

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

The Complete Duty of the Lord's Churches

By Garner Smith
of Clarksville, Tennessee

The Bible teaches beyond any doubt that the Lord works today through His churches. He empowered His church on the day of Pentecost with the baptism in the Holy Spirit, that they have both power and authority to carry on His work in the world. This would certainly prove to us that His churches have a special work today. The Lord has a purpose to fulfill with His churches, and rules and regulations they must go by as they fulfill His plan. This work cannot be done by any other means or organization. The Lord sets forth this work for His churches along with all regulations, restrictions and rules in the Scriptures.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to



observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Let us look first at some things that the Lord has not commanded His churches to do as a Divine institution.

The special work of the Lord's churches is not ENTERTAINMENT. To read and hear some of the advertisements put forth by some of the churches today, one would be made to believe that the mission of the churches is to entertain. Some churches are showing the best movies. Dances, suppers and card parties along with the gambling games, bingo and such are a must for the now generation church

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Obedience Required

Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia



Let us consider the fact that in order for us to truly worship God we must manifest the obedience which God requires of all of those who would serve Him.

No matter who we may be; and no matter what may be our level of understanding; and no matter how much or how little we might be used of the Lord; we understand that we cannot be His servants, unless we obey Him. And, in the matter of worship, we must understand that God requires obedience. It seems to me that this is something the world in general and even the world of Christianity have forgotten or have ignored. We see all around us folks who make a pretense of worshipping God; and we see all around us folks who will give some measure of lip-service unto our God and Saviour. But, how many

folks do we see that will actually, with their lives and with the words of their mouths, manifest true obedience unto God and unto His Word.

I would like to use King David as an example. Surely, among all of the men and women of the Bible, we would be hard-pressed to find a single person that sought to worship God more fully than did King David. It was always his desire to serve, worship, and praise God. He did so through songs and psalms; he did so through prayers and devotions. But he found in several instances in his life that he could not properly worship God unless he would first render himself as an obedient servant unto God.

The example I would like to make

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Come Let Us Reason Together

By Andy Proctor
of Citrus Springs, Florida

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).

It has been said that "He that will not reason is a bigot; he that cannot reason is a fool; and he that dares not reason is a slave." The Hebrew word here for reason is, *yakach* (yaw-kahh') and the Greek word for reason is *dialegomai* (dee-al-eg-om-ahee), both mean to reason, to think, to ponder, to judge, to discuss, to dispute.

God has distinguished man above all of His creation with the ability to reason. Thus, the invitation we have here is a legitimate invitation and as we shall see gracious invitation. To discourage such is to encourage bigotry, folly, and slavery.



The Scriptures describe the people of God as a reasoning and reasonable people, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus were so reasoning. **"And it came to pass, that, while they**

communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them" (Luke 24:15). They were thus in position to listen and derive benefit from the Saviour's comforting words.

The great Christian mathematician and scientist of the 1600's, Blaise Paschal, put reason in its proper perspective when he said, "The ultimate purpose of reason is to bring us to the place where we see that there is a limit to reason." There are some things that are unfathomable, unsearchable, and inexhaustible when it

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The Sin-Sick Soul and Its Cure

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5).

We might well consider this passage the key verse to the whole Bible. The entire story of redemption is seen here in a miniature. Here is the gospel in essence. In this brief sentence there is a Divine presentation of the depravity of man and the substitutionary atonement of Christ.

A meditation upon this blessed verse will be purposeful and profitable. Let us approach it with fear and trembling, for it concerns our suffering Saviour and the great salvation He provides. A number of truths come to light to those who have eyes to see as they ponder the message of this text.

SIN IS A DISEASE

In this text sin is seen as a disease of the soul. This figure is derived from the fact that an awakened sinner is often presented in Scripture as crushed, broken, bruised and battered by the weight of his sins. Then the removal of the load of sin is represented as an act of healing. This is seen in Psalm 41:4: **"I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee."**

Disease in the body impairs the performance of vital parts of a man. Likewise sin in the soul puts its faculties out of gear. Proverbs 14:12 says: **"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways**

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"The straight and narrow path is the only highway that has no traffic problems at rush hour."

"We cannot be spiritually healthy if we live in an atmosphere tainted with evil imaginings."

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

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

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Come Let Us Reason

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comes to our ability to fully comprehend and thus, reason with. Things like, "Why would God even consider saving such prideful, unthankful, disrespectful, ungodly sinners like us?"

The problem is that people do err not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. This is especially true in regards to experiential knowledge. But, as the text expresses, reason is a merely a means of grace to bring someone to Christ. Yet, it appears that if one begins to truly reason that it denotes the beginnings of the work of the Holy Spirit unto sure salvation. However, any decent Bible student recognizes that ultimately, faith, which is a gift of God, must be given to an individual before he can genuinely repent and believe the gospel, and thus be saved from his sins.

But following the Biblical pattern we shall as in Acts 17:2, "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures" and in Acts 18:4, "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks."

We shall begin by considering *To Whom This Invitation is Extended*, *By Whom This Invitation is Extended* and its initial intent, *The Ultimate Intent of This Invitation*.

I. TO WHOM THIS INVITATION IS EXTENDED

In some ways we could look at this as a commandment or subpoena, but considering the words, "let us," there is a degree of warmth in those words that denote some invitational overtones involved here. This makes this passage all the more amazing as we consider who we are in and of ourselves.

In Isaiah 1:1-17, and really all of Isaiah's prophecy we grasp an awful picture of whom God is addressing. "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." (God gives this invitation to rebellious sinners.) "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (God gives this invitation to ungrateful sinners.) "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." (God extends this

invitation to obstinate sinners) "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." (God offers this invitation to totally depraved sinners.) "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah." (God extends His invitation to immoral sinners) "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them." (Here the invitation is extended to religious sinners.) "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." (God extends this invitation to hypocritical sinners.) "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

This invitation is offered to the greatest of sinners, totally depraved sinners, religious sinners, immoral sinners, secret sinners, public sinners, obstinate sinners, rebellious sinners, hypocritical sinners, repeat offenders. What a merciful invitation that our God extends to such sinners as we are!

Furthermore, such things proceed from sinners such as we all are, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), because we have a sinful heart, (Jer. 17:9) from which proceeds sinful thoughts, sinful intentions, and sinful deeds. Jesus said in Matthew 15:18-19, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness,

blasphemies."

It is an invitation given to us, for we are all sinners who have come short of the glory of God. So, let us come, come and examine closely Who it is that invites us and why.

II. BY WHOM THIS INVITATION IS EXTENDED AND ITS INITIAL INTENT

An invitation's validity and value is based much upon the one who gives the invitation. For instance, an invitation to be an honored citizen of a highly prestigious kingdom is of no value if that person is not even a citizen of that kingdom, but here we have the very King and Creator of the highest and most prestigious kingdom extending an invitation to be an honored citizen therein.

The identity of the One Who extends the invitation is revealed in these words, "saith the LORD"—the High and Lofty One, the Almighty, the Everlasting God, the Eternal One, the Judge of all the earth, the One Who is Glorious in Holiness, the All-Knowing One, the Ever-Present God, the Everlasting Father, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the One Who never lies and Who is Truth, the God Who created this world with the Word of His Power, the God Who sustains this world likewise, the God Who called Abraham and his seed, the God Who sustained them, the God Who delivered Israel with a high hand out of the bondage of Egypt, the God Who bore with them in the wilderness, the God Who brought them into the Promised Land, the God Who gave them judges or deliverers in time of their sin, the God Who sent them prophets to declare His Perfect and Glorious Will,...this is the One Who extends this invitation.

This is not the only time the Lord offers such an invitation, but often He gives out the invitations. Here is another one in Isaiah 41:21, "Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob."

The initial intent is that we would reason together with the Lord, for as we mentioned, we are at enmity with God, we have been an offender against Him; nonetheless, He takes the initiative, even though we won't, and seeks to bring reconciliation.

The kind of reasoning here is objective without prejudice, a willingness to learn, not to win an argument. The religious leaders during Christ's earthly ministry reasoned among themselves often, but it was a reasoning to do evil and a seeking to justify themselves or a seeking to win an argument, which was insanity not sensibility and rationality.

Is it not reasonable for us to accept the Lord's invitation? He does not say here, Come, for you are a sinner, and I invite you to your eternal death and damnation. He actually, descends as it were, to

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reason together with us! Not Him doing all the talking, but having dialog with us, discussing. Is it not reasonable that we would graciously come at His gracious invitation?

People are constantly attempting to agnostice everything, refusing to reason as a bigot, unable to reason as a fool, and/or afraid to reason as a slave, and thus, limit themselves to laziness and limit God in their own minds to virtually non-existence which is seemingly convenient for a guilty conscience. Those who deny that there is a First Cause, and then deny that it is God Who is that First Cause is likened unto a fool by God (Ps. 14:1). Is it not reasonable that there would be a God? It is not some fanatical spirit here. Some of the most gracious, calm, collective, intellectual, and scientific minds have embraced such and continue to do so.

Those of us who may be familiar with the heretical writings of Dan Brown know that he seeks to cast doubt upon the reliability of God's Word. This proposition is false because I suspect that the basis for such is a hatred for God's Word and therefore a biased and unscientific treatment of the whole subject matter.

I was preaching at a juvenile delinquency facility and one of the inmates approached me on this and I asked him if it would be reasonable for God to keep His Word hidden and corrupted so others wouldn't know the truth to set them free? He admitted that it was an unreasonable assumption. I elaborated and said that all this is nothing but, regurgitated, mystical, Gnostic foolishness. Is it not reasonable that the Almighty God, the God of all Truth, the God of all which is good, would desire to, and be able to preserve His Word? Did we, puny creatures as we are, thwart and overpower our Creator and somewhat outsmart the omniscient and all-wise God? The whole premise for such is ridiculous. I asked him if he ever read the whole Bible before, and he said that he didn't. I told him that I did because I grew up in a home where skepticism in this realm was a reality. What I found out through the instrumentality of God's Word and the Holy Spirit is that **"let God be true, but every man a liar"** (Rom. 3:4).

Is it not reasonable that God would have consequences for sin? After all are there not consequences for violating the God-created physical laws; so, is it not reasonable that there are consequences for violating God's spiritual laws and that He would create them as well?

Many refuse to reason with God; however, if they do, there are the beginnings of hope. A husband wanting

to reconcile with his wife, but she refuses to speak about the matter. It is obvious she is at fault for not even discussing or reasoning. So it is with people today. They are at fault and cannot charge God for being unreasonable, rather He is encouraging reason. As long as there is some kind of dialogue there is some hope of light at the end of the tunnel.

Those who refuse to reason or discuss or dialogue such things are revealing themselves to be the animalistic beings they imagine themselves to be evolved from. God did not create us to be that way, but all too many have chosen that course of action. **"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee"** (Ps. 32:9). **"Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish"** (Ps. 49:20). Paul spoke of beasts at Ephesus and prayed to be delivered from unreasonable men (I Cor. 15:32; II Thess. 3:2). In the book of Revelation, the leaders of the New World Order, the antichrist and the false prophet are described as the first beast and the second beast. They will not reason, nor be reasonable when it comes to the Christ. We desecrate ourselves when we refuse to reason though God has given us the ability to do so. Understand, of course, that this reason alone cannot save you, as we shall see.

Most want the pastor, church officer, parents, college professor, or someone else to do their thinking for them, especially in this matter. This is a personal invitation to individuals to reason as individuals. What if some world leader or some famous person you admired gave such an invitation to you? Most people would jump on that opportunity, but treat the Creator like trash and decline, usually not just once, but multiple times—woe unto such a person! There is no excuse and will be no excuse when a person stands before their Creator for such unreasonable, stubborn, and dishonorable irrationality.

There is hope when one is willing to reason, to discuss the Word of Christ. Take note of this passage in the book of

Mark, **"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question"** (Mark 12:28-34). Did you see where this scribe heard Christ reasoning with the religious leaders and perceived or reasoned that Christ answered them well? Notice Jesus said that the scribe was not far from the kingdom of God. Again, the possibility of hope emerges when reasoning takes root. Now, I realize that some brethren are saying that reason can't save you, and I most certainly believe that, but hear me out till the end of this message.

Before we proceed any further let's examine a strong prerequisite necessary to be able to reason. This preparatory principle is stillness. Notice in I Samuel 12:7, **"Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers."** The reason to stand still is, **"that I may reason with you."** Psalm 4:4 says, **"Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart (or reason) upon your bed, and be still. Selah."** Then, a most well-known passage in Psalm 46:10 which describes who we must be still

to even begin to know Who it is we are reasoning with, **"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."** Some are so restless, so busy, so nervous about such subjects, so filled with an unholy fear, so filled with a distrust of God, so filled with a hatred towards God, they will not be still, and seal their own doom.

Here are some pertinent questions God asks those who refuse to reason because of unfounded fears and misconceptions: **"Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain (Jer. 2:5)? "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me"** (Micah 6:3). The obvious answer to such rhetorical questions is that there is no good reason why people would reject the God of the Universe. He has not judged us according to our sins, rather He bestows His mercy and gifts pertaining to life, upon us over and over again. What do you do in return?

People, this is the God Who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift we enjoy, the God Who has given us health, wealth, intellect, a place to live, family who loves and cares for us, friends to enjoy, food to eat, drink to quench our thirst, vehicles to take us places, luxuries like no other people in the world. Yes, there are difficulties, but there must be consequences for violating the moral laws as well as the physical laws.

This is very reasonable, even logical. If you can't trust God, who can you trust? Are you going to die some hyper-suspicious and bitter wretch distrusting everybody and everything, even God, and then, go from that frying pan to the fires of hell? It isn't worth it. Honestly, you can't even trust yourself or others. People promise to keep resolutions at the beginning of every year and continue to break those promises to themselves. People make promises and don't keep them, and so we are not dependable. Sometimes we cannot keep our promises because of sickness, lack of resources, lack of ability, or death. As the Scriptures declare, **"Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD"** (Jer. 17:5).

Let's look at just a few more questions to consider under this heading. Isn't it reasonable that God would require repentance from sin lest by turning His Head from it He would be an accomplice in it, and He would no longer be holy. Isn't it reasonable that we repent of our sins because sin has done so much harm to others?

See, dear friends, what a proof this is of God's lovingkindness and graciousness that He invites us to reason with Him;

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DXDS, Digos City, Philippines...	Sunday 12:00 - 12:30 p.m.	1161 Khz	1,000 AM

Come Let Us Reason

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because, if He had not meant good to us, He would have had no reasoning with us. I fear that some are afraid to reason because it does make sense, but they don't want to pursue the path that leads to reason due to the fact that their conscience will bother them to change their conduct and the way they live their lives. But, you see, God is so great (after all He spoke this universe into existence), that He can give a person grace to actually enjoy and embrace His commandments.

III. THE ULTIMATE INTENT OF THIS INVITATION

The purpose of this invitation is that one would come to God through Christ for salvation from your sins, so that you can have a saving relationship with God. As a matter of fact, if you will come on God's terms, reason as He would have you reason, you will be saved.

The Apostle Paul, in the New Testament, continued this practice of reasoning as a means for evangelism in Acts 24:25, **"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."** But, reasoning by itself cannot save. Again, fear of changing, but love casts out fear, and welcomes trust, that God is so great that He can create in us a new nature to love Him and His Word.

Though you be as Nebuchadnezzar, a beast, but his reason returned to him and he not only acknowledged God, but gave Him the glory. Though your sins be as scarlet, the blood is on your hands, you are caught red-handed, God shall make them white as snow, though your sins be as crimson, they shall be as wool. This is promised assurance for those who will come. The very reason why God should not accept you is taken away from those who think, I have no right to heaven, I am not worthy to be a servant of God, my sin, my sin, I cannot come because of my sin, so, Christ says to such whose heart has been made ready by the Spirit, **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"** (Matt. 11:28).

This is new nature which is needed is expressed in what Jesus says in John 3:7, **"Ye must be born again"** in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. When someone is born of the Spirit, they will exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"** (Gal. 5:22-23).

This supported by the words following our text in Isaiah 1:19-20, **"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and**

rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." If there is true reasoning and salvation there shall be true willingness and true obedience; in other words, repentance and faith are required. Thus, there will be the opposite of what is recorded in what we observed in Isaiah 1:1-17.

Is it not reasonable that God would require such? Would it not stand to reason that a child of God, born again of the Spirit would live like any other child of the devil? Is it not reasonable that we live for Christ and obey Him when He has given us eternal life? Romans 12:1-2 appeals to Christians to the reasonable service of laying down our bodies a living sacrifice.

Yes, but what about my bad habits of sin, I cannot live this Christian life! Nevertheless, God's promise stands, He will give grace to conquer over the guilt of sin, the penalty of sin, and the power of sin when He makes His salvation complete as He does for all His children. But, besides all that when you are born of the Spirit you are given power to become the sons of God, a new principle within takes dominion and sin no more reigns in our mortal bodies! **"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"** (John 1:12).

Notice, **"Come,"** a gracious invitation, not a closed door policy. **"Come now,"** not after you've gone to church for a month, read your Bible through, not like Felix who trembled at Paul's preaching, but said that he would call upon him at a convenient season of his choosing, **"To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."** **"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."**

The reason of the hope within me, is Jesus, His Person, His Work at Calvary on my behalf. Do you have hope, is the reason for your hope in Christ, a reason based upon Him, Who He is, and what He did for you at the cross? Then you are most blessed of all people!

In summation, it says in Revelation 22:17, **"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."** Also, it is stated in II Corinthians 5:20, **"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."**

Let me ask you a question to encourage you to reason this out. Do you have a religion or philosophy that is any better than that which is in Christ Jesus the Lord? If so, then reason with me, or better yet, with the Lord out of His Word. If your religion or philosophy is so good, you shouldn't fear to reason; as a matter of fact, love should bid you to

reason. A religion or philosophy without love isn't worth anything. I challenge you to reason together with us. If you won't reason, or fear to reason, your unreasonableness will send you to hell. **"We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."**



Sin-Sick Soul

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of death." The man stricken with sin has his senses disturbed and his actions perverted. The broad road to Hell seems the right way to go. Vice appears to be virtue. Death looks like life. Sin weakens the mortal energy of man just as disease weakens the body and hinders proper function of the organs.

Disease causes pain to the body. The same may be said of sin. The alcoholic knows the pain of sin. The gambler is acquainted with this suffering. The criminal in prison is aware of its hurt. Those who have broken homes and wrecked lives are no strangers to its agony. The torment of soul is the most grievous suffering that any man can experience.

Man was created in finite perfection. But by rebellion against God he contacted the virus of sin. His present condition is abnormal. The disease has spread to all parts of his being: **"The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment"** (Isa. 1:5-6). The distemper has seized upon the vital parts of man: the heart and the head. When sin is unrepented of nothing is done to heal its wounds.

How deadly is the malady of sin? It surpasses all the dreaded and destructive diseases known and unknown to medical science. It is due to hereditary defect; **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"** (Rom. 5:12). It is so contagious that it has passed to all men born of woman: **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23). Sin is the common disease of all mankind.

Sin, unlike all mortal disease, cannot be cured even by death. Cancer can be cured by death. Heart disease can be cured by death. Leprosy can be cured by death. But not even mortal death can destroy the virus of sin. The pain and power of sin survives the death of the body. Sin brings suffering in eternity. In the ages to come those stricken with it shall experience **"wailing and gnashing of teeth"** (Matt. 13:42). The sin-sick sinner is destined to **"have no rest day nor night. . . for ever and ever"** (Rev. 14:11). Oh, how fatal and far-reaching is

the consequence of the disease of sin!

The disease of sin cannot be cured by the sin-sick soul: **"For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous"** (Jer. 30:12). **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and incurably wicked"** (Jer. 17:9 Gill's trans.). There is no medicine that can cure its symptoms known to medical science. No mortal physician knows how to deal with it. In every one it is fatal! **"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death"** (Jas. 1:15). Sin condemns to suffering for eternity.

PHYSICIANS OF NO VALUE

In spite of the fact the Bible teaches sin is an incurable disease in the human race, many refuse to take God at His Word. The world is filled with religious quacks who offer all kinds of false cures to suffering souls. We have sick people attempting to be physicians to other sick people. Sin-sick souls should say to these quacks: **"Physician, heal thyself"** (Luke 4:23). Many sick and sore sinners, like the woman with the issue of blood, have **"suffered many things of many physicians"** (Mark 5:26). Yea, these pseudo-doctors have only slightly healed suffering souls (Jer. 8:11). False prophets and fake preachers should have a sign posted over the doors of their churches which reads: **"Ye are all physicians of no value"** (Job 13:4).

Whenever a soul is troubled over his sickness, Satan will send Dr. No Hell to cure his pains. He comes forth saying, "God is merciful. He will not send anyone to the fires of Hell." But this message can never take the fear of Hell out of the sinner. His awakened conscience torments him until he feels he is already in Hell. This well-dressed doctor is indeed a physician of no value to the sin-sick soul.

Satan sometimes sends Dr. Do Better to see some who feel their hurt because of sin. This talkative physician says, "Yes, you are sick, but just try to do better in the future." But he brings no cure to the sinner who sees that his righteousness is filthy rags in the sight of God. How can the sinner do better when he has done only bad in the past? How will his doing better in the future blot out the guilt of the past? Away with this religious quack. He is a physician of no value.

Then the Devil often sends Dr. Good Enough as an angel of light. His prescription for a sin-sick soul is, "You never did any one any harm; you have paid your honest debts. What more can God require?" But this does not satisfy the sick soul who feels he has sinned against God. He knows God's holiness condemns him. He knows this diagnosis is entirely false. Dr. Do Good Enough, too, is a physician of no value.

Then there are times when the sin-sick soul goes to see Dr. Baptism. He is

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Sin-Sick Soul

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a very religious fellow that is admired by all. He says, "The cure for your soul is in the waters of baptism. Without it you will die in your sins." But the sinner reasons, how can water on the outside heal the sin-sick soul on the inside? This doctor is also a physician of no value, for he does not understand the nature of the disease.

It is tragic for a medical doctor to give a patient the wrong prescription. But it is far worse to prescribe the wrong medicine for the sin-sick soul. The wrong medicine always shows the ignorance of the spiritual doctor of the sinner's disease. To tell the sinner to do better or to be baptized is to give him the wrong medicine. To urge him to unite with some church does not relieve his suffering. To tell him to heal himself is foolish. Self-healing is impossible, for the tendency of man is ever toward a worse state: **"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse"** (II Tim. 3:13).

A REMEDY IS AVAILABLE

While no earthly medicine can cure sin and no earthly physician can properly diagnose it, there is a heavenly medicine and the Great Physician. No matter how great your sins there is no medicine like the blood of Christ. The Great Healer has never lost a case. There is more power in Christ's blood to save than in your sins to destroy. No patient ever failed to be cured who received from the Great Physician the balm of atoning blood. The Heavenly Clinic has never written a death certificate.

In the spiritual economy the Physician bled and died that the patient might be healed. The Doctor suffered in soul and body to procure the healing ointment. The Healer Himself was wounded to bring about our cure: **"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed"** (I Pet. 2:24). The life and good health of the cured sinner is due to the death inflicted upon Christ.

We are not cured by Dr. Do Good, or Dr. Baptism, or Dr. Arminius. Our cure is due to the vicarious sufferings of the Saviour. He represented us; He bore our sins in His own body on the tree of the cross. The Great Physician not only took our disease, but He bore it away. Isaiah 53:4 says: **"Surely he hath borne our sickness"** (improved translation).

Those who fail to see the substitutionary atonement of Christ err not knowing the Scriptures. It is by His wounds we have soul healing. **"He was wounded for our transgressions,"** yet the cure is ours. The blood shed was His, while the balm is ours. The sufferings were all His, but the salvation is ours.

The whole body of the elect was

considered in Jesus Christ on the cross. God regarded His death as our death. We fulfilled the law in Him, died with Him, and rose from the dead in Him. In our covenant Head we obtained the victory over sin, death, the devil, and Hell. Christ was charged with our sins: **"The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"** (Isa. 53:6). **"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures"** (I Cor. 15:3) and **"put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"** (Heb. 9:26).

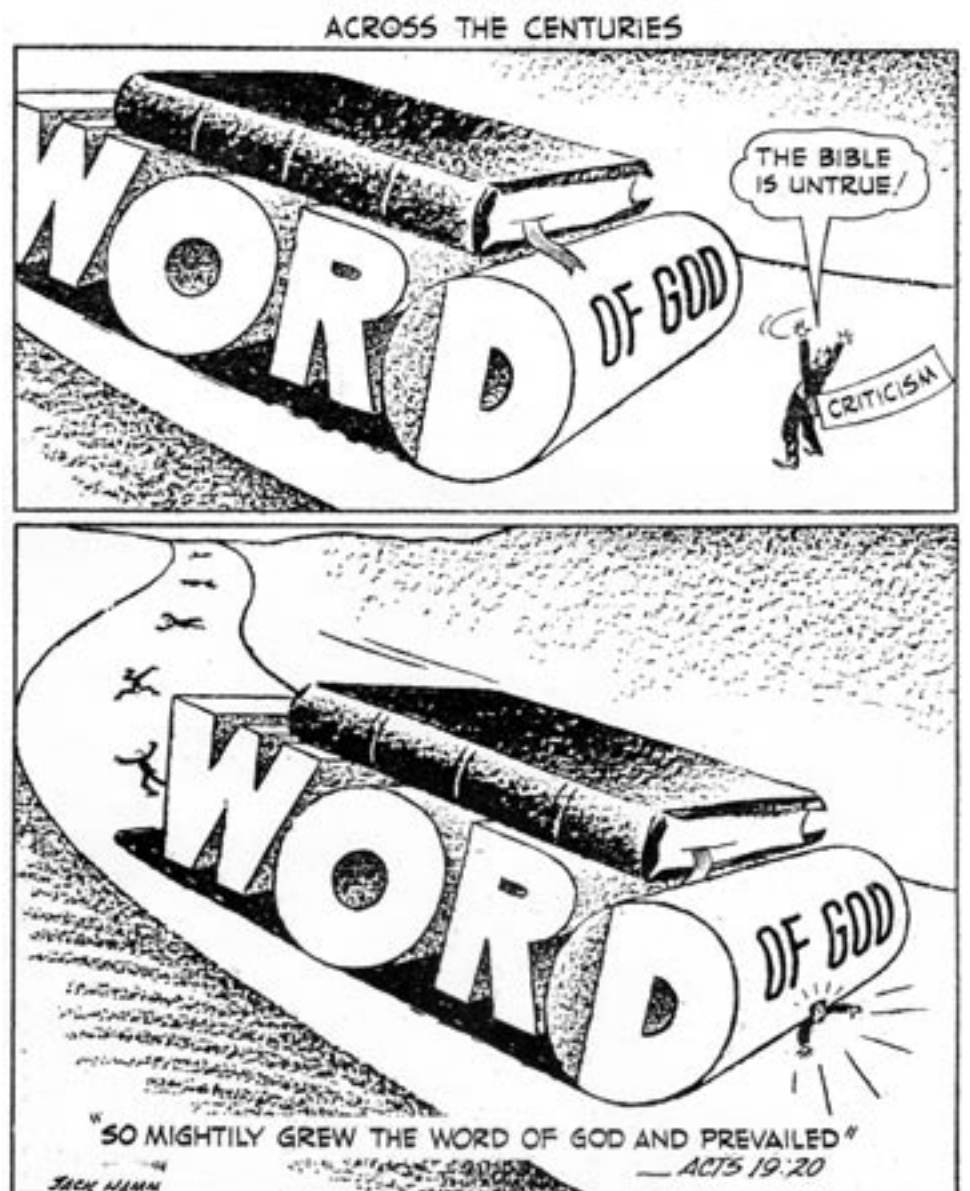
The fruit of His death is the justification of all the elect before God. Christ justified many by bearing their sins (Isa. 53:11). He was bruised as an expiatory sacrifice and **"by his stripes we are healed."** The Great Physician restored us to health; He cured all our spiritual ills. He cured our minds of blindness, our hearts of hardness, our nature of perverseness, our will of backwardness, our memory of slipperiness, our consciousness of numbness, and our affections of disorder.

The word "stripes" denotes the wounds or scars due to suffering. Jesus will bear these scars for all eternity as a reminder that **"by his stripes we are healed."** The Lord of glory had these scars in His post-resurrection appearances (John 20:24-27). When John saw Christ in Heaven He **"stood a Lamb as it had been slain"** (Rev. 5:6). When He returns to earth **"every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him"** (Rev. 1:7). **"And one shall say unto him, what are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends"** (Zech. 13:6). These battle scars of Calvary will remain upon Him as the benefits and effects of His death will forever remain upon us.

The one and only cure for the sin-sick soul is the suffering of the Great Physician. Those who by faith receive Christ as he Healer of their sin-sick souls have the restoration of health. Holy Spirit conviction causes one to see his sickness and to beg for Divine surgery. Repentance is the first symptom of recovery, and faith in Christ is the cloth which binds the wound. Please do not make too much of these means of grace so as to make them rivals of the stripes by which we are healed.

CHRIST BRINGS IMMEDIATE CURE

Those Christ died for **"are healed."** They are not slightly healed and left to die in sin. The believer enjoys the instant cure of the Divine medicine. Jesus Christ is instant salvation. **"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases"** (Ps. 103:2-3). The Great Physician eradicates sin which causes spiritual sickness. Christ answers all our needs and cures all our infirmities. No disease of soul can baffle our skilled Physician, for He heals **"all thy diseases."**



What a wonderful Doctor we have! After the first visit He continues to visit the soul to heal new maladies which arise. He, like a doctor of medicine, will keep up these visits until the last trace of the sin disease has gone from our nature. He has medicine to cure the fever of anger and the lunacy of pride. He can heal the drosy of avarice, the leprosy of lust, and the palsy of slothfulness. Consider the multitude of infirmities of the elect of God and be assured Christ can heal them all!

Psalm 107:20 declares: **"He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions."** How glorious the thought! How wonderful the words! The Lord does not try to heal; He heals! All He suffered for will be healed; they will all be delivered from the destructive powers of sin. The Great Physician never falters, never fumbles, never faints, never fails all who desire soul healing.

By **"his word"** in Psalm 107:20 we may understand the essential Word, even the Second Person in the Godhead, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Father sent Him into the world **"to heal the broken-hearted"** (Luke 4:18). It is **"by his stripes we are healed."** Christ has **"healing in his wings"** (Mal. 4:2) for all our spiritual diseases. He is the mighty Physician of the soul. When on earth, He healed **"every**

sickness and every disease among the people" (Matt. 9:35). He healed these diseased bodies to prove He was also the Great Physician of souls. Christ never turned away any person who applied for bodily cure. By this He demonstrated to us that He will never refuse any person who applies to Him for spiritual cure.

Others take **"his word"** to refer to the written Word or the gospel. This is also true. Christ healed many by His spoken word while on earth, even as His written Word is used to apply the spiritual cure to the sin-sick soul when the Spirit works in regeneration. The Spirit uses the Word of God to convince, convert, and heal the soul. While it is **"by his stripes we are healed,"** it is the Word in the hands of the Holy Spirit which reveals the sickness and applies the cure.

When the gospel is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit a man comes to realize his condition before God. The sorrows of death compass him, and **"the pains of hell"** take hold of him (Ps. 116:3). He is made to see **"there is no healing"** (Jer. 14:19) within himself, and that there is "no healing medicine" in religious rites. What a joyful sound to his ears to hear **"by his stripes we are healed."** How it thrills his heart to become acquainted with the One Who said: **"I am the LORD that healeth**

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Sin-Sick Soul

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thee" (Ex. 15:26).

Under the converting power of the Holy Spirit, he is made to cry out, "O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed" (Ps. 6:2). The Spirit whispers in his hearing ear: "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Ps. 147:3). The sin-sick soul is the patient in this verse. His soul sighs and groans after redeeming grace. The Healer is Jesus Christ. He heals those whose hearts are broken because of sin. He walks the hospital of the world to handle and heal broken hearts. He puts on the ointment of grace and binds up the bleeding wounds of those convicted of sin. O broken hearts, come to the Great Physician Who never fails to heal! Uncover your wounds to Him Who lovingly and tenderly binds them up!

YOU ARE SICK!

No sinner will ever come for soul-healing until his heart is broken by the Word and Spirit to see his ruined condition. Jesus Christ said: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matt. 9:12). Multitudes of sinners live in a fool's paradise. They fancy themselves to be sound and solid. They see no need for Christ, nor do they listen to His gospel. They dislike His Word and way, not because they have no need, but because they think they have none. How tragic those dying in sin believe they are in perfect health!

Dear friend, you are sick with the disease of sin! Sin is the sickness of the soul. Sin reigns in your deforming, weakening, disquieting, and wasting soul and is killing your soul. Oh, how dangerous is this malady! Nature cannot cure it; no man can cure it; no angel can cure it; no demon can cure it. Without Jesus Christ you are eternally undone. You will never be cured until you come to the Great Physician for healing and health. He alone can heal the sin-sick soul.

There is one thing for certain: you are either healed or sick. How is it with your soul? Are you sick and do not know it? If you are sick, why are you not healed? "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jer. 8:22).

You are not still sick because Christ has no power to help and heal. If you are unhealed it is not for want of a physician, or a method of sure cure. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). There is balm in Gilead. There is a physician available. The problem is that the patient refuses to admit he is sick. He refuses to submit to the method of cure. When such a sin-sick soul dies in his

wounds, his blood is upon his own head.

CONCLUSION

If Jesus Christ has healed your soul, then live like a man cured of the disease of sin. Conduct yourself before men as one with a healed nature. Let the world know your heart is cured of the love for sin. Let men see in you how Christ healed your rebellion. Shun all diseased company. Labor for Christ like a healthy man ought.

Those who have experienced healing should tell other sin-sick souls about their doctor. If you knew a neighbor was dying of a disease, and you knew of a doctor who could heal the dying man, would you not run to tell the suffering man the good news? Then why not run to the sin-sick soul with the gospel of Christ? Go to the sinner with great speed since the Great Physician has already healed you of the same disease the dying man now has. Go at once and tell him that "by his stripes we are healed."



ARE YOU HOLDING YOUR LAST BANNER?

Look at your mailing label on the front page of this month's paper. If you see above your name "Expires 2/2010" then this will be your last issue. So don't miss an issue! Renew now so you won't miss all the articles in next month's Banner.

Complete Duty

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according to the common practice of many churches today. Airplane rides, giant popsicles, the Largest Man, the Clown and Magician are common.

Before me I have some of these advertisements. We shall give one example: Discover – That Christ is the answer to all your questions, one of the most exciting aggregations in gospel music; a package of versatile successes, with vivacious dignity and excitement containing a Spiritual depth that is rare and delightful. Thousands of dollars that belong to the Lord and Scriptural work He has called and commissioned His churches to do are wasted on such worldly, fleshly, and many times ungodly, and God dishonoring entertainment. God never had any plan such as this for His churches.

Many churches have gone so far in the entertainment scheme that they have made sports arenas out of church buildings. Churches are building entertainment centers. Bowling alleys are being built with mission dollars. Instead of following the orders of the commission in baptizing and teaching to observe the Scriptural commands of decency and order, they are building swimming pools, and teaching them to undress indecently

and act disorderly. The Lord's money given by people interested in preaching the gospel to lost souls both at home and abroad is being spent for softball, baseball, basketball, and all other kinds of uniforms. Instead of carrying tracts they are building tracks. Trophies are being awarded to people instead of the Bible preached and taught in these churches. Sports may be fine in their place, but they are not the work of the churches. The Lord nowhere in the Scripture tells the church to be sports-minded.

Churches are not CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS. It is sickening and ungodly to see preachers and churches marching in demonstrations and picket lines in the Civil Rights Movement. Many preachers and churches (so called) travel thousands of miles to yell and scream about the so-called social injustices and wrongs being done to people. How many of these same people ever speak, even in a whisper, about the injustices perpetrated against our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ? The Word of God, as it is preached in all of its purity, is the only thing that will change social wrongs. If God's people would stick to preaching the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, many social evils would change. As people are saved by the preaching of the gospel they are made a new creation, their way of life changes – the more that are saved the more the change in the structure of our society.

The special work the Lord has given His churches is not PROCLAIMING A SOCIAL GOSPEL. This is seemingly the mission of many churches today. They spend millions of dollars in proclaiming the social gospel. The community is constantly harassed by churches in their selling sprees for the poor, hungry, and needy. More churches are known for their rummage sales, pie suppers and such like than what they believe about the Bible. The cry of the social gospel is the reform the criminal, rehabilitate the alcoholic and drug addict. The emphasis is placed upon the physical need rather than the spiritual need. Jesus said, "...the poor you have with you always."

All the needs presented in the social gospel and the means provided by it are temporal and will soon pass. The need and provision for the soul is what is important – it is enduring. We certainly are not against the helping of the needy, naked, and alcoholics, etc., but it is not the work of the church given it by the Lord. If the churches will present Christ to our sick, naked, hungry, criminal, lost, and dying society, they will have given society the answer and provision for all ills and evils of society. Christ is the answer, He fed the multitudes, healed the lame, deaf, blind and most important of all, saved eternally people – even dying thieves.

Many churches are spending thousands of dollars to try to feed hungry

nations, and cure all the ills of war torn countries. Many churches are so concerned about such social things that they have forgotten the many souls of men that are eternally lost and on their way to an everlasting Hell. Which is the most important?

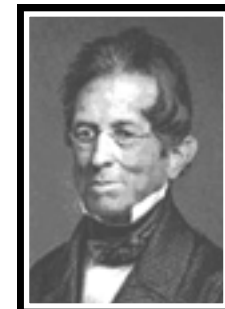
When I think of this I think of what was said in days before Pearl Harbor. Missionaries of Japan begged for help from churches of America to help reach lost people of Japan for Jesus Christ. People were more concerned about social, temporal, or earthly things than the souls of men. The missionaries said that for every \$50 they could reach one soul for Christ (one soul saved). People spent money for earthly things instead and in a few years they spent millions to kill the Japanese in the war besides the lives of our own boys.

So-called churches were more concerned about entertainment, sports, social problems, than carrying out the plan commission of the Lord given His churches.



Life of Joshua

By Thomas H. Gallaudet
(1787 – 1851)



THE CHARACTER OF JOSHUA, WITH REFLECTIONS

Joshua was, in an eminent degree, like his illustrious predecessor, a man of faith. His whole life shows that he

was under the continual influence of a strong confidence in God; in his character and government, his declarations, threatenings, and promises. Among other instances of this, the passage of the Jordan, the taking of Jericho, and the miracle at Gibeon are illustrious examples. How indispensable was this faith to inspire Joshua with the necessary courage and perseverance in attaching the hosts of Cannanites, trained, equipped, and marshaled as they were for war, with whom he and his countrymen had to contend, and who must be vanquished before they could obtain possession of the promised land. What irresolution and dismay would have quickly been spread among the Israelites, if their leader had shown the least symptoms of distrust and fear. Under God, the success of the whole enterprise seems to have hung upon the intrepidity of this one man. And his intrepidity depended on his faith. See thus the absolute need of this faith for the fulfillment of the very promises

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CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

Encouragement and thoughts from a prisoner to other prisoners and readers.

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried” (Rev. 2:10).



SETTING GOALS IN THE NEW YEAR

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader. I hope this finds you doing well in the new year.

I would like to apologize to you, dear reader, for my tardiness in writing this column. I try to get the column in on time each month but sometimes circumstances get in the way. For example, we just came off a lockdown in which I didn't have any stamps or envelopes. Then there is the fact that I'm going through some trials and tribulations with a certain officer who is trying to make my life miserable, and she's doing a pretty good job of it, too. So I've been distracted by that. And then there is the little matter of my coming up for parole any day now (by the time this is published I should have been interviewed already). And then, and this is a constant problem, I'm the world's biggest procrastinator.

However, like anytime I stumble and fall flat on my face I eventually get tired of wallowing in the dust and reach out for the Lord to help me get back on track. So here I am humbly asking you to forgive my lapse, dear reader.

As I mentioned earlier, this is my year, and month, to see parole. And boy, am I nervous. I'm definitely ready to get out of here. It's been twelve and half long years. But it's a big old scary world out there that's changed a lot since I was last in it. Yet, I'm better prepared for the challenges that lie ahead and I know I'm secure in the Lord, but sometimes I feel like the Apostles when they were in the boat with Jesus in the storm (Matt. 8:23-27).

So, please pray for me and all my infirmities, procrastination, dealing with hostile guards, and insecurity--just to name a few.

This column has always been about sharing my struggles and thoughts as a prisoner to help other prisoners and in the last five years I've covered a lot of subjects. And with this being the first column of what could be my last year as a prisoner I'd like to talk to you about the necessity of setting goals, dear reader.

Please don't go to sleep on me here. Setting goals is very important. You can accomplish anything if you have a plan and a clearly defined goal. Start off small. When I first started setting goals I was

in segregation. My first small goal was to read classical literature. I surmised that all successful people were well versed in classical literature, so if I wanted to be successful then I needed to read it, too. And believe it or not, that first small goal led to my writing this very column.

You see, it was a passage in the introduction of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* that the Lord used to inspire me into wanting to be a writer.

When you first start setting goals don't get too big for your britches. Set realistic short term goals. If you set your goals so high that it takes forever to reach them you'll get discouraged and give up on goal setting. But if you set small short term goals and achieve them then you will be encouraged to set more short term and some mid-term goals. The more goals you set and achieve the more courage you'll have to set bigger, longer term goals.

I've been out of seg for three years now and I took my goal setting with me. So, see, you can do it anywhere you are: in seg, in population, out in the free-world--wherever you are.

I've been taking college classes for some time now and set goals for every semester. I make it my goal to do the best I can in every class. Does that always mean an "A"? No it doesn't. My goal is to do the best I can do, not set myself up for discouragement if I don't get an "A". If my goal is to do my best and I do that all semester and get a "B", then I am happy that I met my goal. My goal is not perfection if I do my best and get a "B" I'm okay with that. Perfection is an unrealistic goal.

My biggest goal of the moment is to make parole. And I've done everything in my power for almost ten years now to make that happen. But it's not all up to me, however, what has been up to me I've set goals to achieve.

And I haven't stopped at making parole. I've already begun setting goals for life after prison. The biggest goal of which is to graduate from the Texas Culinary Academy's Le Cordon Bleu Culinary Arts Program. I'm even working on that goal while still in prison by reading everything I can on becoming a chef and professional cooking.

Start small and work your way up to big, long term goals. And once you set a goal, keep it ever before your eyes, break large goals down into small baby-step goals so you don't get discouraged. Setting goals is like following a map: you state

the goal and then reason out the steps it's going to take to get to the goal. And then follow the steps to your goal. Start small, set realistic goals, and achieve them and you'll be a big time goal achiever before you know it. You don't have to be a brainiac or have any special skills to set and achieve goals--you just have to keep the goal in sight and do everything in your power to reach it, one small step at a time.

“... press toward the mark ...” (Phi. 3:14).



Life of Joshua

(Continued from page 266) ♦

of God. No wonder that the Scriptures speak of it as a divine gift; no wonder that they attribute to it such an astonishing efficacy. It comes from God. It goes back to the throne of His grace, taking hold of His almighty arm, and accomplishing His own eternal purposes. What can it not aid us to endure! What can it not enable us to perform! He who has it shall go, like Joshua, from strength to strength, till he arrives to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, and is a triumphant conqueror over all his spiritual enemies. My young friend, has thou faith in God, in all that He tells thee; in all that He commands thee? Especially, dost thou believe, in thine heart, in Christ as thy only Saviour?

The faith of Joshua unquestionably led him to be a man of prayer. The connection between the two is inseparable. Faith is the life of prayer. Prayer is the breath of faith. To ask of God what we need is as essential to true piety, as to believe that he is able and willing to supply our necessities. The very fact that the faith of Joshua accomplished such prodigies, proves that his also was the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man, which availeth much.

Joshua was a person of remarkable humility, and felt deeply his dependence on God. There was nothing like presumption or self-complacency in this truly modest man. He always points his countrymen to God as the only source of their confidence. He is careful that the Almighty shall have the glory of the great deeds which he was but the instrument of achieving. How profound his humiliation, when, after the discomfiture of the Israelites at Ai, he was sensible that his own sins, and those of the people under his charge, had drawn down the displeasure of Jehovah upon them. He felt, doubtless, throughout the whole of his extraordinary career, how entirely it was owing to divine grace that he was enabled to be what he was, and to do what he did. Happy humility! **“He that humbleth himself shall be exalted;”** and most truly was Joshua exalted in the worth of his personal character, in the favor and friendship of God, and in the unspeakable good which he was instrumental of conferring upon the whole nation of the

Israelites and their descendants. **“The Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.”**

Reader, dost thou feel that thy wisdom is but folly, and thy strength weakness; and dost thou look to God continually to work in thee both to will and to do of His own good pleasure?

The obedience of Joshua to the commands of God, was prompt and implicit. Difficulties and dangers did not dishearten him. He never made excuses for delay. He was no procrastinator in the discharge of duty. **“Arise, go over this Jordan,”** ---was the direction of the Almighty; and his servant put it into immediate execution, though a whole nation was to make the passage, and a miracle was necessary to accomplish it. The captain of the Lord's host ordered Jericho to be compassed, and Joshua commanded the priests and the people to begin the march. Achan and his family were to be destroyed, and it was done. Strongly fortified cities were to be taken; mighty kings were to be subdued; large and powerful armies were to be vanquished--the word of the Lord came to that effect, and the leader of the Israelites put his armies in motion. He heard. He believed. He obeyed.

Joshua was decided in his piety. His love to God was a principle of loyalty, deep-rooted, abiding, incorruptible. To do the right--to do it always, to do it fearlessly--was one of the most conspicuous traits of the character of this noble man. When he had ascertained the will of God, he had the rule, and he followed it. The ambition of conquest, the tempting spoils of the vanquished, the lure of popularity, turned him not aside from the path of rectitude. He sought no personal aggrandizement. He coveted no large possessions, and showed a singular disinterestedness in the moderate portion for which he asked, and which was assigned him. If necessary, he would stand alone in his fidelity. Even if the whole nation should go over to idolatry, his inflexible resolution was; **“as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”** Reader, is such the purpose of thy soul?

This distinguished person was imminently trust-worthy. There must have been that in his intercourse with his fellow-men which early won their confidence. He was known to be entitled to it. Hence he was chosen by Moses to lead the band that conquered at Rephidim, and to ascend Mount Sinai with him, his only companion when he went to its highest elevation to receive the tables of the law. Hence he was one selected for the important mission from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the promised land. And hence, (the highest honor that was conferred upon him, placing the seal of the divine approbation upon his fidelity,) he was chosen by God Himself the colleague

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Life of Joshua

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of Moses before his death; his successor after it as the leader of the Israelites; their conductor into Canaan; and the chief of the nation, until, under his guidance, they conquered the country and had it divided among them. What responsible trusts! What proofs of his moral greatness of soul, thus to have the confidence, entire and unchanging, of his God and of his fellow-men!

In the divine strength, my young friend, resolve to be, like Joshua, trust-worthy. Acquire the confidence of those with whom you are connected in the various relations and business of life, by showing that you deserve it. Adhere rigidly to the truth. Keep your word. Fulfill punctually and strictly your engagements. Perform your duties conscientiously. Be faithful to every trust reposed in you. Let integrity mark your whole character. Above all, be faithful to your God. Secure, as Joshua did, His gracious approbation, and you, too, shall be honored with the marks of His confidence, and enjoy the exalted privilege of being employed in His service. You shall be prepared, in whatever sphere of duty He may see fit to place you, to be happy in promoting His glory and the best good of your fellow-men here; and in the future world to rise to higher privileges, and to happiness unutterable, in loving and serving Him without imperfection, and without end.

We might speak, in the same way, of the courage of Joshua, both his moral courage, and his personal bravery; of his wisdom and prudence; of his wonderful talent to command; of his inflexible perseverance; of his patience and skill in managing such a people as the Israelites; of his patriotism; and especially of his active and affectionate benevolence, as shown, in so striking a manner, towards the close of his life, and in his parting counsels to his countrymen. We might expatiate on these and other estimable traits of his character. But time forbids. We have seen enough in this eminently great man, to lead us to adore the riches of that grace which fashioned him into such loveliness and excellence, and to pray that, through the same grace, we may be, as he was, ---each one in his lot and station, ---the servant of the Lord.



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From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Law, and The Law-Abiding

“Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently” (Ps. 119:4).

Some theologians say sinners become saints by obeying the law. This is legalism to the core. It is a denial of salvation by grace and the affirmation of salvation by works. Others declare that the law has nothing whatever to do with believers. This is a repudiation of God's governmental authority; it is Antinomianism, pure and simple. Then some, like myself, believe that the law continues as a rule of life for believers in this age.

It has always seemed foolish to me for Antinomians to use the many verses about being dead to the law in the writings of Paul to prove that the Gentiles now have no laws to obey. It is the height of folly to use these verses in this fashion if the Gentiles were never under the moral law of God as they teach. Thus one of their arguments mutually overthrows the other, leaving these lawless teachers in a dilemma.

Christ fulfilled the types of the ceremonial law, but He did not abolish the moral law. It antedated the Mosaic Economy, continued through it, and remains as a rule of conduct for God's children today.

Man needs God's moral law just as a railway car needs a track to guide itself. To leap the track is not to find freedom, but ruin. It does not hurt the scholar to have before him the ideal of a perfect scholarship, nor the Christian to have before him the perfect law of liberty.

THE MORAL LAW CONTINUES

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22). In Paul's heart there was a deep joy in the law of God. He went on to say: **“So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God”** (Rom. 7:25).

How far removed is this from the delusion that the law has been abolished and has no relationship to the Christian whatever. The new nature, which the Apostle had, caused him to delight in God's law. It was his innermost desire to serve, please and glorify the Lawgiver.

“But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully” (I Tim. 1:8). Paul could not have said this if the law had been repealed to Christians. Thus there is a lawful use of the law as a rule of life. To use the law lawfully is to receive it as a corrector of conduct and to fulfill it in

love.

The law is used unlawfully when sinners rest on their imperfect obedience to it as the ground of their justification. To the Galatians Paul said: **“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace”** (Gal. 5:4).

“For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Rom. 13:8-9).

Here again the Apostle Paul destroys the idea that the Ten Commandments are obsolete to the Christian. He quotes five of them and then declares: **“Love is the fulfilling of the law.”** Love when enlightened by the law will obey the commandments of God.

“To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law” (I Cor. 9:21).

While Paul forewent his Christian liberty for the sake of the gospel, he did not act as **“without law to God,”** but instead considered himself **“under law to Christ.”** He ever considered himself under the moral law of God, the eternal law of righteousness.

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Heb. 8:10).

The New Covenant was made with all the elect for whom Christ died. This passage reveals that God puts His laws into the minds and hearts of every one of the redeemed. It would be very foolish for God to do this, if the law was not binding upon Christians. But if the law is a rule of life as I contend, then the passage makes sense.

“If ye fulfill the royal law according to the Scriptures, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors” (Jas. 2:8-9).

James discloses that the early Christians

by despising the poor had transgressed the law. He would not have said this unless the law was binding upon those Jewish Christians to whom he writes. Thus we see another conclusive proof that the law has not been destroyed.

James goes on to say: **“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law”** (Jas. 2:10-11).

Those who fail to love their neighbor is just as much a transgressor of the law as the man who is guilty of murder, for he has rebelled against the authority of the One Who gave the whole law.

When he says: **“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty”** (Jas. 2:12). There is absolutely no reason for the believer to be judged by the law of liberty, if he is not under the moral law as a rule of life.

“He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked” (I John 2:6). The Christian is to regulate his conduct by the conduct of Christ. How did Christ conduct Himself? by perfect obedience to the law of God. I Peter 2:21 says: **“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”** But can we follow in Christ's steps by disobeying God's moral law? Certainly not!

IN WHAT SENSE IS THE BELIEVER FREE FROM THE LAW?

Believers are free from the constraint and bondage of the law: **“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace”** (Rom. 6:14). To be under law is to be under its claim of entire obedience of pain of death; it is to be shut up under inability to keep it and to be the helpless slave of sin. The Christian is not under the law in this sense. He is under the glorious saving effects of God's grace which reigns unto eternal life by Jesus Christ his Lord (Rom. 5:20-21).

Christ freed the believer from the curse and penalty of the law by bearing the curse and penalty Himself. **“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”** (Gal. 3:13).

The law can do nothing with a man after it has executed its death penalty upon him. **“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but**

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Law-Abiding

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if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:1-4).

Our marriage relations with the law ceased with our union with the crucified One to Whom we are united by faith. The expiatory death of Christ has dissolved the claims of the law on believers as a husband's death sets the wife at liberty. Since Christ has risen from the dead our marriage union to Him causes us to be in obedience to Him as a wife would be to a second husband after the first had died.

Our Savior freed us from the law as a method of salvation. **"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"** (Rom. 10:4). The design of the law was to lead people to the righteousness of Christ. The moral law revealed the wound and the ceremonial law foreshadowed the remedy, but Christ is the end of both.

The purpose of the law was to bring men to perfect obedience, and so to obtain justification. The law is not destroyed, nor the intentions of the Lawgiver frustrated, but full satisfaction being made by the death of Christ for the breach of the law, the end is attained and the believer is justified.

Obedience to the law on our part is no longer rendered painful as if our salvation depended upon it. We now gladly and freely keep His commandments out of gratitude for what Christ has done for us. God's law may have seemed to be a **"yoke of bondage"** to the Israelites, but Christians find Christ's **"yoke"** to be easy (Matt. 11:30) and His **"commandments are not grievous"** (I John 5:3).

Christ freed the believer from the law as an outward and foreign compulsion by giving us the Spirit of obedience and sonship. Grace makes **"the children of disobedience"** (Eph. 2:2) to become **"obedient children"** (I Peter 1:14). Grace puts love in the place of fear, and this secures an obedience more intelligent and hearty than could have been secured by mere law. **"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"** (II Tim. 1:7).

THE RELATIONSHIP OF LAW AND GRACE

The law is a partial expression of God's nature. It expresses His holiness, but not His personality, love, mercy, goodness and helpfulness. Grace is the larger and more complete manifestation of the Divine nature. Law reveals God's holiness while grace discloses God's love. Not the law,

but Christ is the perfect image of God. **"His son. . . the expressed image of His person"** (Heb. 1:2-3).

The law was a rude outline of the good things of grace (Heb. 10:1). It foreshadowed the elements of salvation by grace with object-lessons. The Old Testament saints had a shadow of the good things of Christ and the gospel. We have the substance in these gospel days.

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). We are not to understand by these words that there was no grace before Christ or no law before Moses. There has always been an intermixture of law and grace in all dispensations.

There was grace before Moses' time: **"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD"** (Gen. 6:8). Likewise there was law before Moses' time: **"Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws"** (Gen. 26:5). There was grace during the Law Dispensation: **"The LORD will give grace and glory"** (Ps. 84:11). There is law during the present Grace Dispensation: **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"** (John 14:15).

While the Dispensation of the Law was in force, grace was in the background and the law in the spotlight. In these gospel days, grace is on the front seat and the law is in the rear.

The dispensations of law and grace are not opposing systems, for God did not take opposing attitudes toward men in these two different ages. "So far from being opposing systems, law and grace as revealed in Scripture are parts of one harmonious and progressive plan. The present dispensation is spoken of as the age of grace, not because grace belongs to it exclusively, but because in it grace has been fully manifested. When John declared that 'the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' he was contrasting law and grace, not as two contrary and irreconcilable systems, but as two related parts of one system.

The law was the shadow, Christ was the substance. The law was the pattern, Christ was the reality. The grace which had been behind the law came to light through Jesus Christ so that it could be realized. As a matter of fact, grace had been in operation from the beginning. It began in Eden with the first promise of redemption immediately after the fall. All redemption is of grace; there can be no salvation without it, and even the law itself proceeds on the basis of grace" (Dr. McNichol).

Grace does not abrogate the law; it enforces it. **"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law"** (Rom. 3:31).

Those saved by grace and justified by faith establish the right use of the law. Though we cannot be saved by it, we submit to it as a rule of life in the hands

of a Mediator. Grace does not make a man lawless. It strengthens the law and causes one to keep it, not through fear, but through love to God (Rom. 8:15).

Grace secures the perfect fulfillment of the law. **"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"** (Rom. 8:3-4 marginal reading).

The law condemned, yet offered no pardon. It could not secure its own fulfillment. The defect was not in the law but in man's flesh. Christ was made sin for the elect and, being so made, when He was condemned in His human flesh. Thus Christ imputes to the believer a righteousness of satisfaction for the breach of the law, so that though the righteousness of the law is not fulfilled by us, yet it is fulfilled in us who walk after the Spirit.

Jesus Christ did not destroy the law of God. **"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill"** (Matt. 5:17). Christ exhibited the fullness and spirituality of the law by amplifying its contents. He brought out the inner meaning of the law by revealing in Himself the perfect life.

He in no way subverted, or abrogated, or annulled the moral law of God. Christ observed the Sabbath, prayed, gave alms and never broke one of the least commandments. Prophecy had said of Him: **"He will magnify the law, and make it honorable"** (Isa. 42:21). The Lord Jesus could truly say, **"Thy law is within my heart"** (Ps. 40:8).

THE LAW HAS BEEN CHANGED

It is written: **"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law"** (Heb. 7:12). The writer of Hebrews indicates in these words that there has been a change in the law concerning the priesthood. There was a tribal change and a change in the internal character and vital efficacy of the priest.

While the verse under consideration refers to the change in the ceremonial law, it may also indicate a change in other aspects of the law as well. We know that Christ in post resurrection days gave some new **"commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen"** (Acts 1:2).

The ceremonial law has been changed in three ways. First, the place of worship has been changed: **"Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father"** (John 4:21).

In Old Testament times Jerusalem was the place of worship to the Hebrews. In this dispensation the place of worship

is anywhere on earth where God's people gather together in Christ's name. **"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"** (Matt. 18:20). **"I will therefore that men pray every where"** (I Tim. 2:8).

Second, the manner of worship has been changed. Old Testament worship was ceremonial and carnal. The worshippers were largely strangers to the inward part of divine worship. The Christian era brought about a great revelation. We no longer worship God by the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic Economy. We worship the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ **"in Spirit and in truth"** (John 4:23). Our worship is rational and intellectual.

Third, the law of worship has been changed as to time. Christ did not abrogate the Sabbath, but He did change the day of it from the seventh day to the first day of the week. That there is a Sabbath for Christians to observe is evident from Hebrews 4:9: **"There remaineth therefore a keeping of a sabbath to the people of God"** (Marginal rendering).

CONCLUSION

It was the law of priesthood and worship, not the moral law, that was a shadow of good things to come. God's moral law is not our savior, it is our perpetual guide. It is not a covenant of life, yet it is a rule of life. The believer is not under the condemning power of the law, but he is under its commanding power.

Beware of Antinomianism for it contradicts the Scriptures and opens the door to all licentiousness. Those who refuse to let the law rule them have never been saved by the grace of God (Tit. 2:11-13).

Sinner, you do not keep God's law. Jesus Christ said: **"None of you keepeth the law"** (John 7:19). Your depraved nature will not permit you to keep God's law. By nature you are a rebel against God's dominion. You will not have Christ to reign over you. In your heart you desire to break His laws asunder.

Those who are not ruled by the law of God written in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, will inevitably be ruined by the Lawgiver. **"But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile"** (Rom. 2:8-9).

You will never delight in God's law until it is written in your heart by the Holy Spirit: **"And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them"** (Ezek. 36:27). Marvel not! Ye must be born again!



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Where in the Bible does it forbid gambling? There are some who say it does not.

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There is not a specific verse in Scripture that says: "Thou shalt not gamble." However the sin of gambling violates a number of scriptural principles, doctrines, warnings, and commands found in the Bible. Usually those who try and defend the gaming industry are really attempting to justify their sin, covetousness, and rebellion against God.

Many people are confused about gambling, risks, and the practice of casting lots in Scripture. They are not all one in the same. Every day we engage in manageable risks which are not associated at all with gambling. They are just part of every day life. Farmers take manageable risks every time they plant a crop. Entrepreneurs take manageable risks every time they introduce a better mouse trap into the marketplace. The practice of casting lots in Scripture was to discern the sovereign will of God in a given situation. It has absolutely no connection with gambling. Time and space forbid me to answer all the objections and explain all the differences so I will simply define what gambling is, and then offer some reasons why gambling violates specific principles revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

John MacArthur gave an excellent definition of gambling in one of his sermons:

"Gambling is an activity in which a person risks something of value, usually money. It's an activity in which a person risks something of value to forces of chance completely beyond his control, or any rational expectation. That's it. It is an activity in which a person risks something of value to forces of chance completely beyond his control, or any rational expectation, in hope of winning something of greater value, usually more money. But it is an appeal to sheer chance."

In light of the above definition I give the following reasons why gambling is immoral and why it violates the principles of Scripture:

1. Gambling denies the doctrine of God's sovereignty and replaces it with luck or chance. There is no such thing as luck or chance in Scripture. The Bible makes it clear that God does all things according to the purpose of His own will

(Eph. 1:11). Gambling at its very core is based on chance or what many people call luck, which is a denial of God's sovereignty. Those who gamble do not seek God's will or direction. Rather they make games of chance their god, praying that lady luck will favor them. This is idolatry which is a breach of the first commandment.

2. Gambling is promoted by the spirit of covetousness and materialism. The tenth commandment specifically states "**Thou shalt not covet...**" We are commanded to be content with what God has graciously provided us through personal initiative, industry, and hard work. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, and promotes the lust of covetousness (I Tim. 6:10) which is elsewhere referred to as idolatry (Col. 3:5).

3. Gambling dishonors the principle of a good work ethic and honorable labor. Gaming promises a huge return for little or no work. Proverbs 14:23 declares: "**In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.**" Proverbs 12:11 states: "**He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.**" Some of the most vain, empty, and undiscerning people on earth are gambling promoters. They are often associated with organized crime and corruption. To engage in gambling is to join hand in hand with those who promote the idea that you can get lots of money without working for it. It is shameful and immoral for people to adopt this philosophy.

4. Gambling is poor stewardship of the resources that God has providentially provided. It is God who gives us the power to get wealth (Deut. 8:18). We are commanded to be good stewards and be faithful with what God has given us (I Cor. 4:2). We are to do everything to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31). Gambling is taking the money that God has provided to support your family and throwing it away to support an addiction. How many horror stories are there about men and women who gambled away their means of sustenance while allowing their family to suffer? I Timothy 5:8 declares: "**But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.**" I believe that everyone is responsible to tithe. The tithe is holy and belongs to the Lord (Lev. 27:30-32). I would venture to say that an overwhelming majority of gamblers rob God to play games of chance or pay off gambling debts.

5. Gambling is immoral because it causes people to make irrational decisions. Billions of dollars are spent every year in the gaming industry by people who think they are going to cash in. They live in a fantasy world. They place their bets or spend their money on lottery tickets thinking they are going to hit the jackpot. Instead they lose their money only to fall for the false hope and deceptive advertising the next day or the next week. Gamblers have a carnal mind void of spiritual discernment. Nobody in their right mind would throw hard earned money away like gamblers do day after day, week after week, and year after year.

6. Gambling exploits people, especially the poor. In order for there to be a winner there usually are thousands or millions of losers who put their money in the pot. The gaming industry steals from those who are deceived by their false advertising and slick marketing in order to fund their machine.

7. Gambling is associated with all sorts of vice and wickedness. It is proven, that wherever gambling is prevalent the crime rate goes up: theft, murder, prostitution, drunkenness, drug abuse, and scams are all part of the gambling scene.

I could go on and on, but suffice it to say anyone who is engaged in gambling in any form is dishonoring God and violating the simple principle set forth in I Corinthians 10:31: "**Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.**"

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What a great question. Is the word gambling in the Bible? No. Is the word tithing or Trinity in the Bible? These words may not be, but the evidence in support of these truths is presented in Gods Word.

Why would one gamble anyway, to win, or to make some sort of return on monies gambled? The increase in monetary gain is the motivator for gambling. The problems with gambling are many. One problem in particular is, like a drug, gambling causes a release of hormones called dopamine. The individual who gambles associates the feeling of a "high" from this hormone to the activity and thus becomes addicted. This behavior manifests itself in other activities such as running, skydiving, weightlifting, eating, and so on. After some time the routine of moderate involvement in the activity does not produce the required amount of dopamine for the individual to feel

the "high" they must increase the danger, amount, or duration of any activity.

I said monetary gain is the motivator. Do we think the Bible calls gambling work? Maybe the Apostle Paul was misunderstood when he wrote "**Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread**" (II Thess. 3:12). What I'm getting at is people gamble to get rich. God's Word says we are to "**...work...**" The next observation in God's Holy Word is for us to abstain from coveting this worlds rusty old rotten cankered wood, hay and stubble riches. Why on earth would you want to be overcome with such things like, "**Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children**" (II Peter 2:14)? Eventually gambling like any other activity can have profoundly negative effects to a person's life. "**For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows**" (I Tim. 6:10).

You want to covet something? "**But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way**" (I Cor. 12:31).

Child of God, turn away from the things of this world that would turn you away, even for a moment, from the riches God has made us partakers of.

Would, maybe, you be the one who says gambling is harmless or that you would never be one that gambling would overcome? Let God's Word have the final say and direct our paths to sanctification. "**And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God**" (Luke 16:15).

MIKE DEWITT



Retail \$8.00

The book contains fifteen chapters. Chapters cover the following attributes: Omniscience, Foreknowledge, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Eternity, Holiness, Love, Goodness, Veracity, Spirituality, Mercy, Independency, Justice, Immutability and Long-Suffering.

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Please define what type of church members you would like to see in your church?

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“Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints” (I Thess. 3:11-13).

I can define what type of church member with one word, faithful. Faithful to God, to the church they belong to, faithful to their husband or wife, and faithful to the responsibilities as pertaining to a man or woman.

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Chesapeake, OH 45619

I have preached a sermon entitled “What Makes a Good Church Member” many times in special meetings, conferences, and revivals. I believe the church at Thessalonica provides us with an excellent model of what the membership of the Lord’s church should aspire to be.

I Thessalonians 1:2-3 declares: **“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.”** I offer the following 10 ingredients necessary to be a good church member with Scripture references (look them up):

1. Every church member must be “saved” by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who are not born of the Spirit, recipients of the gifts of repentance and faith, washed in the blood of the Lamb are not fit to be members of the Lord’s church. Only true believers in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ should be church members

(I Thess. 1:9).

2. Every church member must have “scriptural Baptist baptism” (Acts 2:41-47; Romans 6:3-6; Eph. 4:2-6). Baptism has four necessary components: 1) Proper authority--a scriptural Baptist church; 2) Proper mode--immersion in water; 3) Proper reason--symbolic only (baptism is a symbolic picture, not a saving ordinance); 4) Proper subject--a believer only. You cannot be a member of the Lord’s church without proper baptism which is why Baptists do not recognize the ordinances of the Catholics, Protestants, or the cults as valid and authoritative. If someone is not willing to submit to Baptist baptism they will never make a good church member.

3. Every church member must be “submissive” to the Word of God and the authority of the Lord’s church (I Thess. 2:13; II Thess. 3:4). When a believer becomes a member of the Lord’s church they become part of something that is more important than they are. They enter into covenant with a body of Christ and are responsible to honor Him through faithful, submissive service.

4. Every church member must be “separated” from evil and have a desire to walk in holiness (I Thess. 4:1-7; II Tim. 2:19). We must be set apart, consecrated, sanctified for God’s glory.

5. Every church member must be “steadfast,” faithful, and loyal to Christ and His church (I Thess. 1:3; 3:8; I Cor. 15:58; Heb. 10:23-25). The Lord’s church and His work should have a sacred priority in the life of every member.

6. Every church member must have a “sincere love” for the Lord’s people (I Thess. 3:12; 4:9; II Thess. 1:3; Phil. 2:2-5). There is nothing worse than a church full of people who are mean spirited, hateful, critical, unforgiving, and malicious. The one thing that Jesus said would distinguish His disciples was that they would have love one for another (John 13:34-35; 15:16-17).

7. Every good church member must have a burden to “share Christ” with others through faithful witnessing (I Thess. 1:8; 2:19-20; Prov. 11:30; Acts 8:4; II Tim. 2:10). Every church member should have a concern for the unsaved and obey the command to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). Hardshells in theory or in practice don’t make good church members. A church full of people unconcerned about the unsaved and the work of missions has the death rattle in its throat.

8. Every good church member must have a willingness to “sacrificially give” of themselves, their time, resources,

and money to support the work of the Lord. Every church member should be a consecrated tither (Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; Luke 6:38). Those who rob God in tithes and offerings are not honest. They are guilty of greed, covetousness, and stinginess when they do not honor God’s command to tithe.

9. Every good church member must have a “sincere respect and love for the pastor” that God has appointed to oversee the flock (I Thess. 5:12-13; I Tim. 5:7-19). There must be a bond of love and grace between people and pastor if the church is to prosper spiritually.

10. Every church member must be committed to “stand for truth” in a manner that is uncompromising and gracious at the same time (II Thess. 2:15; Eph. 4:15; Jude 3).

May God grant each Baptist church member to examine themselves in light of the above ingredients that make a good member and pray for grace to live for God’s glory.

TOM ROSS



Judge Yourself

By Dan Stepp
of Given, West Virginia

I look around today and see many Baptist brethren preaching and teaching the wonderful truths concerning the church, the sovereignty of God and the doctrines of grace. I rejoice in these great truths of The Word of God, and I believe they are essential to make good Baptists. Brethren, I believe that too many of the Baptist messages today are being made of none effect because of the lack of a godly life and testimony on the part of the preachers and the brethren in our Baptist churches.

In Matthew 7:20 Christ said that by their fruits you can know and recognize the false prophets. I believe that He intended that the saints should be recognized by their fruits. We find that our Saviour Himself expected to be recognized by His fruits. When John sent from prison to inquire as to the identity of Jesus, He replied: **“Go and shew John again 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 raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them”** (Matt. 11:4-5).

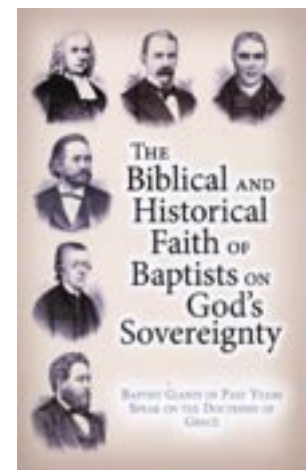
Brethren, it is time that Baptists awake to the fact that we are ambassadors for Christ (II Cor. 5:20). I Peter 2:9 tells us we are to be a peculiar people, and that we should show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into

His marvelous light.

I realize that there are too many preachers today that either by their teaching, or lack of teaching, indicate that it doesn’t matter how short the women wear their dresses, how long the men wear their hair, how much time the family sits in front of the TV set, how little time is spent in Bible study and prayer. But I would like to point out to you that we are exhorted to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We are going to be judged for the manner in which we have fulfilled our responsibilities as Christ’s ambassadors. I Corinthians 11:31 tells us **“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”**

I would like to propose three questions by which we as Baptists can judge all that we do and say: First, does it glorify God? If it does not, repent! Second, does it exalt Christ? If it does not, stop doing it! Third, is it to the edification of yourself and others? If it is not, then it is not worth your while.

Beloved Baptist friends, we are living in the latter times that Paul speaks of, and we can daily see the world waxing worse and worse. I believe it is past time that we as Baptists awake out of sleep and work while it is day. I believe it is time that we examine and judge ourselves as to whether we are living the holy faith as it was once delivered to the saints.



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A Fairy Tale of Profiling

Once upon a time, not so far away, in the mystical land of Political Correctness, a bank was bombed. Many people were hurt, and some were killed. There was indisputable proof as to the kind of person who did the bombing. The bomber was a red-haired, freckled face male, who drove a blue pickup truck. Now in the Kingdom of PC, there lived a gang of red-haired, freckled face men with blue pickup trucks. It was also known that some in this group were bombers. And remember, it was a red-haired, freckled face man who drove his blue pickup full of explosives into the bank and blew it up. There was also a track record of past bombings showing that 99.9 % of all bombings over the past several years had been carried out by red-haired, freckled face men in blue pick ups.

The rulers and the police of the Kingdom of Political Correctness believed that the red-haired, freckled face gang might bomb again, and began stopping and questioning and searching all red-haired, freckled face men in blue pickups. Now, not all red-haired, freckled face men in blue pickups were a part of this bombing gang. Some were tax paying, law abiding, legitimate citizens of the Kingdom of PC. But how were the police to know who was who without investigation? Lawsuits were enacted and Politically Correct Television (PCTV) and the Council on Red-Haired Relations (C.R.H.R.) began to yell, scream, kick and cry about how unfair it was to profile and target red-haired, freckled face men in blue pickups.

Soon, the police began to detain and question only blonde-haired, blue eyed females who drove red pickups. Well, everybody felt better then, except blonde-haired, blue eyed females in red pickups, but who cared, as long as the red-haired, freckled face men in blue pickups, and their lawyers, and PCTV were happy. After all, happiness and peace and the preservation of a few people's rights, (over the rights of the majority) is all that's important, right?

Oh, yeah, the conclusion of this tale. More banks were bombed, more lives lost and the rulers and the police of the kingdom and the kingdom itself were identified as the bad guys. Morale was devastated, the economy sunk, and the

kingdom collapsed. But hey, at least they got rid of that nasty, offensive profiling thing. No one seemed to notice that the kingdom had lost one of its most precious commodities: *common sense*.

Moral of this tale: ALWAYS use common sense in any situation. With the current threat on our national security, SOME profiling is a must. Profiling guided by common sense protects all and discriminates against none. Remember the words of Lester Roloff: "America has become an insane asylum, run by the inmates."



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use of now occurs in the life of David, and centers around the time that David sought to praise and worship the Lord through the Ark of the Testimony. We find that King David arranged to bring up the Ark of the Testimony into the city of Jerusalem. But we find that, at first, he did not do so in the manner and the fashion in which the Lord had commanded. Therefore, we can see that David is an example, in this instance, of one who sought to worship the Lord---but in a disobedient way.

Let's read the account of the time that David brought up the Ark of the Covenant.

First, let's read in I Chronicles 13:1-14: **"And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul. And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjathjearim. And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjathjearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it. And they carried the ark of God in a new cart of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart. And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the**

ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God. And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called Perezuzza to this day. And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me? So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obbededom the Gittite. And the ark of God remained with the family of Obbededom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obbededom, and all that he had."

Now, let's read two chapters later, what happened when David sought to worship and serve and praise the Lord God using the manner and means which the Lord God had commanded. We read in I Chronicles 15:1-15, 25-28: **"and David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever. And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it. And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites: Of the sons of Kohath; Uriel the chief, and his brethren an hundred and twenty: Of the sons of Merari; Asaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred and twenty: Of the sons of Gershon; Joel the chief, and his brethren an hundred and thirty: Of the sons of Elizaphan; Shemaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred: Of the sons of Uzziel; Amminadab the chief, and his brethren fourscore: Of the sons of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD. . . So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the**

LORD out of the house of Obbededom with joy. And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams. And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the son with the singers: David also had upon him an ephod of linen. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps."

As I said at the beginning, I believe there is much that we can learn from these actions of King David. And, in particular, I believe that there is much for us to learn in the areas of obedience to God, and the true worship which we desire to deliver up unto Him.

GOD GIVES US

COMMANDMENTS TO OBEY

Throughout the Bible, we receive the Word of God, which gives us the commandments and the teachings of God. Let us never forget that God is our God, and we are His children and servants. Therefore, we are obliged unto Him---obliged even to obey His commandments and His ways and His teachings.

As we return to the ineffective efforts of King David to worship the Lord the first time that he attempted to bring up the Ark of the Covenant, I want to remind you of some particular commandments of God with regard to the Ark of the Covenant---in particular the way in which it should be moved.

First, we notice that the Levites, in particular, the sons of Kohath (one of the sons of Levi), were the ones that were entrusted with the duty to bear the Ark. We read of this in Numbers 4:1-5, 15: **"And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers, From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things: And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil, and cover the ark of testimony with it. . . And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the**

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congregation. When we consider the events that took place the first time that David sought to bring up the Ark of the Covenant, it seems that David and his men did not abide by the things which are taught here. And, in doing so, or rather, in failing to obey God, they violated some very plain and clear precepts of God. And, even though they sought to worship God, their worship would not be accepted because of their manner and mode of worship.

I believe this to be true in many Christians and so-called churches today. The world is full of those folks that will deny some very basic tenets of the Scriptures---even deny some very obvious teachings of the New Testament---and yet they think that their worship of God will be acceptable in His sight, just because (supposedly) their hearts are full of good intentions, and they seem to be obeying some other, more easily obeyed precepts of God. But, when it comes to those Scriptures that command utter obedience and utter service and lives full of faith and duty, they tend to neglect these, and base their worship on other less taxing Scriptures.

But, let's get back to the Lord's Word concerning the Ark of the Covenant, and how that it should be moved.

We have already noticed that the sons of Kohath should have been the ones who carried the Ark of the Covenant. Second, we can see that there were some staves which were made so that the Levites could carry the Ark. Only these staves were to be used to carry the Ark, and the Ark was not to be carried in any other way. We read about this in Exodus 25:13-16: **"And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee."** David and his followers apparently ignored this commandment of God. Instead, they carried the Ark of the Covenant in a new cart.

Oddly enough, just some few years before, in the time of Samuel's youth, the Philistines had defeated the Israelites in a battle and they had captured the Ark of the Covenant. After their failed attempts to keep the Ark, and to abuse that symbol of God's dwelling-place with men, the Philistines had decided to return the Ark unto the Israelites---only after the Lord had destroyed many of them and made many more sick, because they had lightly and mockingly handled the Ark of the Covenant. Well, when the Philistines sent the Ark back into Israel, they had sent it in a new cart, drawn by two young

milch kine (See I Samuel 6:7-8). Now, doesn't it seem strange, and rather gross, that David would have made use of the same means of transport that the wicked idolaters from the neighboring cities had made use of? Maybe, in this instance, David was not unlike many of those who are in Christianity today. They, too, seek to mingle idolatry and the ways of the world with their worship of God.

But today, we, too, have commandments that we ought to abide by. And, even though we are under the New Testament, we are still required to be obedient unto the commandments that God has given us. For instance, we are commanded to love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, souls, might, and minds. We read about this in Mark 12:30-31. **"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."** Now, some may object, and they might say that these are Old Testament laws. But, I believe that since Jesus made reference to these commandments; and, since these commandments express the spirit and the intent of all of the

commandments of God; then we ought to obey these plain and clear teachings of God. Therefore, unlike those false professors that may populate Christianity today, we ought to manifest the love of God which God has required of us. And we ought to fill our hearts, souls, might and minds with the love of God and our worship of Him. If we fail to do so, then we are, in fact, disobedient unto God, and we are seeking to worship Him without first obeying Him.

Further, I believe that our true worship of God must manifest obedience to God and to His commandments, and even His expectations. We read in John 15: 9-10, **"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."** I believe this Scripture makes it plain, that we cannot even truly worship God if we do not continue in His love. And the only way to manifest our love for Him and His love for us---in other words, the only way to continue in His love---is to keep His commandments.

How many folks today, that make a pretense of worshipping God, really and truly love God with all of their hearts, souls, might, and minds? How many folks today that seem to obey God in

some areas, will also violate the clear teachings and precepts of God in other areas? These folks ought not to expect that their semblance of worship will be accepted of God---any more than what David's worship in the instance of the initial move of the Ark of the Covenant, would in any wise be acceptable in God's sight. Instead, David's attempt at worship resulted in catastrophe and death. I wonder how many other persons in today's world have attempted to worship God in a manner that is not prescribed and perhaps catastrophe, sickness, or even death may have been the result?

CERTAIN THINGS ARE EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN

Just as the Bible is full of "Thou Shalt Do's," maybe, even more, the Scriptures expressly teach us many "Thou Shalt Not's."

For instance, the children of Israel knew that there were certain things forbidden in regards to the Ark of the Covenant. They knew that they were not to touch the Ark of the Covenant---and they were not to even look at it. This prohibition even applied to those who were to carry the Ark---the sons of Kohath. **"And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Cut ye not off the tribes of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites: But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden: But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die"** (Num. 4:17-20). Apparently, when King David moved the Ark of the Covenant, this is an aspect of God's Law that he did not abide by. In neglecting the Word of God, David put himself and all of his followers at risk. And, in fact, Uzza lost his life because of the willingness of David and the others to ignore the Word of God---even though they sincerely had a desire to worship the Lord, they did not go about it in the Scriptural manner.

The same is true in the lives of many Christians today. Many Christians will ignore or neglect some very important instructions of God, just so they can serve and worship the Lord in their own way. Well, my friends, this is not a characteristic of true worship. Instead, these willful denials of the prohibitions of God are only proof that we are, in that particular instance, in a state of rebellion against God and His ways of true worship.

But, let's go on to draw some observations from this concept of the commandments of God that expressly forbid us from doing certain things or worshipping in certain ways.

Just as we are commanded to love and serve God, we are also expressly forbidden to give our love and service

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unto another. The sons of Kohath were forbidden to **“approach unto the most holy things”** or to **“see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.”** Well, conversely, we in the New Testament are expressly forbidden to associate with evil and wicked men; and we are expressly commanded for forsake the associations of the things of man and the things of the flesh, in order that we might be holy and useful servants unto God. **“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”** (II Cor. 6:14-18). So, if we are going to manifest the obedience that is required of us, and if we are going to truly worship God, then we are prohibited from being worldly or consuming our lusts upon the things of the flesh. Instead, we are commanded to forsake the world and **“touch not the unclean thing.”** And, we are told to **“come out from among”** the **“darkness”** of the world; and the Belials of the world; and the infidels of the world; and the **“idols”** of the world; and we are told to **“be. . .separate.”** When we obey the Lord’s commands in these regards, then we are manifesting true worship. And, in turn, the Lord God will acknowledge us, and He **“will be a Father unto”** us and we shall be His **“sons and daughters.”**

The things that I have just mentioned are very practical. And, certainly, the Bible makes it clear that we are to keep ourselves holy in this world. But we are not just to forsake the world and keep our flesh pure; but we are also instructed to forsake the world and keep our doctrine and gospel pure. We read in another place in the New Testament that we are forbidden to follow another gospel. Paul told the churches of Galatia, **“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be**

accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9). Therefore, if we are to serve the Lord acceptably, and if we are going to exhibit any characteristics of true worship, then we need to obey the gospel---and not just obey the gospel, but also preach the one and true gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, let us, as the churches of Jesus Christ in whatever location He has placed us, be about the preaching of the gospel of Christ. And let us teach and preach the same things that the Apostles and all of the true churches before us have taught and preached. And, as Paul said, **“If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”**

OTHER THINGS ARE PROHIBITED THROUGH IMPLICATION

Some folks claim that since certain things are commanded of us; and since certain other things are prohibited us; that there are many other areas which are left unto our own discretion. However, I believe that when we study the Word of God and the commandments of God and the teachings of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have all that we need to know to arrive at any decision as to what we ought to be doing and what we ought not to be doing.

For instance, there wasn’t anywhere in the Law of Moses, where the use of a cart was expressly forbidden in the carrying of the Ark of the Covenant. So, perhaps David thought that it was acceptable to do so---he even used a **“new cart”** (I Chron. 13:7) when he went to move the Ark of the Covenant. But, the fact that God had given clear instructions on how to transport the Ark of the Covenant meant that all other methods or modes of transport would not be acceptable. To me, this is something that we ought to apply to the faith and practice of so many who pretend to worship and serve the Lord God today. How many folks will make use of some practice or teaching which they imagine to be appropriate, just because that particular practice or teaching may not be dealt with intimately and particularly in the Word of God?

Some might say, “Well, it seems to me that David’s heart was in the right place. And it seems to me that he was really seeking to worship God.” I must admit that, certainly these things are true. In fact, the account which we have read today reveals to us some of David’s attempts at worship in the instance of the first attempt to move the Ark of the Covenant: **“And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets”** (I Chron. 13:8). Here we find that **“David and all Israel”** really sought to worship

God **“with all their might.”** But, in the end, no matter how hard they tried, they could not be pleasing in the sight of God---because His Ark, containing His covenant with Israel, was in a new cart, and not resting on the shoulders of the chosen Levites of God!

Now if you and I were to twist the Scriptures, or enforce certain passages of Scriptures of the expense of other passages of Scriptures, we could come up with many a heretical doctrine. This, I believe, is what much of Christianity seeks to do, when they attempt to worship the Lord. Let me give you some examples.

First, notice the tendency of Christians in Christianity to indulge in the observance at Christmas and other pagan holidays. They claim that since these things are not expressly mentioned in Scriptures, that they might be alright to observe---especially if they observe these pagan holidays in the proper and godly frame of mind. However, remember, David and all Israel played and sang and worshipped with all their might---and still, Uzza wound up dead on the ground.

Second, notice the tendency of Christians in Christianity to neglect the importance of the local church, and even the neglect of the importance of church attendance. These folks claim that there is no Baptist church in the Bible---therefore any church or denomination will suffice. And, these folks claim that there were no church buildings in the Bible, but instead people met in houses and homes---therefore it must not be too important to attend upon the public worship services of any local Baptist church. Some folks will say, “I can have church in my house, just as well as you can have church in that church building.” Other folks will say, “I don’t need to go to church to prove I am a Christian---I can worship just fine right here in my house---or in my fishing boat, for that matter.” When folks are questioned concerning these actions, they often times will say, “Well, the Bible doesn’t anywhere say that I can’t have Sunday worship in my house---or in my boat, or on the golf course, or at the ballgame.” Well, that is true. But the, bass boats or golf courses or ballgames weren’t places that were oftentimes frequented by most of the folks in the New Testament.

But let me give you a more plain reprimand that these folks are in need of, and that is this: Just because the Bible doesn’t expressly forbid some action (or inaction), does not mean that that action (or inaction) is a manifestation of obedience to God. In other words, I believe that the fact that the Bible makes it plain that we are to worship with the church, which is the **“called out, baptized, assembly of God,”** then we have no excuse to pretend that we can gather together with our family, and perhaps a

few others, even if they are members of the body of Christ, at the expense of the clear command of God to **“not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.”**

In the end, David understood that just because a new cart was not mentioned (or listed) as a prohibited means of transport for the Ark of the Covenant, did not mean that he had permission to twist or ignore or neglect the Word of God on the subject. And, when he goes to move the Ark of the Covenant the second time, we read these words: **“And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD”** (I Chron. 15:15).

WE HAVE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO WORSHIP

There are many other aspects of the obedience which is required of us that we could go on to talk about now.

We have just noticed a little of the plain teachings concerning the accepted manner and mode of the worship of God in the Old Testament---in particular the way in which the children of Israel were to worship the Lord God.

I want us all to be reminded that the Bible, in particular the New Testament, reveals unto us the ways and means of our worship of God. Beginning with the instructions to be baptized; continuing on to serve Him in the church of Jesus Christ. All of these are characteristics of true worship.



“Worshippers alone can be relied upon to build churches. The people who regularly worship faithfully in the sanctuary are the ones who must be relied upon to bear the burdens of the church: They are the givers, the soul-winners, the loyal supporters of the varied and vital ministries of the church.

“People who do not attend public worship can not be relied upon as builders of the church. It is certain that there is scant hope that the lost will be reached with the plea of the gospel if they do not attend upon the preaching of the Word. There is good and sufficient reason for the concern manifested by pastors regarding the attendance of the people upon the preaching service.” --- Burroughs (*News & Truths*).



THE BIBLE BANNER 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.

DEMOCRAT JUMPS SHIP OVER HEALTH CARE

(EP News)--U.S. Rep. Parker Griffith of Alabama announced Dec. 22 he would change his party affiliation to Republican. At a press conference Griffith said the Democratic Party does not represent his values. "I have become increasingly concerned that the bills and policies pushed by the current Democratic leadership are not good for north Alabama or our nation," he said. "Our nation is at a crossroads and I can no longer align myself with a party that continues to pursue legislation that is bad for our country, hurts our economy and drives us further and further into debt." There are now 257 Democrats in the House and 178 Republicans.

MARRIAGE IS GOOD FOR MEN AND WOMEN

(EP News)--Married people are less likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and substance abuse, according to researchers from the University of Otago in New Zealand. Researchers looked at 34,000 people in 15 countries and also found mental health disorders increase when a marriage ends through divorce, separation or even death. Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project, said that while marriage is a religious issue, it's also a human institution. "There's a large body of research that suggests that marriage plays an important role in elevating the social and emotional welfare of adults in the United States and around the world," he said. "A variety of cultures and religions lift up marriage because they recognize that marriage provides an important measure of social and economic support to adults and of course to kids as well."

IOWANS RALLY FOR MARRIAGE

(EP News)--Family advocates will hold a rally at the Iowa state capitol for "Two days for Marriage" on Jan. 12-13 in support of a marriage protection amendment, a day after the Legislature goes back into session. The event is being coordinated by "Let Us Vote Iowa" and the Iowa Family Policy Council (IFPC). Tom Steen, chief operating officer for the IFPC, said the rally will come after the governor's state of the state address. "We are going to take the leaders of the various community groups that will be there to meet House leaders and Senate leaders," he said. "They are going to be delivering petitions that have been building and gathering over the state for the last four or five months." Last April, the Iowa Supreme Court struck down the state's defense of marriage act

– ushering in gay "marriage." Steen said the numbers show that Iowa is ripe for a constitutional marriage amendment.

HOUSE RESOLUTION CALLS FOR REMOVAL OF 'SAFE SCHOOL CZAR'

(EP News)--Rep. Michael Burgess, R-Texas, has introduced a resolution calling for the dismissal of "safe schools czar" Kevin Jennings. The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, a gay activist group founded by Jennings, has been scrutinized for pushing controversial reading lists and curriculums in public schools. Family advocates are worried Jennings will use his new post to introduce a homosexual agenda in public schools. Rep. Steve King said that's almost guaranteed. "One can only expect him to continue down the path that he has, and that is to promote homosexuality activity," said the Iowa Republican.

CHRISTIAN MOM DOES NOT RELINQUISH DAUGHTER TO FORMER LESBIAN PARTNER

(EP News)--Lisa Miller of Virginia had been ordered by a Vermont judge to hand over her daughter to former lesbian partner Janet Jenkins on Jan. 1. Miller did not show up for the appointment. Miller and Jenkins entered into a civil union in 2000 in Vermont. Isabella was born to Miller through artificial insemination in 2002. Miller became a Christian and walked away from homosexuality shortly thereafter. A Vermont Family Court Judge awarded custody of Isabella to Jenkins on Nov. 20.

COURT RULES IN FAVOR OF MONTANA ASSISTED-SUICIDE LAW

(EP News)--The Montana Supreme Court has ruled in favor of physician-assisted suicide. Montana has the only court mandated assisted-suicide law in the nation. Jeff Laszloffy, president of the Montana Family Foundation, said, "It's up to us now to go into the next legislative session and put a statute in place that completely and once and for all bans physician-assisted suicide in the state of Montana," he said. The pro-family group polled the Legislature in the last session and found an overwhelming number of legislators that are opposed to physician-assisted suicide. Oregon and Washington also allow assisted suicide.

CONSERVATIVE GROUP PONDERES CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE TO HEALTH CARE

(EP News)--If Democrats are successful at pushing health care reform legislation through to law, conservatives are looking at the possibility of a constitutional challenge.

The Conservative Action Project (CAP), a coalition of conservative groups, said, "Mandating that individuals must obtain health insurance, and imposing any penalty – civil or criminal – on any private citizen for not purchasing health insurance is not authorized by any provision of the U.S. Constitution." Democrats have claimed that the individual mandate is authorized under the Commerce Clause, the General Welfare Clause or the Taxing and Spending Clause, according to CAP. CAP argues that the federal government has limited jurisdiction, "unless a specific provision of the Constitution empowers a particular law, then that law is unconstitutional."

CIVIL UNIONS TAKE CENTER STAGE

(EP News)--Some homosexual activists are rethinking the strategy to redefine marriage now that voters in 31 states have affirmed one-man, one-woman marriage. Since the latest defeat in Maine in November, they're talking about turning their attention to civil unions. But Caleb H. Price, social research analyst with Focus on the Family, said it doesn't mean the gay lobby is backing off. "It's simply a half step backward in order to regroup in order for them to achieve their ultimate goal, which is same-sex marriage," he said. "They may take different forms or different shapes, but the fact of the matter is – in most cases – they are the same thing as marriage but just with a different name."

NEW MEXICO COURT RULES AGAINST CHRISTIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS

(EP News)--A state court in New Mexico has upheld a ruling against Jon and Elaine Huguenin. As owners of Elane Photography, they declined to photograph a same-sex commitment ceremony in 2006 and were sued. The court ruled the owners had violated a nondiscrimination law. Jordan Lorence, senior legal counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), said it exposes the threat such laws pose to religious liberty. "The court showed very little respect for that," he said, "and said that this was no different than a caterer serving food and was liable to this same-sex couple." Lorence points out New Mexico hasn't legalized same-sex unions. "So, these couples are going through these ceremonies that have no legal significance to them," he said. "They're using these non-discrimination laws like 'blasphemy' laws, and they're going on witch hunts to root out the heretics and punish them." ADF plans to appeal.

MISSOURI LAWMAKER TAKES STAND FOR LIFE

State Sen. Scott Rupp filed a bill attempting to protect his state from abortion mandates in health care reform. The Missouri Republican Rupp doesn't want his state taxpayers forced to fund abortion services under the Democrats' plan. "We see this as an overarching reach from the government," he said. "We're trying to say in Missouri, 'We are a pro-life state, we respect the sanctity of life and we want to make sure we protect the unborn.'" Rupp is proactively

protecting Missourians' rights, even though the final health care draft has not been determined. "One of the reasons we were looking at how we drafted the language," he said, "was there are some provisions in one of the versions of the federal government's bill that does allow the states to have this right to say, 'No we can do what we want to do in our own state.'"

PRESIDENT APPOINTS 'TRANSGENDERED' INDIVIDUAL TO FEDERAL POST

(EP News)-- President Barack Obama made history on New Year's Eve when he appointed the former Mitchell Simpson, who now identifies himself as a female named Amanda, to a position as a senior adviser in the Commerce Department. Amanda Simpson, a former test pilot for Raytheon, has been named to the Bureau of Industry and Security as Senior Technical Advisor by President Barack Obama. Simpson, who now identifies as a female, was nominated by the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE). In a news release from NCTE, Simpson expressed hope to "soon be one of hundreds (of transgender presidential appointees)."

HEALTH CARE NEGOTIATIONS GO BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

(EP News)--Despite assurances by President Barack Obama that the debate over healthcare reform would be a public one, Democrats are moving to close the meetings to the public. The House and Senate passed different versions of the healthcare reform bill, and those differences must now be resolved in committee. Rules in both the House and Senate say conference committee meetings must be open to the public — and multiple promises made during the presidential campaign by Obama that negotiations on health care would be an open process and televised. But after a meeting with her leadership team, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said of the promise of transparency, "there were a number of things (Obama) was for on the campaign trail." The comment was seen as evidence she has no intention of opening the process to public scrutiny.

KEY DEMOCRATS ANNOUNCE THEY WILL NOT RUN FOR RE-ELECTION

(EP News)--Three prominent Democrats announced that they were not going to be running for their seats this year. Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., said he wanted to write books. Today, Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., told reporters it was just time for a change. Moments later, Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter announced that he would drop out, because he wanted to spend more time with his family. What each incumbent hinted at, but left unsaid, was that they were facing long odds in their upcoming races. Ritter and Dorgan didn't even have announced opponents, but still trailed prospective rivals by 8 and 20 points, while Dodd trailed Republican Rob Simmons by about 10 points.

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PLANNED PARENTHOOD BUILDS MEGA-CLINIC IN TEXAS

(EP News)--Planned Parenthood is reportedly building the second-largest abortion clinic in the world in Houston. The six-story building will be located in the middle of four neighborhoods that are at least 80 percent black or Hispanic. Dr. Marcella Colbert, director of the Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Houston, said the abortion giant has been shifting strategy recently. "This is a reorganization that's been going on," she said, "consolidating everything into one big clinic." Part of the reason could be new laws that hold abortion clinics to a higher medical standard. "Abortion is now being covered," she said, "in the very same way as any other medical procedure."

IOWANS RALLY FOR MARRIAGE

(EP News)--About a thousand people gathered at the state Capitol in early January to demand that voters have a say on same-sex "marriage." The Iowa Supreme Court forced gay "marriage" on the state in April 2009. Pastor Keith Ratliff encouraged the crowd. "We want to vote on this marriage amendment," he said. "There are 67 percent of Iowans that believe that traditional marriage -- that real marriage -- that only marriage is between one man and one woman." Chuck Hurley, president of the Iowa Family Policy Center, said he plans to put pressure on lawmakers. "The next step in this saga would be for the Legislature to reaffirm the Defense of Marriage Act and say 'No thanks' to the Supreme Court's opinion," he said.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS

N. KOREA TOP PERSECUTOR OF CHRISTIANS FOR EIGHTH STRAIGHT TIME

(EP News)--Two of the most notorious and restrictive regimes in the world top the Open Doors 2010 World Watch List (WWL) of 50 countries which are the worst persecutors of Christians, released in January 2010. In the No. 1 spot for the eighth straight time is North Korea, the country where every religious activity is recognized as an insurrection to the North Korean socialist principles. There are an estimated 200,000 North Koreans in political prisons, including 40,000 to 60,000 Christians. Iran is now No. 2 on the list. Iran was previously No. 3 on the WWL for many years, behind Saudi Arabia, now No. 3. The wave of arrests of Christians which started in 2008 continued even stronger during 2009, resulting in the arrest of at least 85 Christians. It is suspected that the arrests are a way for the Iranian government to distract attention from internal problems, including the domestic turmoil after the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Most of those arrested were mistreated in prison. The turmoil and rioting continued at the end of 2009.

DIKTATOR SAYS SOCIALISM IS PATH TO SAVING THE PLANET

(EP News)--Hugo Chavez, president of Venezuela, addressed the climate summit in Copenhagen. He took aim at the U.S. and capitalism in particular as the reason for the world's ills. He cited Karl Marx and called capitalism the "ghost" walking in the halls of the summit.

"Socialism, this is the direction, this is the path to save the planet," he said, "I don't have the least doubt." Chavez received thunderous applause for the statement. He also continued the drum beat of demanding financial help from the industrialized world for third world countries. "The political conservatism and selfishness of the largest consumers of the richest countries shows high insensitivity and lack of solidarity with the poor, the hungry and the most vulnerable to disease, to natural disasters," he said.

General Directions to All Families and Persons Visited with Sickness

By John Willison
(1680 - 1750)

DIRECTION I. Diligently inquire into the ends and designs for which God usually sends sickness and afflictions upon men.

An infinitely holy and gracious God hath various and wise ends in afflicting the children of men, whether they be converted or unconverted, which ought to be duly considered by all, and especially by those who are visited with sickness; some of which I shall mention.

1. God visits with sickness, to cause careless sinners to bethink themselves concerning their soul's estate, who, perhaps, never had a serious thought about it before. There are many who, when in health and strength are so intent upon the pleasures and profits of the world that they mind nothing else; all the warnings, exhortations, and counsels of ministers, teachers, and friends, are lost upon them; they cannot endure to entertain a thought of God, of the soul, of death, of Heaven, of Hell, or of judgment to come, till God doth cast them into some sickness or bodily distress; and then sometimes they begin, with the prodigal, to come to themselves, and bethink themselves concerning their souls and a future life. Now, this is God's design: "If they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captives, and repent" (I Kings 8:47). By sickness, God gives a man that before was wholly diverted from the care of his soul by business, company, and pleasures, occasion to bethink himself. The man is now confined to his chamber, is deprived of his former company and diversions, and so gets time and leisure to commune with his own heart, and reflect on his former ways, and to hear what conscience speaks concerning a judgment-day, and a world to come, and his need of a Saviour.

COUNTRIES BLOCK PORN DISTRIBUTION

(EP News)--Australia, India and China are moving to filter illegal pornography based on its harm to society. Compulsory internet filtering in Australia, the blocking of 13,000 porn sites in China and a tightening of filters in India have family advocates wondering why the U.S. isn't following suit. Phil Burress, president of Citizens for Community Values, said the Department of Justice is slow to enforce laws already on the books. "Everything that's in our video stores, our hotels and everything being sold by the cable companies that they call 'adult' is hardcore pornography," he said, "and thus, illegal and prosecutable."



persons under sickness and distress.

Another lesson is the great evil of sin, which is the cause of all sickness and disease whatsoever. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you" (I Cor. 11:30). Ah, what a root of bitterness must that be, which brings forth such bitter fruit!

He showeth us the preciousness and excellency of Christ and His promises, which alone can enable a Christian to rejoice in tribulation, and be calm under the greatest pains and diseases. There are many who are indifferent about Christ in time of health, who, when sickness comes, through the blessing of God do change their note, and cry, O for an interest in Christ above all things!

3. God sends such trials and distresses, in order to mortify and kill sin in us. "By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sins" (Isa. 27:9). And indeed sickness and affliction have a tendency to weaken and subdue our prevailing sins and lusts. O man, is thy heart turned hard, so that thou art not sensible of thy own sins or of others' sufferings? God sees meet to try the fire of affliction, to see if it will melt thy frozen heart. Hast thou undervalued health, and slighted thy mercies? Now God removes them from thee, that by the want of them thou mayest know the worth of them. Art thou turned proud and self-conceited? God sends thee a thorn in the flesh to prick the swollen bladder of pride, that thou mayest not be puffed up above measure; God lays thee low upon thy bed, that thou mayest be lowly in thy heart. Doth love to the world prevail in thee? God sends affliction to discover its emptiness, and wean thee from it. Art thou fallen secure, dead, and formal? God sends affliction to awake thee, that thou mayest not sleep the sleep of death.

4. God sends sickness to awaken in us the spirit of prayer and supplication, and make us more earnest and importunate in our addresses to the throne of grace. There is a great difference between our prayers in health and in sickness, between our humiliations in prosperity and in adversity. In prosperity we pray heavily and drowsily; but adversity adds wings to our desires. "LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them" (Isa. 26:16). Though they were backward enough to prayer before, yet they pour it out most freely now. The very heathen mariners cried aloud to God in a storm. What a famous prayer did Manasseh make when he was under his iron fetters. We find it thrice mentioned (II Chron. 33:13, 18, 19). And the voice of fervent prayer is what the Lord desires to hear.

5. Another end is, to loosen our hearts from the things of this world, and cause us to look and long for Heaven. When we enjoy health and ease in this world, we

And so, by the blessing of God upon such afflictions, not a few have begun their first acquaintance with God and Christ, and serious religion. Nay, it is in the furnace that Christ has usually formed the most excellent vessels of honor and praise. "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10). Manasseh, the prodigal, Paul, and the jailer, were all chosen there.

2. God visits us with sickness, in order to instruct and teach us things we know not (Ps. 90:12). It was the saying of Luther, *Via crucis est via lucis*---The path of the cross is the path of light. And indeed the school of affliction is the place where many of Zion's scholars have made good proficiency in spiritual and experimental knowledge. Now, there are several remarkable lessons which God would teach us by the rod.

One is the knowledge of God. It is said of Manasseh, "When he was in affliction. . . then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God" (II Chron. 33:12-13). Though Manasseh was well educated, and early taught the knowledge of God, yet till now he knew not the Lord; but now he knew Him in His power and greatness, His holiness and hatred of sin; now he knew God in His goodness and mercy, and wondered that He had kept him so long out of Hell.

Another lesson is the knowledge of ourselves. In time of health and prosperity, we are apt to forget ourselves and our mortality; but sickness causeth us to know that we are but men, and frail men, Psalm 9:20---that God hath an absolute sovereignty over us, and can as easily crush us as we do a moth.

He teacheth us the emptiness of the world. How vain a help is that which fails a man in the time of his greatest need; and oftentimes we see, that worldly means and friends can neither give the least case to the bodies, nor comfort to the souls of

♦ (Continued on page 277)

Visited with Sickness

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are apt to say with Peter on the mount, **"It is good for us to be here,"** but when distress cometh, God's people will turn their tongue, and say with the Psalmist, **"It is good for me to draw near to God"** (Ps. 73:28). When things here go well with us, we are apt to think ourselves at home; but when trouble ariseth, we begin to say, Arise, let us depart, this is not our rest. Though Heaven was much out of sight and out of mind before, yet, when a afflicting sickness comes, the poor believer will sigh, and say with David, "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. I would hasten my escape from the windy tempest" (Ps. 55:6).

6. God designs to make the world bitter, and Christ sweet to us. By such afflictions, He lets men see that the world is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit--that riches avail not in the day of wrath; then it is that they may see the insufficiency of the world to relieve them--that, as one saith, "A velvet slipper cannot cure the gout, a golden cap cannot drive away the headache, nor a bed of down give ease in a fever." And as the world turns bitter, so Christ grows sweet to the believer. In time of ease and health, Christ is often very much neglected and forgot. As the disciples, while the sea was calm, suffered Christ to sleep with them in the ship, thinking they might make their voyage well enough without His help; but when they are ready to be drowned, then they see their need of Christ, they awake Him, crying, "Master, save us, or we perish," so the best of saints, when all is easy about them, are prone to suffer Christ to sleep within them, and thus neglect the lively actings of faith on Christ; but when the storm of affliction begins to rise, and they are ready to be overwhelmed with distress, then they cry, "None but Christ, none but Christ."

7. God visits with sickness and distress, in order both to prove and improve His people's graces (Deut. 8:2; Rev. 2:10). Grace is hereby both tried and strengthened.

Such afflictions do prove both the truth and strength of our graces, as they serve to try if we love God for Himself--if we can endure and hold out in serving Him, waiting and depending upon Him, notwithstanding discouragements. That faith will suffice for a little affliction, that will not suffice for a great one. Peter had faith enough to come upon the sea at Christ's call; but as soon as the waves began to swell, his faith began to fail and his feet to sink, till Christ mercifully caught hold of him, saying, **"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"** (Matt. 14:31). Little did Peter think his faith was so weak till now.

They tend to improve our graces also,

by quickening and strengthening them. They serve as a whetstone to sharpen faith, so that the soul is made to renounce earthly shelters, and to clasp about God in Christ, as its only refuge and portion. They excite to repentance and serious mourning for sin; for, like the winter frost and snows, they make the fallow-ground of our heart more tender. They prompt us to heavenly-mindedness, self-denial, and patient waiting on God. Yea, the experience of God's people can attest it, that grace is never more lively than under affliction. David never found himself better, as to his spiritual state, than when he was persecuted and hunted as a partridge on the mountains; and hence he says, **"It is good for me that I have been afflicted"** (Ps. 119:71).

8. God's aim is, to awaken us to redeem time, to prepare for flitting, and clear up our evidence for Heaven. In the time of health we are apt to trifle away time, to loiter on our journey, and forget that we are pilgrims on the earth; wherefore God sends sickness as His messenger, to remind us thereof.

Now it highly concerns us, when sickness attacks us, to consider and meditate upon these ends for which God brings on distress, and pray earnestly that they may be accomplished in us; and so our sickness shall not be unto death, spiritual or eternal, but to the glory of God and the good of our souls.

DIRECTION 2. Let all who are visited with sickness or distress, search for the Achan in the camp, and inquire diligently what is the ground and cause of God's controversy with them.

It hath been the practice of God's people in Scripture times, to inquire into the cause and meaning of God's rods which have been laid upon them. So David, when the land of Israel was three years under the stroke of famine, inquired into the meaning of it (II Sam. 21:1). So Job is exceedingly desirous to know why God set him up as a mark for his arrows (Job 7:20). And hence it is that he makes the petition which is most suitable for every man in distress, **"Show me wherefore thou contendest with me"** (Job 10:2).

I grant, indeed, that God sometimes visits His people with affliction, for the trial and exercise of their grace and for their spiritual instruction, more than for the correction of sin. But sin being the origin and foundation of all affliction, it is safest, when it is our own case, and most acceptable to God, to look on sin as the procuring cause. Or if our sins have not immediately procured the present affliction; yet the best of God's children must own that they have at least deserved it. We see the sin of the Corinthians is mentioned as the cause of their sickness: **"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you"** (I Cor. 11:30). The Psalmist concludes the very same thing: "Fools, because of their transgression and

their iniquities, are afflicted; their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw nigh unto the gates of death" (Ps. 107:17-18). But, ordinarily, by sickness the Lord points at some one sin in us more than another--some Jonah in the ship, that hath raised the storm, which the Lord would have us to search out and throw overboard without delay.

QUESTION. But how shall we discover the particular sin for which God afflicts us with sickness or distress?

ANSWER. 1. Study the Lord's Word, and the chastisements there recorded, which He hath inflicted upon people for their sins, and inquire if you be guilty of the like. Observe what hath been God's mind to His people, and what sin He hath pointed out to them when they have been brought under such a rod, and so you may learn His mind to you. **"For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning"** (Rom. 15:4).

2. Consider what is the sin of which conscience doth most of all accuse thee, in thy most serious and solitary hours. Conscience is God's deputy and thy bosom-monitor, whose voice, perhaps, thou hast little regard in the day of thy health; wherefore God hath sent a sharper messenger to second the voice of conscience. Hear now the voice of the rod, for it is the same with the voice of conscience. In the day of prosperity, carnal profits and pleasures made such a noise that the voice of conscience could not be heard; wherefore God hath brought on thee the silent night of adversity, that His deputy may obtain an audience. Well, then, give ear--what saith conscience now? May you not hear it saying, as Reuben to his brethren in distress. Spake I not to you in the day of health, do not commit such a sin, and do not delay repenting for such a sin; but you would not hear. O man, let conscience get a hearing at last, as it got with the patriarchs, when they were brought to distress in Egypt, and made to confess their sin in selling Joseph: **"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us"** (Gen. 42:21).

3. Consider what are the evils that others have observed in you, whether they be friends or foes. Harken to what a Christian friend noticeth in you, either when speaking to you, or to others about you. **"Let the righteous smite me,"** saith David, and **"it shall be a kindness."** Yea, do not disregard what enemies say of you; as David got good by the malicious reproaches of Shimei, in the day of his affliction, so may you in the time of distress: for sometimes malice itself will speak truth. Enemies are sharp-sighted to spy out our faults, and so may, through the divine blessing, prove monitors to us, both with respect to sin and duty.

4. Consider the nature and

circumstances of thy distress. Ofttimes the affliction is so suitable to the transgression, that we may clearly read our sin written on the forehead of our punishment, as in the case of Adonibezek and many others (Judg. 1:6-7). And also you may be helped to find it out by the Lord's timing of the rod to you. Was it sent when you were under much formality in duty; or when you were eagerly pursuing the things of the world; or when you were under the power of some prevailing lust? Then the rod comes to reprove you and awaken you to see the evil thereof.

5. Consider what is the sin that hath been formerly most affrighting to thy thoughts, and perplexing to thy conscience, when thou hast been in the immediate view of death and judgment. It is very likely, if thou hast not truly repented of it, that is the sin which God now intends to awaken thee to see the evil of, what thou mayest sincerely mourn for and turn from it, looking to God in Christ for pardon and mercy.

OBJECTION. Ah, saith one, it is my lot to lie under a dumb and silent rod; I do not understand its language, I cannot hear its voice, I cannot find out the sin that is pointed at by it; what course shall I take?

ANSWER. 1. Be deeply humbled under this trial, and bewail thy case before the Lord; for it very much aggravates the affliction to God's people, when they know not the language of it. Hence was it that Job lamented so heavily that his way was hid, and he knew not the reason of God's contending with him (Job 3:23).

2. A believer's case may be sometimes so dark that it requires a great deal of spiritual wisdom to enable him to hear the voice of the rod, and understand its language. Hence it is said, **"The man of wisdom shall see thy name"** upon it (Micah 6:9). Now, this wisdom can only come from above, therefore,

3. Go to God, and earnestly beg for wisdom, that you may know His mind, and the meaning of the rod. Do as Rebecca did, when she went to inquire of the Lord, saying, **"Why am I thus?"** (Gen. 25:22). Cry to God to give you His Spirit, to teach and enlighten you to see sin in its evil, and the particular evil you are guilty of. This was Job's course in his affliction: **"Show me wherefore thou contendest with me. That which I see not teach thou me. Make me to know my transgression and my sin."** There is no better way for a prisoner to know the reason of his confinement, than to ask the magistrate who committed him. God is a wise agent, and can give the best account of His own actions.

4. If thou canst not find out the particular sin for which God afflicts thee, then labor to repent of every known sin, and cry for pardon of every unknown and forgotten sin also. Do that out of wisdom which Herod did out of malice,

◊ (Continued on page 278)

Visited with Sickness

(Continued from page 277) ♦

who, because he could not find out the babe Jesus, killed all the little ones of Bethlehem that he might be sure to kill Jesus among them. Let us seek the utter ruin and death of all our sins, that we may be sure to destroy that sin for which God afflicts us.

5. Study to exercise a strong faith, and a humble submission, while God keeps you under the silent rod. Believe firmly that God is just, though you know not for what He contends. And however long He thinks fit to make you walk in the dark, resolve humbly to wait on Him and commit yourself to Him, Who has many times guided the blind in a way they knew not.

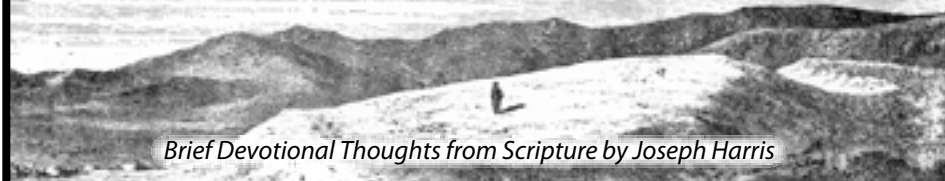
DIRECTION 3. When any fit of sickness attacks you, think seriously upon death, and make diligent preparation for it.

I do not mean that any man may delay the work of preparation for death till sickness cometh. No, no; this should be the great and absorbing business of every man in the time of his health and strength. But sickness and diseases being the harbingers of death, and messengers sent from God to warn us of its coming, every man is thereby called to renew the work of preparation for death with all earnestness and application. God's voice by every fit of sickness is that in Deuteronomy 32:29: "**O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.**" God knows our folly and readiness to forget this great work in the day of health; and therefore, in His mercy, He sends sickness and affliction to teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to this piece of heavenly wisdom, of making preparation for death. And here I shall present some motives to press this duty, and some advice for the doing of it aright.

1. For MOTIVES, consider these things:

(1.) Consider God's mercy and patience towards you, in giving you so many warnings, and so many years to prepare for death, and in sending His messengers and warnings so gently and gradually to excite you to this work, when many younger and stronger than you are hurried into eternity, and little or not time given them to think where they are going. Have you not been spared many years, in the midst of dangers, while you have seen that bold archer, death, shooting his arrows, and killing thousands of your neighbors and friends round about you? Sometimes the arrow hath glanced over your head, and slain some great man, your superior; sometimes it hath alighted at your feet, and cut off a child or a servant, your inferior; sometimes it hath gone by on

The Backside of the Desert



Brief Devotional Thoughts from Scripture by Joseph Harris

Never Ending Supply

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

An ancient Greek legend speaks of a horn that had magical powers. The Cornucopia, or Horn of Plenty as it was sometimes called, could be filled with whatever the owner wished. It was never empty. It was always full of fruit, grain or whatever was the desire of the owner. Obviously, we do not believe in Greek mythology, however, this principle of never-ending supply is found in our text.

The Source. God is always the source. Everything we have or could hope to have, comes from God. Every gift is supplied by God, either directly or indirectly.

Why were you able to open your eyes this morning? It was because God sustained your life through the night and blessed you with the gift of another day. Why does your heart continue to beat, circulating blood throughout your body? Scientists and medical doctors have been unable to find a battery in the human body. God is the power source of human life.

your left hand, and killed your enemy; at other times it hath passed on your right hand, and killed your near relations. So that you have seen friends and foes, superiors and inferiors, relations and strangers, dropping down dead around you; and all this for a long time, to give you warning to prepare for death. O let the goodness and forbearance of God towards you lead you to repentance, and persuade you to flee speedily to Christ for refuge and protection from wrath.

(2.) Consider how terrible death will be if it meet you in an unprepared state, in a Christless and impenitent condition. What a fearful change will it bring upon you! A change from earth to Hell, from hope to despair, from pleasure to pain, from comforts to terrors; a change from the offers of grace to the revelation of wrath; a change from probabilities to utter impossibilities of salvation. Death will cut off all your hopes and expectations of mercy for ever (Job 27:8). There is no coming back to amend what hath been done amiss here; and there is no work nor device in the grave, whither you go. As the tree falls, so it will lie, through all eternity.

2. I come now to give some ADVICES,

The Supply. The word used for supply in the text means "to fill up." This scripture promises that God will fill us up to the top in supplying what we need in life. God will not sparingly supply our needs; His supply will match the demand.

The Bible even speaks of God's furnishings as being abundant, or more than enough. In Ephesians 3:20, God's ability to provide is spoken of as being "... **exceeding abundant above all that we ask or think...**" Think of pouring water into a measuring cup. The cup can be filled to half, one third, or full to the top. It can also be filled until it spills over the top. God is able to supply for us until His provisions spill over the top, and He usually does.

The Savior. All promises and provisions are secured by the Savior, Jesus Christ, through His work on the cross and His resurrection from the grave. God delivers, protects and supplies for His children "... **according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**" The supply is never ending because the Savior is never ending. "... **He ever liveth to make intercession...**" (Heb. 7:25). Jesus is alive forever to supply our needs as well.

in order to the right preparation for death.

(1.) Set about self-examination work. Inquire whether you are in Christ or not--whether you are yet far off from God, or have been brought near by the blood of Jesus. And see that you be impartial in this search, and willing to find out the truth on this important question. Be not foolishly tender of yourself, and apt to believe that you are safe, when it is not so; for in this way, thousands do ruin themselves. But be earnest to know the worst of your case, and thoroughly to understand your soul's danger, that you may be moved to take the right way to escape it. Wherefore take a view of the marks of Christless and unconverted persons laid down in God's Word, and judge yourself by them; and consider also the signs of true grace there recorded, and see whether they are applicable to you or not.

(2.) If, after inquiry, you find your state is bad---that you have been a lover of the world more than of God, have minded your body more than your soul, have lived in the neglect of precious Christ, and allowed yourself in known sin, O then be convinced of your inability to help

yourself, and your need of Christ to help you. Labor to be deeply humbled before God, under a sense of your sin and folly. "Ah, how foolishly, how rebelliously, how unthankfully have I lived! I have abused God's mercies, and left undone the work for which I was made and preserved, and enjoyed the gospel. Oh, I had all my time given me, to make preparation for eternity, and I have never minded it till now that sickness, the harbingers of death, is come upon me; and now what shall I do to be saved?" Then, in order to convince and humble you the more, cast back your eyes upon the sins of your nature, and of your past life; view them in their nature, number, aggravations, and deservings. O, do not so many years' sins need a very deep humiliation? O, do you not stand greatly in need of such a person as Christ, to be your Saviour and Ransomer from such a vast number of sins? O, but their weight will press you eternally down to the lowest Hell, if left to yourself with them upon your head.

(3.) O, sinner, art thou deeply humbled, and desirous of mercy upon any terms? Believe then that thy case is not remediless, but that there is a sacrifice provided for your sins, and an able and all-sufficient Saviour offered to you. Believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and became flesh to be a surety for you; that He is both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Though your sins, your danger, and your fears were never so great, yet He is able and willing to save. O, flee to this refuge city, whose gates are open to receive you. Trust your souls upon Christ's sacrifice and meritorious blood for mercy and salvation. Apply humbly to Him, that He may teach you the will of God, reconcile you to His Father, pardon your sins, renew you by His Spirit, and save you from eternal wrath.

(4.) Give yourself up to God in Christ, by way of covenant and solemn resignation. Give a cordial and voluntary consent to the covenant of grace. Acquiesce cheerfully in the gospel way of salvation through Christ and His righteousness, and receive of God in Christ as thy portion. Make choice of God the Father, as thy reconciled Father in Christ; and God the Son, as thy Redeemer and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghost, as thy sanctifier, guide, and comforter. And likewise give up thyself, soul and body and all that thou hast, to be the Lord's; engaging, in Christ's strength, to live for God, and walk with Him in newness of life. And study to do all this deliberately, unfeignedly, and cheerfully. Though perhaps you have done this hypocritically, at former times; though you have profaned God's covenant, and behaved unsteadfastly and perfidiously therein, yet now endeavor to be sincere with God for once.

♦ (Continued on page 279)

Visited with Sickness

(Continued from page 278) ♦

(5.) Live daily in the exercise of faith and repentance: renew the acts thereof frequently, in proportion to your renewed sins and guiltiness. Cleave close to glorious Christ, your high-priest and surety, and be ever washing in His blood. As long as you are in the world, you will have need to wash your feet (John 13:10). Come death when it will, let it find you at the fountain, always looking to and making use of Jesus Christ. You have great need of Christ every day of your life, more especially in sickness, but most of all at a dying hour. O what need will you have of Christ as an advocate with God, when the question is to be determined where your mansion is to be assigned through all eternity, whether in Heaven or Hell. O then, be looking always to Christ, with the eye of faith. Live in the constant thoughts of this blessed Mediator. Let Him be first in your thoughts in the morning, and last in your thoughts at night.

(6.) Strive to mortify every sin and lust, both outward and inward. Die to sin daily, that so you may not die for sin eternally. O that sin may be daily losing its strength and dying in you, so that it may be certainly dead before you. Pray earnestly that your sins may die before you die; for if they die not before you, but outlive the dying body, they will live eternally to sting and torment the never-dying soul.

DIRECTION 4. Be not anxious for recovery to health, but leave the issue of your present sickness to the will and pleasure of the infinitely wise God.

Remember, O man, thou art the clay and God is the potter; He is absolute Lord of thy life and ties: therefore learn to adore His sovereignty over thee and all thy enjoyments. David did so, when he said, "**Lord, my times are in thy hand**" (Ps. 31:15). And indeed they are only best in His hand, for He best knows how to dispose of them. The prophet saith, "**The LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him**" (Isa. 30:18). Judgment there signifies wisdom. The Lord is a God of wisdom, and will order and time all things well; and therefore it becomes us quietly to wait for His pleasure, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." It is taken notice of as a great sin in the Israelites, that they waited not for His counsel, but limited the Holy One of Israel (Ps. 78:41). What an unaccountable folly and presumption is it, for the worms of the earth to seek to stint and limit the Sovereign of Heaven to their measures! It becomes us at all times, but especially in sickness and affliction, to have low, submissive thoughts of ourselves, and high, exalted thoughts of God's sovereignty, such as Nebuchadnezzar had: "**And all the**

inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4:35).

We should therefore refer all to His wise determination, and be willing to die or live, as He shall be pleased to appoint. I remember to have read of a godly woman who, in her sickness, being asked whether she was most desirous to die or to live; answered, "I have no choice in that matter; but refer myself to the will of God." "But," said the other, "suppose God should refer it to you whether to die or to live; which would you choose?" "If God," replied she, "should refer it to me, I would even refer it back again to Him." It becomes thee, O man, to be entirely resigned to the will of thy Maker, and to stand like a sentinel in thy station, ready to move as thy great General and Commander shall give order concerning thee. It would be pleasant and acceptable to God, to see thee more desirous to be delivered from sin, than from sickness. Sin is a far worse disease than any sickness in the world; beg importunately that the great Physician may cure this woeful soul-disease, and let Him do with the body what He pleaseth. This was David's practice in his affliction: "Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins" (Ps. 25:18). As for his pains and afflictions, he asks no more but that God would look upon them, and do with them as He thought fit; but as for his sins, no less will satisfy him than a pardon, and blotting them entirely out, so that they might be remembered no more.

DIRECTION 5. Bind yourself with holy purposes and resolutions, in Christ's strength, to be more watchful against sin, more diligent in duty, and to improve the time of health better, if God shall be pleased to restore it again to you.

When God is visiting your iniquities with rods, and pleading a controversy with you for your omissions and slackness in duty, He expects that you will return from your backslidings, and set about a serious reformation and change of life. "**I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early**" (Hosea 5:15). See then that you open your ear to discipline; study to answer God's call and expectation, and in His strength resolve to enter upon a new life. "**Surely now it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more**" (Job 34:31-32). Now is the season you should say with Ephraim, "**What have I to do any more with idols?**" (Hosea 14:8).

Having duly examined yourself, and searched out your sins, you ought to put a bill of divorce into the hands of every one.

Deliberately resolve against all your sins, whether secret or open; and especially resolve against your darling and beloved sins, the sins which do most easily beset you. Resolve also against all temptations to sin, and particularly against the snares of bad company, whereby you have been formerly enticed; say now with David, "**Depart from me, ye evildoers; for I will keep the commandments of my God**" (Ps. 119:115).

You must not only purpose to forsake all sin, but also to mind every known duty; that you will make religion your one thing needful, and the pleasing of God the chief business of your life; that you will set the Lord always before you, give Him your heart in all duties, aim to nearness and communion with God in every one of them, and press forward to the full enjoyment of God in Heaven through eternity.

Resolve also, through grace, that you will in a special manner mind secret duties, which the eyes of men do not observe, and those duties which conscience doth most challenge you for neglecting. And you that are heads of families, resolve to make more conscience of family religion, of worshipping God with your families, both morning and evening; instructing your children and servants in the knowledge of Christ; and recommending religion and godliness to all about you, whether relations or strangers.

And if you would have your resolutions effectual, see that they be accompanied with a deep sense of your insufficiency to perform them in your own strength. Bear always in mind the corruption and deceitfulness of your own heart, and make all your resolutions in humble dependence on the sufficiency of Jesus Christ your Surety. Observe the Apostle Paul's advice to his son Timothy: "**Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus**" (II Tim. 2:1). All your stock, O believer, is in His hand, so that without Him you can do nothing; but, through Christ strengthening you, you are able to do all things.

DIRECTION 6. Set your house in order, by making your will, and settling your domestic and secular affairs, while you have freedom and capacity for doing it.

After the heart is set in order, the next work is to set your house in order, according to God's counsel to Hezekiah (Isa. 38:1). It is recorded of the patriarch Abraham, that he was careful to settle the affairs of his family before his death (Gen. 25:5-6). He disposed of his estate to Isaac, and legacies to the sons of his concubines. It is too general a fault, that men delay and put off making their wills, as they do their repentance, to the very last, and so too frequently never make them at all. Consider the evil of deferring or neglecting this necessary

♦ (Continued on page 280)

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 12-1-2009 to 12-31-2009

Beginning Balance \$11,888.23
RECEIPTS:
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN 50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 200.00
..... 575.00
TOTAL 12,463.23

EXPENDITURES:
Radio Time 590.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 590.00
..... \$11,873.23
Interest + .99
..... 11,874.22
Less Corbin, KY des. -766.12
ENDING BALANCE \$11,108.10

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance \$966.12
RECEIPTS:
..... 966.12
Radio Time (WCTT) 200.00
ENDING BALANCE \$766.12

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 12-1-2009 to 12-31-2009

Beginning Balance \$2,002.44
RECEIPTS:

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX 25.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 362.02
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL 60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN 150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX 200.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID 50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV 300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 300.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV 50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL 25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR 25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME 20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL 50.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK 35.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL 25.00
Kenneth Copedge, Edwardsville, IL 5.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA 225.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM 100.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH 100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN 20.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN 50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL 100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR 50.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA 25.00
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., Silsbee, TX 30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC 100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA 25.00
Subscriptions 160.00
Anonymous 5,025.00
Dividing checks 300.00
Sub Total \$7,342.02
TOTAL \$9,344.46

EXPENDITURES:
Printing 581.71
Postage 704.99
Wages 2,300.00
Wages* 150.00
FICA 235.44
Dividing checks 300.00
Total Expenditures 4,379.12
ENDING BALANCE \$4,965.34

*Extra wages were for extra help on several projects we are working on. These funds reimbursed by Berea Baptist Church.

Visited with Sickness

(Continued from page 279) ♦

affair; for if you, upon whom God hath bestowed means, shall die interstate, your estate may descend otherwise than you intended; much of it may be spent in tedious and expensive lawsuits; such differences may fall out among relations, who should live in friendship and mutual affections, as cannot be healed; some of them may be reduced to extreme want, when a small legacy might have put them in the way of a living; and many such inconveniences may follow. Now, if your neglect should bring on these evils, and involve your posterity in endless strifes and contentions, may you not justly fear that the guilt thereof will pursue you into another world, whose wretched carelessness was the occasion of all that mischief?

Pray, what is the reason that men put off this duty? Is it not because they do not incline to think so seriously on death, as this will occasion them to do? Doth not this neglect savor of abominable earthly-mindedness, as if a man desired all his portion in this life, and cared not for a better; and that he is so far from preparing for death, that he cannot endure to think of it? Alas, that this worldly disposition should so far prevail among us. But surely there is no wise man will say that the putting off the thoughts of death will keep death at the greater distance; or that preparing for death and making our wills will bring on death the sooner.

It were surely best to arrange our affairs in good time, yes, do it in time of health, rather than delay it unto a sickbed, or a death-bed; for either you may be snatched off suddenly, and have no time for it; or you may be taken with such a disease as shall seize your tongue, so that you cannot express your mind; or seize your understanding, so that you cannot rationally dispose of your effects. And though none of these should happen, yet certainly it proves a great disturbance to a dying man, to be casting up, ordering, and settling the affairs of his family, when he should be securing a heavenly mansion for his soul and clearing up his evidences thereto. It is great wisdom to attend to this affair in time, that you may have as little to do with the world as may be, and that all occasions of distraction to your immortal soul may be prevented, when it is near to its entering into an eternal and unchangeable state.

Moreover, in settling your secular affairs, observe these following **ADVICES**:

1. Make your wills cheerfully, and freely lay down whatever you enjoy, when God calls you to it. Praise God that you had these things while you needed them; and when you have no longer use for them, leave them without repining to

those that come after you. Look not back to Egypt, when you are upon the border of Canaan.

2. See that you deal justly, in providing for your family, paying all your just debts, and making restitution if you have wronged any. Abhor all designs of defrauding any of your lawful creditors, for if your last act should be unjust, you leave a blot upon your name here.

3. In settling your estate, see that God and good uses be not forgotten nor left out. When you are leaving the world, and can glorify God no longer here by your words or actions, see that you honor the Lord with your substance, by leaving some part thereof to pious and charitable uses. It is a work of charity to give for maintaining the bodies of the poor, and especially the poor of God's people, who belong to His family. But it is much more pious and charitable to leave somewhat for propagating Christian knowledge in dark places, for educating poor children to read the Scriptures, and instructing ignorant souls in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is much to be lamented that so many rich men among us die, and leave but little to such pious uses. The liberality of papists on their death-beds, may give a sharp challenge to many professed Protestants. O what a shame it is to the professors of the doctrine of grace, what the false doctrines of merit and purgatory should produce so many donations and mortifications among the papists, and the faith of Christ's most glorious gospel should not do the like among true believers! Shall the proud conceit of merit, and the imaginary fear of purgatory, prompt men to do more this way, than the certain persuasion of the love of God in Christ, and the well-grounded hope of eternal life through the alone merits of Jesus Christ? O what a reproach is this to our holy religion!

4. It might be much to the glory of God and the good of souls, that our wills should contain many solemn charges and exhortations and blessings to our children, or those to whom we bequeath any legacy; so that they could never open our wills, but they might see something adapted to make impressions on their souls, for their spiritual edification,

and for quickening them to the diligent practice of both family and personal godliness.

(The Afflicted Man's Companion, 1727).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

We now have an additional four discs of the Berea Hymnal Piano music CD's.

These are Disc #9 (songs 201-225), Disc #10 (songs 226-250), Disc #11 (songs 251-275), and Disc #12 (songs 276-300).

We are three-fourths of the way through the hymnal and are looking at completing all of the songs early this year.

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, WA is in need of a pastor.

The church is small, and the new Pastor will need support from sister churches.

There is a faithful nucleus. They have a building in town. They are grounded in Sovereign Grace Landmark truths and are good people who love the Lord. Any brethren who may be interested please contact Gerard Griesen - 360-388-8697 or write to: Victory Baptist Church 1617 N.W. West St. Chehalis, WA 98532

The Grace Baptist Church in Fredericktown, OH is currently seeking a pastor, and also guest speakers.

Our current services: Sunday school at 10:00 am, Worship service at 11:00 followed by lunch and an afternoon service at 1:00 pm. Wednesdays at 7:00 pm.

Any brethren that may be interested in filling in to help our ministry can contact Bro. Tory Smith at (614) 205-0729 or by email toremup@columbus.rr.com.

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

Any interested Elder should call Connie McMellon at 318-872-1647.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor.

Any interested Elders may call (618) 288-4236 for more information.

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GLEANINGS



THE INFLUENCE OF BOOKS

Books are like friends; they leave part of themselves with us each time we come in contact with them. A young girl came into the library one evening carrying a magazine of which her father did not approve. "My dear," said her father, "I'd be a lot happier if you would not read magazines like the one you are carrying." "Why Daddy, it won't hurt me to read it. The girls in my crowd are always talking about it and I'm dying to see what it's like. It won't hurt my morals, if that's what you are worrying about. You've helped me ground them too well for that. I have to have a little thrill once in a while. I don't intend to read magazines like this often."

The wise father did not even answer the argument. He walked to a coal bucket near the fireplace and picked up a lump of coal. Handing it to his daughter, he said: "Here Mary, hold this." "O, no, it might soil my fingers." "Why, it would probably rub off all right," replied the father. "But there's a chance it wouldn't." "Exactly so, Mary, you can't afford to take a chance with anything that's dirty. It might not rub off." "Dad, you old sermonizer," laughed his daughter. "I see the point. You win." And she threw the doubtful magazine in the fire unread. (News & Truths, 1929).

HOW TO PRAY

Read Luke 18. We are taught by the Master that Heaven is to be assaulted by prayer after the same manner as earthly things. If you want a job, ask for it twenty times, and the boss believes you really want a job. Of the two temple men who prayed, which one is most of us? When Uncle Same gets down where his tears can flow for his sins God has a place for him at the very top. (Sunday School Times, 1931).

"The greatest need of the churches of Jesus Christ today is not money, not learned and eloquent preachers, however desirable these may be, but a ministry with a Holy Ghost religion coupled with a John-the-Baptist conviction and courage. . . A John the Baptist in every church would be worth far more than a John the Rockefeller. 'It is not by power nor by might, but by my Spirit, said the Lord.' ---W. D. Nowlin (News & Truths).

