

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

The Church at Laodicea

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 – 2002)

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and



have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine

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The Bride Defined

By Larry J. Killion
of Tacoma, Washington

According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, the word bride appears fourteen times in our King James Bible. The first nine times it is the Old Testament Hebrew word *kallah*, and the last five times it is the New Testament Greek word *numphe*. Both ancient words have to do with a betrothed girl or a young married woman, a son's wife, or a daughter-in-law. According to Webster's New International



Dictionary, a bride is a woman newly married or about to be married. The Bible tells us that Jesus will marry a bride.

WHO is this

Bride of Christ?

Revelation 21:9-27 tells us about when one of seven angels in the Apostle John's vision came to show him the Bride of Christ,

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A Choice Drop of Honey From the Rock Christ

By Thomas Willcox
(1622 - 1687)

Psalm 81:16

A word of advice to my own heart and yours. You are a religious person and partake of all the ordinances. You do well: they are glorious privileges: but if you have not the blood of Christ at the root of your religion, it will wither, and prove but painted pageantry to go

to Hell in.

If you retain guilt and self-righteousness under it, those vipers will eat out all the vitals of it at length. Try and examine with greatest strictness every day, what ground your religion and hope of glory is built upon, whether it was laid by the hand of Christ. If not, it will never be able to endure the storm that must come against it;

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Valiant for the Truth

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues



like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they

know not me, saith the LORD. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother

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Affection has its share of affliction.

A tender heart is sure to endure pain and love is not without its bitterness. Even the highest form of affection—love of God and holiness—involves a measure of suffering.

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12).

July 5, 2015
Volume XXXV, Number 7
Whole Number 432

Editor: Christopher Cockrell

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THE BEREBA BAPTIST BANNER (UPS 546470) is published monthly for \$6.00 per year by the authority of the Berea Baptist Church, 3881 Highway 363, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855. Periodical Publication postage paid at Mantachie, Mississippi.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEREBA BAPTIST BANNER, P. O. Box 39, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855-0039.

PUBLICATION POLICIES: All matter for publication should be sent to the editor. All manuscripts are to be typed and double spaced. All such material becomes the property of BBB and will not be returned unless requested by the writer. We reserve the right to edit and condense all materials sent to us for publication.

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY with paid circulation in most states in the U.S.A. and some foreign countries.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - U.S.

One year.....\$6.00
 Two years.....\$10.00
 Five years.....\$24.00

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - FOREIGN One Year \$45

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BUNDLES TO ONE ADDRESS: These are sent for \$4 per paper for a year. An example: 10 papers for one year at \$40 or 20 papers for one year at \$80.00.

LOCATION OF PUBLISHING CHURCH: Our church is located on state highway 363 about one mile south of Mantachie, Mississippi. Readers are always welcome to visit our services.

CHURCH PHONE: 1-662-282-7794.

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

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

Church at Laodicea

(Continued from page 1) ♦

eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 3:14-22).

Of all the seven churches, Laodicea was in the worst spiritual state before God. There was little in Sardis to draw forth the praise of Christ; nevertheless, they had a few **"who had not defiled their garments."** In Laodicea there seems to be little or no exception. A spirit of lukewarmness and indifference had permeated the whole. Christ had no praise for this unemotional church.

THE CHURCH (v. 14)

With regard to the origin of the church in Laodicea, we have no positive testimony. However, there are two good possibilities. Many historians and scholars contend the church at Laodicea was founded by Paul and Silas, or, a few say, Paul and Timothy. The Book of Acts discloses that Paul did go **"throughout Phrygia"** (Acts 16:6; 18:23) preaching the gospel of Christ.

But objectors to this view cite the words of Paul in Colossians 2:1: **"For I would that ye know what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh."** From this language, **"have not seen my face in the flesh,"** we infer that the

Laodiceans had never seen Paul's face, little alone had their church founded by him.

The church of Laodicea was located near the church of Colossae. Paul mentions the churches of Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea in Colossians 4: **"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. . . . Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and the church which is in his house. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea"** (vv. 12-13, 15-16).

I would gather from the words here the following facts: First, Epaphras was the one who evangelized the Laodiceans, founded their church and remained to pastor them for a time. Second, Colossians 4:17 indicates that Archippus, the son of Philemon, was probably the pastor of the church in A. D. 64. Third, it seems the church at Laodicea met for some time in the house of Nymphas.

THE CITY (v. 14)

The city of Laodicea was situated on the confines of Phrygia and Lydia, on the banks of the Lycus River, at the narrow glen of the Lycus Valley, about 40 miles from Ephesus and not far from Colossae. It was founded in 250 B.C. by Antiochus II who named it after his wife, Laodicea. The city was in the road from Ephesus and controlled the entrance into the interior province of Phrygia.

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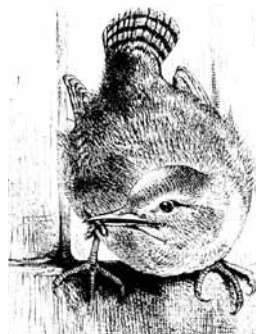
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Church at Laodicea

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The city contained three theaters and an immense circus seating of 30,000 people, the ruins of which can be seen even today.

Laodicea was one of the wealthiest and most prosperous cities in Asia Minor, being the principle banking center of that entire region. Caesar cashed his bills of exchange there. When the city was destroyed by an earthquake in A. D. 62, it refused help offered by the Roman Emperor, declaring they were financially able to rebuild their own city with ease. This calls to mind the words: **"Thou sayest, I. . . have need of nothing."**

The wealth of the city came largely from the manufacture of soft, glossy wool of which expensive garments were made. A prominent feature of the local topography was the "hot springs." Then there were also the "thermal springs" which were "neither cold nor hot" but "lukewarm." These were well suited for bathing but utterly unfit to drink. The finest ointments in the known world were made in Laodicea. The famous eyesalve, called "Corrylimum" or "Phrygian power," was sold by this city all over the Roman and Greek world.

THE CHRIST (v. 14)

The Speaker to this lukewarm church describes Himself in this manner: **"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."** Here is a threefold description of the Divine nature of Jesus Christ. Christ presents Himself in His Divine nature to this worldly church who needed reviving by Divine power.

First, Christ calls Himself **"the Amen."** The word "Amen" means

"true, certain, faithful." It is applied to Christ who is eminently true and faithful (Isa. 65:16). It is as if the Lord had declared: "I am the One whose threatenings and promises will most strictly and assuredly be fulfilled." We learn from this title of Christ that His opinions and decisions have in them a mark of finality. In the Bible Christ is set forth as the "Yea and Amen" of every promise of God (II Cor. 1:20).

Second, He is seen as **"the faithful and true witness."** This presents the idea of "Amen" in a more complete form. Christ is a witness of God and truth, and He can approve of nothing which the God of truth does not approve. This was said to a church which had failed to be a faithful and true witness for Christ. Are our modern churches any better than the church at Laodicea? Do we witness to the true character of God? We must honestly confess that every witness of God has failed save One!

Third, Christ is called **"the beginning of the creation of God."** This expression has two possible meanings, although only one indicates the Divine nature of Christ which seems to be the thought in these three titles. It may mean that Christ is the Parent and Producer of every created thing (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2). Allowing this to be the meaning, it strongly attests the Deity of Christ as the uncreated and eternal One, the Origin, the Source and the Creator of the universe.

Others contend **"the beginning of the creation of God"** points to the incarnation of Christ, to His being the Second Adam, the firstborn, the first begotten from the dead, the Father of the new creation. This suggests Christ has the excellency of dignity

and power being the Chief, **"the Prince of the kings of the earth"** (Rev. 1:5). Having this rank, Christ can speak to the church with great authority. Either meaning is possible, although I prefer the former to the latter.

THE COMPLAINT (vv. 15-17)

The whole body of the church had fallen into a lukewarm state: **"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot."** This church had no faithful few. Hence Christ has nothing for them but blame and censure. Had there been anything worthy of praise, the Faithful and True witness would have found it and made mention of it.

There is no mention of any heresy in this church. They are not seen enduring any persecution for Christ's sake. There is no indication of spiritual warfare or conflict. Laodicea had no factional problems. Things were running smoothly. The minister preached his stale and dry sermon and the audience listened without feelings. The church had no enthusiasm. It was without emotions and indifferent as to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. They had no constraining love of Christ manifest in their praise, prayers, paying or preaching.

What a condition of lukewarmness this church had fallen into! The members attended church like they would have a lodge or social club. Speaking to God was like talking to the "man upstairs." These churchgoers did no particular harm to anyone, nor did they do any special good for Christ. They were not decidedly religious, and yet their conscience would not permit them to let religion alone. They were content to be counted Christians while being indifferent to their conduct and its consequences. While they

talked much about Christ and the gospel, they did not the things Christ commanded. They had a high profession and a low practice.

O Lord, help the churches in this twentieth century! Laodicea is a graphic description of our modern churches which are content with the routine of religious observances! Our churches in the main are neither boiling nor bubbling over. Most churchgoers think once a week or a month, or a year is sufficient for church attendance. Some will give their money to support the church, but they will not give themselves to the work of the church. Most church members show much more enthusiasm over lodges, sports, politics and TV than they do the church and the gospel of Christ.

Jesus Christ prefers an extreme church to a mediocre church: **"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."** He prefers a church red hot or icy cold: **"I would thou wert cold or hot."** There is no disguise or pretence to such a congregation. Neither Christ or the world cares for a lukewarm church.

To be lukewarm in the face of reality is equivalent to the denial of the thing one professes to believe. If we truly believe men are lost, how can we be indifferent to their condition? The people doing the most damage to the cause of Christ are those people inside the church, those who profess to believe the Bible and have no enthusiasm over its teachings. They are coldly evangelical, but not hotly evangelistic! They are satisfied to sing, "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" without sounding a note of "Rescue the Perishing." The Devil has no fear of such a self-satisfied church with all of its

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dead orthodoxy!

Such a low spiritual condition in a church is as nauseating to Christ as tepid water to us. Nothing disgusts Him more. He has no taste for such a mess; His stomach will not digest such unsavory food. To take such into his stomach would make Him vomit. Christ said He was ready to spew this church out of His mouth; that is, to utterly reject and cast them off as a true church. This lukewarm church was on the verge of ceasing to be a New Testament church! Her candlestick was ready to be moved out of his place.

But despite the low spiritual condition of the church before God, she was ignorant of her plight. She had a high estimation of herself: **"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."**

The Laodicean Church was self-righteous, self-satisfied, self-contented and self-deceived. They judged themselves from their temporal advantages. Had you visited their church, they would have shown you the magnificent buildings, their splendid equipment, their large saving account and their well-paid pastor. The members of this church were so self-complacent they did not need to pray. They needed no soul-winning, no missionary work, no revival meetings and no Bible conferences for the study of the Word. They were so well equipped and programmed they had **"need of nothing."**

Christ's estimation of this church was the very opposite of their own estimation: **"...thou art wretched; and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."** The deepest need of this lukewarm

church was a consciousness of its real needs. It was **"poor"** in spiritual wealth, although it considered itself to be rich. It was **"blind"** to its true condition and nearsighted to the invisible and eternal world, although they possessed the best eyesalve in the world. They could not see their own spiritual nakedness while boasting of their beautiful woolen garments. They were from the spiritual standpoint **"miserable"** and **"wretched,"** even though they professed to have **"need of nothing."**

THE COUNSEL (v. 18)

The counsel to this church is in verse 18: **"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."**

The Laodicean Church had three problems: poverty, nakedness, and blindness. Here Christ graciously offers to meet their needs. "Buy" is used in this verse in a figurative sense to denote the church's need to procure of Christ absolute spiritual riches (Isa. 55:1, Prov. 23:23; Matt. 13:44-46). This church needed to give up their self-sufficiency and come afresh to Christ with their emptiness and to receive out of His fullness. They needed to give up their human wisdom which was blindness and resign themselves to Christ's Word and Spirit. Then their eyes would be opened to see wondrous things out of His Book.

THE CHASTENING (v. 19)

Even though Christ was sick of this church and on the verge of completely rejecting it, He did not believe they were without hope: **"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."** This

epistle to Laodicea was the rebuke of a loving friend, not the scorn of an enemy. Christ had their best interest at heart. His rebuke and chastisement were designed to heal their backslidings and bring them to repentance. A backslidden church should lose no time and spare no labor in turning from the error of their ways. They needed to become zealous for Christ.

Jesus deals differently with His churches than we would if we could. We would have ousted this unfaithful church without a moment's hesitation. How patient and forbearing our Saviour is! He calls them to repentance because He dearly loves them. Did this church repent? Was it spewed out of the mouth of Christ? I think not. Laodicea existed in much later times, and it was the place of the council of Laodicea in A. D. 361 that determined the canon of the Scriptures.

THE COMMUNICATOR (v. 20)

In verse 20 we see Christ standing outside of the Laodicean Church: **"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."**

Christ is not seen here knocking at the sinner's heart. Rather, He is seen standing outside the door of one of His churches knocking for entrance (S. of S. 5:2). Christ once stood inside this church, but now it is a Christless church. The Laodiceans had everything--wealth, culture, organization, prestige, dignity, and decorum--everything except the presence of Jesus Christ. Their lukewarm, indifferent, heartless, Spiritless, unexcited, unblushing, apathetic attitude had excluded His gracious presence.

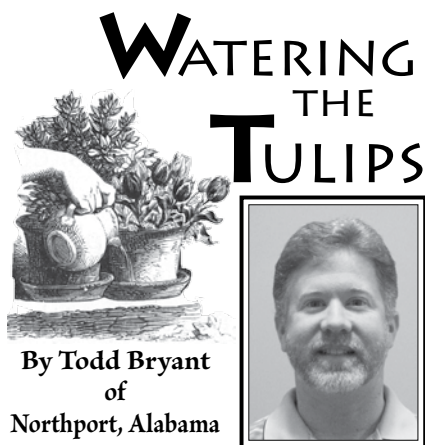
They had turned Jesus Christ out of His own church! Just think of it! Christ shut out of the church He died for (Acts 20:28), the church He promised to be with always (Matt. 28:20), the church He went to prepare a place for, the church He is coming to receive unto Himself (John 14:1-3). What a grievous sin! Tragedy of tragedies! Shame of all shames! Horrors of every imaginable horror! Christ excluded from His own church of which He is the Head! Excluded from His nation, for they rejected Him; excluded from the world, for it crucified Him, excluded from the inn, for they had no room; excluded from His church, for He stands outside knocking for entrance! Worse still, it seems the church has not missed His presence!

How can Christ get back inside the Laodicean Church? Must the church sing an invitational hymn? Should they have a prayer meeting, or maybe a unanimous vote of the congregation? NO! **"If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him."** Each individual member must hear His knock by chastisement and this epistle. Each person in this church must open their heart's door and bid the Saviour to reenter (Luke 24:28-29). then Christ will reappear to give sweet communion with Himself in the comfort of the Scriptures and the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

THE COMFORT (v. 21)

In verse 21 there is the promise of reward for the overcomer: **"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."** This is the greatest promise of the seven to the overcomer. It is filled with glory and grandeur. Indifference is

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By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama

God in the Flesh

“Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 9:5).

Jesus is God. The man Who walked on Earth as Jesus of Nazareth some 2000 years ago was the same God that created this world. John wrote, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).** This **“Word”** that **“was God”** speaks of Jesus. John makes this plain when he says, **“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).** And just a few verses later, John refers to Jesus as **“the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father...” (John 1:18).** Clearly, John (who received his learning at the feet of Jesus Himself) believed Jesus was God...and he was right.

The Apostle Paul affirmed that Jesus is God. Our text verse declares Jesus to be **“God over all.”** That couldn’t be much plainer! He said again that we are to be **“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).** So, the very God Who is over all is the

same God Whose return we are now awaiting. This Jesus is both **“our Great God and Savior.”**

Peter made a similar statement to Paul when he declared Jesus to be our **“God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:1).** As was the case with John, Peter learned these things at the feet of Jesus.

When Thomas saw the risen Jesus standing before him, his declaration was **“my Lord and my God” (John 20:28).** None of the apostles corrected him. Jesus did not correct him. For Jesus certainly is God manifested in the flesh.

Certainly this is difficult to comprehend with a human mind. Paul spoke of the difficulty of grasping this with our minds when he said, **“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Tim. 3:16).** Paul said, **“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).** He was 100% man and 100% God at the same time. A momentary consideration of that makes our head want to explode – but it is true!

Jesus was hated by the Jews for declaring Himself to be God in the flesh. The Jews clearly knew what He meant when He said **“I and my Father are one”** for they **“took up stones again to stone him” (John 10:30-31).** This was not merely his CLAIM. It was a declaration of the truth. He is God manifested in the flesh.

True Christian believers are the minority today. Few people know, understand and believe who Jesus of Nazareth truly was. Yet, we do know. He was (and is) God. The natural mind struggles with even beginning to ponder this.

Even the regenerated mind has great difficulty. We agree with the Apostle Paul that **“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Tim. 3:16).** God became a man...and yet God continued to run this universe as God the entire time. You must be God to comprehend that.

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). God is not visible to us. We do not see Him. Yet, when people saw Jesus, they were looking at God in the flesh. Jesus declared to Thomas, **“he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).** Think of it. The very God of Creation became a man and men of this world sat around Him and were His company and friends.

Some would try to persuade us that Jesus never declared Himself to be God. This is not true, however. The Jews of Jesus’ day knew full well of His declarations of deity. They picked up stones to stone Him **“...because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God” (John 10:33).** Jesus had just said, **“I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).** He said He was God...and He is.

Again, they sought to stone Him when He declared Himself to be God saying, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58-59).** Notice closely, Jesus did not say merely **“before Abraham was, I was.”** He declared Himself to be timeless by saying **“before Abraham was, I am!”** He, as God, dwelled before time and is the Creator of it! As we have said, they knew full well

who He was declaring Himself to be.

In his writing to the Colossian saints, Paul said, **“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).** This is a striking statement! In Jesus of Nazareth, **“the fulness of of the Godhead bodily.”** He is God in the flesh! Remember, Paul saw Him on the road to Damascus with his own eyes (Acts 9). And yet, even having seen Him, Paul declared the difficulty for the human mind to comprehend this entire truth (I Tim. 3:16).

Child of God, find comfort in this blessed truth. Jesus had the ability to overcome sin and death because He is God in the flesh. Our friend and our Savior is the Creator Himself! We believe the truth of our text verse which declares Jesus to be **“God over all.”**



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harder to overcome than violent persecution or worldly opposition. John and James considered it a high honor to sit at the right and left hand of Christ (Matt. 20:20-23). How much greater to sit with Christ upon His glorious throne!

There are two different thrones in verse 21. There is the throne of the Father in heaven, and the throne of Christ on earth. Christ’s throne is never said to be in Heaven; it is on the earth in Jerusalem (Ps. 67:4; Amos 9:11; Jer. 3:17-18; 23:5; Isa. 9:6; 24:23; Zeph. 3:14-15). Christ will sit upon His father David’s throne when He returns to earth in His glory (Matt. 25:31; Ps. 102:16), having received the confirmation of the kingdom from His heavenly Father (Luke 19:12, 15). Christ

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now sits with His heavenly Father on His Father's throne. When Christ returns to earth **"the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David"** (Luke 1:32-33).

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."



A Choice Drop of

(Continued from page 1) ♦

Satan will throw it all down, and great will be the fall thereof (Matt. 7:27).

You that glory in being a Christian, you shall be winnowed. Every vein of your profession will be tried to purpose. It is terrible to have it all come tumbling down, and to find nothing but itself to stand upon.

You who pride yourself on being a Christian, see to your waxen wings, which now will melt with the heat of temptation. What a misery is it to trade much, and be bankrupt at length, and have no stock, no foundation laid for the eternity of your soul!

You who pride yourself on the gifts you have, look to see there is not a worm at the root that will spoil all your fine gourd, and make it die about you in a day of scorching. Look over your soul daily, and ask: Where is the blood of Christ to be seen upon my soul? What righteousness is it that I stand upon to be saved? Have I got away from all my self righteousness? Many eminent religious people have come at length to cry out, in the sight of the ruin of all their duties, "Undone, undone, to all eternity!"

Consider, the greatest sins may

be hid under the greatest duties, and the greatest terrors. See that the wound that sin has made in your soul be perfectly cured by the blood of Christ! not skimmed over with duties, humblings and enlargements. Apply what you will besides the blood of Christ, it will poison the sore. You will find that sin was never mortified truly, if you have not seen Christ bleeding for you upon the cross. Nothing can kill it, but beholding Christ's righteousness.

Nature can afford no balsam fit for soul cure. Healing from duty, and not from Christ, is the most desperate disease. Poor, ragged nature, with all its highest improvements, can never spin a garment fine enough (without spot) to cover the soul's nakedness. Nothing can fit the soul for that use but Christ's perfect righteousness.

Whatsoever is of nature's spinning must be all unraveled before the righteousness of Christ can be put on. Whatever is of nature's putting on, Satan will come and plunder every rag away, and leave the soul naked and open to the wrath of God. All that nature can do, will never make up the least gram of grace, that can mortify sin, or look Christ in the face one day.

You are known as a Christian person, and go on hearing, praying and receiving, yet miserable you may be. Look about you: did you ever yet see Christ to this day, in distinction from all other excellencies and righteousness in the world, and all of them falling before the majesty of His love and grace (Isa. 2:17)?

If you have seen Christ truly, you have seen pure grace, pure righteousness in Him in every way infinite, far exceeding all sin misery. If you have seen Christ, you can trample upon all the righteousness of men and angels,

so as to bring you into acceptance of God. If you have seen Christ, you would not do a duty without Him for ten thousand worlds (I Cor. 2:2). If ever you saw Christ, you saw Him a Rock that follows you (I Cor. 10:4), and there will be continual dropping of honey and grace out of that Rock to satisfy you (Psalm 81:16). Examine if ever you have beheld Christ as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14), Be sure you have come to Christ, that you stand upon the Rock of Ages, and have answered to His call to your soul, and have closed with Him for justification.

Men talk bravely of believing, whilst whole and sound; few know it. Christ is the mystery of the Scripture; grace and mystery of Christ. Believing is the most wonderful thing in the world. Put anything of your own to it, and you spoil it. Christ will not so much as look at it for believing. When you believe and come to Christ, you must leave behind you your own righteousness, and bring nothing but your sin: (Oh, that is hard!) leave behind all your holiness, sanctification, duties, humbling, and so on; and bring nothing but your wants and miseries, or else Christ is not fit for you, nor you for Christ. Christ will be a pure Redeemer and Mediator, and you must be an undone sinner, or Christ and you will never agree. It is the hardest thing in the world to take Christ alone for righteousness: that is to acknowledge Him Christ. Join any thing to Him of your own, and you un-Christ Him.

Whatever comes in when you go to God for acceptance, besides Christ, call it anti-Christ; bid it be gone; make only Christ's righteousness triumphant. All besides that is Babylon, which must fall if Christ stand, and you

shall rejoice in the day of the fall thereof (Isa. 14:4). Christ alone did tread the winepress, and there was none with Him (Isa. 63:3). If you join anything to Christ, Christ will trample upon it in fury and anger, and stain His raiment with the blood of it. You think it easy to believe. Was ever your faith tried with an hour of temptation, and a thorough sight of sin? Was it ever put to grapple with Satan, and the wrath of God bring upon the conscience, when you were in the mouth of Hell and the grave? Then did God show you Christ a ransom and a righteousness; then you could say, "Oh! I see grace enough in Christ." You may say that which is the greatest word in the world, believe. Untried faith is uncertain faith.

To believing there must be a clear conviction of sin, and the merits of the blood of Christ, and of the blood of Christ, and of Christ's willingness to save upon this consideration, merely, that you are a sinner; things all harder than to make a world. All the power in nature cannot get up so high in a storm and guilt as really to believe there is any grace, any willingness in Christ to save. When Satan charges sin upon the conscience, then for the soul to charge it upon Christ, that is gospel-like, that is to make Him Christ. He serves for that use, to accept Christ's righteousness alone, His blood alone for salvation, that is the sum of the gospel. When the soul, in all duties and distress, can say, "Nothing but Christ, Christ alone, for righteousness, justification, sanctification, redemption" (I Cor. 1:30), not humbling, not duties, not graces; that soul has got above reach of the billows.

All temptations, Satan's advantages, and our complaining, are laid in self-righteousness,

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and self-excellency. God pursues these by setting Satan upon you, as Laban did Jacob for his images. These must be torn from you, be as unwilling as you will. These hinder Christ from coming in; and where guilt is, there is hardness of heart; and therefore much guilt argues very little if anything to Christ.

When guilt is raised up, take heed of getting it allayed in any way but by Christ's blood: that will tend to hardening. Make Christ your peace; **"for he is our peace"** (Eph. 2:14); not your duties and your tears, Christ your righteousness, not your graces. You may destroy Christ by duties, as well as by sins. Look at Christ, and do as much as you will. Stand with all your weight upon Christ's righteousness. Take heed of having one foot on your righteousness, another on Christ's. Till Christ come and sit on high upon a throne of grace in the conscience, there is nothing but guilt, terrors, secret suspicions; the soul hanging between hope and fear, which is an ungodly-like state.

He that fears to see sin's utmost vileness, the utmost hell of his own heart, he suspects the merits of Christ. Be you never such a great sinner (I John 2:1); try Christ to make Him your Advocate, and you shall find Him Jesus Christ the righteous. In all doubting fears, storms of conscience, look at Christ continually, do not argue with Satan, he desires nothing better; hid him to go to Christ, and He will answer him. It is His office to be our Advocate (I John 2:1), His office to answer law as our Surety (Heb. 7:22), His office to answer justice as our Mediator (Gal. 3:20; I Tim. 2:5); and He is sworn to that office (Heb. 7:20,

21). Put Christ upon it. If you will do anything yourself, as to satisfaction for sin, you renounce Christ the righteous, Who was made sin for you (II Cor. 5:21).

Satan may bring forward and corrupt Scripture, but he cannot answer Scripture. It is Christ's Word of mighty authority. Christ foiled Satan with it (Matt. 4:7). In all the Scripture there is not an ill word against a poor sinner stripped of self-righteousness. No! it plainly points out this man to be the subject of the grace of the gospel, and none else. Believe but Christ's willingness, and that will make you willing. If you find you cannot believe, remember it is Christ's work to make you believe. Put Him upon it; He works to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). Mourn for your unbelief, for unbelief is but a setting up of guilt in the conscience above Christ, and undervaluing the merits of Christ, accounting His blood an unholy, a common, and unsatisfying thing.

You complain much of yourself. Does you sin make you look more at Christ, less at yourself? That is right, or else complaining is but hypocrisy. To be looking at duties, graces, enlargements, when you should be looking at Christ, that is pitiful. Looking at them will make you proud, looking at Christ's grace will only make you humble. By grace you are saved (Eph. 2:5). In all your temptations be not discouraged (James 1:2). Those surges may be not to break you, but to heave you off yourself upon the Rock Christ.

You may be brought low, even to the brink of Hell, ready to tumble in; you cannot be brought lower than the belly of Hell. Many saints have been there, even dowsed in Hell; yet even then you may cry, even there you may look toward the holy temple (Jonah 2:4). Into

that temple none might enter but purified ones, and with an offering, too (Acts 21:26). But now Christ is our temple, sacrifice, altar, high priest, to whom none must come but sinners, and that without any offerings, but His own blood once offered (Heb. 7:27).

Remember all the patterns of grace that are in Heaven. You think, oh, what a monument of grace you would be! There are many thousands as rich monuments as you can be. The greatest sinner did never pass the grace of Christ. Do not despair. Hope still. When the clouds are blackest, even then look towards Christ, the standing pillar of the Father's love and grace, set up in Heaven for all sinners to gaze upon continually. Whatever Satan or conscience say, do not conclude against yourself, Christ shall have the last word. He is Judge of quick and dead, and must pronounce the final sentence. His blood speaks reconciliation (Col. 1:20); cleansing (I John 1:7); purchase (Acts 20:28); redemption (I Peter 1:19); purging (Heb. 10:19); justification (Rom. 5:9); nighness to God (Eph. 2:13). Not a drop of this blood shall be lost. Stand and hear what God will say, for He will speak peace to His people, that they return no more to folly (Psalm 85:8). He speaks grace, mercy, and peace (II Tim. 1:2). That is the language of the Father and of Christ. Wait for Christ's appearing, as the morning star (Rev. 22:16). He shall come as certainly as the morning, as refreshing as the rain (Hosea 6:3).

The sun may as well be hindered from rising as Christ the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2). Look not a moment off Christ first. When you mourn for sin, if you see Christ then, away with it (Zech. 12:10). In every duty look at Christ; before duty to pardon; in duty to assist, after duty to accept.

Without this it is but carnal, careless duty. Do not legalize the gospel, as if part remained for you to do and suffer, and Christ were but half a Mediator and you must bear part of your own sin, and make part satisfaction. Let sin break your heart, but not your hope in the gospel.

Look more at justification than sanctification. In the highest commands consider Christ, not as an exacter to require, but a debtor, committed to work according to His promise. If you have looked at word, duties and qualification, more than at the merits of Christ, it will cost you dear. No wonder you go about complaining; graces may be evidences, the merits of Christ alone (without them) must be the foundation of your hope to stand on. Christ only can be the hope of glory (Col. 1:27).

When we come to God, we must bring nothing but Christ with us. Any ingredients, or any previous qualifications of our own, will poison and corrupt faith. He that builds upon duties, graces, etc., knows not the merits of Christ. This makes believing so hard, so far above nature. If you believe, you must every day renounce, as dung and dross (Phil. 3:7, 8), your privileges, your obedience, your baptism, your sanctification, your duties, your graces, your tears, your melting, your humbling, and nothing but Christ must be held up. Every day your workings your self sufficiency must be destroyed. You must take all out of God's hand. Christ is the gift of God (John 4:10). Faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8). Pardon is a free gift (Isa. 45:22). Ah, how nature storms, frets, rages at this, that all is of gift and it can purchase nothing with its acting and tears and duties, that all workings are excluded, and of no value to Heaven.

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If nature had been left to contrive the way of salvation, it would have rather put it into the hands of saints or angels to sell it, than of Christ Who gives it freely, whom therefore it suspects. It would have set up a way to purchase by doing; therefore it abominates the merits of Christ, as the most destructive thing to it. Nature would do anything to be saved rather than go to Christ, or close with Christ. Christ will have nothing, the soul would force something of its own upon Christ. Here is that great controversy. Consider, did you ever yet see the merits of Christ, and the infinite satisfaction made by His death? Did you see this when the burden of sin and the wrath of God lay heavy on your conscience? That is grace. The greatness of Christ's merit is not known but to a poor soul in the greatest distress. Slight convictions will but have slight low prizing of Christ's blood and merits.

Despairing sinner! You look on your right hand and on your left, saying, "Who will shew us any good?" You are tumbling over all your duties and professions to patch up a righteousness to save you. Look at Christ now; look to Him and be saved all the ends of the earth (Isa. 45:22). There is none else. He is a Saviour, and there is none beside Him (v. 21). Look any where else and you are undone. God will look at nothing but Christ and you must look at nothing else. Christ is lifted up on high, as the brazen serpent in the wilderness, that sinners at the ends of the earth, at the greatest distance, may see Him and look towards Him. The least sight of Him will be saving; the least touch healing to you.

And God intends that you should look on Him, for He has set Him on a high throne of glory, in the open view of all poor sinners who desire Him. You have infinite reason to look on Him, no reason at all to look away from Him: for He is meek and lowly of heart (Matt. 11:29). He will do that Himself which He requires of His creature, namely bear with infirmities (Rom. 15:1), not pleasing Himself, not standing upon points of law (v. 2). He will restore with the spirit of meekness (Gal. 6:1), and bear your burdens (v. 2). He will forgive, not only till seven times, but seventy times seven (Matt. 18:21, 22). It put the faith of the apostle to it to believe this (Luke 17:4, 5). Because we are hard to forgive, we think Christ is hard.

We see sin great; we think Christ does so, and measure infinite love with our own line, infinite merits with our sins, which is the greatest pride and blasphemy (Psalm 103:11-12; Isa. 40:15). Hear what He says, "**I have found a ransom**" (Job 33:24). "**In whom I am well pleased**" (Matt. 3:17). God will have nothing else. Nothing else will do you good, or satisfy conscience, but Christ who satisfied the Father. God does all on account of Christ. You deserve Hell, wrath, rejection: Christ's deserving are life, pardon and acceptance. He will not only show you the one, but He will give the other. It is Christ's own glory and happiness to pardon.

Consider, whilst Christ was upon the earth, He was more among Scribes and Pharisees, His professed adversaries; for they were self righteous ones. It is not as you imagine, that His state in glory makes Him neglectful, scornful to poor sinners: no; He has the same heart now in Heaven. He is God, and changes not. He is "**the Lamb of God, which taketh**

away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He went through all your temptations, desertions, rejections (Matt. 4:2-12; Mark 15:24; Luke 22:44; Matt. 26:38), and has drunk the bitterness of the cup and left the sweet; the condemnation is out. Christ drunk up all the Father's wrath at one draught; and nothing but salvation is left for you.

You say you cannot believe, you cannot repent. Fitter for Christ if you have nothing but sin and misery, go to Christ with all your impenitence and unbelief, to get faith and repentance from Him; that is glorious. Tell Christ, "Lord, I have brought no righteousness, no grace to be accepted in, or justified by: I am come for Thine, and must have it." We would be bringing to Christ, and that must not be. Not a penny of nature's highest improvements will pass in Heaven. Grace will not stand with works (Titus 3:5; Rom. 11:6). That is a terrible point of nature, which cannot think of being stripped of all, not having a rag of duty or righteousness left to look at.

Self righteousness, self sufficiency, are the darlings of nature, which she preserves as her life, that makes Christ seem ugly to nature. Nature cannot desire Him. He is just directly opposite to all nature's glorious interests. Let nature but make a gospel, and it would make it quite contrary to Christ; it would be to the just, the innocent and the holy; Christ made the gospel for you: that is, for needy sinners, the ungodly, the unrighteous, the accursed. Nature cannot endure to think the gospel is only for sinners: it will rather choose to despair than to go to Christ upon such terrible terms. When nature is but put to it by guilt or wrath, it will go to its old haunts of self-righteousness and self-goodness. An infinite power

must cast down those strongholds; Christ will look at the most abominable sinner before Him. None but the self-justified stands excluded from the gospel, because to such an one Christ cannot be made justification: he is no sinner.

To say in compliment, "I am a sinner," is easy; but to pray with the publican indeed, "**Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,**" is the hardest prayer in the world. It is easy to say, "I believe in Christ;" but to see Christ full of grace and truth, of Whose fullness you may receive for grace; that is faith indeed. It is easy to confess Christ with the mouth; but confess Him with the heart, as Peter, to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, the alone Mediator, that is above flesh and blood. Many call Christ, Saviour; a few know Him so. To see grace and salvation in Christ, is the greatest sight in the world. None can do that, but at the same time they shall see that glory and salvation to be theirs. Sights will cause applications. I may be ashamed to think in the midst of so much profession, that I have known so little of the blood of Christ, which is the main thing of the gospel. A Christian, formal religion, will be the blackest sight next to Hell that can be. You may have many good things, and yet one thing may be wanting, that may make you go away sorrowful from Christ. You have never sold all, you have never parted with your own righteousness, and so on. You may be high in duty and yet a perfect enemy and adversary to Christ, in every prayer, in every ordinance. Labour after sanctification to your utmost; it must come down one way or other. Christ's infinite satisfaction before God. When the Lord shall appear terrible out of His holy place, fire shall consume that as

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hay and stubble.

This will be sound religion: To rest all upon the everlasting mountains of God's love and grace in Christ, to live continually in the sight of Christ's infinite righteousness and merits, they are sanctifying. Without them the heart is carnal, and in those sights to see the full vileness, yet littleness of sin (in comparison to Christ's righteousness), and to see all pardoned in those sights to pray, hear, and so forth, seeing your polluted self, and all your weak performances, accepted continually; in those sights to trample upon all your self-glories, righteousness, privileges, as abominable, and be found continually in the righteousness of Christ only, rejoicing in the ruins of your own righteousness, the spoiling of all your own excellencies, that Christ alone, as Mediator, may be exalted in His throne. Mourn over all your duties however glorious, that you have not performed in the sight and sense of Christ's love. Without the blood of Christ on your conscience, all is dead service (Heb. 9:14).

That opinion of free-will (so cried up), will be easily confuted, as it is by Scripture, in the heart, which has had any spiritual dealing with Jesus Christ as to the application of its merits, and subjection to His righteousness. Christ is every way too magnificent a Person for poor nature to close with or to apprehend. Christ is so infinitely holy, nature never dare look at Him; so infinitely good, nature can never believe Him to be such, when it lies under a full sight of sin. Christ too high and glorious for nature so much as to touch. There must be a divine

nature first put into the soul, to make it lay hold on Him, He lies so infinitely beyond the sight or reach of nature.

That Christ which natural free-will can apprehend, is but a natural Christ of a man's own making, not the Father's Christ, to Whom none can come without the Father's drawing (John 6:44).

Finally, search the Scriptures daily as mines of gold in which the heart of Christ is laid open. Watch against sins to which you are prone, see them in their vileness, and they shall never break out into act. Keep always a humble, empty, broken frame of heart, sensitive to any spiritual misconduct, observing all inward workings, fit for the highest communications. Keep not guilt in the conscience, but apply the blood upon you

to make you look at Christ, the brazen serpent.

Judge not Christ's love by providence, but by promises. Bless God for shaking off false foundations, for any way whereby He keeps the soul is awakened and looking after Christ, better sickness and temptations than security and superficiality.

A slighting spirit will turn a profane spirit, and will sin and pray, too. Slightness in the bane of real religion, it is not rooted out of the heart, by constant and serious dealings with, and beholding of Christ in duties; it will grow more strong, and more deadly, by being under church-ordinances. Measure not your graces by others' attainments, but by Scripture trials. Be serious, exact in duty, having the weight of

it upon your heart; but be as much afraid of taking comfort from duties as from sins. Comfort from any hand but Christ is deadly. Be much in prayer, or you will never keep up much communication with God. As you are in private prayer, so you will be in all other ordinances.

Reckon not duties by high expressions, but by low frames, and the beholding of Christ. Tremble at duties and gifts. It was the saying of a great saint, "He was more afraid of his duties than of his sins;" they often made him proud, the other always made him humble. Treasure up manifestations of Christ's love, they make the heart low for Christ, too high for sin. Despise not the lowest, meanest evidence of grace; God may put you to make use of the lowest as you think; even that may be worth a thousand worlds to thee (I John 3:14).

Be true to truth, but not turbulent and scornful.

Restore such as are fallen; help them up again with all the bowels of Christ. Set the broken disjointed bones with the grace of the gospel. Confident Christian! despise not the weak saints; you may come to wish to be in the condition of the most despised of them. Be faithful to others' infirmities, but realizing especially your own. Visit sick beds and deserted souls much; they are excellent scholars in experience.

Abide in your calling. Be dutiful to all relations as to the Lord. Be content with little of the world; little will serve. Think little of the earth, not much because unworthy of the least. Think much of Heaven, not little, because Christ is so rich and free. Think every one better than yourself, and always carry self-loathing about you, as one fit to be trampled upon by all saints. See the vanity of the world,

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THE TRUTH PERCEIVED	THE GOSPEL BELIEVED	THE SOUL RELIEVED
 <p>"God be merciful to me a sinner."</p>	 <p>"CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS"</p>	 <p>"I will sing of my Redeemer"</p>
<p>COMPASSED ABOUT WITH SORROWS</p> <p>"The sorrows of hell compassed me about" Psalm 185.</p>	<p>COMPASSED ABOUT WITH MERCY</p> <p>"He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." Psalm 32:10.</p>	<p>COMPASSED ABOUT WITH SONGS</p> <p>"Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." Psalm 32:7.</p>

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and the doom of all earthly things; and love nothing but Christ. Mourn to see so little of Christ in the world; so few wanting Him; trifles please them better. To a self secure soul Christ is but a fable, the Scriptures but a story. Mourn to think how many are under baptism and church-order, who are not under grace, looking much after duty, obedience, little after Christ, little versed in grace. Prepare for the cross; welcome it; bear it triumphantly like Christ's cross, whether scoffs, mocking, jeers, contempt, imprisonments, and so on, but see it be Christ's cross, not your own.

Sin will hinder from glorying in the cross of Christ. Omitting little truths against light may breed hell in the conscience, as well as committing the greatest sins against light. If you have been taken out of the belly of Hell into Christ's bosom, and made to sit among princes in the household of God, oh, how you should live a pattern of mercy!

Redeemed, restored soul! what infinite sums you owe Christ! With what singular feelings should you walk and do every duty! On Sabbaths, what praising days, singing of hallelujahs, should they be to you. Church-fellowship, what a heaven, a being with Christ, and angels' and saints' communion! What a drowning the soul in eternal love as a burial with Christ, be astonished and wonder; and when you see sin, look at Christ's grace that did pardon it; and when you are proud, look at Christ's grace, that shall humble and strike you down in the dust.

Remember Christ's time of love when you were naked (Ezek. 16:8-9), and then He chose you. Can

you ever have a proud thought? Remember whose arms supported you from sinking and delivered you from the lowest Hell (Psalm 86:13), and shout in the ears of angels and men (Psalm 148), and for ever sing praise, praise; grace, grace. Daily repent and pray, and walk in the sight of grace, as one that has the anointing of grace upon you. Remember your sins, Christ's pardoning; your deserving, Christ's merits; your weakness, Christ's strength; your pride, Christ's humility; your many infirmities, Christ's restoring; your guilts, Christ's new applications of His blood; your failings, Christ's raising up; your wants, Christ's fullness; your temptations, Christ's tenderness; your vileness, Christ's righteousness.

Blessed soul! whom Christ shall find not having in his own righteousness (Phil. 3:9), but having his robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14).

Trifle not with ordinances. Be much in meditation and prayer. Wait diligently upon all hearing opportunities. We have need of doctrine, reproof, exhortation, consolation, as the tender herbs and the grass have of the rain, the dew, and small rain, and the showers (Deut. 32:2). Do all you do as soul-work, as unto Christ (Zech. 7:5-6), as immediately dealing with Christ Jesus, as if He were looking on you and you on Him, and fetch all your strength from Him.

Observe what holy motions you find in your soul to duties. Prize the least good thought you have of Christ, the least good word you speak of Him sincerely from the heart. Rich mercy! Oh, bless God for it! Observe, if every day you have the dayspring from in high, with His morning dew of mourning for sin constantly

visiting you (Luke 1:77). Have you the bright morning star, with fresh influences of grace and peace constantly arising (Rev. 22:16), and Christ sweetly greeting the soul in all duties! What duty makes not more spiritual, will make more carnal; what does not quicken and humble, will deaden and harden.

Judas may have the sop, the outward privilege of baptism, supper, church-fellowship, etc., but John leaned on Christ's bosom (John 13:23), that is the gospel-ordinance posture in which we should pray, and hear, and perform all duties. Nothing but lying on the bosom will dissolve hardness of the heart, and make you mourn kindly for sin, and cure superficiality and ordinariness of spirit, the gangrene of religious profession. That will humble indeed, and make the soul cordial to Christ, and sin vile to the soul; yes, transform the ugliest piece of hell into the glory of Christ. Never think you are right, as you should be, a Christian of any attainment, until you come to this, always to see and feel yourself living in the bosom of the Christ, Who is in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18). Come and move the Father for sights of Christ, and you will be sure of speed! You can come with no request that pleases Him better. He gave Him out of His own bosom for that very end, to be held up before the eyes of all sinners as the everlasting monument of His Father's love.

Looking at the natural sun weakens the eye. The more you look at Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, the stronger and clearer will the eye of faith be. Look but at Christ, you will love Him and live on Him. Think on Him continually. Keep the eye constantly upon Christ's blood, or every blast of temptation will

shake you. If you will see sin's sinfulness, to loathe it and mourn, do not stand looking upon sin, but look upon Christ first, as suffering and satisfying. If you would see your graces, your sanctification, do not stand gazing upon them; but look at Christ's righteousness in the first place (See the Son and you see all), look at your graces in the second place.

When you exercise faith, what you first look at, that you expect settlement from, and make it the ground of your hope. Go to Christ in sight of your sin and misery, not of your grace and holiness. Have nothing to do with your graces and sanctification, they will but veil Christ, till you have seen Christ first. He that looks upon Christ through his graces, is like one that sees the sun in water, which wavers and moves like the water does. Look upon Christ only as shining in the firmament of the Father's love and grace; you will not see Him but in His own glory, which is unspeakable. Pride and unbelief will put you upon seeing somewhat in yourself first; but faith will have to do with none but Christ, Who is inexpressibly glorious, and must swallow up your sanctification as well as your sin; for God made Him both for us, and we must make Him both (I Cor. 1:30; II Cor. 5:21). He that sets up his sanctification to look at, to comfort him, he sets up the greatest idol which will strengthen his doubts and fears. Do only look away from Christ, and straightaway, like Peter, you sink in doubts.

A Christian never lacks comfort, but by breaking the order and method of the gospel, looking on his own, and looking off Christ's perfect righteousness, which is to choose rather to lie by candlelight, than by the light of the sun. The

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honey that you suck from your own righteousness will turn into perfect gall, and the light that you take from it to walk in, will turn into black night upon the soul. Satan is tempting you by putting you to plod on in your own grace, to get comfort from that; then the Father comes and points you to Christ's grace, as rich, glorious, infinitely pleasing Him, and bids you study Christ's righteousness. And His biddings are enablings; that is a blessed motion, a sweet whispering, checking your unbelief. Follow a least hint close with much prayer; prize it as an invaluable jewel, it is an earnest of more to come.

Again, if you would pray, and cannot, and so are discouraged, see Christ praying for you; using His interest with the Father for you; what can you lack (John 14:16)? If you are troubled, see Christ your peace (Eph. 2:14), leaving you peace when He went up to Heaven, again and again, charging you not be troubled, no, not in the least sinfully troubled, so as to obstruct your comfort or your believing (John 14:1-27). He is now upon the throne, having spoiled upon His cross in the lowest state of humiliation, all whatever that can hurt or annoy you. He has borne all your sins, sorrows, troubles, temptations, and is gone to prepare mansions for you. You who have seen Christ as all, and yourself absolutely nothing, who make Christ all your life, and are dead to all righteousness besides; you are a true Christian, one highly beloved, and who has found favour with God, a favourite of Heaven. Do Christ this one favour for all His love to you - love all His saints and churches, the most widely despised, the smallest,

the weakest, notwithstanding any difference of judgment, they are engraved on His heart as the names of the children of Israel on Aaron's breastplate (Exodus 28:29). Let them be so on yours. **"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee"** (Psalm 122:6).



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The High Cost of Revival

By Leo Hornaday

Many churches will not be having a revival next year. The cost is simply too high. Traditionally, most churches, about once a year, set a time, arrange for an evangelist, and have a meeting. Sometimes these are revivals. More often, they are only a series of meetings.

The cost of revival rises in direct proportion to the love of worldly things. More churches than not end their meetings without having experienced revival.

The cost of revival is increasing, not because more money is involved, but because more repentance is required. The financial expense of revival is not nearly so burdensome as the cost of renouncing personal pleasures. It is much easier to reach into the pocket book than into the heart. Money, however, can never purchase revival.

Revival is a state of the heart in which nothing comes between the soul and the Savior. It is a harmonious walk with God. It

requires that all sins be forgiven, all self be denied, all doubt be resolved and all worldly yokes be broken. The high cost of revival is in meeting the requirements of God for an unhindered fellowship; a cost that many are unwilling to meet.

God has not raised the price of revival. The conditions are exactly the same today as always. The difference is in the privileges and opportunities that accompany a free and affluent society. Along with the ability to go further and do more, man has inherited the ability to get further from and put more obstacles between himself and God.

Many of these opportunities are temptations in disguise. To further upset God, Christians often use the time, talents and treasures that He has given them to further distance themselves from Him.

The road of repentance and self denial is harder than many are willing to travel, thus the high cost of revival.

"Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2). (From *Northwest Profile*)



Valiant for the

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will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. Thine habitation is

in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people? Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait" (Jer. 9:1-8).

I want to talk about "truth." I especially want to talk about the need that we have to be "Valiant for the Truth." In our text passage, we find out that this principle is addressed, but from a negative perspective. Jeremiah found, in his time and place, that the people of Judah were not **"valiant for the truth upon the earth."** It was his hope, and the desire of the Lord, that the people of Judah and Jerusalem would contend for the truth of God and God's Word, and that they would valiantly stand up for what was right and just in the sight of God. Instead, the people amongst whom Jeremiah lived - the people that he ministered to - were liars, and deceivers, and men who would twist the truth and contort the Words of God for their own benefit. Our text tells us that the people had bent tongues that shot out dangerous words. (See v. 3, 8.) Does this sound familiar? Is not this the same attitude of the people amongst whom we live today? Does not this seem to be a good description of the people and society we are a part of today?

Sadly, I believe some of this attitude will rub off (and has done so) on the Christians of our day and age. We do not highly esteem righteousness and honesty and truth today. We have partaken of the sins of the people, and we have, in many ways, compromised

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. To what extent is the "limited atonement" limited?

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I am writing this with confidence in the Scriptures, on the other hand myself have no confidence in myself. I believe with all my being that the Elect of God are covered by the atonement. The blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross was so pure, so effectual that it could have taken away the sins of all mankind in all ages, but it did not.

Our natural inclination is that Jesus would have died for everybody. Would not it be something if all our loved ones and friends, and people thru the years we have known went to Heaven?

The Scriptures give many indications and plenty enough evidence that God has an Elect. **"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace... What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded"** (Rom. 11:5, 7) This is just one of the passages that contains the word Elect. Notice the **"rest"** were not able to attain **"it"** although the Elect did.

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder,

whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is" (Rev. 17:8). There are no new names written in Heaven, certainly that idea has no Biblical precedence. The term from the foundation of the earth signifies that God had in His infinite mind a people He would redeem from sin, consequently there were names that were never, or would ever be, recorded in that book of life.

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). Jesus says **"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"** (Matt. 7:23). The Bible demonstrates over and over that the Elect of God are those who have been atoned for. The atonement is limited to the Elect of God, this is the extent of it.

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I rarely use the term "limited atonement" preferring rather "particular redemption" to define the extent of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. I believe that before the world began God the Father chose a multitude out of Adam's fallen race to be saved by grace in time (Eph. 1:3-7; II Tim. 1:9). In this covenant of grace the Lord

Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the sacred Trinity, agreed to die in the stead of all the Father chose and gave Him to redeem. In that same covenant of grace framed before the world began, the Holy Spirit agreed to regenerate all that the Father chose and the Son agreed to redeem. Thus, the sacred Trinity engaged to save a great multitude of sinners before the world began. Whatever God has decreed and purposed in eternity will definitely come to fruition in time without fail. This certainly includes His purpose of redeeming the elect.

Jesus Christ came into the world for the express purpose of redeeming and saving all that the Father gave Him before the world began. The first time the redemptive and saving work of Christ is mentioned in the New Testament this purpose is clearly set forth: **"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins"** (Matt. 1:21). The people whom Christ was sent to save are called "His people" before He ever died because the Father gave them to Him in the covenant of grace before the world began. Not one that the Father elected and gave to the Son will be lost according to the statement of Christ in John 6:37-39: **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."** God's will insured that the work of Jesus Christ would be a complete and absolute success, meaning that all

who He died for will definitely be called and saved, and none would ultimately be lost. This truth is also expressed in Hebrews 10:10 and 14: **"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."** God the Father sanctified the elect before the world began, Christ the Son sanctified them with His blood, the Holy Spirit sanctifies them in time through regeneration and His indwelling. The ultimate purpose of sanctification as worked out by the Holy Trinity is the perfection and glorification of all the elect. This will definitely happen in light of Romans 8:28-39! Those who Christ died for will definitely be reconciled to God in time without fail. Galatians 1:4 declares: **"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."** I Peter 2:24 states: **"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."** I Peter 3:18 declares: **"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."** If a sinner is never brought to repentance and faith in Christ it means that Christ did not die for him, thus his sins are still with him and will be punished throughout all eternity in the Lake of Fire. If you die in your sins it means that Christ did not put them away through His sacrifice. If you never live unto righteousness it means that Christ did not bear your sins in His body on the tree and you will bear them

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. I recently read in some Christian comics that all a person has to do to be saved is to tell Jesus that you are sorry and ask Him to come live in their heart. Is this the way to be saved?

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That is so funny and probably why you read it in the Christian comics. When I was first saved I read that as well, did not believe it then and do not believe it now. I challenge anyone to show me where the Scripture says, "To tell Jesus that you are sorry and ask Him to come live in your heart." That is the biggest Arminian lie there is! Not funny, but so very sad!

Have you ever seen the artist picture of the man (supposed to be Jesus) standing outside the door knocking, and did you noticed there is no door handle? The Arminian misuse of "**Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me**" (Rev. 3:20) is an abomination and affront to God and the precious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. First of all, Christ does not need a door knob to get inside. "**And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you**" (John 20:26). Second Revelation 3:20 is talking to the church (believers inside the church), not lost

people! But the Arminian insists on preaching a false gospel to get folks saved. Thirdly, you can not be sorry for your sins unless God quickens you and fills you with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:1-10; Col. 2:13-15). Here are three verses of Scripture on how one is saved, and there are many more:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47).

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (Joel 2:32).

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

There are many examples on how one is saved. The Samaritan woman did not come to Jesus; He went to her in John chapter 4. How was she and some of the other Samaritans saved? They believed? How was the Ethiopia eunuch saved? He did not come to Jesus. Philip was sent by the Holy Spirit to give him the blessed gospel, the eunuch said, "**I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God**" (not that he asked Jesus in his heart) Acts chapter 8. One of the greatest conversions in the New Testament, I believe, was the Apostle Paul (Saul). He hated Christ; he hated everyone that believed in Christ. He was on his way to Damascus to imprison and have the followers of Christ killed.

How is it that he then told Christ he was sorry and asked Him into his heart? Paul did not seek Christ; Jesus came to where Paul was- Acts chapter 9. **"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood"** (Gal. 1:15-16).

Either my Bible is wrong or the Arminian is! Many are deceived today because of false preaching and a false gospel. **"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** (John 8:32). God Bless!

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Modern evangelism has forgotten that salvation is still a miracle. The new doctrine of "Easy Believism" puts the power of salvation in the hands of the sinner... Jesus Christ and God Almighty have done Their part and now if the salvation is going to be effectual, the sinner (we) must do OUR part. Selah! Think about it!

Effectively, we become our own saviour (or at a minimum- Co-saviour), because for all of eternity we will have to be thankful that we made the right choice to be saved. God only made a choice to save (all) the inhabitants of the world, but our election of Jesus Christ was the crucial difference between becoming a saint in glory or a reprobate in Hell. This blasphemous doctrine takes the

glory of God and gives it to man and his vaunted free will. Selah! Think about it!

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness" (Isa. 59:2-3). Actually, the power of salvation is out of humanity's reach forever, and there are three major miracles that MUST occur to bring about the rescue operation.

1) The first miracle of salvation is: God the Father loving the despicable rebellious malefactor (me). **"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)"** (Eph. 2:2-5). No meritorious acts or intrinsic value could be found in any of humanity. In fact we were the enemies of God. Yet, miraculously, He loved us. **"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ...For if, when we were**

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Forum #1

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throughout eternity. This is the essence of particular redemption or limited atonement. Christ died for His people (Matt. 1:21), His sheep (John 10:11, 14-16, 26-28), the world of believers (John 3:16), for many (not all) among fallen mankind (Matt. 20:28; 26:28; Heb. 9:28).

The Arminian who espouses a general or universal atonement must also believe in universal salvation for all men, which is contrary to Scripture (Rev. 20:11-15). In light of the above Scriptures that state Christ's work was a complete success the Arminian finds himself on two horns of a dilemma. Either Christ's work was a miserable failure because so many die in their sins and are cast into the Lake of Fire, or he must embrace an idea that is completely foreign to Scripture that Christ died for everyone and therefore no one is eternally punished. Either way the Arminian position is contrary to Scripture. I would urge the reader to study every word that relates to the death of Christ: ransom, redemption, propitiation, reconciliation, remission, and substitution. Every word clearly defined by Scripture demands a specific, precise, particular redemption of God's elect!

I will end with a classic quote from C.H. Spurgeon who many Arminians are fond of quoting: "We are often told that we limit the atonement of Christ, because we say that Christ has not made a satisfaction for all men, or all men would be saved. Now, our reply to this is, that on the other hand our opponents limit it; we do not. The Arminians say, Christ died for all men. Ask them what they mean by it. Did Christ die so as to secure

the salvation of all men? They say, 'No, certainly not.' We ask them the next question--Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer 'No.' they are obliged to admit this, if they are consistent. They say 'No; Christ has died that any man may be saved if'--and then follow certain conditions of salvation. We say, then, we will just go back to the old statement--Christ did not die so as beyond a doubt to secure the salvation of anybody, did He? You must say 'No'; you are obliged to say so, for you believe that even after a man has been pardoned, he may yet fall from grace, and perish. Now, who is it that limits the death of Christ? Why, you. You say that Christ did not die so as to infallibly secure the salvation of anybody. We beg your pardon, when you say we limit Christ's death; we say, 'No my dear sir, it is you that do it.' We say Christ so died that He infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ's death not only may be saved, but are saved, must be saved, and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved. You are welcome to your atonement; you may keep it. We will never renounce ours for the sake of it" (New Park Street Pulpit, Vol. 4, p. 135, Pilgrim Publications).

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"Therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and

visit their sins. Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence" (Jer. 14:10-12).

Limited atonement is the "L" petal in the TULIP Doctrines of Grace. Since man cannot in any way "atone" or make restitution/payment for his (our) sins, "... **God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life**" (John 3:16). Atonement is the contracted covenant of God the Son to come and pay the sin-debt that we owed! An atonement is a covering and the blood of Jesus Christ reconciles us to God, restoring that holy communion Adam and Eve lost in the Garden of Eden. **"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us"** (Ps. 103:12). Selah! Think about it!

Since all do not end up in Heaven, reconciled to God with their sins atoned for, the atonement of necessity must be limited. The death of Christ was not meant for Satan, so obviously all must agree that there is a limit to the atonement! It has no power to reconcile the fallen angels- it is limited. The Bible is very clear that the atonement was not intended for Esau (Heb. 12:17), Pharaoh (Rom. 9:17), and Judas Iscariot (John 17:12): again, it is limited. The atoning blood of Jesus Christ is limited (by God) to those whom God the Father carefully apportioned to Christ to die for. **"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as**

many as thou hast given him. ...I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. ...I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. ...While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:2, 6, 9, 12).

The power of God is not in question. God will save whomsoever He desires and He desires to save HIS PEOPLE! "... **Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins**" (Matt. 1:21). **"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy"** (Rom. 9:14-16).

The key word is "transaction" in comprehending the limited atonement. Jesus Christ purchased a redemption on Calvary. His death as seen in Isaiah 53 was a substitutionary, vicarious (Him for me) death. **"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: ...But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."** Either the debt was paid, or it was not. Nothing we can do in "decisional regeneration" can change (or add unto) what Christ did on Golgotha's hill. When He shouted

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Forum #1

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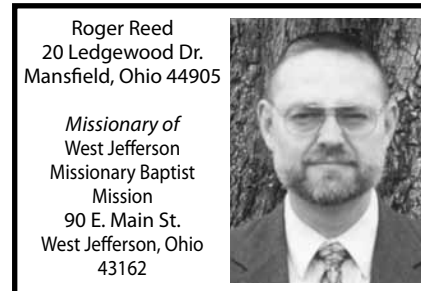
“it is finished,” the “transaction of atonement” was complete and “Jesus paid it all.” Selah! Think about it!

Of necessity, only the ones He died for, only the ones He substituted Himself for can be the considered legally justified. If Jesus died for ALL, as universal redemptionists claim, then how can the logical process be followed? They are ALL reconciled and justified! Or else the work of Christ is NOT complete. It must be one or the other. But since Scripture clearly proclaims a great number that will be judged eternally in Hell for their own sins, the atonement must be limited. For it to be efficacious for one sinner and not another demands particular redemption. **“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left”** (Matt. 25:32-33). **“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep”** (John 10:14-15).

The atonement is limited to His sheep. Sheep are specifically whom He died for. **“For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth”** (Deut. 7:6). **“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of**

darkness into his marvellous light” (I Peter 2:9). **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”** (John 6:37). Selah! Think about it!

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The word “limited,” among other things, means: with limit imposed; on which some form of limit or restriction is imposed. So by this meaning the word restriction, or restricted, comes to mind.

So with the question asked there was a restriction on the atonement. With the atonement of course is the reconciliation between God and people brought about by the death of Jesus Christ. Christ paid the debt that was owed by us to God. **“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement”** (Rom. 5:10-11).

“Limited” then does not mean all, but means some, or many. God put a restriction on whom Christ would die for. He restricted, if you will, that Christ would not die for the whole world as many make John 3:16 to read, but for the “many” that God would give Him (Christ) to die for. **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”** (John 6:37).

In reference to whom Christ died for is not the “all,” but the “many!” I have always been amazed that “many” people do not see this.

“So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen” (Matt. 20:16).

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28).

“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.” Why did not all the Samaritans believe? Because it was “limited” to those that God predestinated, chose, elected before the foundation of the world.

“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph. 1:5).

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph. 1:11).

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Eph. 1:4).

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (I Peter 1:2).

So “Limited Atonement” is “limited” to the highest degree and Jesus Christ only died and shed His

blood for those God gave Him, no more, no less. I would encourage you, dear reader, to check these things out to see if they are true or not. **“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so”** (Acts 17:11). It really makes a good study if one will allow the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and direct one in such a study. I am afraid man lets his pride and past teachings get in the way of the truth. The first 3 chapters of Ephesians is a great place to start. God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

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enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:6-7, 10).

2) The second miracle of salvation is: God dying for man. Just fathom that bottomless statement. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and fully God in every way. **GOD DIED FOR MAN!** Miraculous! **“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, ...Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”** (Luke 23:33-34). Certainly they knew not what they did. After the centurion had watched Jesus die, he correctly assessed the irreparable damage that they had done. **“Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared**

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Forum #2

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greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54). But that is the cost of our salvation. A miraculous imputation of our sin-debt upon God, Who infinitely paid our eternal Hell during that terrible three hours of darkness. God died for mortal man.

3) The third miracle necessary for our salvation is still God's handiwork: God the Holy Spirit regenerating life from death. When Adam died and plunged all humanity into death, we were doomed to an eternity of separation from God. We are not sick with sin, that we might recover our former state of life and health. The Bible says we are DEAD! **"And you, being dead in your sins"** (Col. 2:13). No mere resuscitation will do. Jesus told Nicodemus, **"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again"** (John 3:7). The Holy Spirit must bring new life where before there was only death. **"The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up"** (Matt. 4:16). This last miracle is NOT one that we can do any more than the other two! We CANNOT pray a sinner's prayer and ask Jesus into our dark, depraved heart of death! Salvation's miracle is the Holy Spirit REGENERATING life within us and imparting unto us the gifts of repentance and faith. **"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life"** (Acts 11:18). Selah! Think about it!

There is no "plan" of salvation from our perspective as preachers of the gospel. There is only a "Person" of salvation, Jesus Christ.

Salvation is finding Jesus Christ by the power and miracle of the Holy Spirit: **"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29). The only hope of salvation is for lost sinners to be made "thirsty" for Jesus Christ and when He is revealed unto us by the miraculous power of God repent and believe in Him! **"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ...Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"** (Isa. 55:1, 6-7). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



The Philippian jailor asked Paul and Barnabas **"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"** Their answer was direct and to the point: **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."** When the Holy Spirit regenerates and gives spiritual life to a sinner he will immediately repent of his sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not so much what the sinner does, as it is what the Holy Spirit moves him to do by His invincible power. I have seen people saved in a variety of differing circumstances, but

the one constant is the power of God moving upon the heart and giving the sinner grace to turn from sin to believe that Christ died for them personally, that He was buried, and rose from the dead (Rom. 1:15-17; I Cor. 15:1-4). Regeneration is the work of the Spirit directly upon the sinner giving him spiritual life. Immediately following the new birth the sinner responds to the truth of the Gospel in conversion as evidenced by genuine repentance and saving faith. The truth of this is seen in Christ's conversation with Nicodemus. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again by the Spirit of God to enter into the kingdom of heaven (John 3:3-10). Then Jesus said: **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** There must be spiritual life before there can be the spiritual activities of repentance and faith. However, I believe as soon as regeneration takes place conversion immediately follows with no measurable time lapse. There is no such thing as someone being regenerated but not converted. Where there is spiritual life there is always the exercise of the gifts of repentance and saving faith.

Our responsibility is simple. As believers we are to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and pray that God would be pleased to save poor sinners. When dealing with lost sinners I simply show them from the Word of God that they are polluted by sin, under the condemnation of the law, and deserving of Hell. Then I explain the responsibility they have to repent and believe the Gospel. The fact that they are dead in sins in no way nullifies or

abrogates their responsibility to repent and believe. Acts 17:30-31 declares: **"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."** If you study the Book of Acts you will find that the early churches went everywhere preaching Christ crucified, buried, and risen again as the only way of salvation. There was no psychology, trickery, programs, or magical formulas. They preached like Paul did in Acts 13:38-39: **"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."** When our church knocks on doors in our community the message is simple: Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Repent and believe the Gospel! An overwhelming majority reject the message of the Gospel, but God works on the heart of some and draws them by His mighty power into a saving relationship with Christ as Lord and Savior. Let us be faithful in sharing the truth of the Gospel with everyone praying that God will do a work of grace in their heart. Stick to the simplicity of the Gospel and trust God for the results. I Corinthians 3:6-9 declares: **"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."**

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Forum #2

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Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

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"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (II Cor. 7:10). For a person to be saved they must be born again of the Spirit of God, (John Chapter 3). A turning over a new leaf or a declaration of a command to Jesus to enter the heart is not salvation. Only after the working of the Spirit of God upon the heart of man can man believe and repent to the saving of His soul. **"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"** (Rom. 10:10). **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"** (Titus 3:5).

Christ answered a question by His disciples, and it is the same question that is asked by many today. **"And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved"** (Mark 10:26). And His answer is the same today. **"And Jesus looking upon them saith,**

With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

MIKE DEWITT



Valiant for the

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our own Christianity in favor of a more worldly existence.

But, I do not want to speak from a negative perspective. Instead, I want to be an encouragement to you (and me), and remind us all to be strong, upright, and brave. I want us to look at this principle from a positive aspect. I want us to exhort ourselves and others to be "Valiant for the Truth." Even if the world and apostate Christianity will continue in sin, deceit, and lies; let us, the people of God, be diligent, wise, and valiant for the truth.

The word "valiant" can be defined as, "brave and steadfast." Or, we can define the word this way: marked by, exhibiting, or carried out with courage or determination: heroic. Another synonym for "valiant" would be "bold." These might be words (or meanings) which we might not normally apply to the faithful servants of God; but, when it comes to the matter of right and wrong; when it comes to the matter of justice; when it comes to the matter of righteousness; when it comes to the matters of God's Word; we, the children of God must be brave, courageous, determined, and steadfast in standing up for God's Word and His Ways and His Righteousness. Jude said, **"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should**

earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3).

Let us consider three ways in which we should be "valiant for the truth."

BRAVE TO PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

Those who are the children of God in our day and age must demonstrate bravery. If we are to properly serve God, if we are to properly contend for His Word and the faith that is delivered unto us; then, we must be brave and courageous. Those who follow after God must be brave to proclaim the truth. We should share this truth with others! We should cry out the Will and the Word of God to the world! Others must hear, so they will be saved; others must hear so they will obey the Word; others must hear so the Will of God will be made known in the hearts and minds of the people.

Of course, it is a dangerous thing to proclaim the truth of God's Word in the world we live in today. There are many who oppose us; and there are dangers and distresses that will certainly confront us. This is why we must be valiant. This is why we must be brave. Jeremiah lived in a dangerous time, and yet he went about proclaiming the Word of God. **"Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee, And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle"**

(Jer. 19:1-3). He would be persecuted because of the words and the truths which he proclaimed, yet he was courageous and determined and brave in the way in which he fulfilled God's will and purpose for him and his ministry. Though men would attack him and evils would assail him, he was still brave to proclaim the words and truths that Israel and Judah needed to hear.

Maybe we should be brave and valiant for the Word of God in our day and time. Maybe we should proclaim the message that Jeremiah proclaimed: **"The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever"** (Jer. 7:1-7). Certainly, our nation and our people are in need of a change. We need to "amend" our "ways and" our "doings." Innocent blood is shed through abortion and murders; other gods are worshipped – even the gods of self and nature; judgment, justice, and

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truth are fallen in the street, and lying words are proclaimed as the truth.

And yet, we must be brave. We must withstand the evils of this day, and we must boldly preach the Word of God and the justice and truth which come from Heaven. Men have grown, if possible, even more wicked. Evil has waxed greater. Yet, the truth that comes from God – the Truth that is proclaimed in the Holy Scriptures – will never change.

Jesus Christ proclaimed truth wherever He went, during His earthly ministry. The Pharisees might have had ill intent for Him when they spoke these words, but they were right in what they said: **“...Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth”** (Mark 12:14). Though the Pharisees and the others did not yet acknowledge Him, Jesus Christ was (and is) the personification of the truth! He is the Word of God incarnate! His ministry on this earth was a reflection of that truth and Word of God. I suppose that this is an attitude that we need to have – to disregard our own person, or the dangers that we might face, in favor of the truth. To have no regard for the person or place of those we minister to; to have no special regard for their power or prestige, but to give them the unadulterated truth of God’s Word. Rich or poor; young or old; Jew or Gentile; all need to have the Truth proclaimed unto them.

John the Baptist was like this as well: **“For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias’ sake, his brother Philip’s wife.**

For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod’s birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist’s head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath’s sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother” (Matt. 14:3-11). John the Baptist was “brave to proclaim the truth,” and in the end, it cost him his mortal life. But, I am sure, that he was willing to die for the truth, and he did not count his life too dear. This attitude must be ours as well. We must be brave in the face of danger. We must be bold in the face of rebuke. Regardless of the cost, the truth must be proclaimed. Either we will proclaim the truth, or the Lord will raise up someone else to do so. The world must (and will) hear the truth.

STALWART TO PURSUE THE TRUTH

In order to be “valiant for the truth,” God requires more than just an occasional adherence to His Word, and He expects more than just a partial commitment to Him and His Ways. If we want to demonstrate an acceptable valiance in God’s service, we must follow after the truth of God’s Word, we must earnestly and consistently pursue truth and God’s judgment and justice. It is not enough to proclaim this truth

to others. We, ourselves, must take part in this pursuit of truth. We, ourselves, must love the truth of God’s Word, and always desire a deeper and more thorough understanding of God’s Word and His Will for us in our lives.

This will require steadfastness on our part. This will demand persistence on our part. This will demand a continual desire to please God, and to follow Jesus Christ. Our zeal will leave us from time to time. The fervor and the energy we once had may dissipate or lessen from time to time. But, we must continue and pursue in a valiant and stalwart manner. This is an attitude that is not much seen in Christianity today! And yet, we have the opportunity (and requirement) given to us of God, that we should be strong and unmovable in our belief and trust in His Word, and that we should be examples of consistency and determination in our service unto God and our pursuit of the truth.

The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians, **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, 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). I believe that Paul’s words, and his encouragement to the Corinthians, is very similar to the precept that we are in consideration of today: to be “valiant for the truth.” There is always something more to be done. There is always another attack to defend against. There is always another temptation to resist. There is always another tribulation to overcome. There is always another sin to condemn. To be steadfast and stalwart is necessary, if a person wants to properly serve the Lord and contend for the truth of God’s Word.

We read in the epistle to the

Colossians, **“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister”** (Col. 1:23). “Valiant for the truth,” means that we “continue in the faith grounded and settled.” Don’t forsake the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ! David once said, **“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved”** (Ps. 55:22). We have a certainty and a confidence because of God and His power and His promises.

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation” (Heb. 3:12-15). Here is a simple truth: Sin is deceitful, but God’s Word is true. We need to be stalwart in pursuit of, and belief in, the Word of God and the truth that is found in the Holy Scriptures.

NOBLE TO PORTRAY THE TRUTH

So, in regards to the “truth,” we must “proclaim” and “pursue.” And, in my final observation notice that we ought to “portray” the “truth.”

I want you to know that those who are “valiant for the truth” are persons who have allied themselves to a higher purpose, and who have identified themselves with a better and more excellent

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cause. Therefore, it is our duty and privilege to portray a life and an existence that is separate from the world, and a life that is consecrated unto the service and calling of God. We must not dirty ourselves with the lies and deceits and injustices of the world! Instead, we must put on display – for the world of men to see – a life that shows forth the honest and upright and just character of the true sons and daughters of God! Unlike the wicked Jews of Jeremiah's generation, we ought not take that which is good, and turn it into something that is evil! **“For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD”** (Jer. 2:20-22).

A nominal Christian may not have a need for nobility – for he will probably not have many noble and pure thoughts. However, a dedicated Christian – a child of God who is “valiant for the truth” – ought to have every motivation to live an upright and pure life. It is not that we are “noble” in ourselves; but, it is that we have been brought into the family of God, and we have been brought into a familial relationship with Jesus Christ and our Father in Heaven. Should not our daily lives on this earth, show some respect for such a relationship that we have with God our Father and our dear Sav-

our, Jesus Christ? How can we casually indulge in sin; or, how can we indifferently serve our God, when we consider how dear and wonderful He is, and the relationship that we now have with Him? The writer to the Hebrews said, **“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister”** (Heb. 6:1-10). I would that you and I would live lives that would show forth **“better things,”** and **“things that accompany salvation.”** Oh, that we would live lives that would not be a disappointment to the expecta-

tions that God has for us!

The life of a Christian should reflect a certain nobility, for our spiritual lives are not of this mortal realm. The Holy Spirit has now taken up habitation within us. We ought not tarnish the lovely name of Christ with evil associations and wicked intentions! Instead, let us devote ourselves and our lives to holy things, and to good and righteous endeavors. To nobly portray the truth of God's Word to the world. **“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”** (Heb. 12:1-2).



The Bride Defined

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the Lamb's wife, saying, **“Come hither.”** The angel carried John away in the spirit to a great high mountain and there showed him that great city, the holy Jerusalem coming down from the Heaven of God.

This great city was the dwelling place of the Bride of Christ and manifested the Glory of God. She shined like a precious jasper stone clear as crystal. There was a great high wall around the city and it had had twelve gates. There were twelve angels at these gates and the gates had the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on them. Three of the gates were on the East. Three were on the North. Three were

on the West, and three were on the South. The wall of the city had twelve foundations and on the foundations were the names of the Apostles of Christ.

As the angel talked with the Apostle, John noticed that he had a golden measuring instrument with which to measure the city, the gates, and the wall. The city is symmetrically square with four corners. The height, breadth, and length of the city measured equally the same. The measurement was twelve thousand furlongs. A furlong is about 660 feet. That makes it 7,920,000 ft. X 7,920,000 ft. X 7,920,000 ft. It must have been a remarkable sight.

The wall of the city measured out to be one hundred forty four cubits high. Ordinarily, a cubit is believed to be about a foot and a half in length. If my math is correct, that makes the wall about 216 feet high. The city was pure gold like clear glass and the wall was made of jasper. The foundations of the wall were garnished with all sorts of precious jewels. According to verses nineteen and twenty, the first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

Each of the twelve gates in the wall was made of one pearl and the street of the city was pure gold. The city had no temple in it because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. There was no need for the sun and the moon to shine in the city because the Lamb is the light of it and the glory of God lit it up.

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Apparently, the sheep nations that survive the great tribulation (Jacob's trouble) and enter into the thousand year reign of Christ on this earth according to Matthew the 25th chapter, will walk in the light of this marvelous heavenly city and in John's vision, the Kings of the earth at that time will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. There is no night in the city and the gates will remain open all day. Even at that, nothing that defiles or is abominable, or is false in anyway shall enter the city for only those whose names are in the Lamb's book of life can enter.

In this passage of Scripture, we have a vision of the Bride. An angel showed the Apostle John this vision and what he describes for us is that great city, the holy Jerusalem. Obviously, this Jerusalem is not the modern day age-old capital city of Israel but it is a literal and visible location. It is where Jesus went and prepared a place for His Bride. John 14:1-6, are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ where He speaks words of comfort to the Apostles and all of us who have followed Him and served Him according to His teaching in one of His local New Testament congregations. He reveals that He was going to ascend into glory and prepare a place in His Father's house for Him and His Bride. He promised that He would return to this earth in God's time and take his Bride to that place prepared by Him. We believe that this is that beautiful city coming down from God's Heaven in the Apostle John's revelation of the end times.

"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26).

Men do not marry cities. They dwell in them. Jesus is not going to marry a city. He will marry a bride and they will dwell in the holy city Jerusalem. So, again we ask the question, WHO is this bride of the Lord Jesus Christ? Certainly, the one that must ultimately answer this question must be the Bridegroom Himself – and surely it is evident not everyone shall enjoy this blessed relationship with the Lord. It is obvious to almost everyone from the language of Revelation verse twenty-seven that the unsaved will not be in the Bride. What many Christians overlook, however, is how the language in verse twenty-four in like fashion excludes a number of the saved. They are described as not dwelling in the city with Christ but walking in the light of it with the Kings of the earth. So, being born again is definitely one of the requirements to be in the Bride of Christ but apparently there are other requirements that also must be met in order to have a place in the Bride.

In the Bible, women are often used as symbols for religious organizations, spiritual institutions or churches. **"Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine"** (Hos. 3:1). **"And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD"** (Hos. 2:19-20).

Israel is typified in the Bible as God's unfaithful wife.

Sometimes women are used in a typical way to represent a good kind of religious organization and sometimes a woman is used typically to represent a bad religious organization. In II John 1:1. the Apostle John wrote as the elder to the elect lady. Perhaps this was a literal woman in one of the local congregations like Ephesus. Then there are some who suggest the term lady might be a metaphor for a true local church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes false religions are typified as whores and harlots. Revelation 17:1-5 is an example of this. In this passage of Scripture, we have the Biblical description of a false religious system that has ravaged the world with her hypocritical wickedness. She is called the great whore and mother of harlots. Her roots go way back to the paganism of the reprobates at the tower of Babel. In fact, another one of her names is Mystery Babylon the Great. The description laid out for us in these verses describe a religious institution that has ruled the world religiously and politically for centuries even when Protestants rebelled and came out of her in what was called the Reformation.

The New Testament refers to the church (local, visible) that Jesus built in Matthew 16:18 as the Bride of Christ.

In Ephesians 5:22-23, wives are instructed to submit to their own husbands as unto the Lord. The reason given for this action is that the husband is the head of the wife just like Christ is the head of the church.

In II Corinthians 11:1-2, the Apostle Paul is writing to the local congregation in Corinth. He explains that he had espoused her to one husband and he desired to present her to the Lord Jesus

Christ as a chaste virgin.

In John 3:27-30, John the Baptist is the speaker and he is exalting the Lord Jesus Christ. John denied that he was the Christ but only the one that was sent ahead of Him. Many of those that John had immersed in the Jordan River had stopped following John and were sitting at the feet of Jesus. John was quick to point out that Jesus was the Bridegroom and Jesus had the Bride. John only described himself as the friend of the Bridegroom. John was not jealous about this at all. In fact, he rejoiced about it and told everyone that would listen to him that he and his ministry must decrease now that he has revealed Christ as the Lamb of God. John only wanted Christ to be lifted up and exalted.

In Matthew 25:1-13 is the parable of the ten virgins. There are different interpretations of this parable. When it comes to the five wise virgins and the five foolish virgins some say that the wise represent truly saved individual believers and the foolish represent unsaved false professors. Others say since they were all virgins, they must all represent truly saved individuals and the foolish ones simply missed out on certain blessings. The main problem with this view is that Christ said to the foolish virgins, **"I never knew you."** If they were saved sheep, the Bible says that Christ knows His sheep (John 10:14). Another view of this parable of the ten virgins is that they do not represent individuals, either saved or unsaved, at all. It can be argued that the virgins all represent religious organizations. If it is seen this way, the wise virgins

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would represent true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ and the foolish virgins represent denominations in Christendom that Christ does not recognize or know them as true New Testament Churches. Jesus established what He called "My Church" during His earthly ministry and He empowered and accredited that congregation on the Day of Pentecost by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon her. In Biblical Typology, oil is sometimes used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Virgins who have no oil in their lamps in reality have no lamp stand or candlestick, which is a critical part of being a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19:7-9 talks about a day that is coming in the not too distant future, as we write these words, when the Bride of Christ and the Lord Himself shall be brought together for the marriage of the Lamb. The wife of the Lord (all the faithful members of all the true congregations that endured unto the end) shall have made herself ready and the Lord will be given honor with gladness and rejoicing. The Bride will be wearing apparel that represents absolute purity and perfection and all those that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb and His spotless Bride shall certainly be blessed indeed. The Bride will consist of those believers who identify with wise virgins. All the rejoicing believers attending the marriage supper in that day will be happy and glad to attend even if they are identified with foolish virgins not wise enough to insure that they had the oil that was needed in their lamp.

The bride question is actually a simple question but unfortunately, many Christians have a tendency to oversimplify it by saying that if you are saved, you will be in the Bride. Scripture does not support that theory, because there are some saved who will only walk in the light of the city where the Bride and the Bridegroom dwell. Some virgins will go into the bride chamber and some will not. There will be guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb who are no doubt saved but they are not the Bride.

There are TWO MAIN qualifications for being in the Bride of Christ. They are first of all, as almost everyone agrees, you must be saved; secondly, you must follow the Lord in Scriptural baptism and then serve Him in and through one of His true New Testament local churches. Since New Testament churches are to be fitly framed with individual believers, we can see how some that read this book may or may not be considered as candidates for the Bride of Christ. This is NOT saying that you are saved by joining a church – no - there are many who have their names on a church roll that have never truly been born again. They are unsaved church members and they will not even be in Heaven unless the Lord saves them by His grace before they step out into eternity. May we ponder this thought with fear and trembling?!

Salvation is not in a church of ANY kind (local visible, universal invisible or universal visible or what ever) salvation is in Christ ALONE. It is the gospel of His death, burial and resurrection that saves not His house of worship. To be in Christ by faith is not the same thing as being in the Bride. Many saved people

in the world are not members of a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will not be in the Bride unless they submit to the Lord and receive Scriptural baptism and become a member of one of His true churches. These are the two main requirements for being in the bride of Christ. **"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God"** (Rev. 19:9).

Many will be called to the marriage supper by sovereign election and likewise the bride, those believers that the Lord added to His churches, will be in her place by elective grace. **"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.... Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"** (Acts 2:41, 47).

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:22-24).

Oh yes, there is a difference between the general assembly, the first born who are written in Heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect. As we look to Mount Zion and the holy city heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling place of the Bride and

the Bridegroom, we see at least three different groups. There are the angels. These are not saved people, they are the elect messengers of God that were sent as ministering spirits to the elect (Hebrews 1:14). Then are those who are saved, the spirits of just men made perfect, but they are spoken of in terms separate and distinct from the church (Christ's bride). Then there are those in the church (a local visible assembly of Scripturally baptized believers that was fitly framed to do the will of Christ) of the firstborn (Jesus).

Dear Reader, let us face some facts here. None of us are angels. That is, in the sense of being the spirit beings referenced in the Bible. So, we will not be in that group. I would like to think that all the readers are born again believers but it is very possible that some readers are not born again. Let me encourage you right here and now, to not be concerned at all about the Bride of Christ for the moment and make sure you have a remedy for your sins. This is more important than anything else in your life. Turn in repentant faith to the Lord Jesus Christ and trust Him as your personal Savior. As a born again believer, if you would be in the Bride of Christ, we exhort you to seek out a sound New Testament church and submit to Scriptural immersion. Become a faithful member of the local congregation that administered your baptism, always guarding against moral or doctrinal error. The author is Pastor of one such church and we are waiting for the soon return of our Bridegroom. Come and go with us when He calls His Bride into the bride chamber. AMEN.



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.

SCHOOLS SEEK PROTECTION FOR MARRIAGE VIEWS

(WNS)--Leaders of religious organizations are expressing growing concern about the possible implications of the Supreme Court's same-sex marriage decision later this month. Last week, more than 70 leaders in Christian education sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky, and House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, urging them to pass legislation that would protect schools from government discrimination based on their belief in the Biblical definition of marriage. "The majority of these institutions hold to religious traditions that forbid sexual intimacy outside of marriage between one man and one woman, and will not jettison these convictions for any tax benefit," said the letter, whose signers included Michael Farris, chancellor of Patrick Henry College, Al Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and numerous school associations.

TENNESSEE GOVERNOR SIGNS 48-HOUR ABORTION WAITING PERIOD INTO LAW

(WNS)--Before voters approved a constitutional amendment in November, Tennessee had become the "abortion capital of the Bible Belt," according to some abortion opponents. In late May, Gov. Bill Haslam signed a bill into law continuing a recent trend reversing that dubious distinction. Women seeking abortions in the Volunteer State must now wait two

days before going through with the procedure. Earlier in May, Haslam approved another pro-life measure, requiring facilities performing 50 or more abortions a year to be regulated as ambulatory surgical treatment centers.

NORTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOLERS WIN BID TO START PRO-LIFE CLUBS

(WNS)--Administrators for a North Dakota school district approved two Students for Life of America (SFLA) high school clubs after initially denying their applications. The approval followed a demand letter sent by the Thomas Moore Society (TMS) on behalf of SFLA and high school students Katie McPherson and Brigid O'Keefe. TMS sent the letter to Superintendent Jeff Schatz, outlining how the denial violated the federal Equal Access Act and the First Amendment.

HOUSE PASSES 20-WEEK ABORTION BAN

(WNS)--The U.S. House of Representatives in mid-May approved a ban on abortions after 20 weeks, exactly two years after a Pennsylvania jury found abortionist Kermit Gosnell guilty of murdering late-term infants born alive. "Late-term abortion is not health, and it is not care," Rep. Diane Black, R-Tenn., a registered nurse, said on the House floor. "This is a human rights issue." The 242-184 vote also came almost two years after the House passed similar legislation that eventually died in the Senate. Republicans appeared

poised to pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act again in January, but GOP leadership abruptly pulled the bill amid a controversy over an exception for rape and incest victims.



A Dose of Reality

"Common Sense Comments"

by

Joseph Harris
of Laurel, Mississippi
www.josephharrismagic.com/rnd



TRANSGENDERISM, TRANSRACIALISM, AND NOW..... TRANSECONOMICS

Transgendered people claim to be the opposite gender trapped in the wrong body, such as a man trapped in a woman's body or a woman trapped in a man's body. When asked who trapped them, they quickly say, "God, and He made a mistake." Strange, but some who would eagerly deny the existence of God suddenly become all too willing to accept the existence of God. This week in the news, there is a case of transracialism or a black woman trapped in a white woman's body. Even though both of her parents are unquestionably caucasian, she now claims to be black. According to today's "experts," whether the issue is transgender or transracial, the individual just simply has to believe they are whatever they want to be, regardless of birth, history, heritage, DNA and other messy facts. Just make a few physical changes, and Shazzam, a transformation occurs.

Finally, the time has arrived that I can come out. That is right, I have a trans secret. I am not joking, this is serious business. The

power of the mind is awesome, and now, backed by an insane society, led by an ever willing media, the power to be whatever you want to be has expanded with no boundaries. Just wish it, think it, or demand it to be so, and it is.

Here it is: I am a wealthy person trapped in a poor person's body with a poor person's identity. However, my recent experiment in transeconomics did not work and no one is sympathetic to my cause. I wrote a check for a purchase totaling over \$10,000 and my narrow minded bank says I am overdrawn. Well, I beg your pardon, but I say that there is over \$20,000 in my account. I want it to be true, I believe it to be true and I demand it to be so, therefore it is. For good measure, a little "surgery" on their books from their end would validate my claim. Yet everyone I have spoken to is bigoted, narrow minded, hateful, and they look at me like I am crazy. Forget truth, reality, deposit slips, and good accounting procedures; I demand my bank accept my reality. After all since truth is no longer absolute and relativism now reigns, one person's reality is as good as the reality of anyone else. I may have been born poor and lived my life poor, but now I have decided to be wealthy. Where is MSNBC, ABC, CNN, and all the other XYZ's when I need them? This is a personal crisis and I DEMAND to be heard and validated. I will not accept all the hate speech coming my way. I am wealthy; hear me roar!

And if this does not work, I can always say I am a Chinese man trapped in a Caucasian body. It must be so; I love Chinese food.

UNITY OR PURITY?

The leavening of America, God's

◊ (Continued on page 23)

A Dose Of Reality

(Continued from page 22) ♦

churches, the family and society has been underway for decades. In a sense, the leavening process has always been around as Satan has constantly tried to dilute and weaken the people of God and their influence in the world. Paul said in I Corinthians **"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"** The nature of leaven (yeast) is to permeate and spread throughout the entire lump of dough, causing it to rise. It only takes a small amount to change the entire lump.

What disturbs me does not always disturb others. In this fast paced age of change, I am disturbed by the shift in attitude and philosophy of the average person. I am increasingly finding myself in the minority on issues of Bible doctrine, politics, and ethics. Yet, I have not changed. I stand today where I stood 33 years ago when surrendering to God's call to preach and teach His Word. I see the danger in a little leaven. The depraved nature of humanity leans toward sin and the path of least resistance and will exploit every inch given, hence the saying, "Give him an inch and he will take a mile" is an absolute. Maintaining purity requires effort.

In the religious, political and cultural battles of today, purity has taken a beating. However, purity is essential. Consider the following: when given a choice, would you rather drink pure water or filthy water? Would you prefer a virgin for a spouse or a promiscuous person? Would you choose dirty clothes over clean clothes for your body? Would you rather have a clean politician (an oxymoron, but bear with me) or a person of character as your representative? Any sane person would choose

purity in these situations. But when the choice of purity may result in conflict, stress, and division, people will choose unity over purity 95% of the time.

Look first at purity in the local church. Concerning immorality in a church, it will usually be tolerated, especially when the other option is conflict through confrontation. It is not easy to confront sin and require purity from ungodly church members who may also be family members, or influential in the community or big givers in the offering plate. Yet, the small amount of leaven will spread throughout the lump, affecting the whole. When we are more concerned with the smile of man, then we will have the frown of God, and when purity goes out the window for the sake of unity, then God's churches lose the power and blessing of God.

Consider purity in church doctrine. Baptism and the Lord's table have taken a beating with pastors and churches caving in to the plea for unity rather than purity in the practicing of these ordinances. Only a scriptural New Testament church of the Lord Jesus has the authority to baptize new believers and administer the Lord's Table to those who have prepared themselves through scriptural baptism and church membership. Paul said to refrain from eating with those who had not examined themselves, especially concerning immorality (I Cor. 5:11). These ordinances belong to the Lord, not the church, but He has given their care and stewardship to each local church for proper administration for His glorification. Rather than stand for purity and cause contention, many are satisfied to sacrifice purity for unity, forgetting that unity with God through purity is primary. When a church adopts

a human driven philosophy, their main priority will be to please men and not God. Here is a novel idea: How about a God driven, Spirit sensitive church. It just might work.

Look also at purity in ecclesiastical associations. Ecumenism has taken hold and many are willing to turn loose of Bible doctrines that "divide" in order to fellowship with those who disagree in doctrine. After all, we are all children of God, and why can we not just get along and love one another? True love often requires hard choices. Amos the prophet asked **"Can two walk together except they be agreed?"** They can walk, just not together, because those not of like faith will have different beliefs, different standards, different philosophies of ministry, different goals and different ways to achieve those goals. When pastors and churches refuse to cooperate with others who are not of like faith, they are accused of being hateful and having no love for the brethren. Loving the brethren is not the issue; purity is the issue. Besides, we are commanded to love God before we are commanded to love others and maintaining purity is loving God. We are never commanded to fellowship with those who show a contempt for God by disobeying His Word. As Dr. Curtis Hutson used to say, "There are some things that cannot be sacrificed on the altar of love."

Purity of the Word of God is important. Concerning the Word of God, I believe in the purity of His Word. I believe the Scriptures were divinely inspired and providentially preserved. God divinely inspired the writers in the original manuscripts and then over time, providentially preserved these writings in the original language texts of the

♦ (Continued on page 24)

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

5-1-2015 to 5-31-2015

Beginning Balance	\$7,622.31
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
.....	525.00
TOTAL	8,147.31
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	363.98
Postage stamps	147.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	510.98
.....	7,636.33
Interest	+06
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,636.39



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

5-1-2015 to 5-31-2015

Beginning Balance	\$1,913.23
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
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Carol Willet, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Emmanuel M. B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME	100.00
Faith B. C. Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
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
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	30.00
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	100.00
Providence S. G. B. C., Tupelo, MS	200.00
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	36.00
Anonymous	1,210.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,896.95
TOTAL	\$5,810.18
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	675.99
Supplies	130.50
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,922.45
.....	1,887.73
Bank Charge	-13.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,874.73

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS would like to announce Revival Services. The church will be holding the Revival Services on Saturday July 18th & Sunday July 19th. Elder Tom Horn will be speaking in all services.

Also, they would like to announce that they are holding Sunday afternoon services in Pratt, KS at 117 W. 3rd St., Pratt, KS (Municipal Building). Services begin at 4:00 p.m. and will be held from May 24th thru October 25th. If you happen to know anyone who lives in the Pratt, KS area please let them know about the worship services. Please pray that the Lord might be pleased to use this endeavor to save souls and glorify His name.

If anyone has any questions, please feel free to contact Pastor Hille at nhille@gmail.com or at (620) 845-4183.

The Berea Baptist Broadcast can now be heard on WQRL 106.3 FM in the southern Illinois area at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. The program is being sponsored by the Grace Missionary Baptist Church, 306 North Vicksburg St, Marion, IL 22959. If you enjoy the program let them know by calling them at (618) 841-0228.

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

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

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

grace@gmail.com.

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

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

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

The Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church of Hamilton, OH is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Organized in 1938, the church holds to historic Baptist truths, including the Doctrines of Grace. Please visit the church's website at http://twinbrook.net to view the Church

Constitution and other items that describe our beliefs and show what the church is doing today. Please contact Bro. Chris Willis at Elohimfirst@gmail.com for more information.



A Dose Of Reality

(Continued from page 23) ♦

Hebrew Masoretic text and the Greek Textus Receptus. I use the 1769 edition of the 1611 King James version, not because of “Thee’s” and “Thou’s,” but because I believe it to be a faithful translation from these texts. The issue is about using the right English translation based upon the right original language texts. The purity of His Word is essential since doctrine and practice are based upon the authority of Scripture. **“The words of the LORD are pure words”** (Ps. 12:6).

Purity in the home. Purity must first be established in the heart, otherwise, the outward appearance is a sham. However, after inward purity is a reality, further instruction is still needed concerning outward conduct and appearance. Concerning standards of dress, entertainment choices and others issues in contemporary culture, most churches and parents opt for unity and peace in the congregation and the home rather than the unsettling, stressful conflict which comes from requiring standards of purity. Modern apparel is more

important than modest apparel. A sloppy, unkempt appearance has replaced a dignified, neat and tidy appearance, yet what is on the outside, usually reflects the attitude of the inside. Degrading movies and videos de-sensitize values concerning right and wrong over issues of sexuality, ethics and the role of men and women in the home. Ultimately, standards or lack of standards, go back to the home and the example set by the parents. Godly parents face intense pressure in the world and often from their church, over disagreement of standards, and parents too often give in to the pressure of their children, their church and other family members, who accuse them of being too hard.

Consider purity in society. Homosexuality and immorality have become more and more accepted through gradual exposure. To address someone’s immoral sexual lifestyle is considered an attack on the individual. Homosexuality and immorality are both destructive to all who participate, ruining self esteem and respect, destroying families, and can end in death from disease. To warn of self destruction and promote sexual purity honors God and helps people experience full and more satisfying lives. Sexual immorality affects everyone in society as a whole through broken homes, wounded children and adults, and increased financial costs, resulting from choices that damage health.

May God give us the resolve to stand and be more concerned about maintaining unity with God, as we preach and practice purity in a culture that has an ever growing contempt for truth.



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