodily action, in conjunction with a prescribed form of words. It is to be feared many often assume a devotional attitude, and attend to outward forms and ceremonies, who are nevertheless destitute of vital religion.

But our moral character is not established by the mere recitation of some selected sentences, some singular position or action of the body, but by the purity of the heart and the unimpeachable tenor of the life. Religion is a work of the heart, and must influence our conduct.

Do you ask, then, what are the criteria by which our moral character is determined? The answer is, **"To the law and to the testimony"** (Isa. 8:20). This is the infallible standard of appeal by which the quality of an action may be determined. The Bible affirms what we must believe, enjoins what we must practice, and shows what is required at our hands. If we fail to fulfill its requirements, to establish our moral character will be a vain attempt; it must be earned by conforming to its precepts and imitating the example of Christ. In proportion as we resemble Him in disposition will be manifest the existence and degree of our spiritual state. Another consideration which should excite us to fidelity is---

2. *The impetus which it gives to religion.*

The spread and triumph of religion in the world is a desideratum, an object well worthy the attention and united efforts of the church. But the supineness, hypocrisy, and immorality of some who have belonged, professedly, to the Christian church, have tended to retard the progress of truth. A refractory and disaffected member may do considerable harm, both in and out of the church. One Achan in the camp, or one traitor at the table of the Lord, is calculated to injure the Savior's cause. We cannot further the interests of religion as we ought, and as God requires, unless we are faithful to our vows and resolutions, and sincere and earnest in our prayers and performances. But when there is a becoming carriage, and a corresponding exemplification of the spirit and truth of religion, others are constrained to admire the influence which produces such delightful results, and imparts to its possessors such solid and permanent happiness. A consistent life furnishes an irresistible argument in favor of Christianity, and promotes the glory of the Divine Redeemer. **"Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"** (Eph. 4:1-3). Another consideration is---

3. *The certainty that every act of dissimulation and unfaithfulness will be detected.* We possess not the attribute of omniscience; and, therefore, it is not difficult to deceive each other. However great may be our powers of discrimination, and extensive our knowledge, many sins may lie buried in the depths of the heart which we are unable to detect or discover, although we maintain a familiar acquaintance with one another. But Jehovah is omniscient; and, therefore, acquainted with our thoughts, words, and actions; for nothing can escape His notice. The unwelcome guest who entered the room at the marriage feast was detected, and the enquiry rung in his ears, **"Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment"** (Matt. 12:12) But he made no reply; he could not justify his conduct; he had nothing to say in his defense; **"he was speechless"** (Matt. 12:12). Observe the command, and mark the destiny to which he was consigned! **"Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"** (Matt. 22:13). Every hypocrite and every unfaithful servant will be detected, exposed, and rewarded according to his deeds. How important that ministers of the Gospel should be sincere and earnest in the sermons they preach, lest any souls should be lost through their unfaithfulness. Fidelity to the truth they proclaim may expose them to persecution and ridicule, but necessity

is laid upon them, and woe unto them if they shun to declare the whole counsel of God.

These are not days for ministers to slumber at their posts, nor the soldiers of Christ to recline on their swords, when so many millions of unpardoned sinners are on their way to the judgment-seat of Christ. There must be decisive action and gigantic efforts to awake the slumbering, to arouse the lukewarm, and alarm the careless. Another consideration is---

4. *The reward connected with Christian fidelity.* If faithfulness in secondary matters secures the confidence and respect of our fellow-men, we may reasonably conclude that fidelity to our Maker will render us lovely in His sight, and obtain His approbation.

'For saints are lovely in His sight, He views His children with delight; He sees their hope, He knows their fear, And looks and loves His image there.'

The chief reward of the faithful is on high. **"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"** (Rev. 2:10). Here we see the recompense is coupled with patient persevering fidelity; the connection between the one and the other is easily traced, the means and the end are inseparably associated. **"So run, that ye may obtain"** (I Cor. 9:24). We must "hold on our way" (Job 17:9), and **"endure unto the end"** (Matt. 24:13), so that we may "finish our course with joy" (Acts 20:24). Warriors are applauded and honored when they are victorious in battle, but the richest earthly rewards are insignificant and fleeting in their duration when compared with those of Heaven. So are the people of God honored and rewarded when they have triumphed over the last enemy. **"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"** (Matt. 25:21). This is the highest dignity to which we can be elevated; here is the unfading diadem, and joys pure, full, and endless. A throne, a crown of life, an incorruptible inheritance, an everlasting kingdom, are promised to the faithful. Joshua, at the close of a long and eventful life, reminded all Israel of the faithfulness of their Deliverer and Guide. **"Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof"** (Joshua 23:14). In conclusion, I remark---

1. *That all have an important work to perform.* Salvation to secure, Hell to escape, a God to glorify, and Heaven to gain. You who are wasting your time, and neglecting the great salvation purchased by the death and mediation of Jesus Christ, remember how awful is your condition, and how great the danger to

♦ (Continued on page 279)

Faith, Or Fidelity

(Continued from page 278) ♦

which you are exposed; and will you, and dare you trifle away your precious time, and bury or misapply your talents, and then plunge into the lake of fire, which is the doom of all the unfaithful? Pause in your unhappy career, be persuaded to repent and believe the Gospel 'now, while it is called to-day' (Heb. 3:13).

2. *Servants of Christ, be faithful.* **"Occupy till I come"** (Luke 19:13), said the Saviour; live in expectation of His return, that you may be found of Him in peace, having on the wedding garment. Ministers, teachers, leaders, masters, servants, parents, children, be faithful. Jehovah demands it, the Scriptures inculcate it, the Saviour urges it, ministers proclaim it, the church requires it, the world needs it. The whirl of time, the convulsions of society, our responsibility and immortality urge us to be faithful. The rejoicings of the blest and the wailings of the damned cry, Be faithful. Though the world may frown upon you, and friends desert you; when temptations assail you, and want oppresses you, be faithful. In health, when afflicted, when the chill of death creeps upon you and eternity is near, be faithful; then may you exclaim, **"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation"** (Luke 2:29-30).

*'Should worlds conspire to drive me thence,
Moveless and firm this heart should lie;
Resolved---for that's my last defense---
If I must perish, there to die.'*



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 12-1-2005 to 12-31-2005

Beginning Balance	\$5,014.33
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	1,100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	250.00
.....	1,750.00
TOTAL	6,764.33
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	400.00
Postage	14.05
Dividing check	125.00
Dividing check	125.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	539.05
.....	\$6,225.28
Interest	+1.11
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,226.39

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,011.52
RECEIPTS:	
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	1,000.00
TOTAL	2,011.52
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	200.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,811.52

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Yearly Report 1-1-2005 to 12-31-2005

Beginning Balance	\$1,328.93
RECEIPTS:	
.....	12,150.00
.....	13,478.93
Interest Earned	+5.86

TOTAL	13,484.79
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	4,881.25
Tapes	66.00
Postage	151.15
Dividing check	1,800.00
Tape Production	350.00
Bank Service Charge	10.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$7,258.40
.....	6,226.39
Less Corbin, KY fund	-1,811.52
ENDING BALANCE	\$4,414.87

CORBIN, KENTUCKY YEARLY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,811.52
RECEIPTS:	
TOTAL	2,000.00
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	2,000.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,811.52

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 12-1-2005 to 12-31-2005

Beginning Balance	\$1,537.04
RECEIPTS:	
A. W. Richardson, Cedarville, WV	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	59.55
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	1,100.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	250.00
Carol Willett, Pflugerville, TX	30.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL	100.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tamps, FL	100.00
Charles Smith, Louisville, KY	11.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME	200.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	70.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	200.00
Joe Jurzec, Richmond, IL	45.00
Landmark B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	50.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	200.00
Leston Farrell, Des Allemands, LA	225.00
Lord's C. Beverly Hills, Goose Creek, SC	200.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	5,000.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	200.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testamant B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA	75.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	50.00
Subscriptions	612.00
Dividing Checks	154.00
Anon	755.00
Sub Total	\$11,341.55
TOTAL	\$12,818.59
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	634.69
Postage	1,091.03
Wages	2,600.00
FICA	198.91
PO Box Rent	66.00
Total Expenditures	4,590.63
.....	8,287.96
Bank Charges	-17.34
ENDING BALANCE	\$8,270.62

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER YEARLY Financial Report 1-1-2005 to 12-31-2005

Beginning Balance	\$2,040.89
RECEIPTS:	
.....	71,505.12
TOTAL	\$73,546.01
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	7,463.73

Postage	11,157.90
Supplies	1,779.73
Wages	39,240.00
FICA	3,102.72
Dividing checks	1,237.45
PO Box Rent	66.00
Refund	1,000.00
Bank Charges	227.86
Total Expenditures	\$65,275.39
ENDING BALANCE	\$8,270.62



Foreordination and Foreknowledge

by Augustus Hopkins Strong
(1836 - 1921)



Foreknowledge implies fixity, and fixity implies decree. From eternity God foresaw all the events of the universe as fixed and certain. This fixity and certainty could not have had its ground either in blind fate or in the variable wills of men, since neither of these had an existence. *It could have had its ground in nothing outside the divine mind*, for in eternity nothing existed besides the divine mind. But for this fixity there must have been a cause; if anything in the future was fixed, something must have fixed it. *This fixity could have had its ground only in the plan and purpose of God. In fine, if God foresaw the future as certain, it must have been because there was something in Himself which made it certain; or, in other words, because He had decreed it.*

We object therefore to the statement of E. G. Robinson, Christian Theology, 74- "God's knowledge and God's purposes both being eternal, and cannot be conceived as the ground of the other, nor can either be predicated to the exclusion of the other as the cause of things, but, correlative and eternal, they much be coequal quantities in thought."

We reply that while decree does not *chronologically* precede, it does *logically* precede, foreknowledge. Foreknowledge is not of possible events, but of what is certain to be. The certainty of future events which He

foreknew could have had its ground only in His decree, since He alone existed to be the ground and explanation of this certainty. *Events were fixed only because God had fixed them.* Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 1:397- "An event must be made certain, before it can be known as a certain event." (Turretin Inst. Theol. loc. 3, quaes. 12, 18).

Decreeing creation implies decreeing the foreseen results of creation. To meet the objection that God might have foreseen the events of the universe, not because He had decreed each one, but only because He had decreed to create the universe, institute its laws, we may put the argument in another form. In eternity there could have been no cause of the future existence of the universe, outside of God Himself, since no being existed but God Himself.

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

E. G. Robinson, Christian Theology, 84- "The existence of divine decrees may be inferred from the existence of natural law." Law-certainty-God's will Positivists express great contempt for the doctrine of the eternal purpose of God, yet they consign us to the iron necessity of physical forces and natural laws. Robinson also points out that decrees are "implied in the prophecies. We cannot conceive that all events should have converged toward the one great even-the death of Christ-without the intervention of an eternal purpose."

No undecreed event can be foreseen. We grant that God decrees primarily and directly His own acts of creation, providence, and grace; but we claim that this involves also a secondary and indirect decreeing of the acts of free creatures which he foresees will result therefrom. There is therefore no such thing in God as *scientia media*, or knowledge of an even t that is to be, though it does not enter into the divine plan; for to say that God foresees an undecreed event, is to say that He views as future an event that is merely possible; or, in other words, that he views an even not as it is.

Only knowledge of that which is decreed is foreknowledge. Knowledge of a plan as ideal or possible may precede decree; but knowledge of a plan as actual or fixed must follow

♦ (Continued on page 280)



WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans - Norfolk, Virginia

Is Hillary A Slam Dunk Unless Condi Runs?



Some observers think that Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) is a slam dunk for president. We have to admit she is the leading candidate for the Democratic Party.

Some observers think the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is a worthy candidate with Hillary. Although she has no experience in the elective office, she has been working with the President on a daily basis and has earned much respect not only from her own nation but from leaders of many other nations that she has personally met.

HILLARY LEADS

Hillary Clinton currently leads the Democratic field for the presidential nomination in every poll. Even worse, a recent Gallop poll found that 52% of Americans---a majority---would consider voting for Hillary in 2008. A Hillary Clinton presidency would lead to socialized medicine, huge tax hikes, gun bans, and dozens of new radical, activist federal judges.

Hillary as president would certainly take our nation in the wrong direction. She'd reverse everything President Bush has accomplished. President Bush has brought integrity and decency to the office of the presidency again.

HIRED GUNS

And with hired guns like James Carville, Ann Lewis, and other extremists like Howard Dean and George Soros on her team, you know she'll do whatever it takes to win, including running a multi-million dollar negative campaign.

Hillary wants the American people to think she's moving to the center. This is all about her political ambition and has nothing to do with helping New York or a change of heart.

PUBLIC OPINION POLLS

Another politician who puts her anger in the air and makes decisions based on the results of public opinion polls and focus groups is not what we need. But every so often, Hillary lets her guard down and the true Hillary comes out.

For instance, Hillary claims to be tough on terrorism but she recently voted against a bill to add 2,000 new border patrol agents. And rather than get tough on North Korea's Kim Jong-il who is actively pursuing nuclear weapons, Hillary decided that a huge new aid give-away package for North Korea will encourage them to scrap their nuclear weapons programs. It didn't work for Bill Clinton when he was president yet this is what a Hillary Clinton administration would look like.

HEALTHCARE

Hillary may be most remembered for her convoluted and illegal efforts to put all health care under the government---one seventh of our entire economy. The Hillary socialized health plan would fine doctors \$10,000 a day for billing errors and \$50,000 for unauthorized treatment. Said Hillary to critics "It's time to put the national interest ahead of individuals."

ELECTORAL COLLEGE WORKS

The Electoral College should not be abolished. It works. It provides political clout for the smaller states, so they will not be steam-rolled by behemoths like New York and California. This is the same reasoning in our constitution that provides two senators from each state, while representatives are allotted by population density.

TRAVELGATE

Hillary's true colors were flying early on. In 1993, she ordered the entire White House travel office replaced with Cousin Catherine Cornelius's crew from Little Rock. Then, Hillary initiated an FBI criminal investigation of director Billy Dale with trumped up charges of embezzlement---all later disproved in court, but not before extensive legal fees.

FILEGATE

This 1996 scandal was Hillary's brainchild for which she hired former saloon bouncer Craig Livingstone to collect 1000 FBI files on Republican "opponents"---a felony that was never prosecuted. Clinton sides then constructed a computer database of 300,000 names for later smears. It worked.

LET US NOT FORGET

The mysterious Rose Law Firm billing records, with the multi-million dollar frauds "White Water" and "Castle Grande"; Hillary's "Cattlegate"

windfall cover-up after Vincent Foster's mysterious death---Webster Hubbell's "money for silence"; Chinagate---bed and breakfast in the Lincoln bedroom---use of Air Force planes on Hillary's book tour and in shuttling back and forth for her New York campaign.

Hillary Rodham Clinton was deeply involved in every one of these major scandals. In all, there were 38 major scandals in the Clinton White House in the most corrupt administration in U.S. history. Almost without exception, Hillary was in the forefront.

Mrs. Clinton wants to be president, perhaps by the year 2008. Her priority is the popular vote---not the Electoral College and not preserving our Republic. Just the votes please!



Gays Gaining Ground in Church and Society

By G. Russell Evans

In considering the machinations and iconoclasm of the gays, who can deny that they are making progress? Or, that their most stalwart supporters are the courts, the politicians, and the preachers? In the current frenzy to separate church and state, it seems ironic that these two pillars of civilization should be so faithfully committed to kicking God's laws out the window---no separation of church and state on the homosexual issue. The state uses the First Amendment to assure gay rights, and the mainline churches fall back on the "insufficiency of the Bible" to prove that "homosexuality is a sin."

These profound judgments deserve examination and, indeed, suggest a kinship to Albert Einstein's observation, "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler." To use the First Amendment's freedom of speech and assembly for gays suggests making things simpler than possible. But that's what the Oklahoma Supreme Court

did to cancel the university's control of gays on campus (GAA v. University of Oklahoma). The school had objected to condoning violations of criminal laws (sodomy) and the implication of state approval of homosexuality. But it lost.

So did the Jesuits of San Francisco when they had to pay the Gay Men's Chorus \$5,000 in damages for "breaching" their rights to sing in St. Ignatius Church. After these successes, the Gay Rights Advocates (GRA) pursued other litigation: equal rights to teach in schools, in industrial employment, and in the armed forces. GSA with help from ACLU has used to overturn Oklahoma's "anti-gay teacher law" and has won a suit to permit alien gays to enter the U.S.

The gays demand the freedoms of civil rights and equality. We believe that every freedom has its price; none is free. When they ask acceptance of their lifestyle, they would change God's moral law. They trade values. They substitute a part of their privileges in society in order to satisfy their own desires. There is no obligation in the Scriptures or the U.S. Constitution that the majority jeopardize their morals because some choose homosexuality. The fact is that those who violate accepted moral laws are not going to be universally accepted to teach children and to minister in Christian churches. That's the way society is made.

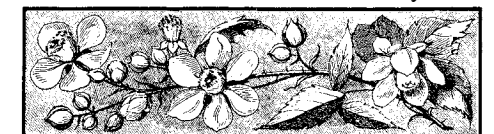
Evidence is overwhelming that homosexuality is a learned response and that it can be unlearned and cleansed through a Christian commitment. Many ministers stand ready to assist and have convincing records of success. The famous theologian Harold Lindsell has this to say: "Whether a homosexual feels good about his homosexuality or proclaims that he has no sense of guilt doesn't alter the Biblical prohibition. Good feelings do not deliver from the judgment of God. The last word on this subject does not come from psychologists, sociologists, secularists or humanists. It comes from God, Who has spoken His word against the practice and Who has never stuttered in His speech."



Foreordination

(Continued from page 279) ♦

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



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