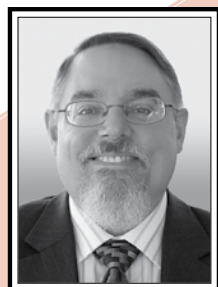


## I Am Thankful for What America Once Was

By Tom Ross  
of South Point, Ohio



As I think about the upcoming 237th celebration marking America's Declaration of Independence from oppressive British rule, I am humbled to be a citizen of what has arguably been the greatest civilization in human history. Even with all of the imperfections throughout our history, no other system of government has provided more freedom, religious liberty, and the hope of prosperity to its citizens. No other country has done more Gospel mission work and nation building around the world. America has long been recognized as a political, moral, industrial, and

economic leader throughout the world. I am proud of our heritage and history. I am thankful that I was part of something special while it lasted.

Unfortunately, I live in the generation that took our freedoms for granted. I live in the generation that allowed the American Civil Liberties Union to threaten and intimidate our local schools and communities. I live in the generation that took the Bible, the Ten Commandments, and prayer out of the public forum. I live in the generation where the godless

religion of secular humanism has infiltrated every facet of society. I live in the generation that made it legal to exterminate living children in the womb. I live in the generation that seeks to destroy the sacred union of holy matrimony between a man and a woman by redefining the meaning of marriage. I live in the generation that promotes idolatry, immorality, and hedonism. I live in the generation that allowed Hollywood, pop culture, and mainstream media to determine the values and morals of millions through incessant indoctrination and intimidation. I live in the generation in which professors in our universities routinely mock the principles of our founding fathers and diminish the

value of our Constitution. I live in the generation that has rewritten our history in an attempt to purge God and His influence out of our society. I live in the generation that has promoted an entitlement and welfare mentality among its citizenry, rather than personal responsibility, self discipline, and self sufficiency.

I have witnessed the spiritual downfall of America. I have seen immorality exalted and Biblical standards mocked. I have watched the media glorify proponents of socialism and communism while demeaning law abiding citizens. I have witnessed liberal "so-called preachers" promote false doctrine and plant doubts in the

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## The Stouthearted

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia



"Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory" (Isa. 46:12-13). Today, I want to think about the word "stouthearted." This is a word that is not much used today. However, I find it interesting in its appearance in our text verse, and the thoughts that it provokes.

Let us begin by giving a definition of the word "stouthearted." I think that we can define the word to mean

courageous or strong; resilient or resolute; not easily overcome. These all sound like good things, and good attitudes which we should all demonstrate. However,

we find that these are not always good – especially when a person will, in his stout heart and stubborn ways, oppose himself to God.

### STOUTHEARTED IN THE FLESH

In our text, it appears that the Lord God is addressing the Israelites that

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## The Sacrifice of Christ

By Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 – 2002)

### THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST By Milburn Cockrell

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13-14).

Under the Mosaic Dispensation priests offered slain beasts upon



smoking altars on behalf of the waiting worshippers. These animal sacrifices were typical of the coming self-offering of Christ. Nevertheless,

Christ's death was not a sacrifice after the precise Jewish pattern. There is some difference between the type and the antitype. A picture may be a type of a man, but the man differs from the picture. The sacrifices of Judaism were an outward material representation; the sacrifice of Christ is an inward spiritual reality.

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**"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13).**

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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.
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8. To stimulate Christian growth in grace.
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## America Once Was

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minds of their congregants about the authority of Scripture. We live in a generation where politicians on both sides of the aisle care more about power, popularity, poll numbers, and getting reelected rather than doing what is right in the eyes of God.

I fear that the truth expressed in Isaiah 5:20-24 will soon be a reality in our once great nation: **“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.”** Psalm 9:17 declares: **“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”**

My hope is that God will pour upon our nation a spirit of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is **“the Way, the Truth, and the Life”** (John 14:6) (emph. TR). My prayer is that we will return to God in humility, prayer, and repentance as II Chronicles 7:14 declares: **“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”** The future of our once great nation is in peril. It cannot be fixed by political messiahs or government policies. We must all take personal responsibility for our lives and look to God for direction and strength. **“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer”** (Psalm 19:14).

## OUR NATION WAS ESTABLISHED BY PEOPLE WITH MORAL CHARACTER

The citizens of early America were people of moral character and conviction that was based on a Judeo-Christian world view. In the main people had a measure of respect for God, His Word, and His laws. I am not saying that everybody in early America professed to be a Christian. However, there was a moral ethic that permeated society that emanated from God's Word and the Moral Law. Honesty, hard work, and self-discipline were virtues that were promoted in families and among society at large. Lying, stealing, intemperance, and cheating were looked upon as vices that were shameful and immoral. These simple principles were emphasized and embraced as being profitable to the general welfare of society. Our founding fathers were leaders who believed that God's Word was essential to a civil society.

George Washington, our first President said:

“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible” (p. 660, *America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations*).

In his Farewell Address on September 19, 1796, Washington said:

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable agents...And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle” (Ibid. p. 661).

James Madison, our fourth President, known as the Father of the Constitution wrote:

“The belief in a God All Powerful, wise, and good, is so essential to the moral order of the World and to the happiness of man, that arguments which enforce it cannot be drawn from too many sources nor adapted with too much solicitude to the different characters and capacities to be impressed with it” (p. 131, *Faith of our Founding Fathers*, by Tim LaHaye).

Daniel Webster wrote:

“Lastly, our ancestors established their system of government on morality and religious sentiment. Moral habits, they believed, cannot safely be trusted on any other foundation than religious principle, nor any government be secure which is not supported by moral habits” (p. 29 in *Rebirth of America*).

Noah Webster, the author of the first American Dictionary that bears his name, and cousin of Daniel wrote:

“The moral principles and precepts contained in the Scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws. All the miseries and evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery, and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible” (ibid. p. 33).

Supreme Court Justice Josiah Brewer, wrote the following decision on February 29, 1892, confirming our Christian heritage:

“Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of The Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian...This is a religious people. This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation...we find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth...These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation” (*Church of the Holy Trinity vs. United States*, pp. 599-601, *America's God and Country*).

Included in the moral dignity and integrity of early Americans and the founders of our nation was a sense of personal responsibility and a strong work ethic. People had a mind to work. They were rugged individualists who pioneered the building of our great nation. They despised sloth and venerated the virtue of a good work ethic. Proverbs 13:4, 11 state: **“The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of**

♦ (Continued on page 123)



## America Once Was

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**the diligent shall be made fat...but he that gathered by labour shall increase.**" Proverbs 14:23 declares: **"In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury."** In early America there were no entitlements. There was no welfare state. Those who were unable to provide for themselves due to poor health were helped by families and churches. I am amazed at the amount of work our forefathers were able to get done by the sheer force of their will to persist and overcome all obstacles. They were able to clear the land, build their homes, and provide for their families without all the modern technologies we now have.

I agree with what Lyman Abott wrote about America's greatness:

"A nation is made great, not by its fruitful acres, but by the men who cultivate them: not by its great forests, but by the men who use them; not by its mines, but by the men who build and run them. America was a great land when Columbus discovered it: Americans have made of it a great nation.

...And so they have for they pioneered a continent, subdued the elements that at first worked against them, molded a society of peoples from all over the world. America's initiative and ingenuity are known across the earth. Other nations have looked on in awe at her ability over the decades to produce not only her own needs, but much more." (pp. 23-24 in *Rebirth of America*).

Thomas Jefferson, the writer of our Declaration of Independence and third President was known for his self-discipline and temperance. John Abbot, in his book *Lives of the Presidents of the United States* wrote the following about the habits of Jefferson:

"In college he often devoted fifteen hours a day to hard study...In the winter he rose punctually at five o'clock. In the summer, as soon as, in the first gray of the morning he could discern the hands of the clock in his room, he sprang from his bed. At nine o'clock in summer he retired; at ten o'clock in winter...Gambling

he so thoroughly detested that he never learned to distinguish one card from another. Ardent spirits he never drank, tobacco in any form he never used, and he was never heard to utter an oath" (pp. 99-100).

Oh, that we might learn from the moral character, religious principles, study habits, and work ethic of our ancestors! May God deliver us from the vain and worldly pursuits that steal our time and talents! Ephesians 5:15-17 declares: **"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."**

### OUR FOUNDERS WERE PATRIOTS AND FREEDOM LOVERS

It sickens me when I hear elitist college professors and self proclaimed intellectuals trash and demean our founders. Our founders were patriots in the truest sense of the word. By the grace of God, determination, and unmatched courage the colonists were able to defeat the most powerful nation on earth at the time. The fight for independence from Great Britain and the ultimate victory our forefathers secured is one of the most remarkable feats in all of human history. Our freedoms were secured by the blood and guts of great patriots. Their sacrifices paved the way for our freedoms.

The signers of the Declaration of Independence put their lives on the line when they put their names to the venerable document of freedom:

"We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies, are and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States...And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

On page 15 in the book *Rebirth of America* we read:

"The fifty-six courageous men who signed that document understood that this was not just high sounding rhetoric. They knew that if they succeeded, the best they could expect would be years of hardship in a struggling new nation. If they lost, they would face a hangman's noose as traitors.

Of the fifty-six, few were long to survive. Five were captured by the British and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes, from Rhode Island to Charleston, sacked, looted, occupied by the enemy or burned. Two lost their sons in the army. One had two sons captured. Nine of the fifty-six died in the war, from its hardships or from its bullets."

On March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry gave one of the most noteworthy and oft quoted speeches before the Virginia Convention:

"Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of the means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the Holy cause of Liberty, and in such a county as that which we possess, are invincible by any force

which our enemy can send against us.

Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battle alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battle for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave...

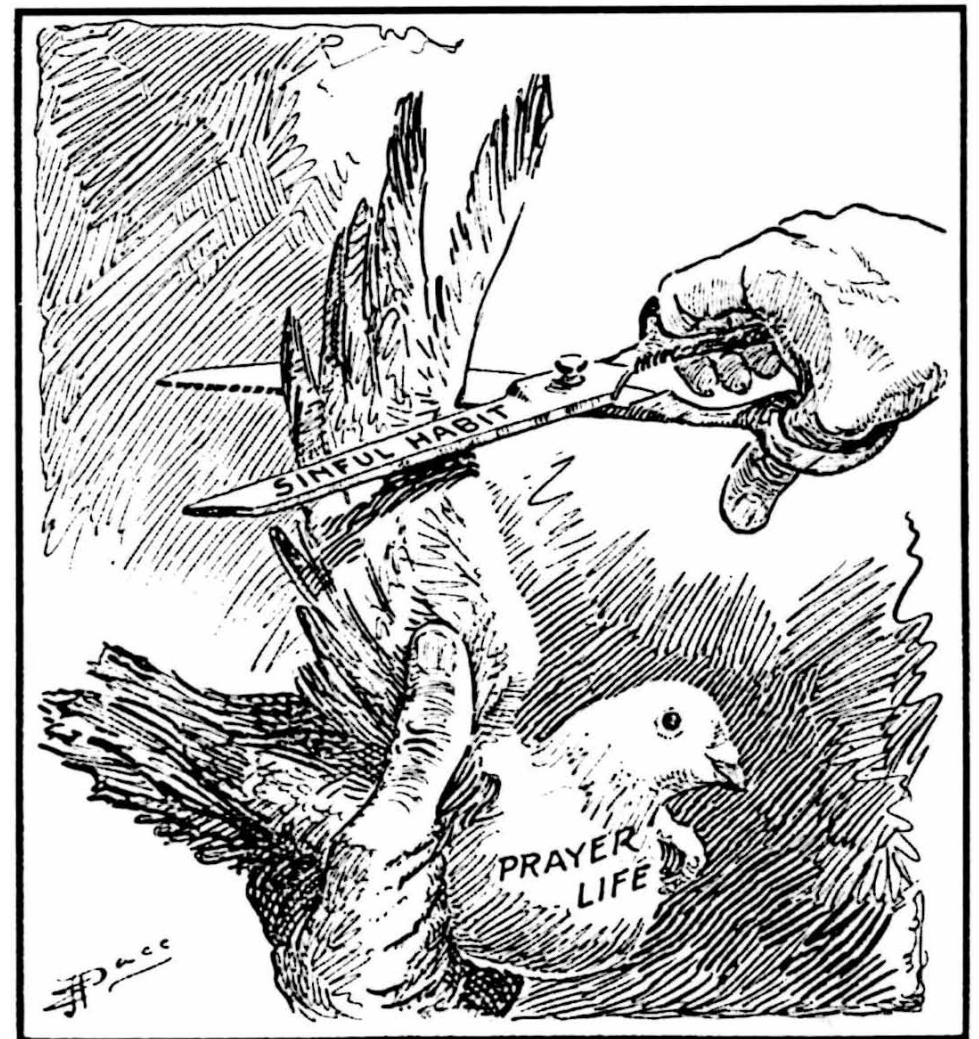
Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death" (p. 288, *America's God and Country*).

I could go on and on with quotes from our founders who risked everything to give birth to the greatest nation in human history. However, I will conclude with two quotes from our second President, John Adams.

On July 1, 1776, Adams spoke at the Continental Congress to the delegates of the 13 Colonies:

"Before God, I believe the hour has come. My judgment approves this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I hope in this life, I

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am now ready here to stake upon it. And I leave off as I began, that live or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration. It is my living sentiment, and by the blessing of God it shall be my dying sentiment. Independence now, and Independence for ever" (Ibid. pp. 8-9).

On July 3, 1776, in a letter to his wife Abigail, John Adams wrote prophetic words regarding the celebration of Independence:

"The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever.

You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. Ye through all the gloom I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is worth more than all the means; that posterity will triumph in that day's transaction, even though we may regret it, which I trust in God we shall not" (Ibid. p. 9).

May God be pleased to raise up another generation of patriots and statesmen in our fair land. We need men and women who embrace the principles of freedom and liberty that have guided our republic for the past 236 years. Let us fight with every fiber of our being to defend the

sacred principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness so that we may preserve the legacy of our great nation.



## Sacrifice of Christ

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### A SACRIFICE

Under the old dispensation the priests offered many sacrifices. There were sacrifices for the Jewish nation, for the family, and for the individual (Lev. 16). There was a difference between a sacrifice and an oblation. There was real change or destruction of a sacrifice offered. It was wholly or in part consumed by fire. An oblation was a simple offering or gift without any change at all. The bloody sacrifice was made of living creatures to obtain God's forgiveness of sin. This is the sacrifice the writer of the Book of Hebrews has in mind in the text, for these were always typical of salvation by Christ.

As our great High Priest, Jesus Christ gave Himself **"for us an offering and a sacrifice"** (Eph. 5:2). The effect of Christ's sacrifice was the expiation of guilt and the propitiation of God, which is the appropriate effect of a sin-offering (Heb. 9:26; 10:12). Paul told the Corinthian Church: **"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"** (I Cor. 5:7). Christ saved us as a priest did---by a sacrifice.

### A BLOODY SACRIFICE

Blood is the circulatory life-fluid of the body. Very early in the history of the human race a peculiar sacredness was attached to the blood: **"But the flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat"** (Gen. 9:4). The blood was identified with the life. The blood was viewed as the basis of physical life, and life

in the flesh was preeminently in the blood.

Hebrews 9:22 declares: **"Without shedding of blood is no remission."** The life was in the blood, and the life of the sacrifice was taken and offered to God, as a representative and substitute for the offerer. **"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul"** (Lev. 17:11).

The sacrifice of Christ was a bloody sacrifice. In my text the writer of the Book of Hebrews called it **"the blood of Christ."** Nothing less than this could make expiation for our sins. When Christ instituted the memorial supper, He said: **"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"** (Matt. 26:28). Paul wrote to the Colossians: **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"** (Col. 1:14). In Hebrews 13:12 it is written: **"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."** Of our Redeemer John said: **"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"** (Rev. 1:5).

Our Lord Jesus Christ offered His sacrifices on earth, as Jewish high priests did without the tabernacle. Having offered His sacrifice on earth, He passed through the visible heavens, as Levitical priests pass through the outward tabernacle, into the Heaven of Heavens, of which the most Holy Place was a type. Christ entered the presence of Jehovah with **"his own blood"** as it had been shed upon earth. Our great High Priest entered Heaven in virtue of His blood---not His perfect character, not by keeping the law, not by personal worthiness. Christ did not enter Heaven except by **"his own blood"** (Heb. 9:12). Neither can we enter Heaven except by the blood of Christ. **"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus"** (Heb. 10:19).

Our Savior, the Holy One, entered God's presence **"through his own blood,"** and some dream of entering Heaven apart from that blood. One

tells us he will present himself to God as having "done his best." Another says he will be in Heaven because he was the member of some church or religious order. Still another expects to be there by his confirmation and baptism. There could be no more absolute and eternal insult to the God whose Son entered His presence **"through his own blood."** Poor deceived soul, have you never come to see your lost, guilty condition? Are you relying on your own profession instead of the blood of Christ? Do not die deceived! All sinners enter Heaven by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Wherever you hear a new preacher and a new message look for blood redemption by Christ. Beware of any preacher who does not preach that sinners enter Heaven by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. If the test of the blood is not met, the message may sound attractive, but it is a new gospel with salvation left out of it!

### A SELF-SACRIFICE

The text says that Christ **"offered himself."** **"Himself"** is in a sense emphatic. There is a contrast between the conscious, voluntary, self-determining nature of the sacrifice of Christ and the unconscious, involuntary, compulsory animal sacrifices. The animal went blindly and unwittingly to its death at the will of another. Christ willingly made Himself a sacrifice. The creature sacrifice was a mere animal act with a mere animal virtue. The sacrifice of Christ is a moral and spiritual act, and as such had a moral and spiritual efficacy.

Self-offering was the disposition of which the blood was the expression. **"Offered himself"** implies a free act on the part of our Redeemer. He was not forced to make a sacrifice, but He did it voluntarily of Himself. **"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"** (Eph. 5:25). As **"the Prince of life"** (Acts 3:15), Christ had power to lay down His life (John 10:17-18). He freely gave **"his life a ransom for many"** (Matt. 20:28; I Tim. 2:6). Paul told Titus that our Lord **"gave himself for us"** (Tit. 2:14). The word **"offered"** in my text implies that Christ made Himself a

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## Sacrifice of Christ

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ransom price, for it properly signifies **“to bring to.”** Christ willingly brought Himself to God for us to redeem us.

I doubt that any of us fully understands the words **“gave himself.”** According to some, Christ gave a little of Himself. Others would say He gave His human nature. But I understand by the words **“gave himself”** that He gave Himself as the God-man to make an infinite atonement. Everything that He was He gave to purge us from our sins.

### A DIVINE SACRIFICE

The words in my text **“through the eternal Spirit”** have been understood in two different ways. Today most make **“the eternal Spirit”** the Holy Spirit of God. The Latin Vulgate, which reflects the fixed “Catholic” understanding, reads: “through the Holy Spirit.” Many Protestants agree, saying that Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit for the fulfillment of His mediatorial high priestly office. This is true and proved by other Scriptures (Isa. 42:1; 61:1; Mark 1:10; Luke 4:18), but I do not think Hebrews 9:14 proves this.

I have always been uncomfortable with the view that **“the eternal Spirit”** in Hebrews 9:14 is the Holy Spirit. It seems that when we say this we have the Spirit helping in redeeming us. This would contradict Hebrews 1:3 which tells us **“by himself”** Christ purged our sins. It was not God the Father or God the Holy Spirit Who died for us; it was God the Son.

It is best to understand by **“through the eternal Spirit”** the heavenly aspect of His deity, or the divine nature of Christ, which is Spirit and at times distinct from His human nature (Rom. 1:3-4; I Tim. 3:16; I Pet. 3:18). As God, Christ is an eternal Spirit, a truly divine spiritual personality, conjoined with His assumed humanity.

A number of translators apply **“the eternal Spirit”** to the divine nature of Christ. J. B. Rotherham has: “who through an age-abiding Spirit.” Kenneth S. Wuest in his expanded translation gives it: “who by virtue of the intermediate instrumentality of (His) eternal spirit (His divine essence as deity, thus by His own volition as

a member of the Godhead) offered himself.” J. B. Philips renders: “who in his eternal spirit offered Himself.” The Twentieth Century translation put it: “through his eternal Spirit.” A. T. Robertson writes on the expression, **“the eternal Spirit,”** thusly: “Not the Holy Spirit, but Christ’s own spirit which is eternal as he is. Thus there is a moral quality in the blood of Christ not in that of other sacrifices” (*Word Pictures in the N.T.*, Vol. V, p. 400).

A number of commentators take this position. Moses Stuart gives it: “in an eternal spiritual nature” (I would call it “spiritual spirit,” although this would not make much sense in English---MRC). John Trapp (1601-1669) wrote on this expression: “That is, by his Deity, called the Spirit of holiness, Rom. 1:4, and the Spirit, I Tim. 3:16, that gave both value and virtue to his death, both to satisfy and to sanctify” (*Com. on N. T.*, p. 679).

I want to give some reasons why I favor making **“the eternal Spirit”** in my text the divine nature of Christ. First, the Hebrew writer as a rule when referring to the Holy Spirit uses the term **“Holy Ghost”** or **“Holy Spirit”** (2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 9:8; 10:15). If on one occasion he uses another term, the assumption is that he has in mind another idea.

Second, there is nothing to suggest the Holy Spirit in the context. The writer is dealing with Christ’s voluntary offering of Himself to God. His own will, His own spirit, inspired the surrender and made it so infinitely acceptable. If the Holy Spirit inspired our Savior’s surrender, then it was not, genuinely and simply, Christ’s offering of Himself. The real merit of the offering belongs to the Holy Spirit who inspired it, not to Jesus.

Third, the sacrifice of Christ purified the inner personality because it was the action of a personality which belonged by nature to the order of Spirit or eternity. This is why Christ obtained **“eternal redemption”** for us (Heb. 9:12). This is why He made a sacrifice which never needs to be repeated.

John Brown (1787-1858) has well said on this verse: “Had it not been for our Lord’s Divine nature, He could not have yielded acceptable and effectual substituted obedience and satisfaction. A mere creature can

never yield more obedience than it owes for itself; and a mere creature has no right, were the thing practicable, to make a sacrifice of its own happiness to obtain the happiness of another. It was the living God manifest in the flesh who was both our High Priest and Victim; and He stamped His own glory on the propitiation for our sins, both on the priestly act and on the ransom offered” (*Hebrews*, p. 402).

The words **“offered himself”** implies acting strictly from within, and proceeding properly from Himself. It was not His purely human soul, which He shared in common with other men (Isa. 53:10) that made the offering. It was not even His purely divine nature, which before His incarnation had consented to His sacrifice, and whose presence was certainly necessary to the efficacy of His offering. It was the blending of His human and divine natures which gave to His act a certain element of humanity and divinity.

That the divine nature of Christ was involved in His sacrifice can be seen in other Scriptures. In I Corinthians 2:8 it is said men **“crucified the Lord of glory.”** In Acts 20:28 the blood of Christ is called the blood of God. It also appears in the fact that **“the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit”** (I Cor. 15:45).

Objectors will say that Christ’s blood was a material, external, carnal thing. They will ask, “How could it have such spiritual vigor?” I would answer that His blood was offered by the eternal Spirit whose blood it was. Christ our priest being an eternal Spirit can save us eternally. From an eternal Spirit proceeds eternal redemption which delivers from eternal damnation. He who died is the Son in human nature. Since in Him the divine and human natures are one person, His blood is of eternal and unspeakable value.

### A SPOTLESS SACRIFICE

Mark carefully the words in my text **“without spot.”** The sinless Savior was seen in the fact that the animal sacrifices were to be **“without blemish.”** This was especially true of the paschal lamb (Ex. 12:5). This was true of other offerings (Lev. 22:19-21; Mal. 1:8, 14). This was designed to suggest the purity of Christ’s nature and sacrifice. The justice of

God could find no fault with the sacrifice of Christ. This is why those He died for shall be unblameable and irreprovable (Col. 1:22; Jude 24).

Adam dealt with God for the human race in the first great trial, imparting weaknesses and moral evils to the race in his failure. Even so, Christ, as the second Adam, dealt with God for the elect in the second great moral trial, imparting salvation and life by His spotless obedience unto and through death. **“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”** (I Peter 1:18-19).

### A GODWARD SACRIFICE

The sacrifice of Christ was not offered to the Devil as some blasphemously assert. Our Lord **“offered himself without spot to God.”** By **“God”** I understand **“the God of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Eph. 1:17). He is the First Person in the Godhead, the One our Savior so often called **“my Father”** (Matt. 26:39; John 20:17, 21). The truth in Hebrews 9:14 is that the Son of God offered Himself to God the Father (Eph. 5:2). This was prefigured by the types in the Old Testament (Gen. 4:3; 8:20; 12:7; Deut. 27:6).

The sacrifice of Christ was for sin, and sin is committed against God. His justice had been offended, His law violated, His will transgressed, and His wrath provoked. Therefore, to the Father atonement must be made. Until His outraged justice is satisfied, His wrath pacified, His favor procured, no peace can be brought to a guilty conscience. If God were not satisfied, our conscience could not be pacified.

### A DEFINITE SACRIFICE

The Redeemer offered His sacrifices to the Father to **“purge”** our **“conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”** Hebrews 1:3 speaks of **“when he had by himself purged our sins.”** The word “purge” (*katharizo*) means “to make clean or purify.” It implies a taking away of filth and making a foul thing clean (Isa. 6:7). In my text it means a

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## Sacrifice of Christ

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spiritual purging from sin, for it is in opposition to **“the purifying of the flesh”** in verse 13.

The blood of Christ has a purging nature which reaches the soul and cleanses it from all sin: **“And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”** (I John 1:7). The blood which Christ presented to the Father did not merely “try to purge” our sins, but it actually did cleanse a people from their sins (I Cor. 6:11; Rev. 1:5). That blood did not merely put us in a “purgative state,” but it really and truly secured the redemption of a people from all their transgressions. The blood of the God-man purged the filth of the conscience for all the elect.

Our Lord did not purge away our sins to keep us out of Hell, nor merely so we could go to Heaven. He cleansed us from all sins so we could **“serve the living God.”** Christ freed us from the bondage of sin and Satan that we could be His free servants. The legal sin-offering purified the flesh from contamination of contact with the dead, so the Israelite could offer acceptable worship. Even so, the offering of our Savior purified our conscience, so we might offer our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1). We are saved to serve, and those who do not serve God are not saved!

### CONCLUSION

1. Christ is a priest, and the sacrifice He has offered up is Himself. He offered His human nature, soul and body, in union with His divine person. This gave His sacrifice virtue and efficacy. As the eternal Spirit and as a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, Christ obtained eternal redemption for all the covenant people. He secured a spiritual and permanent purification for all the elect.

2. All human works done before salvation are dead works---works tainted by sin, and so dead for the purpose of justification. All these works spring from a nature which possesses in it no true spiritual life. Such people can never render acceptable service to God.

3. The blood of Christ which

purifies the soul of a man from sin also invigorates him for the willing service of the living God. In our souls and bodies we must serve Him in a lively manner.

4. Have you been purged from your sins by the blood of Jesus? Are you looking to other things to purify your soul? Do not be deceived by the Devil. You can only go to Heaven on the merits of the blood of Jesus. Remember that God foreordained Christ **“to be a propitiation through faith in his blood”** (Rom. 3:25).



## The Myth of Free Will

By Chad Johnson  
of Auburn, Kentucky

**“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”** (Jer. 10:23).

Most people say that they believe in “free will.” Sadly, as with many other doctrines in the Word of God people pick up on one liners and catch words without properly examining the Bible for the answer. I do not deny that man has a will, however, that will is not free. Man’s will is in bondage to his fallen nature. The only people who have a will that is free are those who have been saved by Jesus Christ. Even then, we still have the old nature that is warring against the new nature (Rom 7:7-25). The redeemed of the Lord have a will that is free to choose to serve God. I now want to define “will.” Will is the faculty of the mind by which we determine either to do or forbear an action; the faculty which is exercised in deciding among two or more objects which we shall embrace or pursue. It is the part of man that makes choices. The question is whether or not this ability to choose is “free.”

The first myth of free will I want

to examine is that of circumstantial freedom. That is to say that our will determines the circumstances in our life. Man does have the ability or will to make a decision, but he does not have the power to carry it out. Joseph’s brothers hated him and sold him to be a slave. They willed to see him die as a slave. They staged his death and told his father that a wild animal had killed him. They even brought his coat of many colors covered in blood to prove it. Joseph’s brothers willed to get rid of him and not have him rule over them. However their will did not thwart the will of God (Gen. 50:20). You may will to have good health, fortune, and many other things. You can eat right, exercise and still die young. Man can do all the right things financially and not be wealthy. Yes, we can choose and plan to do what we will, but our will is not free to accomplish anything against the purpose of God. The rich man in Luke 12:18-21 said I will, I will. He was free to plan, but not free to carry it out.

The second myth I want to look at is the myth of freedom for an unregenerated man to choose to do good. From man’s view point we say someone is good if they do something we consider good. Proverbs 21:4 tells us that **“the plowing of the wicked, is sin.”** All that the lost man does is sin in the sight of God. The lost man does nothing to please God or bring glory to God, and therefore he is free to choose sin because that is what his nature tells him to do. Man’s will is not free to operate apart from his depraved nature (Rom. 3:9-18; Ps. 14:1-3; 53:1-3).

Man does not become depraved and sinful because he sins, he sins because he is depraved and sinful from birth (Rom. 5:12-21). This illustration by Walter Chantry says it well “if fresh meat and tossed salad were placed before a hungry lion, he would be free to choose either, but he would choose the meat every time because his nature dictates the choice. So even what we call good things done by the unregenerated man are evil because he cannot please God.

The last myth I want to look at is that spiritual freedom. Many still think that the human will makes the ultimate decision on spiritual life or

death. Ephesians 2:1 tells us that we were dead spiritually in our sins. Since our will is not free to choose outside the control of our nature we can see no man can or will choose God on his own (Rom. 3:9-18; John 3:18-21; I Cor. 2:11-14; Rom. 8:7-8).

John 1:12-13 says that those who believe on Christ have been born by the will of God, and not man. Some may ask what about “whosoever will.” The myth of freewill and “whosoever will” do not contradict. John 6:44 says no man can come or will come unless he is drawn. The whosoever will’s come not of their will, but of the will of God.



## The Stouthearted

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trust in themselves. I say this because the Lord addresses them as those **“that are far from righteousness.”** Now, it could be that He is speaking to those amongst an unrighteous nation that are still yet “strong for the Lord.” But, I tend to think that the Lord, through Isaiah, is calling out to His people that have turned from God, to trust in the flesh.

Let us begin by considering some ways in which men and women are “stouthearted” and strong in the flesh, and how that this is in many ways a commendable thing.

When we read the Old Testament Scriptures, we will find many examples of the stouthearted and brave in battle. In fact, we can find many accounts of valiant and strong men that fought against the enemies of God and of Israel. I think of the list of valiant men that served with King David. This list is recounted for us in II Samuel 23:8-39, where we read about the thirty-seven mighty men of renown that fought for King David, and some of the incredible exploits that they performed. And, a couple of chapters previous, we read about the men of David that slew the sons of the giant. (See II Samuel 21:15-22). Yes, it is true that there were other giants beside Goliath; and these giants were slain by David’s men.)

And, the Scriptures also record for us the accounts of stouthearted

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# The Stouthearted

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men who were not even godly, which accomplished great deeds. Consider how that the Philistines fought against the Israelites, and how that they were just braver and better than the Israelites in the flesh. Let me recount to you the events that took place when the Philistines were first confronted with the Ark of the Covenant, and how that they defeated the armies of Israel, and took the Ark from them: **"And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain"** (1 Sam. 4:6-11). It is evident, then, that a stout heart is necessary in a good soldier. A successful army depends on men with courage. The outcome of a battle (or a war) is often based on the actions of valiant men.

But, mortal courage cannot defeat every foe, nor is any army invincible. **"The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep. Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry"** (Ps. 76:5-7)? Despite the bravest and most stouthearted attempts at victory, men and

their armies can still be defeated and brought low. In reality, it is the hand of God that must prevail – even in the affairs of men. Surely, David and his men had victory against Goliath and the sons of the giant, only because God was with them! Surely, the Philistines could prevail against the Israelites, only because God would judge the Israelites, and punish them for their sins. And, even today, the strongest and the mightiest and the bravest will only succeed (or fail) based upon the will and purpose of God.

Let me remind you that mortal courage will not avail in the matters of one's soul. No matter how strong or brave or stouthearted you might be in the flesh, this cannot avail you in the affairs of the spirit and soul! **"Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes"** (Ps. 119:155). No matter the bravery, courage, abilities, merits, or moralities that any man might possess, these cannot avail in the matter of the eternal salvation of the soul. **"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).

As we consider the "stouthearted in the flesh," let me remind you also of the many physical and professional and societal successes and accomplishments that are attained by men and women who demonstrate courage, stout hearts, and a certain resiliency in the flesh. Really, if you

find someone who is successful in life, and someone who has accomplished many things on his (or her) own; you will discover that that person is strong and determined and will not be easily defeated or discouraged. And, to my way of thinking, this is generally a commendable and a positive contribution to our society – whether that person is a child of God or not.

A stouthearted person may deal with adversities better than some. And, stout and resilient hearts are much to be desired. However, in the end, we must admit that the brave and stouthearted in the flesh, are not guaranteed a place in Heaven. In fact, stout hearts and resilient minds cannot hold up indefinitely. The Preacher said, **"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it"** (Eccl. 8:8). We need God's grace and God's strength to win out against life's adversities, and to be assured an eternal home in Heaven. No matter how accomplished and successful one might be in this life, we must trust in the strength and grace of God in order to win the final victory.

## STOUTHEARTED AGAINST TRUTH AND GOD

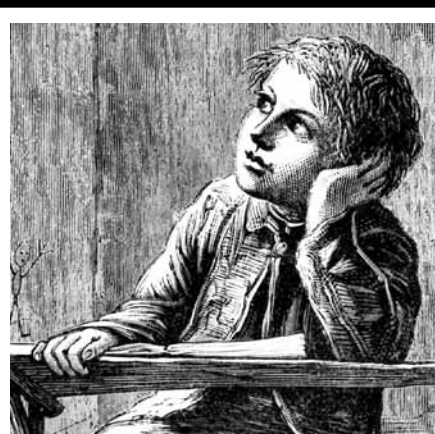
In our previous point, we established the fact that "stouthearted" could be a good thing, after the flesh. We can gain success in battle, or in life. But, in the end, a stout heart alone will not gain eternal salvation for anyone. Now, I would like to think about how men can be "stouthearted" against truth and God and His ways.

When a person or a people will oppose themselves to God and the things of God, then they are (as our text says) **"far from righteousness"**. And, though they might think themselves brave and strong and able to do whatever they desire; still, in the end, they must find out that their hopes and strengths and desires were of no avail. **"Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at**

**noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment"** (Isa. 59:9-15). Our nation that we live in today, is, in many ways, stouthearted against God. We believe and trust in our own strength, and we deny God His rightful place in our lives and in our society. And, when we are warned by natural events, the preaching of godly men, or by some attack or persecution of men; still, though we may acknowledge God for some short period of time, in the end, we think ourselves to be strong enough to persevere on our own – without the presence and help of God Almighty.

In the early New Testament age, Stephen dealt with the Jews, who Stephen found to be stouthearted against God and strong for idols: **"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it"** (Acts 7:51-53). Certainly, the "stouthearted" behavior of the Jews in this instance was not commendable at all! They arrayed themselves against God and His Son – Who was their Saviour; and, they thought to manufacture their own way into

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## WONDERING WHY?

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## The Stouthearted

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Heaven!

In the Old Testament, the Lord had to oftentimes deal with His children of Israel, as they would resist Him and His ways. **“But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts”** (Zech. 7:11-12). It is an amazing thing, I think, that the very people that were called out and known of God would resist Him so stoutly! **“Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered”** (Mal. 3:13-15).

As I have said, I am afraid that our own nation is guilty of this awful behavior today. Now, out of all of the nations on the face of the earth, we are the most blessed and we are the most exalted. And yet, as a people and society, we are dead-set against the things of God. In fact, as a government, people, and society, we are currently dead-set against the name of God – especially the name of Jesus Christ – even being mentioned in public. How “stout” are our words against God today! How hard are our hearts against the desires and purposes of God today! How deaf are our ears to the Word of God today! May God have mercy on this once great nation in which we live.

### STOUTHEARTED FOR GOOD AND GOD

Finally, let us consider the most positive aspect of being “stout-hearted.” Though our text most likely is not referencing this type of “stout-heartedness,” I want to consider the Scriptural and practical implications

of trusting in God, and exhibiting a stout heart in the face of the afflictions, temptations, and difficulties which a child of God must inevitably face.

If you want to be a faithful servant unto the Lord, then you will undoubtedly face adversity in this life. (I might even venture to say, that if you do not face adversity on a regular basis, then you are probably not following hard after the Lord like you should.) However, when these adversities come upon you, I encourage you to be “stouthearted for good and God.” **“Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest”** (Josh. 1:6-7). No matter who might oppose us; and no matter what adversity might confront us; you and I should be stouthearted – trusting in the Lord God that goes with us.

If you want to be a faithful servant unto the Lord, then you will also undoubtedly face periods of tribulation in this life. At such a time, I implore you to turn unto the Lord. Do you realize that you are not strong enough on your own to contend with even the least of the attacks or tribulations which Satan may bring upon you? On the other hand, do you realize that even the greatest tribulation that the powers of Hell can bring upon you – even if it will cost you your mortal life – pales in comparison to the strength and the succor that can be found in God Almighty, and the Lord Jesus Christ? Paul exhorted the Corinthians this way: **“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong”** (I Cor. 16:13). I believe that most of the time, in Scripture, as the people of God, we are encouraged to be “strong” and to be “like men.” I know that we ought to be compassionate and we ought to be caring – these things go without saying. But, I don’t think that Christians ought to be puny and weak and soft (like “milk-toast”) as we face the world. Sure, we want to cry out to the lost men and

women around us in compassion, and in love deliver the gospel to them. Sure, our hearts should break, and we should mourn, as we consider the millions and billions that are lost and headed for Hell. But, I believe that the Lord would have us to be strong, and have us resist the evils (and the Evil One), and have us to **“quit you like men.”**

In the end, I believe that the Lord expects us to be “strong for the Lord.” Not that He needs us, or that He might possibly fail if we do not exert ourselves on His behalf. Far be it from me or you to imagine that we can add anything unto the Lord! But, I believe that He expects us, and desires us, to

be strong for Him, so that we can be a part of His cause, and so that we can build up rewards in Heaven, and so that we can do that for which we were ultimately created. And, I think the Lord has some of these men and women that are “stouthearted for good and God” in every generation. Until the Lord returns, there will always be some who will be strong – what about you? **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”** (I Cor. 15:58).



## From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)



### Are the Saints Now Reigning with Christ?

#### Part III

In some circles in our ranks the idea prevails that we should separate ourselves from every premillennialist who does not agree with every detail of what we believe. This is not, nor has it ever been, the position of this writer. I have some good and trusted friends in either the post-trib or mid-trib camp. On the great issues which divide premillennialism from amillennialism they are premillennialists. In these days of growing amillennialism I do not think that we need any division in the premillennial camp. Let us sit down and discuss in kindness and love the points on which we may disagree, but let us stand united against the doctrine of amillennialism. There is a great gulf between amillennialism and premillennialism.

Even in our attack upon amillennialism let us deal with the doctrine, and under no circumstances should we personally attack a brother. This does not mean that we cannot quote what a brother may have written on the subject. There are some able and fine brethren who hold to the amillennial position, and, with this one exception, they are strong Baptists. As I see it the issue is: What does the Bible

teach about the reign of the saints with Christ? This question must be dealt with and settled by what the Bible says.

In my last installment I spent much space in my discussion of Revelation 20:4. In this issue I wish to look at the other two verses.

#### VERSE 5

**“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”**

The expression, **“But the rest of the dead,”** implies that not all the dead are raised at the time of the first resurrection. It shows that in the sense that those in verse 4 lived again these will live again after a 1,000 years. There is a physical resurrection of the bodies of the beheaded martyrs in verse 4, and there will be the same for **“the rest of the dead”** in verse 5. **“The rest of the dead”** are mentioned in Revelation 20:12-13. This makes it clear that the living again in verse 4 speaks of a bodily resurrection. At the end of the thousand years Hades delivers up these spirits so they live again in the body.

Revelation 13 tells us that death

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## Saints Now Reigning

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gives up the bodies of **“the rest of the dead,”** and Hell gives up their souls. Why is it not said that death and Heaven delivered up the dead in them? The answer is simple: this is a resurrection of the unsaved dead and all of their souls come up from Hell. When these souls are joined to their bodies and judged they are **“cast into the lake of fire”** (Rev. 20:15). Where does it say that any in this resurrection went to Heaven? None are said to go to Heaven because they were raised 1,000 years or more prior to this time.

There are two resurrections taught here. The first resurrection embraces all who are raised before the millennium begins. The second embraces all who are not raised until the thousand years are finished. These are the ones John called **“the rest of the dead.”** These resurrections differ so radically as for one to be **“of life”** and the other **“of judgment”** (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). When the righteous and wicked are mentioned together, the righteous are always mentioned first, for the first resurrection is a **“better resurrection”** (Heb. 11:35).

Amillennialists say that our teaching of two resurrections is based upon one single passage in the New Testament. To which I would ask, “How many times does the Bible have to say a thing before we believe it?” But they are wrong in this assertion. Revelation 20:4-5 stands not alone, but appears rather as a summary of the whole tenor of Bible doctrine concerning the resurrection.

The doctrine of two resurrections can be seen in Hebrews 11:35. The heroes of faith were tortured to death, **“not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”** These holy and faithful saints will be raised by Christ a thousand years before the resurrection of damnation. Therefore they obtain **“a better resurrection.”** If all the dead rise at the same time there can be no such thing as **“a better resurrection.”**

This doctrine is also seen in the words “out from among the dead.” In Philippians 3:11 Paul said: **“If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”** Alford, Berry, Graves, and others say the Greek

text means “the out-resurrection from among the dead.” The Greek text is *ek nekron* which means “from the dead,” or “out of the dead.” *Ek nekron* is not once applied in the New Testament to the ungodly. This phrase would be inexplicable if it were not derived from the idea that out of the mass of the dead some would rise first.

There would be no need to strive to attain to a resurrection from among the dead if all would rise at the same time. The resurrection Paul refers to is for those who know Christ and have fellowship with His sufferings (Phil. 3:10). It is the first resurrection of the blessed and holy, and those in it will reign with Christ for a 1,000 years.

Jesus Christ taught that the resurrection of the righteous was a resurrection from among the dead: **“But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection”** (Luke 20:35-36). **“From the dead”** in verse 35 is *ek nekron* in the Greek, and it means “out from among the dead.”

Christ speaks here in this verse of the same resurrection that John does in Revelation 20:4-5, for John said, **“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”** No lost people are said to be raised in either passage. Christ says of those in His resurrection in Luke 20: **“Neither can they die any more,”** and John says: **“On such the second death hath no power”** (Rev. 20:6). Christ says those in His resurrection are **“the children of God,”** and John says that those in his are **“blessed and holy.”** Only God’s children are blessed and holy. Christ says: **“Being the children of the resurrection,”** and John says: **“He that hath part in the first resurrection.”**

You will note that Christ speaks of a worthiness which is required to be in this resurrection: **“But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world...”** No worthiness is needed to be in a general resurrection. Those in the first resurrection are blessed and holy, and they be accounted worthy to obtain the age to come in which they will rule and reign with Christ for a

thousand years.

Significant phrases found in the Bible clearly distinguishes the two resurrections. **“The first resurrection”** (Rev. 20:6); **“the resurrection of life”** (John 5:29); of **“everlasting life”** (Dan. 12:2; **“of the just”** (Luke 14:14); of them **“that are Christ’s at his coming”** (I Cor. 15:23); and similar expressions. The context shows that the resurrection mentioned is separate from that of the wicked.

The last words in verse 5 read: **“This is the first resurrection.”** These words imply a second resurrection. By these words I understand this completes a three-phase first resurrection, foreshadowed by the three phases of the Jewish harvest: Christ, the first-fruits (Matt. 27:52-53; I Cor. 15:20); the saints at the rapture, the harvest (I Thess. 4:11-18); and the tribulation martyrs, the gleanings (Rev. 20:4). The Bible teaches an order to the resurrections (I Cor. 15:23).

### VERSE 6

**“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”**

Here we see the blessedness of being in the first resurrection and why it is called the **“better resurrection.”** **“Blessed”** describes their happy condition in their glorified bodies and their privilege of being made inheritors in the kingdom of Christ (Matt. 25:34). **“Holy”** describes their character when completely conformed to the image of Christ by resurrection glory.

The words, **“he that hath part in the first resurrection,”** are in marked contrast with and are the only alternative to the **“the rest of the dead”** who have **“their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone”** (Rev. 21:8).

**“The second death”** is eternal banishment from God (Matt. 7:23; 10:28; 25:46; II Thess. 1:8-9) by being cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14; 21:8). **“The second death”** has no power over the sons of the resurrection (Luke 20:35-36).

**“They shall be priests of God and Christ”** means all in the first resurrection are priests and will perform the function of priests. The business of priests is to carry on for

others **“the things pertaining to God”** (Heb. 2:17; 5:1). The glorified saints will perform the function of priests to believers in literal bodies during the millennium.

**“And shall reign with him for a thousand years.”** I point out again that the reign of Christ and the saints is viewed here as a future event. They are not said to be already reigning. Saints are now heirs of the kingdom (James 2:5). When Christ comes in all His glory (Matt. 25:31) the saints shall **“inherit the kingdom prepared”** for them from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34). When the kingdom comes (Matt. 6:10) the saints will possess it (Dan. 7:22). Even the dead saints will all be raised so they may reign with Christ a thousand years on the earth.

### IS THIS VIEW HERESY?

I do not contend that every premillennialists would agree with what I have said on every detail of this passage. But I believe that all will agree that there are two literal resurrections here. They will agree with me that these verses teach a literal thousand-year reign of Christ with the saints on the earth. On these basic points there can be no compromise, although some liberty may be allowed in the finer points of Revelation 20:4-6.

Many great Baptists of the past, as well as many now living, see in Revelation 20:4-6 two resurrections and a 1,000-year reign of Christ and the saints. I am thankful to be among them.

John Bunyan (A.D. 1628-1688) wrote: “These long-lived men therefore shew us the glory of the church shall have in the latter day, even the seventh thousand years of the world, that sabbath when Christ shall set up his kingdom on earth according to that which is written: ‘They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.’ Re. xx. 1-4” (*The Works of John Bunyan*, Vol. II, p. 456).

John Gill (A.D. 1699-1771) said upon Revelation 20:4: “. . . for all the saints will come with Christ, and all the dead in Christ will rise first, or be partakers of the first resurrection: and all that are redeemed by his blood, of whatever nation, or in whatsoever age of the world they have lived, even from the beginning of it, shall be kings

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Why do Baptist churches not use the term "bishop" to denote their pastors?  
-Tennessee

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Never really thought about it, but we would conclude that one reason it is not used, like many other truths in the Bible, are the works of the devil, and he has tainted the Word of God by other religious denominations' usage of the word bishop. We know that Catholicism and Presbyterianism and maybe others have taken the use of the word bishop to mean more than the Bible intended.

I had a Catholic man ask me one time if I considered myself a bishop and I said yes, according to I Timothy 3:1, and he gave me the third degree, and said I was very arrogant considering I did not have the proper training.

Even though I have no problem with being referred to as bishop, I would just as soon be called pastor, elder, or brother for the simple fact I hate the doctrines of Catholicism and all that it stands for. I can see it now if I were introduced as Bishop Reed, the reply would be, and what diocese (the Christian churches that are under the authority of one bishop, or the district containing them) do you belong?

To further answer the question allow us to quote from T. P. Simmons' book "A Systematic Study Of Bible Doctrine" (chapter 33, pg. 402):

"The chief officers in New Testament churches were called bishops, or elders, or pastors. 'That the appellations 'bishop,' 'presbyter' (or elder) and 'pastor' designate the same office and order of persons, may be shown from Acts 20:28 ..." (Strong). To the same effect are the words of many others, including those of Conybeare and Howson and passages quoted by Giessler (*Church*

*History*, Vol. 1, p. 90). See Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1, 8; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:1, 2. The first plausible objection to the identity of elders and bishops was advanced by Calvin on the basis of I Timothy 5:17. But instead of showing that the terms designate two offices, this passage merely shows that the one office involved two kinds of work, teaching and ruling or overseeing. Some occupants of the office were more successful in one than in the other, with teaching being regarded as the highest function of the office. The following passages show that teaching and ruling belonged to the same individual: Acts 20:28-31; Ephesians 4:11; Hebrews 13:7; I Timothy 3:2. The plurality of elders or bishops in New Testament churches was incidental, and is not incumbent on all churches; that is, a plurality of elders is not essential to the existence of a New Testament church. It was the size and scarcity of the churches, and the great expanses of destitution that gave rise to a plurality of elders".\*

### FOOTNOTES:

\*The bishop is not an official priest. The word in the Greek for priest is entirely different from the ones translated bishop, elder, pastor. New Testament churches had no official priests. All believers are priests. See. I Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 5:10. Here is the pitifully weak attempt once made by a leading Catholic to justify the priesthood: "The very word 'priest' in our language is derived from the New Testament word 'presbuterous.' Presbuterous became presbyter; presbyter became priest; priest became priest. This is sufficient indication of the office and proof that the Catholic priesthood is 'scriptural.'"

So as you can see in Brother Simmons' footnotes, Catholicism has tainted the truth with their lies once again, it is nothing less than the deception of that old devil!

**"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"** (Matt. 10:16).

**"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain"** (Phil. 2:15-16).

This of course is my opinion; there may be other reasons why Baptist churches do not use the term "bishop" to denote their pastors. God Bless!

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Baptists normally use the terms elder (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:1-4) or pastor (Eph. 4:11-12) when referring to the man that God has called and appointed to lead and feed the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptural terms of elder/pastor/bishop all describe the same office and may be used interchangeably.

In all probability Baptists moved away from calling their pastors "bishop" because of its association with the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The terms bishop/elder/pastor were never intended to be used as high sounding titles used to exalt men to a place of preeminence among the brethren. There is to be no hierarchy or class system in the Lord's churches. Every member of the Lord's church is equally chosen, redeemed, and called by sovereign grace. Every church member is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and baptized in water by the authority of the church. No man is worthy to take upon himself the title of Reverend, Pope, Most Holy Father, or any other idolatrous term that would serve to elevate the man of God over the membership of the church. Unfortunately, the Mother of Harlots and many of her Protestant daughters perverted the Scriptural use of the term.

N. M. Williams in *An American Commentary on the New Testament* wrote: "Within one hundred years after

the apostles, the original oneness of bishop and elder began to disappear; bishop came to be applied to a small class of ministers, while other ministers continued to be called elders; the bishops grew in ambition, dared to call themselves the successors of the apostles, arrogated the exclusive right to ordain, and claimed that the Holy Ghost could not be given through any other fingers than their own. Diocesan power became metropolitan power, metropolitan power became patriarchal power, and patriarchal power became papal power. Bishops deposed bishops. Councils came into vogue, and becoming the tools of the higher clergy, had the arrogance to demand of the churches the acceptance of creeds hammered out upon their own anvils. It is not surprising that in view of the quarrels and the lust of bishops an ancient idolater said; 'make me a bishop, and I will surely become a Christian'" (Vol. 6, p. 69).

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**"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach"** (I Tim. 3:1-2). The Biblical definition of bishop is an overseer, shepherd or pastor.

So, why do not Baptists typically put "Bishop Jones" on their study doors, or "Bishop Smith" when signing official documents? There is nothing scripturally wrong, if the entire world were Baptists! But, it becomes a stumbling block in many cases, especially where the Roman Catholic church has many followers. The word "bishop" has grown to have connotations of an unscriptural hierarchy among many congregations and denominations. From being an overseer of an individual flock, it has come to mean an overseer over

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Is it wrong for me to attend a Campbellite church? I am unable to drive and the person that takes me to the places I have to go keeps asking me to attend, but I have so far declined. I have been called a bigot by some of my family members, who are freewillers, because I have refused to go. I am a Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist. I do not believe Campbellite doctrine. - Tennessee

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If you are a Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist it means that you believe the truth about the Gospel (I Cor. 1:14-18; 15:1-4), the doctrines of grace, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and the Divine inspiration and authority of Holy Scriptures. It also means that you have a view of the Lord's church that differs from the Roman Catholic Church and all other Protestant daughters, which would include Campbellites who came out of the Presbyterian denomination. As a Baptist you believe scriptural baptism must be administered by the authority of the Lord's church, that only believers are to be baptized, that baptism is strictly symbolic with no saving qualities whatsoever, and that is must be administered by entire immersion in water. As a Baptist you understand that there is no such thing as a universal, invisible church.

If you believe all of the above you have no business attending a Campbellite organization. You would be committing the sin of spiritual adultery. Campbellites believe in works salvation that begins in water and is carried on by human effort. They believe you can lose your salvation. They believe you must be baptized to have any hope of going to Heaven. They don't believe in inherent, total depravity. Isaiah 8:20 declares: "To the law and to the testimony: if thy speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Amos 3:3 asks: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Romans 16:17-18 states: "Now I

beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." II Corinthians 6:14-17 commands: "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."

I am sure our Baptist forefathers suffered much more than merely being called bigots. They were imprisoned, tortured, hanged, burned at the stake, and drowned for their firm adherence to the truth. Don't compromise your convictions no matter what your family members may say. You have not been called to salvation to please them by ecumenical compromise. You are to love and honor God, first and foremost. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able

to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Eph. 6:10-14).

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Yes, it would be wrong for you to regularly attend any church that is not one of the Lord's New Testament churches. In this day and age, I believe you have rightly divined that to be a Sovereign Grace Landmark Independent Missionary Baptist Church! Although there are many folk out there that think it is okay to weekly "attend the church of your choice," I believe that to be patently false! We should "attend the church of GOD's choice!" Selah! Think about it!

I will give some reasons to ponder and consider...

Firstly, God is not the head of these other congregations, Satan is, according to the Bible! "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; . . . I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:8-9). "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; . . . Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee" (Rev. 3:7-9).

Here, in the seven letters to the seven churches, God distinguishes between the "my church" of Matthew 16:18 and the other denominations that have sprung up as "synagogues of Satan" and that have had the candlestick of God's authority removed from their congregations. Brethren, I know that there may be saved saints in these other assemblies, but that does not excuse them! "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and

repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:5).

Secondly, to knowingly give honor (glory) to any but God is a sin, as Christ Himself stated at the third temptation in Matthew 4:8-10, "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Certainly none of these folk would claim that they are worshipping Satan, but they are giving glory and honor to a church that is in competition with God's churches! Contesting both for members and doctrine!

Thirdly, the good of hearing a few (distorted) truths can in NO WAY compare to the steady diet of heresy that will eventually work its way into our minds, leading us away from truth. I believe Revelation 18:4 to be speaking particularly about the Roman Catholic church, but should suffice to warn us of her Protestant daughters also, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." We CANNOT purify the world and her religions by being partakers of their iniquity, but MUST separate and consecrate ourselves away from error and unto the truth. Selah! Think about it!

Fourthly, it is tantamount to spiritual fornication to be unequally yoked with error and Satan. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication" (I Cor. 6:15-18).

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## Forum #1

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several area churches. Selah! Think about it!

It is important for true Baptist churches to refrain from appearances of evil whenever we can. There are some times when we cannot, though! For instance, when seemingly the entire Christian world has gone after the Catholic holiday X-mass, we Baptists have long stood against the vile celebration mixture of heathen customs modified to fit the Catholic desire to accommodate paganistic worship systems. It used to be that only fundamental, conservative Christians rejected this holy day. Now, there are fringe groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses and some Pentecostal Holiness assemblies that have cast off the celebration. So much have modern, liberal Baptists gone hard after the unholy commemoration, that most of the world thinks that only these cults would deny the birthday of Christ! And I personally have been lumped in with folks that I would never have desired to be so!

But, we cannot give in and preach for truth the lies of the devil about the birth of our Saviour! We must suffer the ignominy of "appearing" to be in cahoots with the JW's and others, so that we are true to Bible doctrine. The word "bishop" is not so. The original Greek has not changed, but English has- and "bishop" is an English word. So there is no need to tie ourselves into usage of an unnecessary English word, when we have others that will work as well, or better, such as pastors or elders, which usage will separate us from the heresy of the Catholic churches, et al. Selah! Think about it!

Most Baptist churches call their spiritual leader a pastor, rather than a bishop. Pastor is used in both the New and Old Testaments in relationship of one that is ordained a shepherd to the flock of God's people. **"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: . . . And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding"** (Jer. 3:14-15). **"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists;**

**and some, pastors and teachers"** (Eph. 4:11).

Probably the most common word for the ordained leaders of the New Testament churches would be "elder." Note their job description in I Peter 5:1-4, **"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder... Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."** Overseer, undershepherd, ruler and leader by example.

Another good synonym of the office of a bishop is shepherd (again pastor in Bible form!). **"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood"** (Acts 20:26-28). The Holy Ghost calls men to pastor and preach and the individual churches autonomously will call them to be their overseers and rulers. Their ensamples and leaders. But NOT called over any collection of churches- just each one. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



## Forum #2

(Continued from page 131) ♦

Lastly, your very presence at an unscriptural congregation will lend credence to it. Family members, co-workers, etc, will see you attending and think that it is okay for them to attend, as well...! **"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you"** (Titus 2:7-8). Selah! Think about it!

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**"Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"** (Matt. 16:6).

**"Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"** (Matt. 16:12).

Let us first answer the question; Yes, I believe it is wrong to go to a Campbellite church (church of Christ, which they are called today). Do not go into the enemy's camp; it is not the people who are our enemy (even though they hate us), but their doctrine. First it is not a true church, and second I do not consider it a church at all. They may call themselves a church, but it is not. If you wanted to join a church in the New Testament days, you would not have been able to find a Campbellite church, because they did not exist, huh, I wonder why? Because the only church was the one Jesus started and He said, **"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"** (Matt. 16:18). There is only one true church and that is the one Jesus started and that same church exists today, and has not changed in over 2,000 years!

According to *"A History of the Baptist"* Alexander Campbell around the early to mid-1800s and his followers were excluded from the Baptist Association at that time. There are those who will deny this and that he never started the Campbellite church but according to Baptist history, he did, so it is an argument how the Campbellite church started. We believe, because of the many churches that were started after or around the time of the civil war he most certainly started this sect.

Being once a follower of the Baptist and his daughter's birth spurred Campbell to study the subject of baptism. He ultimately concluded that

Scripture did not support the baptism of infants. But later he came to believe that individuals had to choose baptism and conversion for themselves, which lead him and his followers as they still believe today to the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration" that in order to be saved you must be baptized, which the Bible refutes.

I actually witnessed to a man at work that I thought the Lord saved. He was involved with devil worship and I talked to him about Jesus, and the next day he came in and said a change had come over him and he could see the evil that he was involved with! But his family were Campbellites, so that is the path he followed, and he might be saved, but if his salvation rest in baptism alone then I would doubt his salvation, but God knows his heart, not me. Now he is the pastor of the Campbellite church here in town.

As far as we know Campbellites base "baptismal regeneration" on one verse, but as many do, they do not follow through because it would be the ruin of their doctrine. Here is the verse, but let me show the questioner and the reader their error. Compare these two verses of Scripture spoken by Peter, and since there are no contradictions in all of Holy Writ one must come to the conclusion that even though Peter was quoted by Luke differently, both verses mean the same thing.

**"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"** (Acts 2:38).

**"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins"** (Acts 10:43).

Now, do we receive remission (forgiveness) of sins by baptism or belief in Jesus Christ? Because Luke recorded Peter saying, **"Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"** Alexander Campbell preached "baptismal regeneration," but Luke also records Peter saying, **"That through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."** So, which is it? It can not be both; this is the great error, them not wanting to

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## Forum #2

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admit to the truth. We tried to show this to the man and he just gave us a deaf ear, **"But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear"** (Zech. 7:11).

Now, secondly, let us try and give comfort to the questioner on being called a bigot. **"Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me"** (John 8:48-49). **"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you"** (John 15:18). We used to get upset when people would call us a Jesus freak, and today we hear that we are Bible thumpers, but we do not get upset anymore, we just smile and praise God. We actually count it a blessing because we must be doing what is right or they would not be so threatened by us. Paul was called mad by Festus for his belief; rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12) for His Name sake.

Lastly, we are puzzled by the questioner, you state that you are a Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist; do you not have a true church nearby? Ask the person to take you to your church or have the pastor or a member pick you up. If there are no true churches to go to in your area we feel for you, this is why we need more home missionaries in America, if this is the problem in your case.

You are not alone, and we can tell you, things are going to get much worse and there is a great persecution coming, we are afraid, before the rapture.

**"Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God: and let the LORD do that which is good in his sight"** (I Chron. 19:13).

**"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD"** (I

Chron. 28:20).

**"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD"** (Ps. 27:14).

**"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD"** (Ps. 31:24).

Dear reader, one last thought. Millions of Baptists have died defending the two Scriptural ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Let us be found faithful doing the same. May God bless our efforts as we strive to serve Him! Feel free to contact me by email or phone; we will do our best to help you, if we can. God Bless!

ROGER REED



## Saints Now Reigning

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and priests, and reign with him on the earth, Zech. 14:5; I Thess. 3:13 and 4:14, 16; Rev. 5:9-10" (*Gill's Expositor*, Vol. IX, p. 847).

Again he writes: "The kingdom of Christ will be bounded by two resurrections; by the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the just, at which it will begin; and by the resurrection of the wicked, at which it will end, or nearly; for it is expressedly said, that *the rest of the dead*, that is, the wicked, *lived not again until the thousand years were finished*: now in the interval between the resurrection of the one, and the resurrection of the other, will be the millennium, or thousand years reign of Christ and his people together" (*A Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, p. 465).

Charles Spurgeon (A.D. 1834-1892) preached a great sermon in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, May 5, 1861, on "The First Resurrection." In this sermon from Revelation 20:4-6 he said: "The fact is, in reading this passage with an unbiased judgment, having no purpose whatever to serve, having no theory to defend, ---and I confess I have none, for I know but very little about mysteries to come, I could not help seeing there are two literal resurrections here spoken of, one of the spirits of the just, and the other of the bodies of the wicked; one of the saints who sleep in Jesus, whom

God shall bring with him, and another of these who live and die impenitent, who perish in their sins" (*Spurgeon's Sermons*, Vol. VII. p. 364).

He then went on to say: "Yet I think we may say this morning, there is in the text a distinct promise that the saints are to reign with Christ a thousand years; and I believe they are to reign with him upon the earth" (*op. cit.*, p. 371).

These great Baptists of the past read Revelation 20:4-6 and believed just what they read. They preached and wrote just what it said. I personally do not see how any person with an open mind can read Revelation 20:4-6 without coming to the same conclusion, unless he has a theory to defend as Bro. Spurgeon so well said. These words are weighty and hard to explain away.

Even one amillennialist, Abraham Kuyper, in commenting upon Revelation 20:1-7 made quite a noble confession: "Reading this passage as if it were a literal description would not only tend to a belief in the Millennium but would settle the question of chiliasm for all who might be in doubt concerning the same. . . . If we take it for granted now, that these thousand years are to be taken literally, that these thousand years are still in the future, and that this resurrection was meant to be a bodily resurrection, why then we may say, that at least as far as Revelation 20 is concerned, the question is settled. Then we must admit that Revelation 20:1-7 is a confession of chiliasm with all it contains" (Cited by Charles L. Feinberg in *Millennialism*, p. 313).

### AMILLENNIALISTS AND REVELATION 20:4-6

Most honest amillennialists will admit that Revelation 20:4-6 is a problem passage for them. B. B. Warfield, an amillennialist of high standing in many religious circles, suggested that the meaning of the Revelation was best ascertained, not by verbal criticism, but by a "sympathetic imagination" (Cited by Charles L. Feinberg in *Millennialism*, p. 314). After attempting to show that the statement in the 20th chapter of Revelation (that the Devil would be bound to deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were finished) really means the Devil would not be

allowed to disturb the blessed dead in Heaven, Warfield freely admits: "But it cannot be pretended that the real solution of these difficulties has been offered to any case; it remains a dark spot in an otherwise lucid paragraph, and must be left for subsequent study to explain" (*The Princeton Theological Review*, 1904, pp. 599-617).

That premillennialism was the historic view of the early churches is not only affirmed by premillennials and infidel historians, but also by some amillennialists and postmillennialists as well.

Henry Alford, commenting upon Revelation 20:4-6, declared: "I cannot consent to distort words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for 300 years, understood them in the plain literal sense: and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of consensus which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion" (*Alford's Greek New Testament*, Vol. 4, Part II, p. 732).

If the early churches for the first 300 years held to premillennialism, just who first introduced the anti-millennial teaching? The answer is very simple: the Catholic Church who changed almost every other doctrine in the Bible. While an early form of amillennialism can be seen in the writing of Origen, the present amillennialial view was formulated by Augustine (A.D. 358-434), the Catholic bishop of Hippo who persecuted the premillennial Donatists.

His views as seen in his book, *The City of God*, are as follows:

(1) The first resurrection is the rising of dead souls into spiritual life, beginning with the ministry of Christ, from which time the millennium dates (*Civitati Del.* XX, 6:1; 7:2).

(2) The devil, the strong man armed, is bound and expelled from the hearts of the disciples of Christ (*ibid.*, 7:2).

(3) The reign of the saints is their

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# THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

## NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL WANTS CHURCHES TO RENT SCHOOLS FOR WORSHIP

(WNS)--The New York City Council overwhelmingly passed a resolution May 22 calling on the state legislature to allow houses of worship to rent from public schools. The final vote tally was 38-11, with Council Speaker Christine Quinn—the top candidate for New York City mayor, who will control education policy if elected—voting against it. “We had a huge, huge victory today,” said Pastor Bill Devlin, who with Council Member Fernando Cabrera (D-Bronx) has headed up a group of pastors pushing for churches’ equal access to public buildings. “Here you have the most progressively leaning Democratic city council in the entire U.S. And they vote by a huge margin in favor of the freedom to worship. ... The Lord did this.”

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## “OFFICIAL TIME” RECORDS REQUESTED

(WNS)--According to the conservative Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), the Social Security Administration (SSA) is another in a long line of government agencies that is ignoring Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. CEI filed suit in D.C. Circuit Court this week against the Social Security Administration (SSA) for ignoring a CEI FOIA request that sought records on the use of “official time” by SSA employees. “Official time,” according to CEI, “is the time employees devote to union duties performed on government time. Official time is part of the negotiated agreements under which members of public-sector unions work. Employees spend time during their working day recruiting members, managing the union, handling and even encouraging employee complaints and processing new members.” CEI’s Trey Kovacs, who filed the original FOIA request back in March, stated the obvious: “This clearly is a matter of public interest.

CEI is clearly right to make the request, and the request clearly was made in the proper legal way. But this administration does not want Americans to know how cozy it has become with federal employee unions or how much of their tax dollars go to union organizing.”

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## FORMER PLANNED PARENTHOOD EMPLOYEES DESCRIBE DELAWARE ABORTION CENTERS

(WNS)—On May 29 two former employees of the nation’s largest abortion provider testified before state lawmakers in Delaware. A pair of pro-abortion nurses, Joyce Vasikonis and Jayne Mitchell-Werbrich, explained to a bipartisan panel in vivid detail the “meat market-style assembly-line abortions” provided at Planned Parenthood of Delaware. “It was an absolute nightmare,” Mitchell-Werbrich said. “I’m surprised more people haven’t lost their lives there.” Vasikonis spent more than 20 minutes detailing what she observed—and tried in vain to fix—last year at Planned Parenthood centers in Dover and Wilmington. The charges bore many similarities to the unsafe conditions at Gosnell’s Philadelphia abortion facility: unsterilized instruments, faulty oxygen masks, untrained staff, disregard for patients, breaking privacy laws, and failure to report patient complications. Mitchell-Werbrich spent even longer on her testimony, saying she was angry that repeated attempts to draw attention to the dangerous conditions were ignored. She said state officials had continuously failed to take action until a Philadelphia television station reported on the story in April.

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## AIR FORCE REMOVES PAINTING WITH BIBLICAL REFERENCE

(WNS)--The U.S. Air Force has removed an “inspirational” painting because it contains a Bible reference. The painting was in the dining hall of

Mountain Home Air Force Base, in Idaho. The painting featured a medieval crusader behind an Air Force pilot. In bold letters was the word “INTEGRITY,” and in smaller letters a Biblical reference, Matthew 5:9, which reads, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” The Military Religious Freedom Foundation said the painting was “repugnant” and an “overt display of Christian nationalism.”

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## ABORTION IMAGES BANNED

(WNS)--The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of a Colorado ruling that bars protesters from displaying graphic images of abortion in places that might upset children. This means that—in Colorado, anyway—such images are effectively banned. The case began when pro-life activists displayed graphic photos of aborted babies outside Denver’s Saint John’s Cathedral Episcopal Church, a congregation known for its support of abortion. The church sued the lead activist, Kenneth Scott, for displaying gruesome images with 200 children present. Both the lower court and the Colorado appeals court ruled in favor of the church, saying there was a “compelling government interest in protecting children from disturbing images.” Scott’s attorney, UCLA professor and blogger Eugene Volokh, said “the ‘gruesome images’ provision restricts speech that is central to petitioners’ message.” He said banning political speech merely because children were present could encourage people who want to ban speech to plant children at public demonstrations.

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## SCOUTS “DISAPPOINT” SOUTHERN BAPTISTS

(WNS)--The Southern Baptist Convention, holding its national meeting in Houston, approved a resolution expressing disappointment in the Boy Scouts of America for allowing openly homosexual boys into the organization. The resolution also calls on the Boy Scouts to remove executive and board leaders who pushed for the policy change. The Southern Baptist Convention is the country’s largest Protestant denomination, with 45,000 congregations and 16 million members. Baptist churches sponsor nearly 4,000 Scout units representing more than 100,000 youths, according to the Boy Scouts of America. Because Southern

Baptist churches are autonomous, this resolution is not binding, but such resolutions are influential. Southern Baptists also affirmed the need for more black missionaries.

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## EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION: “IT’LL BE LIKE BUYING TYLENOL”

(WNS)—Abortion rights activists celebrated outside the federal appeals court in Manhattan in early June after the 2nd U.S. Court of Appeals issued an order permitting immediate, unrestricted over-the-counter sales of all two-pill emergency contraceptives. Unrestricted sales of Plan B One-Step contraceptive are still on hold until the court decides the merits of the government’s appeal. Julie Rickelman with the Center for Reproductive Rights hopes the pills will be available without restriction within a month: “The two-pill products are going to be readily available to women without age restrictions, on any drugstore shelf. It’ll be like buying Tylenol. You’ll be able to go get it off the drugstore shelf, no ID, at the regular counter.” That’s exactly what worries opponents of the decision. Family Foundation president Victoria Cobb expressed concern about the ease with which young girls will be able to get this potent product. She points out the unintended consequences: “The government calls pre-marital sex risky behavior because of the high risk of STDs. This ruling may reduce [unintended pregnancies], but it is ignoring the STD risk.” In other words, Cobb said, we are making it sound as if kids can participate in risky behavior, and we have solved all potential problems.

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## NEW YORK GOV. ANDREW CUOMO INTRODUCES BILL LOOSENING STATE’S ABORTION LAWS

(WNS)--Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo introduced his long-promised Women’s Equality Act in early June, a portion of which loosens New York’s abortion laws and establishes abortion as a right. At a press conference announcing the bill, Cuomo faced a barrage of questions about the abortion section, the most controversial proposal in a bill that contains popular equal pay and anti-trafficking measures. The Catholic Archdiocese of New York has said it supports nine of the bill’s

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10 measures—but it has vociferously opposed the abortion measure. The abortion rate in New York is one of the highest in the country, and in New York City, 41 percent of pregnancies end in abortion. New York currently offers legal protections to babies older than 24 weeks. Abortion, with an exception for the life of the mother, is a crime after 24 weeks under current state law. Until Tuesday, no one knew for sure what the abortion language of the Women's Equality Act would be—Cuomo had outlined it in speeches, but hadn't offered finalized language. The bill released June 4 would legalize abortion at any point in a pregnancy for the sake of the life or health of the mother. Health, in Supreme Court precedent on abortion, has been widely defined to include emotional health.

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### INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS USAID SPONSORS PRO- HOMOSEXUAL EVENTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(WNS)--The U.S. Agency for International Aid (USAID) normally provides food, drugs, and other essential items on behalf of the U.S. to poor countries around the world. But under the Obama Administration, the agency has expanded its portfolio. It now ships homosexual activism around the world. In April, with help from the Levi Strauss Foundation and millionaire and homosexual activist Tim Gill, USAID began spending \$11 million to train homosexual activists in other countries. The training began this week, in Columbia, which has recently affirmed traditional marriage. "This partnership leverages the financial resources and skills of each partner to further inclusive development and increase respect for the human rights of LGBT people around the world," said Claire Lucas, senior advisor of the USAID Office of Innovation and Development Alliances during a panel at the Ronald Reagan Building in D.C. "It can be a real game-changer in the advancement of LGBT human rights."

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### ITALIAN PROFESSOR DISCOVERS OLDEST KNOWN TORAH SCROLL

(WNS)--An Italian professor and expert in Hebrew has stumbled upon

what appears to be the world's oldest known Torah scroll. Mauro Perani said a sheepskin scroll, housed for at least a century in the library of his institution, the University of Bologna, was originally misdated by a Jewish librarian in 1889. The Torah scroll—containing the Biblical books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, written in Hebrew—is nearly 120 feet long and two feet tall. It was painstakingly made with 58 strips of sheepskin sewn together. Such a scroll would have been read publicly in synagogues on the Sabbath or during other special gatherings. Although the earlier librarian guessed the scroll dated to the 17th century, Perani, upon examining it, realized the letters of the script bore the square, oriental features of an earlier writing style of Babylonian influence.

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### CHURCH OF ENGLAND CAVES ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

(WNS)--The Church of England has once again caved in the face of a challenge to Biblical morality. According to Religion News Service, "bishops in the Church of England, who had strenuously opposed a bid to allow same-sex marriage, signaled that they won't try to derail the bill after an overwhelming vote of support in the House of Lords. Church of England spokesman Steve Jenkins said, "It doesn't mean the Church of England is happy, but that's where our government is going. Now it's about safeguarding people's right to hold religious beliefs." To do that, the bishops, who hold 26 seats in the House of Lords, plan to amend the legislation to provide conscience protections for Christians and others who oppose homosexual marriage. The new Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby had previously said the redefinition of marriage would undermine a cornerstone of society.

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### CZECH COURT COMPENSATES CHURCHES FOR COMMUNIST SEIZURES

(WNS)--The Czech Republic's highest court on June 3 upheld a government plan to pay billions of dollars to religious groups in compensation for property the country's former Communist regime seized from them. The ruling was a defeat for the country's vocal atheist population, but a big victory for its churches. Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish congregations have been fighting

since the 1989 fall of Communism to get back assets such as farms, woodlands and buildings that have remained in the state's hands. The country's 16 Christian groups and the Federation of Jewish Communities of the Czech Republic will receive more than \$3 billion over the next 30 years. They will also get 56 percent of their former property, now held by the state, worth \$3.8 billion.

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### GAY BACKLASH IN BRAZIL AND RUSSIA

(WNS)--The Russian legislature, by an overwhelming margin of 436-0, passed a law that will impose hefty fines for providing information about the homosexual community to minors or holding gay pride rallies. Foreign citizens arrested under the new law can be deported, jailed, or both. A week earlier, in Brazil, more than 40,000 evangelicals rallied to hear televangelist Silas Malafaia say, "Gay activism is moral garbage. Satan will not destroy our family values."

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### BRAZILIAN EVANGELICALS RALLY FOR MARRIAGE

(WNS)--A rally that attracted more than 40,000 people last week to stand against homosexuality and abortion highlights the growing presence of evangelicals in Brazil, South America's largest country. According to Reuters, "There are 44 million mainly Pentecostal evangelicals in Brazil." Also, "In the last national election in 2010, evangelicals increased their presence in Congress by 50 percent and now have 68 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and three in the Senate. Though belonging to a dozen different parties, evangelicals have begun to act as a caucus in Brazil's fragmented legislature where only the farm lobby tends to speak with one voice."

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### GLOBAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE EQUATES FAMILY PLANNING WITH ABORTION

(WNS)--The Women Deliver conference in Kuala Lumpur, which claimed to be about women's health, focused heavily on abortion and contraception while overlooking pressing health issues around the world. That's what members of the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute (C-FAM) who attended the May 28-30 three-day conference said. The major goal of the conference, according to

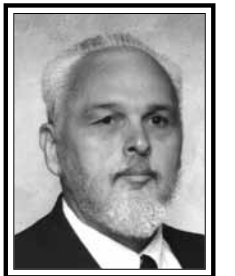
C-FAM's Wendy Wright, was to push "reproductive and sexual health and rights" into the United Nations' new development goals. Sessions promoted late-term abortions, taught ways to skirt abortion laws, and discussed the importance of getting rid of the abortion regulations in developing countries. The most publicized conference speech, by Microsoft-wealthy Melinda Gates, promoted her \$4.6 billion campaign to create a distribution system that would get contraceptives—and abortion-inducing drugs as well—to poor women.



## A Biblical Look At Suicide

By Curtis Pugh  
of Poteau, Oklahoma

A recent report published by the United States government Centers for Disease Control says that in this country death



by suicide is now more frequent than death by automobile crashes. Furthermore, the report says that suicide has increased some 28% among White People, American Indians and Alaska Natives between the ages of 35 to 64. The biggest increases in suicide rates were amongst people aged 50 to 54 years (up 48%) and 55 to 59 years (up 49%). The rates for those aged 10 to 34 and those 65 or older did not change much. This news is indeed distressing. If this trend continues you and I can expect to hear of more and more suicides amongst our families, neighbors and acquaintances in the future. While we believe that the greatest single deterrent to the sin of suicide is an experience of regeneration by the Holy Spirit in connection with Divine Truth, there are some questions that do come to mind. Obviously professing Christians do commit suicide. However, one question that arises is this: can a true child of God commit suicide? Along with that

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question, another one is this: if a true child of God commits suicide will he or she spend eternity with the Lord or not?

The Arminian view held by many Protestants, some Baptists and the various branches of the Catholic church is that suicide automatically results in eternal punishment. The idea behind the typical Arminian view seems to be that a person who commits suicide cannot afterward be forgiven of his sin. If he is of the Catholic party, he cannot seek and be absolved of the sin of suicide by a priest. That is their view. Protestants and Baptists who hold that suicide results in eternal punishment do so based upon the idea that after the commission of such an act a person cannot repent and confess his sin. Thus the forgiveness of sin in their mind depends not upon the finished work of Christ, but upon the actions of sinful human beings. To them, forgiveness is based upon man's works, not upon God's grace. To them justification can be undone by unconfessed sin. It matters not to them that the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to the believing sinner. According to the popular view, justification is negated by failing to confess one's sins - in the case of suicide, by failing to confess just one sin.

However there is another view. Some people believe that God will work in such a way as to not allow His true children to commit suicide. This writer can find no basis in the Bible for it. This view causes those who hold it to automatically condemn to eternal punishment all professing Christians who commit suicide. To be consistent they must condemn to eternal punishment all who fail to confess even one sin! It is true that God provides grace for His true sons and daughters, but it is also true that all of us sometimes fail to avail ourselves of it. The Bible says: **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to**

**escape, that ye may be able to bear it"** (I Cor. 10:13). That verse certainly is true. However, Christians still sin. We do not always look for the way of escape! There is nothing in the Bible of which this writer is aware that teaches that God will not allow His true sons and daughters to take their own lives any more than there is a verse that says God will not allow His children to commit any other sin.

The Bible teaches that while all sins are equal in that they are disobedience to God, there are some sins that result in more severe consequences than others. There are natural consequences to sin and there are eternal consequences also. For instance, Jesus said that certain persons saw His revelatory works but did not repent: of these He said, **"But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee"** (Matt. 11:24). Clearly, those who are given more light will be judged more severely than those who have received less light. Speaking of Pilate Jesus said, **"...he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin"** (John 19:11). Here Christ spoke of the High Priest and perhaps other Jewish religious leaders who were well-taught in the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah. In spite of their knowledge they sinned by willfully rejecting their Messiah (Jesus) when He came to them. The difference is not in degree of disobedience; rather the difference is in degree of punishment. This difference in punishment is tied to the amount of light against which a person sins. If we understand this, we see that all the sins which men commit are equally reprehensible in God's sight and ought to be in our sight also - even those "little sins" we allow in our own lives.

There is only one sin mentioned in the Bible as being unforgivable. Jesus said, **"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it**

**shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come"** (Matt. 12:31-32). Do we have the right to say that there are two unpardonable sins? We know that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable. But if suicide is also unpardonable why is it not so stated in the Bible? What Biblical authority do we have for saying that suicide is unpardonable? Or should we class suicide as one of the **"all manner of sin and blasphemy"** which Jesus said **"shall be forgiven unto men"**? We must admit, if we believe the Bible, that all sin is sin. Killing another person or killing one's self is no worse than telling a lie or having lustful thoughts about the spouse of another in the sense that all these things are a transgression of God's law. There are no "white lies" or "white sins." So we must conclude that suicide is no worse than any other sin. Consider James 2:10-11: **"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."**

Let us consider these facts. When Christ died He died for the sins of people yet unborn. That is, He died for sins yet uncommitted. If He did not, all who have sinned since He died are yet in their sins. To paraphrase old John Owen, Christ died either for (1) all the sins of some men: (2) some of the sins of all men: or (3) all the sins of all men. We believe that the first is the truth: Christ died for all the sins of some men. If Christ died for only some of the sins of all men, then all men yet have sins for which they must answer. If this is true, then all men are hopelessly lost for they must pay for those sins not paid for by Christ. On the other hand, if Christ died for all the sins of all men, then all men are saved. This last is, of course, foreign to the teaching of the Bible. If Christ died for all the sins of His elect then all their sins - past, present and future - have already been paid for by the precious blood of Christ. Paul's words addressed the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia are recorded for us. In Acts 13:39 he spoke specifically

about what Christ accomplished. His words were these: **"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."** True believers are **"justified from all things"**! Justification is a two-sided coin. It means the righteousness of Christ is put down on the account sheet of one who believes. It also means that God no longer puts down their sins on their account. This is clearly stated by Paul in Romans 4:8 where he wrote: **"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."** Think about the meaning of that verse, please! Unless you understand the two-fold nature of justification, you will not have a clear picture of what God does for those who believe. True believers are declared to be righteous even though they are sinners. That is one side of the coin. And sin is no longer imputed to them. That is the other side of the coin. It matters not whether the sin is of omission or commission. It matters not whether the sin committed is one of thought, word or deed. It matters not whether the sin was committed prior to or subsequent to the new birth. So, why then, is suicide said to be some kind of unforgivable sin which will send a true child of God to eternal punishment? Did not Christ promise safety and security to all that come to Him? Did He not specifically say, **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"** (John 6:44)? This is a promise of a future blessed resurrection to all whom are drawn by the Father to Christ. Is not this a promise of eternal safety and security? If we hear that a child of God becomes so emotionally distraught or mentally afflicted as to take his own life, we must ask some questions. (1) Did God know ahead of time that such a sin would be committed by one of His elect? (2) If so, did Christ die for that sin as well as the other sins of this elect person? (3) Was such a believer justified from this sin as well as all the others committed by him? We must answer these questions in the affirmative. Yes, God knew from eternity of such a sin and yes, Christ died for all the

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sins of the elect. And yes, by Christ **“all that believe are justified from all things.”** This is free and sovereign grace! This is salvation!

But, someone says, what about I John 1:9? That verse says: **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** Does not that verse teach that we have to confess our sins to have forgiveness? Let us remember first of all that forgiveness and justification are not the same thing. Ponder that a bit, please. Next, let us look at this verse in its immediate context. We read: **“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”** (I John 1:5-2:2). We may be sure that these words concern saved people. The **“we”** does not include the unregenerate. Do not err by making plural pronouns include more than the context indicates. Second, notice that John here writes not about individual acts of sin but about habitual or continual sins. One individual act of sin does not mean that a person is walking in darkness. What John says here is that if or since we walk in the light we have fellowship with Him. Fellowship with other believers is not the

subject here. Fellowship with God is the issue! If you doubt that, read the context cited above again, please! This passage teaches that if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with Him in whom is no darkness at all. Walking in the light or according to the truth is evidence that **“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”** What sin? The answer is all sin! Did you notice that the Bible clearly says that **“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”** That means both confessed sins and unconfessed sins, does it not? If it does not, pray tell how a child of God is cleansed from unconfessed sins? If he is not cleansed of unconfessed sins, how shall he escape eternal punishment? Will just one honestly forgotten and therefore unconfessed sin condemn one of God's elect to eternal punishment? Now some would tell us that this cleansing applies only to past sins - sins committed before we were regenerated. Therefore they conclude that there is a work we must do in order to obtain forgiveness for sins committed after we were born again. Such a view, it must be admitted, confuses forgiveness with imputed righteousness and holds that salvation is at least in part by works.

We have pointed out that the context of the passage quoted above is clearly about walking in fellowship with God! The issue is not “sonship,” but fellowship! The issue is not justification, but forgiveness. That is the context! “Sonship” has to do with justification (imputed righteousness). The “sonship” of all the elect throughout the whole world depends upon the propitiation (satisfaction or payment) made for our sins by Christ. God said in Isaiah 53:11 that **“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”** When the Father saw the travail of Jesus Christ's soul as He hung on the tree, God was satisfied. The demands of God's justice were met. Christ bore “their sins” - i.e., the sins of many whom He justified by His death. Furthermore, Christ, who satisfied the just nature of God by

His death, is our advocate with the Father. The very One who paid for all the sins of all the elect now appears in Heaven on their behalf! Christ was the satisfactory payment for all the sins of all the elect throughout all the world. That is what enables and determines the “sonship” of God's elect people.

While “sonship” (justification) is dependent upon the work of Christ for His people, “fellowship” is another matter. Fellowship is walking in fellowship with God. It is communion with Him. It depends upon whether or not we walk in the truth and includes whether or not we confess our sins. The idea of confession in I John 1:9 is not merely a dry intellectual recital or enumeration of acts of sin which we have committed. Someone said it means to say the same thing about our sins as God says. It means to see and speak of them as the horrible deeds they are. It means - having seen the holiness of God - that we say with Job, **“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes”** (Job 42:6). It means to condemn or judge sin in our own lives. The Bible is clear: if we do not say the same thing about our sins as God does - if we do not judge ourselves, we can expect chastening from God. Paul made this clear even in the sin of omitting self-examination prior to taking the Lord's supper. He wrote, **“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world”** (I Cor. 11:31-32).

When a child disobeys a parent by a willful act of disobedience, fellowship is broken between them. The parent may chasten the child hoping to bring about repentance. But until the child sees and repents of his or her wrong, fellowship remains broken. The child is not walking according to the wishes and instructions of the parent. The child is in rebellion to the parent to one degree or another. But the child has not destroyed his or her “sonship” by such disobedience. The disobedient child is still the son or daughter of the parent and will ever be even though they no longer “have fellowship one

with another.” The same is true of the child of God in relationship with the Father. “Sonship” is never destroyed. The righteousness of Christ never ceases to be imputed to the believer! Sin is never imputed to the believer! Just as your natural child will always be your child, so the child of God is always God's child. Even suicide cannot destroy that relationship! Why should it? It is not a greater sin than any other. What is destroyed by acts of sin - and that temporarily - is fellowship. And only confession to God restores that fellowship!

Are we Baptists going to take the position of the Thomists (Arminian Catholics)? Will we say that if a person dies with unconfessed sin they cannot go to be with the Lord? Will we imagine a Baptist purgatory? Purgatory is the Catholic answer to unconfessed venial sins. Are we such strangers to grace as to think that our actions are the cause of either our initial or our final salvation? Can we not accept the fact that all the sins of God's elect were paid for by Christ? Do we really believe that we can pay for or somehow erase our sins by confessing them? Are we capable of such a Divine act? Can we not understand the difference between fellowship and “sonship?”

There is a promise of God to His people that will prevent suicide. It is a positive promise of both mental and emotional safety. This promise is found in Philippians 4:6-7 which says: **“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”** The promise here is for a garrisoned heart and a garrisoned mind. It is clearly stated that this keeping or garrisoning of the heart (emotions) and mind (intellect) is by the peace of God which passes all understanding. Someone said this is the kind of peace that must be “felt” rather than “telt.” This is a peace only experienced by true children of God when they (1) do not worry but who (2) in faith make their requests known unto God earnestly and with thanksgiving.

♦ (Continued on page 138)



## Biblical Look At Suicide

(Continued from page 137) ♦

(3) This praying and thanksgiving must include “every thing.” Prayer with thanksgiving in all things is the boat hook that pulls our little boats along the dock of God’s sovereign unchangeable will. As one man said it, “I have often used a boat hook to pull my boat alongside the dock. But I have never used a boat hook to pull the dock alongside my boat.” Surely this promise means much to those who understand something of the absolute sovereignty of God for only they understand that all things both good and evil come from the hand of God (see Job 2:10). After all, God is absolutely sovereign and therefore is in control of all things. Although He chastens His children, He shall never allow real harm to come to them. Sins committed by true believers may result in temporary pain or hurt as God chastens His children. But no real harm spiritually or eternally comes to them. Even so the act of suicide cannot spiritually or eternally harm the child of God. (It is certain to hurt the family and friends of the one who commits suicide and it will certainly bring a reproach on the name of Christ and upon the congregation of which the person is a member).

Let us always keep in mind that the world in which we find ourselves is enemy territory. This modern world is too much with us and we are too weak to walk through it alone and unaided even though we are God’s regenerated sons and daughters. The carelessness of prayerless-ness and unthankful-ness is not walking in the light. From such omissions as prayerless-ness and unthankful-ness we can expect discouragement, despair, and depression. These things come when we have not docked our little boat alongside God’s dock. These are the seeds of suicide. The CDC report cited at the first of this article mentioned that “...those struggling with financial challenges, job loss, intimate partner problems or violence, stress of caregiving for children and aging parents, substance abuse and serious or chronic health problems” are the most likely people to commit

suicide. True children of God face these difficulties even as others. These are problems that often seem insurmountable even to the children of God - especially to those of us in the United States. We are presently either experiencing difficult times or are seeing them zooming toward us on the horizon - or both. We see increasing losses of freedom and a society that has thrown away the morals and ethics of the Bible. These things are beloved to the children of God. Furthermore, we must admit that we have become accustomed to prosperity and a “cushy” lifestyle. Experiencing the erosion of such a lifestyle is stressful. Such stresses as these added to daily personal pressures which we all experience sometimes become what seems to be an insurmountable mountain. Only **“by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving”** can the child of God experience **“the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.”** And only by experiencing it will God’s peace **“keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”** We must walk - i.e., live prayerfully and thankfully for all things - so that we walk in fellowship with God. In that way the glorious **“peace of God, which passeth all understanding”** shall guard our hearts and minds. Paul exhorted his readers with this brief phrase: **“...continuing instant in prayer”** (Romans 12:12). That is the need of the hour! Let us all seek to **“walk in the light, as he is in the light”** so that **“we [God and the believer] have fellowship one with another.”** The three Hebrew children were enabled to survive in the fiery furnace because Christ was with them. King Nebuchadnezzar looked into that furnace and said that he saw four men and that **“the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”** Fellowship with God is only ours when we walk in the light! Consider these words of exhortation: **“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving”** (Col. 2:6-7). Amen.



## Saints Now Reigning

(Continued from page 133) ♦

personal victory over sin and the devil. Satan no longer deceives (*ibid.*, 7:4; 8:1; 9:2).

(4) The Beast is this wicked world; his image is hypocrisy (*ibid.*, 9:3).

(5) The millennium will end in 650 A.D., terminating the six thousandth year period and introducing the rise of Antichrist (*ibid.*, 7:2, 29).

The rise of amillennialism in the Catholic Church is briefly as I will give it. Caius of Rome wrote a book against the premillennial Montanists about A.D. 200. He rejected the Book of Revelation which he regarded as a collection of “monstrous stories,” teaching a “gross sensualism,” teaching a “carnal millennium.”

About A.D. 250 Nepos, an eminent and very spiritual Egyptian bishop, wrote a renowned work on the reign of Christ and the saints on earth. It was entitled, *A Confutation of the Allegorists*, and it was regarded as “incontrovertible.” What did the Catholics do? They destroyed the work of Nepos, and at the Council of Ladoicea in A.D. 360 excluded the Book of Revelation from the Bible on the internal grounds that it taught a personal reign of Christ and His saints on earth, a thing contrary to the doctrine of the Catholic Church. It was not until the spiritualizing methods of Origen and Augustine came along could they condemn premillennialism without disputing the inspiration of the Book of Revelation.

The views of Augustine largely prevailed in the Catholic Church until the Reformation when some of the Protestants went back to premillennialism. Premillennialism continued to flourish among the Waldensians, Paulicians, the Cathari, the Anabaptists and the French Huguenots even during the Dark Ages despite Catholic persecution.

The Roman Catholic Church dates her millennium from the rise of Constantine, and she says she is to judge and rule the world. All who are not Roman Catholics are “heretics” and cannot be saved unless they bow the knee to papal rule; and they must be subjugated or exterminated. At this very hour Rome is one of the most bitter enemies of premillennialism.

In *The Church’s Confession of Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults* they say: “We cannot construct the new world by evolution or revolution, by being conservative or progressive. We cannot even prepare it by establishing a ‘thousand-year reign’ with a false appeal to Revelation 20:4-6. As God’s deed, the Kingdom of God is *not a worldly utopia in a man-made future*. We must resist the old and always-new temptation of fanaticism, which wants to erect a theocracy on earth” (p. 351).

### THE AMILLENNIAL

#### INTERPRETATION OF REV.

##### 20:4-6

The anti-millennial view of Augustine has changed little since he first invented it, whether it be held by Catholics, Protestants or Baptists. Its modern form has been well stated by liberal Professor George E. Ladd: “The thousand years period is no literal piece of history; it is a symbolic number coextensive with the history of the church on earth between the resurrection of Christ and his return. . . The ‘millennium’ is the church age when martyred saints reign with Christ in heaven, awaiting the resurrection” (*A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, p. 260).

Evangelist John L. Bray, a Baptist amillennialist, says on Revelation 20:4-6: “The thrones, and judgment given to those who are seated on them, are viewed as in Heaven---not on earth. This ‘millennium’ passage concerns itself with Heaven, not earth, contrary to what some believe about this. It doesn’t talk about what goes on on earth at all, but what goes on in Heaven. . . These martyred saints, the Christians who suffered for their faith in Christ, are now seen as living and reigning with Christ in Heaven during this gospel age” (*The Battle of Gog and Magog*, p. 10).

As to the meaning of the first resurrection in Revelation 20:5 the evangelist writes: “This living and reigning with Christ is called ‘the first resurrection’ (vs. 5). It is a SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION, not a bodily resurrection. It is living and reigning with Christ in Heaven” (*op. cit.*, p. 12).

These all would make Revelation 20:4-5 to mean blessed and holy is he who is born again, or who has experienced a spiritual resurrection.

♦ (Continued on page 139)

## Saints Now Reigning

(Continued from page 138) ♦

They would stress that John saw souls and that these souls lived in the sense of being made alive spiritually. Premillennialists do not deny that the Bible teaches a spiritual resurrection (John 5:24-25; Eph. 2:1, 5-6; Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1), but we do deny that Revelation 20:4-5 teaches one.

What is wrong with making the resurrection in Revelation 20:4-5 a spiritual resurrection? First, this idea ignores that the word "souls" may sometimes mean the whole man (Acts 2:41; 7:14; Rev. 18:13). The word "souls" alone does not within itself always mean people who are disembodied and in Heaven.

Second, the new birth is never called the birth of the soul, but the birth of the spirit (John 3:6). The terms "soul" and "spirit" are not synonymous terms (I Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12).

Third, John makes it clear that these souls were under physical death, for they had been beheaded for their faith. There is a resurrection of the bodies of dead men, but there is no such thing as the resurrection of the spirit of physical dead men. For living men there may be a spiritual resurrection from the death-state of sin, but there is no such spiritual resurrection for dead men.

Fourth, the first resurrection must be a bodily resurrection, for those who are said to live again were **"beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God."** Dare we to believe that people who died a martyr's death for the witness of Jesus and the Word of God need to be born again? Does not their martyr's death prove that they surely were born again? You cannot kill a soul by beheading it (Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:4). You can kill a body by beheading it, but if it lives after this you have a bodily resurrection (John 11:25).

Fifth, I argue from the Greek text that the souls must in this instance be a synecdoche for the persons, and that the living again must signify the union of body and soul. For first in the passage **"which, or who, had not worshipped the beast,"** the word which is in the masculine gender, whereas souls, which is the antecedent to it, is feminine. So also **"the rest of the dead"** is masculine, in antithetical opposition

to those who were beheaded (Adapted from *Holmes's Resurrection Revealed*, p. 58).

Sixth, the amillennial meaning cannot be reconciled with the words: **"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years are finished."** Those who live after the thousand years are to live in the same sense as the first. In whatever sense one portion lives, the other lives, and in whatever sense some are dead, the rest are dead. If the first resurrection is the new birth as amillennialists say, then after 1,000 years all the dead souls will experience regeneration. This is universal salvation! Or, maybe it could mean that after one soul is regenerated that another cannot be born again for 1,000 years?

Seventh, in the Book of Revelation to die and live again is always with reference to physical death (Rev. 1:18; 11:8-12; 13:14). It is only reasonable to conclude that the resurrection in Revelation 20:4-5 is a bodily resurrection.

Next I must object to their teaching that the whole passage of Revelation 20:4-5 is in Heaven and not on earth. First, in verse 1, of Revelation 20, John said: **"And I saw an angel come down from heaven. . ."** Since there is no mention of Heaven after these words we should assume the scene is still earth in what follows.

Second, the whole context points to earth. In Revelation 19:11-21 Christ and the saints have come from Heaven to earth to destroy the armies of Antichrist and the False Prophet. the binding and loosening of Satan must be on earth as this is the place where he does his deceiving of the nations. Satan is bound on earth to allow the saints to reign on earth in peace and quiet.

Third, amillennialists say the resurrection in Revelation 20:4-5 is regeneration. Does regeneration take place on earth or in Heaven? How many saints were regenerated in Heaven? Let them give the answer.

Fourth, the amillennial view contradicts the Scripture. Revelation 5:10 says that the saints in Heaven look forward to reigning on earth. The reign of Christ and the saints must be on earth; otherwise, Revelation 20:4-5 cannot be harmonized with Revelation 5:10. By putting the two

passages together we see that Christ and His saints will reign on earth for 1,000 years.

The amillennial view leaves many questions unanswered. Here are a few of them: Do disembodied saints reign over sin in Heaven? Who do they execute judgment upon? God and the elect angels? How many unsaved are in Heaven and need to be judged? Why would Satan need to be bound on earth to prevent him from deceiving saints in Heaven? Does Revelation 20:1-3 say Satan is bound to prevent his deceiving the saints in Heaven, or the nations on earth? These are only a few of the many questions which need to be answered.

Fifth, those in the first resurrection are said to perform the function of priests (Rev. 20:6). If this is the function of the blessed dead in Heaven during this present age, then the door is opened for prayers to the dead and requests for their intercessory service!

### REVELATION 22:5

The last passage concerning the reign of Christ and the saints reads as follows: **"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."**

Revelation 20:4-5 speaks of a special reign of Christ and the saints for the period of 1,000 years. This reign will follow the first resurrection and be on earth. Here in Revelation 22:5 we see that after the last judgment for the unsaved dead (Rev. 20:11-15) there will be a new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1). On this new earth the saints and God and Christ shall reign for ever and ever (Greek "unto the ages of the ages"). The eternal aspect of the future kingdom of Christ is seen in other places in Scripture (Isa. 9:7; Luke 1:33; Rev. 11:15). The millennial reign on the old earth ends (Rev. 20:6-10), but the reign on the new earth has no end. As long as we serve we reign; as long as we reign we serve. The yoke and the crown go together (Rev. 22:3, 5).

*Sure I must fight if I would reign,  
Increase my courage, Lord;  
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by thy Word.*

---Isaac Watts (1674-1748)



### BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 5-1-2013 to 5-31-2013

Beginning Balance ..... \$6,698.74

#### RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS ..... 225.00  
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY ..... 100.00  
Calvary B. C., Everson, WA ..... 100.00  
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY ..... 120.00  
..... 545.00  
TOTAL ..... 7,243.74

#### EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time ..... 363.98  
TOTAL EXPENDITURES ..... \$363.98  
..... \$6,879.76  
Less Corbin, KY des. .... -643.72  
ENDING BALANCE ..... \$6,236.04

### CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance ..... \$803.72

#### RECEIPTS:

TOTAL ..... 803.72

#### EXPENDITURES:

WCTT ..... 160.00  
ENDING BALANCE ..... \$643.72



### BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 5-1-2013 to 5-31-2013

Beginning Balance ..... \$2,738.82

#### RECEIPTS:

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX ..... 50.00  
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL ..... 25.00  
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS ..... 300.00  
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL ..... 60.00  
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX ..... 50.00  
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV ..... 313.45  
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY ..... 150.00  
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL ..... 25.00  
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL ..... 25.00  
Davenport B. C., Davenport, WA ..... 160.00  
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME ..... 100.00  
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR ..... 25.00  
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY ..... 120.00  
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC ..... 50.00  
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL ..... 50.00  
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK ..... 35.00  
Indore B. C., Indore, WV ..... 100.00  
Landmark B. C., Moncks Corner, SC ..... 75.00  
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC ..... 50.00  
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY ..... 25.00  
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH ..... 100.00  
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN ..... 50.00  
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL ..... 100.00  
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR ..... 50.00  
Rebecca Williamson, Huntington, IN ..... 15.00  
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS ..... 25.00  
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL ..... 100.00  
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX ..... 30.00  
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA ..... 25.00  
Subscriptions ..... 160.00  
Anonymous ..... 1,700.00  
Dividing checks ..... 150.00  
Sub Total ..... \$4,293.45  
TOTAL ..... \$7,032.27

#### EXPENDITURES:

Printing ..... 535.00  
Postage ..... 628.71  
Wages ..... 2,300.00  
FICA ..... 175.96  
Supplies ..... 94.16  
Dividing checks ..... 150.00  
Total Expenditures ..... \$3,883.83  
ENDING BALANCE ..... \$3,148.44

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



On May 25th Pastor Glen Lloyd Tweet went home to be with the Lord. Bro. Glen spent more than 40 years faithfully preaching the gospel as pastor of the South Park Missionary Baptist Church of Seattle, Washington. For years, he did a weekly radio broadcast, *Amazing Grace*, which aired in the Seattle area, Montana and North Dakota.

Please remember Sister Inez and the family as well as the church in your prayers.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Northport, Alabama and Pastor Todd Bryant would like to announce their Summer Revival for July 25th thru 28th.

Service times are Thursday and Friday at 7:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Scheduled speakers are Elder John Fry of Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Ceredo, West Virginia and Elder Troy McGahan of Rolling Hills Baptist Church of Nancy, Kentucky.

All are invited to attend.

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The Calvary Baptist Church of Piqua, Ohio, is in need of a pastor. Any interested party may contact Terry Allen at (937) 773-9272.

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The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street, Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.

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

2929.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Liverpool Independent Baptist Church of Liverpool, New York (north of Syracuse) is searching for a sovereign grace pastor. The church believes in the doctrines of grace, the local church, and is pre-trib and pre-mil. Interested brethren should contact Bro. Greg Sigworth at (315) 677-3819.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

The Glade Creek Baptist Church, Summersville, WV, is in need of a pastor. This church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and church truth. Any interested Elder should call Bro. Rodney Perkins at (304) 742-3050 or Bro. Allen Frame at (304) 742-5775.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

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

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Any church that is without a pastor, please feel free to send your information in regards to the pastoral position for publication in these announcements.

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## Watchfulness

Perhaps there is nothing more important to the Christian than the admonition **"Watch and pray."** For, without watchfulness and prayer, men "will" sin, "will" fall into temptations, and do many things to bring odium upon the Christian name. The importance and power of prayer, is, probably, more generally understood, than the subject of watchfulness. What can a Christian accomplish, without this excellent grace? What

can he not accomplish, with it? Without it, how feeble and impotent are his intended good deeds? And, alas! how many of his actions prove as the seed sown by the way-side.

Jesus Christ repeatedly enjoined on His disciples the great importance of watchfulness (Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:33, etc.).

Paul exhorts the Corinthian Christians to **"watch ye, stand fast in the faith"** (I Cor. 16:13). He tells the Thessalonians to **"watch and be sober"** (I Thess. 5:6); and to one of his addresses to Timothy, he advises him to **"Watch thou in all things"** (II Tim. 4:5).

John, in his message to the church in Sardis, is commanded to write to them to "watch," or else the Lord "would come upon them as a thief, and they should not know the hour of his coming."

David, in the 37th Psalm, says that the **"wicked watcheth the righteous"** (Ps. 37:32), and, as a sequence, it follows that the righteous should be ever watchful, in order that they may teach a perverse and wicked world the truth of the blessed gospel.

Christians should always watch and pray---should be as **"wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"** (Matt. 10:16). They should watch, for they are every moment exposed to temptations and crosses---in vexations of body and of mind---to evils of every description and character.

The rewards of unceasing vigilance are indeed cheering and soul-animating to every follower of the Savior. In John's vision, it is said, **"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth"** (Rev. 16:15). In the parable of the unfaithful steward, Christ pronounces a blessing on those servants whom the **"lord, when he cometh shall find watching"** (Luke 12:37). It may be a great blessing to watch, for we frequently have opportunities of doing good, which, if not on our guard, may pass forever. Such occasions, misimproved, are sins of omission. Through watchfulness and prayer, we may be **"accounted worthy. . .to stand before the Son of man"** (Luke 21:36), in the day of final account.

(The Baptist).



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