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The Lord's Babies

By Roy Mason

(1894 - 1978)

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (I Cor. 3:1).



There are many persons who delight in calling themselves, the Lord's children, when they might far more accurately and exactly be designated as the Lord's babies. They are His children, indeed, members of His family, sharers in the provisions of His love, heirs of His promises of good things beyond. But they are rudimentary and wholly undeveloped. They have never grown up; they are just babies.

Now, there are few things more beautiful than a normal babyhood, but where are likewise few things more pathetic than a babyhood abnormally continued. Did you ever see a person who had grown to strong,

vigorous manhood, but who was still mentally a child? I have. It is a sight to sadden one. On the other hand, did you ever see a person with the mind of an adult and a body that was little above a child as to its development? I

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Roy Mason

John's Sketch of a Christian

By Jeff Short

Mantachie, Mississippi

"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (I John 2:12).

Our text, as well as other passages in the first epistle of John, reveals the intent of the writer to address himself to Christians. The five chapters of this



Jeff Short

book contain words of comfort, reproof, rebuke, instruction in righteousness, and assurance for the Christian. **"These things have I written unto you that believe on the**

name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13). He makes it plain that he is writing, **"because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."**

In addressing the saints, John draws a clear sketch of the true Christian. I shall endeavor to go through this little book and draw your attention to five marks of true Christians.

I. The first mark of the true child of God is that they do not practice sin. In the ninth verse of the third chapter, John writes, **"Who-**

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The Parable of the Sower

By Milburn Cockrell

(1941 - 2002)

The events leading up to the Parable of the Sower are interesting. According to Matthew's account, on this day the Lord had cast out a demon from a blind and dumb man. The Pharisees had accused Him of being in league with Satan (Matt. 12:22-37). Some of the Pharisees asked for a sign to prove He was the Messiah (Matt. 12:38-45). Then his mother and brothers, fearing for His life, sought to guide and regulate His work (12:46-50). After all of these conflicts and confusions, Christ

calmly taught the people these parables in Matthew 13 on this same day. He sat in a ship on the Sea of Galilee and preached to the multitudes that stood on the seashore.

What is a parable? In the Greek the word for "parable" (*paraballo*) means "to throw or lay beside." Jesus would put things side by side, whereby their resemblance could be seen. By parabolic teaching our Lord placed the known by the side of the unknown. He used simple facts un-

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Our Lord's Precious and Unadulterated Church

By Edgar Grady Cook

(1898 - 1986)

In Ephesians 5:25 we read, **"Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it."** After reading this verse very carefully,



E. G. Cook

stop for a moment and think just how precious our Lord's church was, and still is to Him. Then when you have come to see that, look around you on every side and see how His precious church has been adulterated, de-

famed, besmirched and belittled in the eyes of the world, and especially of the RELIGIOUS WORLD. Does it not make you join with me in wondering how much longer our Lord will stay His fierce anger and His great wrath?

He did not just give a good price for His church. The cattle on a thousand hills were His. He did not give His cattle for His church. The earth is His and the fullness thereof. But He did not consider this earth with all its great wealth an adequate price for something that was so dear to Him. His church is so precious to Him that

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The Lordship of Jesus Christ

Part 2

By Milburn Cockrell

(1941 - 2002)

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9).

In our first message I pointed out in what sense that Jesus Christ is Lord of all. I told how that salvation is bowing to the Lordship of Christ and that it is not possible to divide His Lordship from His Saviorship. I also discussed the Lord's baptism and the Lord's Supper. Today I shall continue this theme.

THE LORD'S DAY

Our Lord requires that we give Him one day out of seven. This teaching is as old as man and the world.



Milburn Cockrell

Hebrews 4:9 reads from the Greek New Testament: **"There remaineth therefore the keeping of a Sabbath to the people of God."** This does not mean that Christians are to keep the seventh-day Jewish Sabbath (Col. 2:16-17). The first day of the week is the day of New Testament worship. It is the Lord's Day as can be seen in Revelation 1:10.

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



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Parable of the Sower

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derstood by all to teach deep spiritual truths. Parables are windows of truth. Through them truth shines that ordinary minds fail to perceive unless present to them through this medium. Those who fail to grasp this simple truth declare that, having eyes, they see not, and, having ears, they hear not (Matt. 13:10-17).

Christ was close to the plain of Gennesaret. Among His hearers were many sowers, or farmers. Many of His hearers had seen a sower go forth from his house to his field, sowing precious seeds in hope of a harvest. Countless birds could be seen hovering over the rich plain. The rocky ground of the hillsides protruded here and there through the fields. Large bushes of thorns could also be seen here and there. One could easily see the rich soil which was clearly distinguished from the hills elsewhere descending into the sea. As Christ and His hearers could see such things before them, He chose these common sights to illustrate the varied effects of

gospel preaching.

The term "the kingdom of heaven" is used by Matthew while Mark and Luke use "the kingdom of God." The terms are the same, except that Heaven is a place and God is a person. It means wherever God's authority is publicly acknowledged. The ideal sense of this kingdom in its present form is seen only in true local churches. In the parables of Matthew 13 "the kingdom of heaven" is what we might call the sphere of Christian profession, or Christendom. As we can see from this parable and the parables to follow, it contains both lost and saved, Christ and Satan, true churches and false churches. In the seven parables in Matthew 13 we have a brief history of Christendom from the first century to the millennium. The history of the true churches on earth is seen in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3.

The design of this parable is to show that hearing the Word of God preached is not sufficient. Good preaching must have good hearers. The preached Word is effectual only when it is received into the heart, understood, and acted upon. Man's heart is naturally unreceptive to the Word, and it is received only in the heart of one to whom the Holy Spirit has given a new heart. The seed and the sower are the same. The great difference is in the soil upon which the seed falls. The cause of damnation is because men's hearts are not right with God.

This parable is found in Matthew (13:3-9, 18-23), Mark (4:3-20), and Luke (8:4-15).

There can be no debate as to the meaning of this parable, for Christ Himself gives the interpretation. Now I want to examine this parable in great detail, comparing the different language in the three Gospels.

The first word in Matthew's account is "Behold" (Matt. 13:3). This word calls attention to something important. Mark prefixes: "Hearken, Behold" (Mark 4:3). It is the Lord who speaks; we must listen. His words are simple, but they are full of spiritual gems. We must meditate over them and pray over them.

THE SOWER

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow" (Matt. 13:3). Here the KJV follows the Geneva and used "a" sower, but in the Greek of the Textus Receptus we find the definite article. Tyndale, following the Greek text, has "the sower." This designates an ideal individual, who represents a class of people as we shall see.

First of all, by the sower I understand Jesus Christ, or the Son of man (Matt. 13:37-38). Christ came into the world preaching the Word of God

from the day in the synagogue in Nazareth till the day in the temple court of Jerusalem, just before His crucifixion. When this parable was spoken Christ had been sowing gospel seeds for many months, and He had experienced limited success. Christ is the Word in person John 1-3,14).

In a secondary sense Christ sows gospel seed through His servants. This would include the apostles, the seventy missionaries, and gospel preachers across the centuries. When His ministers do it by His authority and in His name, it is as if Christ Himself did it. It is written in John 4:1-2: "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.)

What a beautiful name for a gospel preacher is seen here. He is a sower of seeds. The man went forth, not to criticize, or to make a display of himself. He is responsible to sow gospel seeds and expect God to give him a harvest. This is his burden. He who is burdened with precious seeds long to scatter them in as many places as are possible (Ps. 126:5-6). God called and qualified him for this work, and this work he must do, or a woe is upon him (I Cor. 9:16).

Matthew gives it: "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." The words "went forth" means that the farmer left his house and went into his field to sow. This speaks of Jesus Christ's incarnation, and His coming into the world by assuming a human nature. He appeared in the land of Judea as a preacher of the Word. The words "went forth"

also speak of how Christ's ministers are to go forth into the entire world and to preach the gospel to every creature. World missions are seen here.

Luke's account reads this way: "A sower went out to sow his seed" (Luke 8:3).

Mark the words: "His seed." This shows that Christ is the Author and Publisher of the gospel. He is the sum and substance of the good news. The Word, which we preach, is the words of Christ.

THE SEED

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed. . ." (Matt. 13:3-4).

"A sower went out to sow his seed. . ." (Luke 8:3). In giving the interpretation of this part of the parable Jesus said: "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Mark gives it: "The sower soweth the word" (Mark 4:14). In Matthew's account Christ called it "the word of the kingdom" (Matt. 13:19). This Word points to the kingdom and paints the way into it.

Heaven is potentially in it. Thus the seed represents the gospel as preached by Christ and His apostles, as well as all faithful ministers since the apostolic age.

The preaching of the gospel is a work of which it would be difficult to overrate. Christ said that the gospel should "be preached throughout the whole world" (Mark 14:9) and to "every creature" (Mark 16:15). The preaching of the good news about Jesus Christ is the means of grace God uses in saving sinners (Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 1:21). The gospel in the hands of the Holy Spirit is the means God uses to call the elect unto Himself (Eph. 1:4,13; I Thess. 1:4-5; II Thess. 2:13-14; II Tim. 2:10). Those to whom the gospel is hid are "lost" (II Cor. 4:3-4) and shall suffer everlasting punishment (II Thess. 1:8-9; Mark 16:16). There is a sense in which God begets men with the gospel (I Cor. 4:15; Phile. 10; Jas. 1:18; I Pet. 1:23-25).

THE SOILS

The soil represents the heart or soul of man. The four kinds of soil represent the different ways in which those who hear the preaching of the gospel treat it. Here we see four different classes of people who take time to hear the Word. Here we see the gospel is addressed to man's responsibility and his response to it. Christ is not speaking from the standpoint of the Divine counsel of God, which never fails, but He is speaking of how the gospel is to be preached to all. As we can see in this parable, the gospel is to be preached even to those who are not converted by it. Even reprobates and infidels should hear the gospel. The gospel is not, as some say, "Only food for the sheep."

THE WAYSIDE HEARER—THE DEVIL

"And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up" (Matt. 13:4). Concerning this part of the parable Jesus said: "When one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side" (Matt. 13:19). Some call this one the indifferent hearer, and others call him the hard-hearted hearer.

The words "by the way side" (*para ten hodon*) mean "the pathway (or road) through the field" for travellers (Matt. 12:1). Some of the seeds of the sower fell on the road and rested there for a brief time. Some of the seed were crushed by the feet of travellers (Luke 8:5), and other were borne away by the birds of heaven (Mark 4:4). The soil here represents those people who

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hear the Word preached and do not like it. The words fell on their ears, but it did not sink into their souls.

Though the Word is sown in the heart, the heart is unreceptive and unresponsive. This man never laid the Word to heart. He throws off the words about Christ as a tin roof throws off hail. The gospel here is not mixed with faith by the one who hears it (Heb. 4:2). Jesus said of such people: **“And ye have not his word abiding in you”** (John 5:38). Still again He declared: **“. . .because my word hath no place in you”** (John 8:37). The gospel has no lodging place in his heart. Redemption, sin, and salvation are unintelligible terms to him. He is like seed sown upon a highway, for he is careless and inattentive, negligent and forgetful.

Satan is better informed than some preachers. He has enough sense to know that the preaching of the gospel is the instrumental means of salvation. The Devil detects the precious seed lying on the heart and **“catcheth away that which was sown in his heart”**

(Matt. 13:19). Mark says that **“Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts”** (Mark 4:15). The loss is never felt because the hearer never enjoys the worth of the Word. The Wicked One takes the Word out of this man’s memory and diverts his mind from it to other objects. Luke puts it this way: **“Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved”** (Luke 8:12). The Devil, the enemy of souls, does all he can to hinder men’s faith in the gospel of Christ.

The sinner’s heart is hard by nature and by continued acts of sin. Even the grass of morality does not grow in such a wicked heart. The ways of sin are well-beaten paths to this man. He is a very ungodly person. He brings forth no fruit to honor God or to benefit man. God leaves him to his own heart’s lust (John 15:22), for he has despised the gospel preacher and His message of the cross. There is no remedy for him (II Chron. 36:15-16).

THE STONY-GROUND HEARER—THE FLESH

“Some fell on stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered

away” (Matt. 13:5-6). **“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended”** (Matt. 13:20-21). Some call him the shallow-hearted hearer, but others the emotional hear, and still others call him the superficial hearer.

The word for **“stony places”** (*petrudes*—in Luke 8:6,13 it is *petra*—rock) is a rock lying beneath shallow soil. In this shallow soil the seed is received, but the growth is superficial. The small plant lies near the top of the ground with no root. The hot sun soon destroys it.

Many of us have seen such a sentimental hearer of the Word. He at first seems very considerate and highly emotional. Tears are quickly shed, and they are as quickly dried up. These feelings of religious excitement soon pass. His heart seems to be in his ears and eyes. He desires the blessings of discipleship, but he fails to count the cost. He has no character, no reality, and no earnestness. Underneath the outside of seeming life there is an unchanged heart.

“Yet hath he not root in himself.” He never gets to **“the root of the matter”** (Job 19:28; 18:16). The small plant springs up quickly, but it’s all on the outside. Beneath the thin covering of emotional excitement lies the unyielding rock of an incurable wicked heart. This man was never rooted and grounded in love (Eph. 3:17). He was not grounded and settled in the things of the Lord (Col. 1:23). His joy at the Word was mere human excitement, for a real work of grace in the soul produces contrition, sorrow, and humility. This man is a false professor.

It is also written: **“. . .but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”** There being no inner nourishment for the soul this false professor is soon overcome by outward circumstances. The novelty wears off. Tribulation and persecution comes because he claims to believe in the Word. Having experienced no change of heart, he totally and finally fall away from his religious profession. He returns to the world, the flesh, and the Devil. He returns to spiritual Egypt. He does not persevere; therefore, he proves himself to be a false professor and not a genuine believer. Real believers endure to the end (Matt. 10:22).

Modern-day evangelism is designed to produce this shallow-

hearted hearer. Churches often sing sentimental hymns geared to stir human emotions. The preacher stirs the emotions of people by graveyard tales instead of the gospel of Christ. Many preachers are under pressure from their church to produce converts, or be fired. Hence some do anything to get visible and quick results by nook or crook. Sinners are urged to make a “decision” and to come “to the front.” These converted start out good but then turn out bad. Such evangelism produces superficial results. It dishonors Jesus Christ, fills the church with hypocrites, cheapens the gospel ministry, and deceives poor lost sinners. Such so-called gospel preachers are blind leaders of the blind and both the preachers and their converts shall fall into the fires of Hell.

THE THORNY-GROUND HEARER—THE WORLD

“And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them” (Matt. 13:7). **“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful”** (Matt. 13:22). Mark adds that **“the lust of other things entering in”** (Mark 4:19) and Luke adds **“the pleasures of life”** (Luke 8:14). Some call this man the half-hearted hearer, while others call him the double-minded man.

It would appear that the ground had been cleared on the surface for sowing, but the roots of thorns were left under the ground where the seed was sown. The thorns sprang up and grew faster than the planted seed. The thorns shut out the young plant from air and light, and they extracted moisture and nutriment from the earth, which the young plants required. As in Eden, the thorns became a curse.

The thorny-ground hearer represents those whose materialistic life keeps him from becoming a real believer. In his case the seeds do not choke the thorns, but the thorns the seed. His problem is not so much internal causes as it is external snares that cause him to be unfruitful. Luke says that these thorns **“sprang up with it, and choked it”** (Luke 8:7). This man tried to make God and mammon co-exist. He wanted the best of both worlds. This cannot be, according to Holy Scripture. Only true saving faith can overcome the world and its attractions (I John 5:4), enabling the believer not to love worldly things (I John 2:15-16).

This man is not a profane sinner. He is not a reviler of Christ or Christians. He is not a persecutor of the saints. He is a professor of Christianity and may even be a church mem-

ber. He has made outward reformation, and he has historical faith. But he really cares more for this world than the other. He lays up treasures on earth. He desires to enjoy the pleasures of this world for a season. He has the outward leaves of profession, but he has no fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). He brings forth no fruit to perfection because he is thorn-rooted. He has no time, no thought, no real love, for the things which belong to his everlasting peace. He has gained the world, but he has lost his soul!

THE GOOD-GROUND HEARER—GOD’S ELECT

“But some fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold” (Matt. 13:8). **“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it: which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty”** (Matt. 13:23). Some call this person the whole-hearted hearer, and others consider him the honest hearer. I note a number of things about him.

First, I see that he had a prepared heart. The ground where the seed of the Word fell was **“good ground”** (Matt. 13:8,23). Luke calls it **“an honest and good heart”** (Luke 8:15). Naturally a man does not have such a heart (Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9). By nature his heart is evil and barren and as hard as stone. The heart must be prepared by grace to receive the Word. The Holy Spirit of God must plough the hard ground to great depth. Damaging roots and thorns must be cleared away. This is a work which can only be performed by the Divine Being.

The sinner must be given a new heart by the operation of sovereign grace. **“And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. . .”** (Jer. 24:7). **“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh”** (Ezek. 36:26). This new heart is a creative act of God: **“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me”** (Ps. 51:10). This honest and true heart offers no hindrance to the growth of the Divine seed. The soil is deep and loose. There are no thorny roots. Evil passions have been subdued by Divine grace. The judgments, affections, understand, and will have been quickened by the Spirit. Here is a heart anxious for spiritual things. It has no room for worldly care and earthly riches that hinder the one thing needful.

This good heart is a regenerated

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heart that loves Christ, delights in Him, and cleaves to Him. It is not a heart divided between Christ and the Devil, nor Christ and the flesh, nor Christ and the world. Here is a heart that fully trusts in Jesus Christ (Acts 8:37). It rejoices in Christ Jesus and has no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). It counts all things but dung in comparison with Christ (Phil 3:9). To this man Christ is all in all.

Second, it is an understanding heart: **"But he that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it. . ."** (Matt. 13:23). The understanding of the Word is the germination of the seed. This person understands it, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God. He receives it not because of the eloquence of the preacher, nor because it tickles his ears, but because it reaches his heart. He loves it more than his necessary food because it is the words of eternal life in Christ.

Third, it is a fruitful heart: **". . .and bringeth forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred"** (Mark 4:20). "There are degrees of fruitfulness even in good ground. The individual seeds of special truth will be better conditioned in some hearts than others. The same truth in one's man's life may bring forth an hundredfold, while in another only thirty. The measure of understanding has much to do with the measure of fruitfulness. The character of the fruit betrays the nature of the soil. The great object of the Sower is *fruit*. All is loss and failure that is not fruitful. Let us abide in Christ and our lives shall not be barren" (James Smith in *Handfuls on Purpose*, Vol. I, p. 146).

Fourth, it is a persevering heart: **". . .having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience"** (Luke 8:15). Bloomfield says this means to continue to bring forth fruit with perseverance (See *The Greek Testament with English Notes*, Vol. I, p. 301, 1839 edition). There is a very special reference to the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). The difference between a true believer and a false professor is the fruit of the Spirit. Furthermore, there will be perseverance in the practice of these things. The whole life will be spent in serving God amidst discouragement and trials. **"The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger"** (Job 17:9). Jesus Christ taught that perseverance is the badge of a real Christian: **". . .but he that**

endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22).

CONCLUSION

1. There are four ways that people hear the Word. There are three wrong ways. Some hardly hear it at all. They hear the sound but not the sense. To such a person it matters little what message is sent to him. Others hear only in part, but receive nothing at all. Still some others hear without hearing the truth. Then there is one good way to hear the Word. This person hears the sense as well as the sound. He hears the whole counsel of God, not a mere part of it.

2. The man who hears the Word and does what it says is a true Christian. He hears God's call to repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15). He bears the fruit of righteousness. He ceases to do evil and learns to do well. He receives Christ crucified as His only Savior. He is a doer of the Word, and not a hearer only.

3. God hearing is as essential as good preaching. The success or failure of preaching is partly dependent on the character and conduct of the hearer. The gospel preacher cannot expect to convert any more than one in four of those who hear the Word as seen in this parable. If his preaching does not produce good results, he must not be discouraged in sowing gospel seed.

While many who hear the Word will not receive it, this does not lessen our responsibility. Our Lord, who fully knew all these things, did not desist from sowing gospel seed. If all did not hear the words of Christ, let us not marvel that they do not hear what we preach.

4. Ministers of the gospel should greatly desire to find hearers whose hearts have been quickened by the Holy Spirit. Those whose hearts have been ploughed deep by the Spirit will gladly receive the Word. **"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls"** (Acts 2:41). **"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God,**

heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken" (Acts 16:14).

5. What kind of hearer are you? a hard-hearted hearer? a shallow-hearted hearer? a half-hearted hearer? or a good-hearted hearer? **"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear"** Matt. 13:9).

Lordship of Jesus Christ

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John said: **"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. . ."** On the first day of the week Christ appeared to His disciples (John 20:19). On this day the disciples had a preaching service (Acts 20:7) and brought their offerings to church (I Cor. 16:1-2).

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day, and it is the day, which the Lord has made for us to rejoice in and be glad. Sunday is the Lord's Day and it should be used for Him. As much as possible, the Christian should refrain from all secular labor and worldly recreation (Isa. 58:13-14). There is much work to be done for God on this day. On Sunday we should attend church, read the Bible, rest, meditate, visit the lost and the sick, and have Christian fellowship. This is the proper way to spend the Lord's Day. Such an observance honors our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some say that if we observe the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath, we are honoring the sun-god and taking the mark of the beast. The Bible nowhere says that the observance of Sunday is the mark of the beast. Cultists say this, not the Bible. It is true that Sunday was named from the Roman sun-god, and it is also true that Saturday was named from the Roman god Saturn. If the observance of Sunday is the mark of the beast, then some of the most godly people in the world will go to Hell while atheists and the unsaved will be in a better condition. This is not in any sense true. Rather, it is the teaching of one religious group to drive people to embrace their religious dogma.

THE LORD'S TITHE

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD. . .the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD" (Lev. 27:30, 32). Tithing was a part of God's moral law originally revealed to man. Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec four hundred years before the law of Moses (Gen. 14:20). Jacob promised to tithe three hundred years before the law (Gen. 28:22). After hundreds of years of God's people practicing tithing it was made

a part of God's law for Israel in Leviticus 27:30-32.

Tithing was required by law in ancient Israel. An Israelite was to pay tithes of all his increase, his corn, trees and cattle. By this he acknowledged God to be the owner of his land, the Giver of its fruits, and himself the tenant of Jehovah. This tithe was called the Levites' tithe because it was to be paid to the priestly tribe by the command of Jehovah (Num. 18:21-24). To withhold it was regarded by God as dishonesty (Mal. 3:8).

Please pay close attention to the words: **". . .all the tithe. . .is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the Lord."** The principle laid down here is very old. Ten percent of our income from our farm, or even a business enterprise, belongs to the Lord. It is not our money; it is His money. Those who recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ realize that ten percent of all their increase belongs to their sovereign Lord. They dare not use what is holy unto the Lord for their own selfish gratification.

Ultra-dispensationists deny that New Testament Christians are responsible to tithe their income. They believe that God did away with the law of tithing and left it up to man to give when he feels like it, and if he doesn't feel like it, then he does not have to give anything. Such persons ignore the fact that Hebrews 7:1-9 insists that Christians are under greater obligation to give the tithe to our ever-living Christ than was Abraham to give the tithe to Melchizedek. Also remember that Abraham paid tithes under a dispensation of grace and faith, not under the law of Moses (Rom. 4:2-3, 9, 16). Since tithing was first practiced under the principle of grace and faith, surely the portion is not to be less now that the dispensation of grace and faith is fully come.

Tithing is not an optional matter. In Malachi 3:10 the Lord said: **"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house. . ."** In Matthew 23:23 Jesus Christ our Lord said: **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."** Concerning tithes Jesus said, **"These ought ye to have done."** Christ commanded tithing in these words, and what our Lord commended should be to us a command.

Some complain that Christ was speaking here to the Jews, and, therefore, it has no application to the Gentiles. But Jesus was speaking to a Jew

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MARK OF THE BEAST

Look at your name on the front page of this month's paper. If you see the mark 06-03, so detestable to a Baptist, wash it out by renewal of green-backs. If not your paper will stop next month. We are not able to credit. It is not a good plan.



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in John 3:3, yet no one limits the necessity of the new birth to Jews only. If I was so ultra-dispensational as to contend that Christ did away with tithing in Matthew 23:23, then I would consistently contend that He also abolished judgment, mercy and faith in the same verse, for these are also mentioned in Matthew 23:23.

The tithe is not only the Lord's, but the Lord has stipulated where it is to be brought. This is true in both Testaments. **"But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks"** (Deut. 12:5-6, 10-11). Tithes in Israel were to be brought to the place of public worship—the tabernacle and later to the temple. This was God's storehouse. God commanded: **"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse. . ."**

In the New Testament the church is called **"the house of God"** in I Timothy 3:15 and Christ's **"own house"** in Hebrews 3:6. God's storehouse in the New Testament is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches storehouse tithing. If one is a member of a true New Testament church, then he should put his tithes into the treasury of his church. He should not be a member of an unsound church, nor should he support it with his tithes and offerings.

The details of New Testament giving are seen in I Corinthians 16:1-2: **"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."**

First, giving must be punctual: **"Upon the first day of the week. . ."** The Corinthian church took up a collection every Sunday, or every Lord's Day. This was the day of their worship service and on this day they celebrated the ordinances of God's house. The bringing of an offering was an integral part of their worship. If we follow their example we must meet on the first day of the week to bring

our tithes and offerings to God's treasury or storehouse. By such regular and systematic giving we honor our sovereign Lord. The Lord is not honored by haphazard and spasmodic giving.

Second, it must be personal: **". . .let every one of you lay by him in store. . ."** This means that every church member is to give regularly. There are not exceptions to this rule. Rich and poor are to come with their offerings, side by side into the house of God (Mark 12:42; Luke 19:8-10). Let each church member look upon such giving to the Lord as his duty and privilege. **"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts"** (Ps. 96:8). **"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase"** (Prov. 3:9).

Much debate has centered around the words **"lay by him in store."** Some say this means that a person should put aside and store up an offering at home to do with as they see fit. Others translate it: "Let everyone of you treasure up a precious thing." The meaning of the verse to me is simple and plain. Each church member was to put his offering into the treasury of the church. The offering was to be brought to the church assembled for worship. The offering was not to be stored up at home until Paul's arrival, for the latter part of the verse indicates that Paul wanted to avoid taking a collection when he came: **". . .that there be no gatherings (collections) when I come."** If the offerings had been previously brought to the church treasury, then there would be no trouble in collecting them when he arrived. Offerings in the New Testament were church centered.

Third, giving must be proportional: **". . .as God has prospered him. . ."** Giving is to be based upon an individual's financial ability (II Cor. 8:12), according as God has been pleased to bless His labors. This was God's rule in the Old Testament when tithing was enforced by civil law: **"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee"** (Deut. 16:17). One cannot give according to prosperity without giving a definite percentage. The only percentage ever approved in the Bible by God is one-tenth of one's income. This rule applies to New Testament giving.

THE LORD'S CHURCH

In this present age the Lord Jesus Christ has only one kind of church—a local assembly of baptized believers. Every true church on earth today is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 16:18 Paul spoke of **"my church."** In Romans 16:16 Paul mentioned **"The churches of Christ. . ."** To the Corinthian church Paul wrote: **"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular"** (I Cor. 12:27). Jesus Christ Himself founded the church, placed the officers in it, and commissioned it to preach His gospel to the world. Our Lord loved the church and gave Himself for it. He is presently its Head and Lawgiver, and soon He is coming back to rapture His church to glory.

The Lord's church exists to make disciples and to baptize these disciples in the name of the Lord. It is to teach these baptized disciples to observe all things, which the Lord commanded His people to do. It gathers on the Lord's Day to preach the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to praise the Lord in songs. **"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"** (Eph. 5:19). In all that a church does it must glorify its exalted Head who sits now at the right hand of God. It should mean much to us because it is the Lord's church, not ours.

I believe that it greatly dishonors the Lord Jesus Christ to make fun of a local New Testament church, to call it a secondary church, or man's church. Many take pleasure in this even going so far as to say that the local church is a necessary evil—meaning that they must have some place to preach and to get their money. This is a popular practice of those who teach a universal, invisible church. Such a teaching has led to great disobedience to the ordinances, and it has robbed local churches of proper funds to carry on their important work. The Lord is not honored by any teaching that belittles the work of the churches to whom Christ gave the great commission.

If we love Christ we must love His church. It is not possible to love Christ and to hate and make fun of His church at the same time. We ought to avoid saying, "Bro. Smith's church" or "Bro. Brown's church," for it is the Lord's church. We had better be careful as to how we treat the Lord's church. Any hurt done to the church is looked upon by Christ as hurt done to Him. In Acts 8:3 it is written: **"As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."** Then in Acts 9:4 Christ said to him: **"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"** Be careful how you treat the church and how you speak about it. I Corinthians 3:16-17 tells that if any man defile the church God will de-

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Funnybone

"... A time to laugh..." (Eccl. 3:4).

Pastor Brown was on his way home one evening. Near his home, he saw a group of little boys sitting in a circle with a dog in the middle.

Pastor Brown asked, "What are you fine young boys doing with the nice dog?"

Little Joey Counts replied, "We ain't doin' nothin' to the dog, we're just tellin' lies, and which ever one tells the biggest gets the dog."

The pastor sternly replied, "I am shocked! When I was a little lad, I would never have even thought of telling a lie."

Little Jimmy Johnson quickly sputtered, "Give him the dog, fellas."

A young boy knocked on the door of Bill Tightwad's house. As the door opened the boy began, "Er...ah, that is, can I, ah... will you..."

Bill Tightwad cheerfully replied, "Why, yes, my boy, you may have her!"

The young boy nervously gasped. "What's that? Have whom?"

"My daughter, of course," replied Bill, "You want to marry her don't you?"

"Not ...ah... really," stammered the young boy, "I just wanted to borrow fifty dollars."

"Certainly not!" Bill Tightwad exclaimed. "I hardly know you."

Deacon Jones was visibly distressed when stopped by a police officer for driving without a taillight.

"Don't take it so hard" said the officer, "it's only a minor offense."

"That's not why I'm upset officer," replied the deacon. "It's what has happened to my trailer and my wife that was in it!"



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stroy him.

HIS ENEMIES REFUSED TO CALL HIM LORD

The disciples of Christ constantly called Him Lord. However, the enemies of Christ never addressed Him as such. When Satan addressed Him he said: **"If thou be the Son of God. . ."** (Matt. 4:3, 6). He never called Him Lord. In Matthew 8:29 the demons spoke to Him thusly: **"What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?"** In Mark 5:7 one asked: **"What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?"** The demons did not deny His deity, but they would not own Him as their Lord. A demon told the seven sons of Sceva: **"Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye"** (Acts 19:15). Never did the Devil or the demons ever call Jesus Lord. Thus those who deny the Lordship of Christ take their stand on the side of Christ's enemies.

Listen carefully to much modern preaching and watch for the word "Lord" when men preach. They speak of "Jesus" and "the name of Jesus only." They call Him the "Savior" and "Son of God," but seldom if ever do they call Him "Lord." Such language is used by the Devil and the demons who do not acknowledge His Lordship. Those who do not call Christ Lord speak no more highly of Him than do the Devil and the demons.

Man by nature does not want Christ to be his Lord. When you tell them that Jesus Christ is Lord of all they will say to you: **"We will not have this man to reign over us"** (Luke 19:14). They will not submit to His yoke nor even touch the top of His golden scepter. If it were possible they would cast Him off and never submit to His Lordship (Ps. 2:1-4). They want to be their own Lord, do their own thing, and go their own way. Some religious sinners are content to have Christ to save their soul from hell, but they will not have Him to reign over them. Christ is a Savior to those only to whom He is Lord, and who are willing to obey Him. Our text said: **"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."** Our Lord Himself declared: **"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"** (Matt. 7:21).

The Holy Spirit only causes one to call Jesus Lord from his heart: **"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus ac-**

cursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 12:3). To own the Lordship of Jesus and to maintain it to the death cannot be done without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, whose work is to glorify the Lord Jesus. No man can call Jesus Lord from the heart without a subjection to Him and a dependence upon Him unless that faith be wrought by the Holy Spirit. The spirit of Antichrist would never lead one to say that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Some are always calling Him Jesus, healing in the name of Jesus only, carrying on their church programs in the name of Jesus only, parading under the name of Jesus only, blessing prayer cloths in the name of Jesus only, etc. Pretences of inspiration, or the gift of tongues, or the gift of miracles, are not of the Holy Spirit unless they declare the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Much of the so-called manifestation of the Spirit in this generation do not proceed from the Spirit of God, for they deny the Lordship of the Savior. All preaching and singing which does not center around the Lordship of Christ is not of God, although the message may be strong and the music sweet. To proclaim Jesus, as the Lord is the mark of every divinely inspired Christian sermon or song. Such things should raise Jesus to the Divine throne and celebrate Him as the One who exercises universal sovereignty. Such sermons and songs, if they place on the head of Jesus the crown of Lord, are the most extra-ordinary manifestations of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in a Christian assembly! God help us to realize this!

CONCLUSION

What is Jesus Christ to you? A historical person who lived some 1900 years ago that you have heard about? Or, could it be that you profess to know Him as your Savior and refuse to own Him as your Lord? Have you believed the lie of some preacher that you can accept Christ as your Savior and refuse Him as your Lord? The Bible says that Christ is **"a Prince and a Savior"** in Acts 5:31. Christ is a Savior to those only to whom He is Lord. According to Acts 5:31, He cannot be your Savior until He is first your Lord. The word "Prince" comes before the word "Savior." Unless He is your sovereign Lord He is not your Savior.

Jesus Christ is Lord of all, and if He is not Lord of all, then He is not Lord at all. Fall before His pierced feet, as did Thomas of old and say: **"My Lord and my God"** (John 20:28). Join with the old prophet in declaring: **"O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had**

dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name" (Isa. 26:13).

All hail the power of Jesus Name!

Let angels prostrate fall;

Bring forth the royal diadem,

And crown Him Lord of all.

John's Sketch of a

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soever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

Where there is one who is **"born of God,"** *there is not a habit of open sin.* This verse teaches that a Christian cannot go on sinning. It does not teach that a Christian never commits a sin. John refutes this false idea, writing, **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"** (I John 1:8). It is not that a Christian does not sin, rather that they do not practice open sin. They do not go on in sin, without confession and repentance. A life of sin is not the life of a child of God.

Paul taught this truth in the first two verses of the sixth chapter of Romans, **"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"** It is not possible for the saved to go on living in willful disobedience and presumptuous sinning, thinking that they can sin with impunity.

They do not practice sin because where there is one who is **"born of God,"** *there is a divine principle of life.* The verse tells us **"his seed remaineth in him."** The unsaved have not this **"seed"** or divine principle of life. They are walking in the lusts of the flesh, **"fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,"** and they are **"by nature the children of wrath"** (Eph. 2:3). They have nothing to oppose the flesh and are **"unto every good work reprobate"** (Titus 1:16).

When a sinner is **"born again,"** he is made **"a new creature"** (II Cor. 5:17). God creates within **"the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"**

(Eph. 4:24). **"His seed remaineth in him,"** and the spirit wars against the flesh. **"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would"** (Gal. 5:17). The new man opposes sin and loves to do the will of God. **"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man"** (Rom. 7:22).

Furthermore, they do not practice sin because *they are cleansed from sin.* Considering the great love wherewith God loved them and the deep, horrible pit from which they have been delivered, they do not wish to go back to the old broad road of sin. They keep from sin, not because they are under the terror of the law, but because the great love they have for God. **"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous"** (I John 5:3). They have been forgiven much and they love much.

II. The second mark is that they do works of righteousness. John writes in the twenty-ninth verse of the second chapter, **"If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."**

Their fruits give evidence that they do works of righteousness. God created the earth so that everything brings forth **"after their kind."** This also holds true with the children of God and the children of the devil. From their works, one can determine to which family they belong. **"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that**

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Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WFTA, Tupelo, MS	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	101.9	3,000 FM
WLZA, Starkville, MS	Sunday 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.	710	2,500 AM
WCNA, Myrtle, MS	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	95.9	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	680	5,000 AM
KARI, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.	550	5,000 AM
KORE, Springfield, OR	Sunday 8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	1050	5,000 AM
DXRA, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	783 Khz...	10,000 AM
DWSS, Manila, Philippines	Sunday 5:30 - 6:00 p.m.	1494	16,000 AM

John's Sketch of a

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loveth not his brother" (I John 3:7-10). The good tree will bear good fruit just as the child of God will bear fruit in works of righteousness.

They do works of righteousness because *the vital union with Christ produces fruit*. The main reason the wicked do not do works of true righteousness is that they do not have Christ. Apart from Christ, we can do no good works before God. Christ said, **"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned"** (John 15:1-6). In order to bring forth fruit, one must abide in Him.

The child of God does righteous works because *they abide in Him*. John wrote, **"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming"** (I John 2:28). They do indeed abide in Him and that union produces fruit in their lives. The Father promised to prune the abiding branches that they might bring forth even more fruit. With the Christian, there is a continual abiding in Christ and a continual production of good fruit or performance of good works.

III. The third mark is that they love. John writes about the love a Christian has in the fourth chapter and seventh and eighth verses of his first epistle. **"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."**

Love is seen in a Christian because, in the first place, *they love God*. **"We love him, because he first loved us"** (I John 4:19). The love of God for us causes us to love Him. The Scriptures teach that God **"first loved us,"** as He declared to the prophet Jeremiah, **"The LORD hath ap-**

peared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3). In fact, **"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"** (Rom. 5:8). How could we not love Him that **"loved us, and hath given himself for us?"** (Eph. 5:2). The true Christian has a great love for his heavenly Father.

The child of God *loves the brethren*. He loves those brothers and sisters that he has in Christ Jesus. He will not only love God but the whole Christian family. Brotherly love is a noted mark of the saints and is a consistent teaching throughout the Bible. **"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another"** (I John 3:11). Christ testified that it would be an identifying mark of His disciples. **"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"** (John 13:35).

John gives a couple of reasons for a manifest love of the brethren. The first reason is that it is consistent with the fact of God's love for all of His children. **"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us"** (I John 4:10-12). The individual Christian should find grounds to love his brother or sister in the fact that God has manifested His love toward them both. If God has loved you in a great way, then He loves your brother or sister in the same way.

The second reason is that love for the brethren is an evidence of the new life. **"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren"** (I John 3:14-16). An evidence of passing from death to life is loving the Christian brotherhood, God's family. It is not possible for a true child of God to hate his brother.

The true Christian loves and *their love is true*. There is real substance in their love for God and the brethren. **"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth"** (I John 3:18). The love they have is the sort of love

that manifests itself in action. They keep God's commandments and lay down their lives for their brother. They do not just say, **"Be ye warmed and filled"** (James 2:16). They give to help their needy brother. God commended His love; it was not in word or thought only. This is love that moves to action; love that **"Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things"** (I Cor. 13:7).

IV. The fourth mark of the saints is that they persevere. I believe fully that we are preserved in Jesus Christ and I believe that the true Christian will persevere. John writes in the eighteenth verse of the fifth chapter, **"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."**

In persevering, *they guard or take heed to themselves*. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, **"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;"** (I Thess. 4:3-4). The child of God knows **"how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour."** They will seek to maintain purity of heart and mind. They seek out the paths of righteousness and walk therein. They will **"follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart"** (II Tim. 2:22).

They will persevere in *guarding against sin*. They are careful to **"put off the old man with his deeds"** (Col. 3:9). The true Christian does not walk according to the former lusts and conversation. They will purge themselves from vessels of dishonor. **"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work"** (II Tim. 2:20-21). Having the hope of their returning Savior, they purify themselves before God. **"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure"** (I John 3:3).

They will persevere in *maintaining good works*. This is the positive aspect; not only will they keep from sin; they will continue to do good works. **"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good**

and profitable unto men. And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful" (Titus 3:8, 14). No child of God will be satisfied in being unfruitful. God will work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. Their earnest desire is to bring forth fruit to the glory of Jesus Christ.

V. The fifth mark of the true Christian is that they overcome the world. John writes in the fourth verse of the fifth chapter, **"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."**

Their overcoming is seen in the fact that *they have the victory*. The Christian is thought to be a weak and needy creature. In many ways, this is true. However, those saints that are scorned by the world and thought to be defeated are victorious in Jesus Christ. **"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us"** (Rom. 8:37). Our God is the sovereign of the universe and **"our God shall fight for us"** (Neh. 4:20). **"If God be for us, who can be against us?"** (Rom. 8:31). The victory is theirs.

They overcome the world for *their power is in Christ*. They find that the world is their enemy. In the world, they are hated, just as their Savior was hated before them. Jesus warned and comforted His disciples saying, **"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"** (John 16:33). They were not to look to the world for comfort or peace. They were sure to find tribulation in the world. However, in Christ alone they would have peace.

Not only would they have peace in Christ, but also they would be furnished with spiritual weapons for the warfare. **"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled"** (II Cor. 10:4-6). These weapons are spiritual and are **"mighty through God."** The strong holds, imaginations, and high things that exalt themselves against God are in the world and in our flesh. We cannot overcome them carnally, only spiritually. The weapons of our warfare are sufficient to overcome the

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John's Sketch of a

Continued from page 107

world and our own flesh. Through Christ, we can bring every thought of ours into captivity **"to the obedience of Christ."**

They overcome the world; *they are not overcome by the world.* The world is strong and mighty in number. They are a formidable opponent to the righteous. They seem many times to have the advantage. However, the child of God will not be defeated by the world. **"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world"** (I John 4:4). He that is with the saints is far greater than he that is with the world. The final victory belongs to God and His children.

VI. In conclusion, we have noted five marks of the true Christian. John writes in the thirteenth verse of the fifth chapter, **"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."**

In the first epistle of John, *the phrase "born of God," or its equivalent, is used repeatedly.* From this, we learn that in order to be a true child of God, **"Ye must be born again"** (John 3:7). Regardless of our good works and life, we must be born of God in order to be His child.

To be born of God means that *we must be brought to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.* There must be repentance of our will to sin and acts of sin. We must experience a radical change of heart of life and trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone in order to be saved.

From this epistle, we learn that *there will be a struggle with sin in the world and in ourselves.* Until we leave this world, we will have to fight this warfare with sin. There are temptations on every hand. Many snares are laid for us in the way. We must learn to **"put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof"** (Rom. 13:14).

Lastly, from this blessed book, we learn that *there will be an overcoming finally for the Christian.* Paul wrote to the Corinthians, **"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;"** (II Cor. 4:8-9). We are engaged in warfare. There will be many hard battles along the way. We will have to **"endure hardness, as a**

good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3). However, our faith **"is the victory that overcometh the world"** (I John 5:4). Praise God! We have the victory in our blessed Lord!

Our Lord's Precious

Continued from page 101

nothing less than the greatest price this old universe has ever known would be considered a sufficient price. When He gave Himself, He gave the greatest price in the universe because He is the Lamb without spot or blemish, the Father's only begotten Son in which He is well pleased, the lily of the valley, the bright and morning star and the fairest of ten thousand to our souls. It goes then without saying that the greatest price in the world would only be paid for the most valuable thing in the world. So the church is the most valuable thing in all the world to our dear Lord. She is espoused to Him and will someday, and I believe in the very near future, become His Bride. Any real husband can appreciate to some extent her value. A real husband may sell his farm, his business, his home, or even the clothes off his back, but never the wife he loves dearer than his own life. She is just not for sale.

But the old devil, the greatest imitator this old world has ever known, has used his very efficient co-workers to literally flood the market with cheap imitations of our Lord's church. But just as the counterfeit ten dollar bill is absolutely worthless, so are the counterfeit churches in our Lord's sight. And as the money counterfeiter suffers the penalty of the law, so will the counterfeiters of our Lord's churches. How terrible it will be when they meet the Lord at the great white throne judgment. If I had to go to hell, I would much rather go by way of the gutter than to go by way of a church.

These church counterfeiters have done such a marvelous job that the Lord's churches have become very common and insignificant in the eyes of the religious world, and I fear, in the eyes of some of the Lord's Saints as well. When you hear people say, "One church is just as good as another" you realize how well old Satan and his co-workers have done their job. That is just exactly what the old devil wants us to believe. If he can get us to believe that the church founded by the murderous adulterer Henry VIII is just as good as the one founded by our Lord Jesus Christ, he is a marvelous success in his field of endeavor.

Old Henry VIII lived with six different wives during the first fourteen years of his church's existence. Dur-

ing the first four months of this time he had two wives at the same time, one in the prison and one in the palace. One of these wives died in the prison where she had been thrown just to get her out of his way. Two of the others he had beheaded for the same reason. On the same day that his second wife was beheaded he proposed to Jane Seymour who became his third wife ten days later. After one short year she died, and so far as we know hers may have been a natural death. He married his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves for political reasons. After six months he learned this marriage was not necessary, so he divorced her, gave her a mansion to live in and three thousand pounds annually (about \$15,000) to live on. He then turned around and had the man's head cut off who had made the match between them. This man was Thomas Cromwell in case some good Episcopalian should like to check up on his papa's deeds of valor.

For us to try to incorporate a church founded by a reprobate like that into the Bride of Christ is an insult to our precious Lord of the greatest magnitude. If there are any born-again, blood-bought Saints in any of these man-made churches, they are just as sure to go to Heaven as Peter, James or John, but they are certainly out of place. On the other hand, if there are those in a Baptist Church who are not born again, blood-bought Saints they are just as sure to go to hell as Judas Iscariot if they die in this condition. If the Holy Spirit led Martin Luther, John Calvin, Henry VIII, John Wesley or any of the other men church founders in any way in their church building activities after telling our Lord's churches to have the same mind, to speak the same thing and to have no divisions among them (I Cor. 1:10), He is the world's greatest hypocrite.

The one doctrine that has done more harm and hurt to our Lord's churches than all others put together is the one promulgated by the devil himself to justify Martin Luther's church building activities. It is called the universal church, or the true church. When Scofield and his followers on the church question call this big universal, invisible, intangible, un-touchable thing that can have neither pastor nor deacons the true church, they are automatically saying that the local churches that do have pastors, deacons and teachers are false. If you speak of one of two things as being true it goes without saying that the other one is false. But nowhere in God's Holy Word is there any hint of two kinds of churches. The big intangible church is the figment of the protestant mind whether that protestant

be a Baptist or a Methodist. Real Baptists are not protestants and never have been. They have never been affiliated with either the Catholics or the protestants, but Baptists who make themselves protestants make mighty good ones.

There can be only one justification for all the conglomeration of churches in the world today, and that is that everyone can believe and practice anything he wishes to believe and practice and still have a church that agrees with him. If you have a Lord that sanctions all these different and varied beliefs and practices, you just don't have the same Lord I know.

There are two infallible tests by which we can judge any church as to whether it is a church of our Lord Jesus Christ. If it had a Scriptural organization, or beginning, that is, if it was organized by the authority of another Scriptural church, and if it is Scriptural in its preaching, teaching, beliefs and practices, it is a New Testament church. On the other hand if it is popular with the religious world, if those of all the different church groups can visit your services and feel perfectly at ease, if their feathers are not ruffled by what is preached, taught and practiced, our Lord is just not there.

Religion was our Lord's greatest enemy during His earthly ministry, and it is His church's greatest enemy today. Anything that our Lord is in is still persecuted by religion today just as it has always been. You see Christianity is not a religion; it is a revelation of God. So, if your church is popular with all these religious groups, there is something radically wrong with your church. It is true that our Lord's loaves and fishes drew great crowds, but it is just as true that His teaching dispersed the crowds. Many preachers and teachers have felt, as our Lord must have felt in John 6:67 when He said, **"Will ye also go away."** The doctrine of God's sovereignty and election, and now in these days of apostasy the doctrine of the

Continued on page 109



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The Duty of Devoting Ourselves to God

II Cor. 6:19-20

In I Corinthians 3:16 Paul declared the assembly of baptized believers at Corinth to be the temple of God. Here he makes known the physical body of the believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit. When purity of the church was threatened, Paul reminded them they were the temples of the Holy Spirit. When purity of the life of a Christian was at stake, he declared the body of a believer to be the shrine of the Holy Spirit. The whole man is the temple. The understanding and the heart are the inmost shrine, and the body the porch and outside of the edifice.

I. THE ASSUMPTION OF THE NATURAL MAN.

1. Men by nature think they are "their own."
 - (1) Worldly men employ their time and talents as they please (Isa. 53:6).
 - A. He is out of God's way—wandering in the back roads of wickedness.
 - B. Sin is born in us and natural to us (Jas. 1:14; II Pet. 3:3).
 - (2) They think themselves at liberty to do so (Ps. 12:4; Jer. 23:17).
 - (3) They are like Pharaoh (Ex. 5:2).
 - A. "I neither know Jehovah nor fear Him. I stand in defiance of Him!"
 - B. Ignorance and contempt of God are at the bottom of all wickedness.
2. No man is or can be his own.
 - (1) We may be free of any human yoke, but no man is independent of God.
 - (2) Even natural religion teaches that a man belongs to his god.
3. Every Christian should know he is not his own (I Cor. 7:23; Rom. 14:7-8).
 - (1) Paul questions in a direct appeal to their conscience.
 - (2) He takes it for granted they were not ignorant of this truth.
 - (3) He expresses surprise that such a truth could be forgotten.

II. WHY WE ARE NOT OUR OWN.

1. Presentation. In eternity past we were given by God the Father to God the Son (John 17:6).
 - (1) Jesus Christ is God's love gift to the believer (John 3:16; II Cor. 9:15).
 - (2) The elect are the Father's love gift to Jesus Christ (John 17:2, 9).
2. Creation.
 - (1) As our Creator He has unalienable rights over us (Ps. 100:3; Eccl. 12:1; Acts 17:25, 28).
 - (2) We possess not a faculty of body or mind but from God (I Cor. 4:7; II Cor. 3:5).
3. Purchase (I Cor. 6:20).
 - (1) We are the bought property of Christ, bought altogether for His ends.
 - (2) The price is the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:12; I Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9).
 - (3) Christ bought us to be His eternal possession. When a man bought a slave, that slave belonged to him. We are redeemed for the Redeemer.
 - (4) We belong to Christ, and we are obligated to devote ourselves unreservedly to Christ.
 - (5) We must not be defiled or alienated from Christ.
 - (6) Your heart and thoughts are Christ's—your abilities and influence is to be consecrated to Christ—Christ claims your all.
4. Possession.
 - (1) We are not only purchased by Him, but we are already possessed by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19).
 - (2) There are some things unlawful to a Christian.
 - (3) The temple of the Holy Spirit must be kept holy—fit for the Master's use.
5. Preservation. Sometimes we get very sick and the Lord raises us up and lengthens our days. Surely it is that we may use our remaining days as especially sacred.

III. THE EXHORTATION FOUNDED UPON THIS FACT.

1. Our body and spirit are entirely God's property. We are bound to glorify Him with both to the uttermost.
2. We cannot add anything to God's glory (Ps. 16:2).

3. Nevertheless, God esteems Himself glorified by our services (Ps. 50:23; I Cor. 10:31).
4. There are many ways to glorify God daily.
 - (1) Giving up our bodies to Him is our reasonable service (Rom. 12:1). In the Old Testament the fire fell on the sacrifices.
 - (2) Yield Him all the members of your body (Rom. 6:13).
 - (3) Let Him have every faculty of your soul (Ps. 103:1; Acts 27:23).
 - (4) Let us be like Joshua (24:15).

CONCLUSION.

1. The slave of Christ cannot remain a slave of sin—not even a slave to the opinions of men or to earthly standards.
2. We must glorify God inwardly and outwardly. All is to be laid on the altar for Christ.
3. Let us beg God's forgiveness for our failures to glorify Him in body and spirit (Ezek. 36:31).
4. How reasonable and delightful is Christian duty (Ps. 16:11)!! If we honor God now, we shall have a crown hereafter.
5. *"Not my own! My time, my talents,
Freely all to Christ I bring.
To be used in joyful service,
For the glory of my King."*

Our Lord's Precious

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church of our Lord Jesus Christ sends people away in droves, not rejoicing but fuming.

The New Testament churches and their individual members are strangers to the world, and especially to the religious world. Religious people are enemies of grace today just as they have always been. But what really hurts is for us to find that we are strangers to many of those who are near and dear to us. But, when we stop to consider how precious the church is to our Lord, and what a price He paid for her, we should be willing to be strangers even to our friends and loved ones if it takes that for us to be true to His precious and unadulterated church.

The Lord's Babies

Continued from page 101

have seen some cases like this. I once conducted the funeral of a boy who was upwards of twenty years of age. This boy, for some reason, had never developed in any way. His body was that of a child, and during his entire life he never once showed the slightest indication of intelligence. That burial scene was a pathetic one. As the mother stood by the lifeless form, she was heard to cry, "Oh, my boy! If I could only have heard you say, 'mother,' just once, your death would not be so hard to bear!" To grow in years, yet to retain a baby's feebleness, a baby's standard of values, a baby's way of looking at things—what could be more pitiable? Yet this is an exact description of many a Christian.

The average church of today is hindered from fulfilling its largest minis-

try because it must perpetually be a nursery for babies and a hospital for defectives, instead of a camp for soldiers, or a factory for workmen.

It was the realization of this spiritual juvenility that caused the writer of the letter to the Hebrews to say, it would seem almost impatiently: **"When by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that someone teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of MILK, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness, for he is a babe."** This tendency to remain spiritual juveniles greatly troubled the apostle. He wished to see some signs of growth. I think it must be so with every true minister of Christ. It is to him an occasion for heartache to see members of his church remain in the cradle and kindergarten stage. In many actions of his people, a pastor sees the characteristics of babyhood. If these same persons could only realize how childish they often act, they would strive to grow.

In dealing with this subject, I wish to indicate to the reader some of the ways in which Christians resemble and act the part of infants. I am going to be rather plain, and you may, in what I shall say, see some of your own traits and characteristics. If so, I earnestly trust that you may be led to grow out of them into strong, vigorous, Christian manhood or womanhood.

Let us ask, in what ways are some Christians babies? The answer is, first, AS TO THE FOOD THEY TAKE. Paul, in I Corinthians 3:1, in writing to some Christians of this sort, said:

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

The Berea Baptist Banner

PO Box 39

Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

Does 1 Timothy 3:2 disqualify a divorced man from the ministry of preaching or teaching?— Texas



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In a day when divorce is so common, this question is one that is asked often. The answers given will in all probability never bring the two sides to an agreement. If a man is Scripturally divorced and has not remarried, he certainly has not disqualified himself as a minister. Some take the view that a man who is divorced and remarries would be disqualified as a minister of the gospel and others do not. I do not have all the answers, but I have always taken the view that if a man is Scripturally divorced, he does not have a wife.

In I Timothy 3:2, we are told that a bishop must be the husband of one wife. There are different opinions as to what is meant by "one wife." The Bible teaches that there are grounds for divorce. It is my opinion that if a man is divorced on Scriptural grounds, he does not have a wife. The words "put away" in Matthew 19:9 are from the Greek "apoluo" and means to set free (Thayer). God ordained marriage to be a lifetime commitment. The husband and wife committed to each other until death, but if a man's divorce is Scriptural, he is free. He does not have a wife. Even if he were to remarry, he would have the same right to preach or teach as others that God has called.

DAVID O'NEAL



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In the third chapter of First Timothy we are given some basic qualifications for a pastor or overseer. The Greek word for the English word Bishop in this passage is "episkopay" meaning a superintendent or overseer.

Such is the position of a pastor. He must rule or oversee the church he pastors (Heb. 13:7, 17). Their position would certainly necessitate an ability and reputation to govern and lead a congregation of people including men, women, and children.

I Timothy 3:4-5 makes it clear that a man who cannot control his family, wife and children could not rule a congregation of people.

A husband that cannot teach and treat his family in such a way as to keep his wife from divorcing him and marrying another would lack the skill or reputation necessary to oversee or pastor a church.

I believe in I Timothy 3:2 the literal meaning is that a pastor cannot be married more than once unless his former wife dies. A man who divorces his wife and remarries is disqualified from being a pastor of a true Baptist church.

I realize many including some ministers interpret this Scripture to mean one wife at a time, or the practice of polygamy, which I do believe is wrong, but I believe this is a misinterpretation. Nowhere else in the Scripture, when the Bible speaks of one, does it mean one at a time. One has to interpret this Scripture to make it mean anything else but a man being divorced and having a former wife living and a present wife alive. Literal rendering of this Scripture does not allow such an interpretation.

GARNER SMITH



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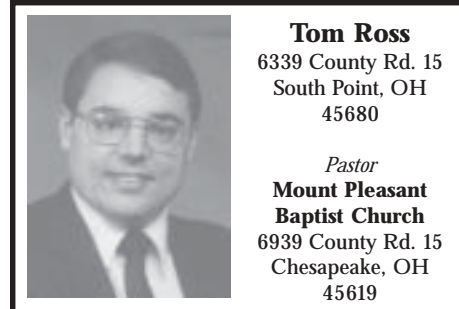
The title, Bishop, has grown into a technical description of a position in the organizational structure of denominations. This view signals a departure from the simple congregational forms of church government observed in early New Testament churches. The Greek word translated bishop, according to its earliest meaning, conveys the idea of "overseer," or "guardian of souls." It refers to those men in local congregations who

are called of God to serve as pastors or undershepherds. There ought not be any doubt that the verses in I Timothy 3 lays heavy emphasis upon a disciplined life for the pastor.

It is my view that these qualifications refer specifically to those who hold the office of a bishop (pastor). This would lead some to say that a divorced man can engage in the ministry of preaching and teaching, but not as one holding the office of a bishop.

There has been continual debate concerning the statement, "the husband of one wife." Some say that it is simply a prohibition of polygamy. However, I very seriously doubt that any informed believer would deny that the passage, in principle, encourages the pastor to engage in Christian marriage, which is defined as the union of one man with one woman for life.

JIMMIE B. DAVIS



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"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach."

Let me first state that I believe the reason why the prohibition of a divorced and remarried man from occupying the office of the pastorate is stated here is because there were obviously members within the churches who had been divorced and remarried at some point. There would be no need for the qualification of the husband of one wife if there were no people within the church who had been divorced and remarried. There are some who teach that a divorced and remarried person cannot even be a member of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am not of that persuasion.

Secondly, I think it is crystal clear that a man who has been divorced and remarried is definitely disqualified from occupying the office of the pastor. This statement no doubt is a con-

troversial one in our day. I am fully convinced that a pastor who chooses to divorce and remarry for whatever reason automatically disqualifies himself from the pastorate.

Thirdly, after stating my conviction about divorced and remarried pastors, I am not sure I have a solid answer to the question itself. It makes me extremely uncomfortable to take the position of some that believe a divorced person could never be used in a teaching capacity. Throughout my ministry I have employed the teaching services of members who have been divorced as long as they agreed not to justify their divorce. I am sure that there are those who are reading these lines who are quick to charge me with inconsistency on this matter. Pray for me.

TOM ROSS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Cortland, Ohio, will be having its annual Fellowship meeting Sat. June 28, 2003. Several speakers are scheduled to speak. The service will begin at 9:30 a.m. Elder Chester Powell is the pastor. The Church will furnish the noon meal. All are welcome. If you would like more information, call Pastor Powell at (330) 772-6323, or e-mail crpsge@onecom.com.

The Grace Bible Baptist Church, Denham Springs, LA will be hosting their 7th Annual Bible Conference June 13th through the 15th. The Theme will be "The Church in These Last Days."

Information can be obtained by calling Elder Jerry Dodson, Pastor, at (225) 664-3223 or by e-mail jerrydodsonsr@wmconnect.com.

In the last issue the word Baptist was inadvertently left out of the name of the Church in Naples, Idaho, pastored by Elder Leroy Pack. This Church is a Sovereign Grace Landmark, Missionary, Pre-Millennial, Pretrib Baptist Church.

The Quarterly Fellowship Meeting will be with the Philadelphia Baptist Church, Decatur, Ala., and Pastor Doyal Thomas June 28th at 10:00 a.m. Lunch will be served by the church. Afternoon services are at 2:00 p.m. All are invited to attend. For more information contact Pastor Thomas at (256) 773-1474 or email pbctnweb.com.



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

The Berea Baptist Banner

PO Box 39

Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

Should a woman cover her head with a head covering when a prayer is spoken outside of the assembly? For example, before a meal. - Kentucky



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I personally cannot see this Scripture teaching anything other than a woman is to wear long hair all the time and an extra covering (a veil) over her hair that is her glory (I Cor. 11:15) when she assembles to worship and glorify God. To give all glory to God she must humble herself and hide or give up all her own glory (her hair).

I believe such practices not only show submission to her head, her husband or father, but also to her Lord and Savior.

I have read and studied what many scholars, Greek scholars, historical scholars, and theological scholars have to say concerning this Scripture and subject. We have also examined the grammatical, geographical, historical, theological, and hermeneutical along with the contextual meaning and setting of this Scripture. I agree with some and disagree with some of the findings which these within themselves sometimes have caused more muddled thoughts than have given good solid answers. In the final analysis that the study of the Word of God and seeking the leadership of the Holy Spirit has given me more truth and peace of mind spiritually than any other research. It is through this type of study that has caused me to arrive at my present position or conviction.

To me the simple acceptance of the liberal meaning is most harmonious with all other Scripture and the present context of this passage of Scripture.

I disagree with some that believe that the covering should be worn all the time outside of the church services. I believe the context of the chapter would point to the time of worship while assembled with a mixed congregation as seen in the observance of the Lord's Supper as found in verses 17-34.

I do not see any harm it would cause for a woman to wear a cover-

ing all the time to point out that she accepts God's command to be in subjection to her head. The only possible harm that could attend such practice would be that it might lose its significance as part of ones religious practice.

I realize that every woman that wears a covering is not in submission to her head, but that is no reason to not follow the commands of the Lord.

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In I Corinthians 11:2, Paul speaks of keeping the "ordinances" that he had delivered to the church. This word is plural and refers to more than one ordinance. This chapter deals with two doctrines or ordinances that are practiced in the church. The head covering of the women, which is a sign of submission to her head, and the Lord's Supper. In verse ten, she is to have a sign of authority on her head because angels are present. This is speaking of angels that attend the worship services of the Lord's church. It is obvious from what is said in verses seventeen and eighteen that he is speaking to the assembled church. The context of I Corinthians 11 would seem to me to limit the wearing of a covering by the women to the church services.

DAVID O'NEAL



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This question has been one that I have given consideration in my study of the different positions on the head covering. Since the position I hold is different from many of my esteemed fellow ministers, it might be better of

those who practice the custom of women wearing a head covering answer this inquiry.

My position, however, should not keep me from expressing my view on the question. If I taught the need for women to wear an artificial covering during worship, I would feel compelled to require the practice when prayer is offered at mealtime or at any public function. The reason being that I believe prayer to be an overt act of worship whether offered in a church building or outside of one. I believe that the giving of thanks before a meal is a brief time of worship. During most meals men are present, whether members of the immediate family, close relatives, or even visitors who are unrelated. Many times at public functions the pastor or other members of a church are called upon to offer prayers. Is there a difference when we worship in prayer inside the church building?

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I believe the context in which the teaching of the head covering is found (I Cor. 11), deals specifically with the church as an assembled body. I Corinthians 11:17-18 & 20 declare: "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together in not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. . . When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper." Therefore, I do not believe it is necessary for a woman to always wear the artificial covering apart from the assembly when prayer is offered. I would have no problem with someone who has this conviction, however to be consistent it would prohibit men from wearing any sort of hat and women from being uncovered at all times, for we

are exhorted to "pray without ceasing."

TOM ROSS

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 4-1-2003 to 4-30-2003

Beginning Balance	\$1,791.86
RECEIPTS	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Berea B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Floyd Williamson, Philpot, KY	180.00
TOTAL	530.00
TOTAL	2,321.86
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	812.00
Postage	18.50
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	830.50
Bank charge	\$1,491.36
BALANCE	-10.00
BALANCE	\$1,481.36
CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT	
Beginning Balance	\$1,413.32
RECEIPT	
Total	1,413.32
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	160.00
Total Expenditures	160.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,253.32

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 4-1-2003 to 4-30-2003

Beginning Balance	\$7,059.55
RECEIPTS:	
A. D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	49.56
Berea B. B., Mantachie, MS	1,100.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN	150.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	90.00
Bible B. C., Sullivan, IL	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL	50.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL	25.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	20.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Faith B. C., Clarksville, TN	100.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Gerald Price, Johnson City, TN	15.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. M. Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	25.00
Helen Milem, South Point, OH	100.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winton-Salem, NC	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
J. L. Saddler, Alford, FL	70.00
John Otis, Agra, KS	100.00
Joseph Jurzec, Lake-in-the-Hills, IL	25.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	25.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Letson Farrell, Long Beach, MS	125.00
Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	300.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Paul Sandelin, Naples, ID	42.00
Philadelphia B. C., Aztec, NM	25.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	75.00
South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH	150.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Raleigh, NC	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH	75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	200.00
Wendell Beall, Cedarville, WV	80.00
Subscriptions	126.00
Anon.	8.00
Dividing checks	335.00
Sub Total	\$5,165.56
TOTAL	\$12,225.11
EXPENDITURES:	
Wages	3,440.00
Printing	494.89
Postage	1,114.80
FICA taxes	281.51
Supplies	336.78
Dividing checks	330.00
Total Expenditures	5,997.98
Bank charge	6,227.13
ENDING BALANCE	-16.93
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,210.20

The Lord's Babies

Continued from page 109

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it." It was a matter of regret to Paul that he had to keep the Corinthians on a milk diet when they ought to have been able to take something stronger. A baby isn't prepared to mas-ticate a beefsteak. Lay down the finest, juiciest porterhouse steak obtainable and the baby would just smear around aimlessly with it, not really under-standing that the beefsteak was food. The same thing is true with reference to a baby Christian. You can't interest him with a real gospel sermon in which there is anything of the doctrinal. Let a juvenile Christian hear a sermon dealing with the deep, eternal verities of God's Word, then let him hear another sermon light, witty and jazzy, and without any Biblical basis, and in most cases he will value the latter as the finer of the two sermons. Moreover, let it be known that a preacher intends to preach a doctrinal sermon and many people will deliberately remain away. That is too strong for them to masti-cate or digest. But it is true that no man can be a Bible preacher and not a doctrinal preacher as well, for the Bible is as full of doctrine as an egg is full of meat. The demand of bottle Christians for light, amusing lectures rather than the gospel, has reacted strongly on the ministry of our day. There is a tendency for one to give folks what they want, rather than what they need, hence many pulpits today dispense a gospel that is as diluted as some soups that I have eaten at cheap hotels. One grain of gospel to a hundred parts of water is the formula! This kind of stuff, of course, never weans anyone, so that year after year the church continues as a nursery, the baby food being furnished in diluted form from the pulpit. If anyone thinks that I am doing the ministry an injustice, let them take close notice of the church announcements that appear in the city papers. I took particular notice of the announcements made by a certain large city church for several weeks, and I observed that the pastor, a very scholarly gentleman by the way, was in the habit of devoting every Sun-day evening to a lecture on church history. Now, church history, interesting study though it is, won't grow Christians. It is the Scriptures, and the Scrip-tures only, that are sufficient, as Paul tells us, **"for correction, reproof, instruction in righteousness that the man**

of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good works."

Many people do not get more out of their relig-i-ous life because they have never gotten out of the rudimentary stage and learned what God's promises are, or what their riches in Christ really amount to. It takes a lot of spiritual growing to reach the place where the Christian religion is really appreciated for what it is. So much wouldn't depend on the preach-ing if people would only read the Bible. The Bible really furnishes the main nourishment for the Chris-tian. If one studies it carefully and prayerfully, the first thing they know they will be casting aside the bottle and subsisting on something more filling than milk. And just as certainly as this is done, there will be a demand for a higher type of preaching. A preacher simply can't satisfy a thriving band of adult Christians on "Metlias Food" or "Eagle Brand." They will demand meat, and if he doesn't feed them that, there will soon occur a change of pastors. May God speed the day when our churches will contain enough Christians to have reached "their majority" to demand Biblical preaching!

Another way in which many, many

Christians show that they are babies spiritually is IN THE MATTER OF THEIR DOING TASKS FOR THE LORD. Have you ever noticed how many children have to be coaxed to do things? Give lots of children a lollypop or a stick of gum, and they will do any-thing you ask. Sometimes we have had a hard time in getting our children to go to bed peaceably at night. Usually, however, the promise of some candy or chewing gum will turn the trick. I lived next door to a man once who would often stop his little boy from howling with a promise of ice cream.

Now, there are a lot of baby Christians that are just like these children that I have described. They won't do anything in the church unless someone is forever petting and coaxing them. It is simply a shame for any Christian to be such a baby as to have to be teased, bribed or coaxed to do what he knows he ought to do. I have often seen church members that would work so long as someone would come around and pat them on the back and flatter them a little. But if this failed to be done, very soon they would get disgruntled and quit. A person, who works in the church with any motive other than love for Christ and a desire to serve Him, is working with a wrong motive. No one ought to be so childish that it takes a committee detailed to the specific task of keeping their feelings soothed.

And then, along the same line, isn't it true that folks often have to be coaxed to sing in the choir, or don't they sometimes have to be coaxed to teach a Sunday School class, or to serve on a committee? To sum it up, don't we have to do a lot of useless coaxing to get folks to do what they ought to do without any urging? If any who read these lines are like this, pray the Lord that He will help you to grow up!

A third characteristic of infancy is the DESIRE TO HAVE ONE'S OWN WAY. My! My! I am getting on dangerous ground here. How many of us want to have our own way—in rapt, are bound to have our own way or "bust"! I have watched chil-dren play, and shortly one of them would get dis-gruntled about something and quit. "Aw, come on, John, and play ball." "Naw, I'm not, neither! If you all don't play my way I ain't goin' to play!" On winter evenings I have seen children playing games in the house. Often I have seen one of them get out of sorts about something, and sullenly draw off by himself in a corner to nurse his temper and chew his thumb. How very like the juvenile church member that was. Haven't you known church mem-bers who were naturally bound to rule or ruin—who either had

their own way, or "refused to play"? I have. I scarcely remember ever living in a town where there were not to be found a number of former church members nursing their grudges and sulking in their corner because something hadn't gone to suit them.

A good illustration of how far people will go just to have their own way is the case of a certain church in Kentucky. This church split to pieces over the highly important question as to whether the church organ should be located on the right or the left side of the pulpit. One faction was determined to have the organ on the right side; the other faction was equally as determined to have it on the left, so, be-cause both sides could not have their own way and remain in the same organization, they had a split, and one faction went up the road a few hundred yards and built a church where they could have the organ where they wanted it!

But our way isn't always the best way by any means. If in the church we can't have everything done just to suit us, let us not be so childish as to cause division or to quit the church. And many times I am afraid that we get the sulks because we can't have our way with God. We want Him to do certain things in just our way, and just as we want it, and when we want it, but God is not to be coerced or driven by us, and such an attitude on our part works to our own detriment.

Another thing that characterizes little children is the TENDENCY TO TATTLE ON EACH OTHER. Children, unless cautioned severely against it, like to tell on one another. "Ma, Howard is out yonder pulling the cat's tail," or "Ma, Susie's gettin' into your face powder." I have known parents to en-courage their children in tattling, with the result that they were mad at the schoolteacher and mad at the neighbors half of the time. Just a little en-couragement and many children will tell all they know and sometimes more besides.

Did you ever know any Christians who were addicted to the childish habit of tattling? I am told that this is a sort of indoor sport with some persons. Nearly always, when a pastor takes a new field, he isn't there long until some good brother or sister drops around to give him a sort of line-up on the membership—their faults and failings. Just after I took my first pastorate, this happened. A certain woman paid us a call, and as we were inexperienced in such things we let her tongue run on uninterruptedly, while our morale dropped with every minute. By the time that she had finished we were inclined to feel that we were in the position of the traveler that

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AVAILABLE AGAIN!

Scriptural Church Organization

by Milburn Cockrell



- Second Edition -

This book is being reprinted and should be in from the printer by the last of June or first of July. In addition to all that was in the first edition two more Appendices have been added in this second edition.

The retail price of this book will be \$6.95 plus \$2 P/H. On five or more copies the cost will be \$3.50 each plus postage.

The Lord's Babies

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the Bible tells us about, who, journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves! According to her version, the church was filled with unregenerates and was headed straight for the bow-bows. We remained on the field, however, and a finer, more charitable group of Christian people I have never met anywhere. The only acid-tongued sower of discord that we discovered in the entire church was this same woman who had so freely talked about everybody else.

A large share of the trouble that arises in our churches is caused by folks "talking too much with their mouths," if you will pardon my slang expression. James tells us that the tongue is an unruly member, and James knew what he was talking about. He tells us that one can put bits into a horse's mouth, or a rudder on a ship and control it, but no device has yet been found to curb the tongue. The sin of backbiting is spoken of by Paul as being a very grievous one indeed, as you will find out, if you read Romans and Corinthians.

One thing we, as church members, ought to learn is, no matter what sin or fault is committed by one of our number, we can neither help them nor the church by discussing that person all over the community. The more we grow up the more reticent we will become, and the less given to hasty expression about others. We would, most of us, do well to pray the prayer of David that is found in the one hundred and forty-first Psalm, "**Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.**"

A fifth characteristic of childhood is JEALOUSY. Few things are more pronounced in children than jealousy. When my own children were very small I have often taken one of them up on my lap, and then the other one would set up a howl unless I took it up, too. At the table, if one had a helping of a certain kind of food, there was trouble unless the other one received the same food in the same quantity. I have often seen children cry because they fancied that their piece of pie was smaller than that given to another of the children. Jealousy! How often we find it among immature Christians! Christ had jealousy to contend with among HIS disciples. They were forever wrangling over the question as to which of them was the greatest. One contended, "I am a bigger man than you are," another, "No, I am the greatest person in this crowd," and so on. On the very night that preceded the crucifixion of Jesus, while they

were in the upper room, the disciples had a quarrel over this same question, and Jesus taught them an object lesson when He washed their feet and told them that he who would become truly great must become the servant of the rest.

Jealousy comes about because of working to honor yourself rather than to honor Christ. The proper spirit for a Christian to have is that which makes one willing to see anyone else excel him. It is this spirit that causes one to do anything, perform any task for Christ that is possible, paying no thought to whether or not they themselves will secure the proper recognition or appreciation for it. If any who read these lines are conscious of ever having manifested the spirit of jealousy, ask the Lord to forgive you, and try to become a big enough Christian to overcome it.

I must not close this chapter without some reference to one more characteristic of physical and spiritual childhood. The thing that I refer to is SELFISHNESS. Everything, to a child, looks like "mine!" "Me and mine" holds the center of the stage. Isn't the same true of the Lord's ba-

bies? Self and the things of self are always uppermost in their minds. The Scriptures counsel us against this, when they say, "Let no man seek his own, but another's." It is this selfish instinct that causes Christians to decline to give to the support of their Lord's work. "As long as I am safe and saved, why should I trouble about the rest of the world?" That is the attitude. Christians who adopt this attitude are yet in the cradle!

I close with this question: are we developing, or are we in a state of arrested growth? Are we helping to keep the church a hospital and nursery, or are we contributing to make it a workshop for the Lord? Let us try to keep off the bottle, to overcome the characteristics of babyhood, and to grow, until, in the words of Paul, we shall "**All attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we may be no longer children, . . . but may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ.**"



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.

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER SAYS HE WILL CONTINUE TO PERFORM SAME-SEX WEDDINGS DESPITE MILD CONVICTION

CINCINNATI, Ohio (EP)—Stephen Van Kuiken, the first Presbyterian minister to be tried on accusations of marrying homosexual couples by a denominational court, was found guilty. He received the Presbyterian Church USA's (PCUSA) mildest punishment of a public rebuke that directs him to only marry a man to a woman.

The court could have ordered Van Kuiken to be temporarily suspended or removed from his ministry at Mount Auburn Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati. He was also acquitted of the charge that he ordained active gays as deacons and elders, which directly contradicts the denomination's law.

Van Kuiken said he intended to appeal the verdict to a higher court within the denomination because he believes that "this decision is theologically wrong and contrary to the Scriptures." He also made it clear that he would continue to

perform the same-sex marriages and, in fact performed a ceremony only four days after his conviction. "The status quo in the Presbyterian Church is inflicting pain so we need to ensure that that pain is addressed and the issue is not ignored," said Van Kuiken.

Parker Williamson, chief executive officer of the Presbyterian Lay Committee, said the case is likely to prompt debate at the denomination's national governing body meeting in May. "Now the question before the PCUSA is 'Will it enforce its standards? Will it require compliance?'" said Williamson.

The Presbyterian Church officially follows the biblical interpretation held by major Christian denominations that marriage is a sacred covenant between only a man and a woman. A high Presbyterian court ruled in 2000 that ministers, although they may "bless" same-sex unions, cannot marry homosexuals.

U.S. SENATE MINORITY LEADER TOM DASCHLE ASKED TO STOP CALLING HIMSELF CATHOLIC
WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—A con-

servative magazine in Washington, D.C., has reported that a Catholic bishop has asked Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., to stop referring to himself as a Catholic. A letter from Bishop Robert Carlson of Sioux Falls, S.D., to the senator told Daschle he should no longer affiliate himself with the Catholic Church.

The Weekly Standard, whom the letter was leaked to, said the letter made clear that Daschle's pro-abortion views are not in line with the Roman Catholic Church teachings. The letter was intended to remain private and no details have been released, but the magazine made it clear that abortion issues were the main topic of the letter.

"He is not a true Catholic. . . he may be a Catholic by name only, but that's it," said Julie Brown, president of the American Life League and a Catholic herself. "One of the things that bishops are called to do by their office is to help those who are in error to mend their ways."

Bishop Carlson has refused to comment on the letter but has published a statement saying he would "never break off dialogue with anyone." Reportedly, this is not the first time Carlson has confronted Daschle regarding his abortion views.

"Yes, what he did was controversial and, yes, it should have been kept private, but what he did is something I wish every bishop would do," said Brown.

"When I heard the news, I literally was bouncing off the ceiling," said Tim Chichester, with the Catholic Family Association. Chichester hopes that Carlson's actions will spur other bishops to take similar action. He said he hopes one day soon that Daschle will realize abortion is against God's will.

Sen. Daschle has released a statement saying he has always been Catholic and has no intention of changing his religious affiliation.

CONTROVERSIAL GENDER BILL

PASSES CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY
SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (EP)—A bill passed the Democrat-controlled California Assembly April 21 that would mandate fines upwards of \$150,000 against business owners who refuse to hire cross-dressing or transsexual job applicants. This bill, if passed into law, would apply to Bible bookstores and nonprofit organizations such as local chapters of the Boy Scouts.

The Assembly passed the bill by a vote of 41 to 34 after more than 45 minutes of heated debate. The slim margin was the narrowest required to send the bill on to the state Senate. All votes in favor of the bill came from California Democrats. All Republicans and three Democrats voted against the bill.

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The bill was authored by homosexual Assemblyman Mark Leno, D-San Francisco. The language in the bill would insert a new definition of "gender" into the state's Fair Employment and Housing Act to include those whose "identity, appearance or behavior" is not associated with the victim's sex at birth.

Leno, in presenting his arguments, cited reports from the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the San Francisco Department of Public Health and other studies that document "widespread discrimination" of transgender people. He said that studies have shown that the unemployment rate for transgender people is 70 percent in San Francisco. "Every Californian deserves the right to a job and to a home," said Leno.

"If I have a Christian bookstore, how could I possibly follow this law?" asked Dennis Mountjoy, R-Monrovia. "How could I possibly have an employee that's there today in a dress, tomorrow may come in a suit and then stay in a dress? How can I possibly employ this employee and still have the Christian bookstore and live by my faith?"

"This bill would give drag queens unprecedented power to persecute the Boy Scouts and religious businesses, even the power to shut down a Bible bookstore," said Randy Thomason, executive director of Campaign for California Families. "People aren't going to sacrifice their dearly-held values. What small business or nonprofit organization could financially survive a government investigation and a \$150,000 penalty? AB 196 (the bill in question) is grossly intolerant of religious freedom and the Boy Scouts. This radical bill engages in reverse discrimination and would do real harm to persons of conscience."

UMC BISHOP SAYS ALLAH IS SAME AS GOD OF CHRISTIANITY; MISSISSIPPI METHODISTS RETURN TO EVANGELICAL ROOTS

CHICAGO, Ill. (EP)—Bishop Joseph Sprague, of the United Methodist Church (UMC), has claimed that Allah, the god of Islam, is the same God of the Bible and Christianity. Sprague has also publicly denied the virgin birth, blood atonement and the resurrection of Jesus.

"I believe they're (Muslims) worshipping the same god, albeit from a very different vantage point—and I would say the same for the Jewish community," said Sprague. Many in the UMC have called for Sprague's resignation in the past, but a committee of bishops recently dismissed a heresy complaint filed against him.

Sprague classifies himself as a "christo-normative inclusivist," instead of a "uni-

versalist."

Members of some UMC churches in Mississippi are taking action to stop the denomination's slide away from evangelical Christianity and unorthodox views such as those of Bishop Sprague. Pastor Jeff Switzer has launched the Mississippi Fellowship of United Methodist Evangelicals (MSFUME) in an attempt to renew evangelical beliefs in the denominational churches in his state.

Switzer sees the denominational leaders abandoning scriptural tenets in order to closer resemble other world religions. "Wesley (the denomination's founder) never did that," he said. "As a matter of fact, Wesley himself said, 'If by ecumenical principles you mean any other than scriptural, they weigh nothing with me. I allow no other ruler, whether of faith or practice, than the Holy Scriptures.'"

Switzer, who is pastor of Sandtown United Methodist Church in Philadelphia, Miss., said, "The church must be built on the foundation of Jesus Christ—that's scriptural—and if we can't stand firm on what the Scriptures say about Him, then we crumble." MSFUME is calling for church leaders to speak up in response to the denomination's changing doctrines.

MINISTRY COMBINES REFORMED AND CHARISMATIC THEOLOGY

By Gary D. Harwood

GAITHERSBURG, Md. (EP)—A geneticist might call Sovereign Grace Ministries a hybrid. The organization describes its theology as "essentially Reformed with a significant charismatic dimension." Formerly known as People of Destiny International, the ministry currently is comprised of 54 churches with new plants in Greenville, South Carolina, and Corning, New York, coming soon. Though the ministry began in 1982, churches now exist in the United States, Bolivia, Mexico, Canada and the United Kingdom, all adhering to the same doctrinal statement. At present there are over 17,000 members worldwide.

Many of the leaders of Sovereign Grace became believers under the influence of the charismatic movement in the 1970s. C. J. Mahaney, who heads up the organization, began reading Reformed theology and works of the Puritans, after his conversion in 1972. The group sees nothing unusual in adhering to both the "doctrines of grace" and the continuation of the spiritual gifts, viewing them as consistent with Pauline theology.

CrossWay Community Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, is a Sovereign Grace plant of 1991, where Mickey Connolly is senior pastor. Connolly sees the empowering of the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual gifts, as biblical. "We don't see where these things have ended," he said. "They're in the Bible and we want to do what is in the Bible." The senior

pastor said the gifts are not adding to the closed biblical canon but are provided for empowering the church's ministry.

The church differentiates from traditional Pentecostal teaching on certain issues. Pentecostals generally teach that speaking in tongues is the necessary proof of having received "the baptism of the Spirit." While CrossWay's pastors adhere to a second distinct experience apart from regeneration, they do not teach that tongues are the necessary proof.

"For us, the important point is not the initial experience," said Connolly, but that "people are walking in the power of the Spirit. . . . as God intended us to live the Christian life."

The CrossWay senior pastor added that "our experiences need to be soundly grounded in the Word, and explained by the Word. Peter at Pentecost doesn't talk about his experience there. He gets up and explains biblically what has happened, quoting Joel. He talks about the relationship between the reception of the Spirit [and] the gospel of Christ's work."

The church also prays for people to be healed, because "in James, the elders are commanded to pray for the people to be healed," said Connolly. He said that healings occur because "we are beginning to experience the benefits of the cross, the benefits of the atonement, and the reign of the kingdom of God."

However, because we live in between the inauguration and the consummation of the kingdom of God, not everyone is healed. "The cross and the atonement don't guarantee healing for all Christians. I think where people make a mistake is when they say 'all people, under every circumstance, will and should be healed, if they only have enough faith.' I don't think that is biblical." Even so, Connolly said we must be open "to the possibility that God would continue to heal divinely and sovereignly in our day," adding that, "even the most flaming cessationist (if they're sick) prays for healing."

The church and her umbrella organization, Sovereign Grace Ministries, also hold to basic Reformed teaching regarding salvation being a sovereign work of God. "It's not what we've done for ourselves, it's what God has done for us," said Connolly. He added that election is a teaching for believers and not part of the Gospel presentation. The church differs from most Reformed churches in that it baptizes adults by immersion.

While believing strongly in their distinctive theology, CrossWay's senior pastor said, "We try not to compare ourselves with others, because there are many other churches and movements that we respect very much. As long as people are preaching the Gospel, then God bless them; because that is the message that saves us."

BUSH ADMINISTRATION ASKS SUPREME COURT TO HEAR PLEDGE CASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—The Bush administration has filed an appeal with the Supreme Court asking it to overrule a lower court decision and allow the Pledge of Allegiance to contain the phrase "one nation under God."

Last summer, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals said the Pledge violated the separation of church and state and was "manifestly contrary" to other church-state cases. The case first arose when California atheist Michael Newdow sued in 2000, saying his daughter should not be forced to listen to the Pledge of Allegiance in her school classroom.

The San Francisco-based Appeals Court found the controversial phrase to be a government endorsement of religion. On March 3 of 2003, the court refused to reverse its decision, despite the public opposition, and the case went to the Supreme Court.

Ted Olson, U.S. solicitor general, wrote the court filing that the phrase with reference to God is not unconstitutional. Olson is the top attorney in the Justice Department.

"Whatever else the (Constitution's) establishment clause may prohibit, this court's precedents make clear that it does not forbid the government from officially acknowledging the religious heritage, foundation and character of this nation," Olson wrote. "That is what the Pledge of Allegiance does. The Pledge is therefore constitutional."

Olson also suggested that the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals was so far out of line in their ruling that the Supreme Court could reasonably strike down the lower court's ruling without even hearing formal arguments in the case.

Reuters has reported that the little girl at the heart of the case still says the Pledge daily in her classroom. The third-grade daughter of Newdow still says the Pledge regularly, according to Superintendent David Gordon.

Sandra Banning, the girl's mother, was never actually married to Newdow. "In my daughter's discussions with me, she expressed sadness about the decision," said Banning. She has filed a countersuit asking that the little girl's name be removed from the court proceedings.

CASINO WILL NOT PLACE GIDEON BIBLES IN HOTEL ROOMS

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (EP)—A new resort and casino opening this summer in Atlantic City has said it will not allow the Gideons to place Bibles in its hotel rooms. The \$1.1 billion Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa is the first casino in the history of organized gambling in Atlantic City to disallow the Bibles.

Borgata spokesman Michael Facenda said, "what we've found is there's such a diversity of gaming customers that visit Atlantic City, by putting one generic pub-

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lication in there, you're not fulfilling the needs of everybody."

Borgata vice president Larry Mullin said, "We are not placing any Bibles in the rooms." He explained that the decision was an effort on the company's part to avoid offending anyone who might prefer another religious book such as the Book of Mormon or a copy of the Qur'an. "When it came to religious material, we wanted to not exclude anyone," said Mullin. He said the Gideons would be allowed to put a copy of the Bible in the hotel library.

"It's a matter of tradition in the hospitality industry," said Maureen Siman, spokeswoman for the Tropicana Casino and Resort.

Jim Werner, Bible Scriptures secretary for the Gideon's Atlantic County chapter, said, "I'm sure it's lower on the list of decision-making. I'm sure they have more important things on their mind than 'shall we put Bibles in the rooms?'" He also pointed out that Las Vegas hotels owned by Borgata's parent companies do have Bibles in their rooms.

"A lot of times the casino hotels have taken their time to make a decision. It seems they don't have a policy because of the so-called controversial nature of the matter," said Werner. He explained that he recipients of the Bibles don't have to pay for them, and each year the Gideons have to replace half of the local casino Bibles.

"Once we put them in the hotel rooms, we let God do the work," he said. "For the casino, it's good for them if it saves one or two lives a year. If nothing else, it's a lot less negative publicity for them and it doesn't cost them a nickel because they're free."

Werner said he believes that eventually the casino will allow the Gideons to put Bibles in the rooms at Borgata.

HMONG CHRISTIANS UNDER SURVEILLANCE, PRESECUTED IN BIZZARE WAYS, SAYS GROUP

LAI CHAU, Vietnam (EP)—Members of Vietnam's Hmong Christian population have faced shocking, violent attacks during the last six months that include torture, rape and demoralization.

Members of the Center for Religious Freedom of Freedom House, the U.S.'s oldest human rights organization, expressed shock in late April over recent reports that the Vietnamese Government continues to violently persecute minority Hmong Christians, particularly those in the Lai Chau province.

"Religious repression in Vietnam is pervasive, and particularly harsh as directed against the Christian tribal people," the center said in a statement.

A report received recently from reliable sources in Vietnam states that in Dec. 20, 2002, five Public Security Police apprehended a Christian couple near their home in Lai Chau. Police reportedly bound Ma A Chanh with rope while police gang-raped his wife, Vang Thi My, a few yards away.

Petitions describing the incident were signed by local villagers and a village chief and provided to Freedom House by Hmong Christians via China. More recently in March, security police detained Christian evangelists Mua A. Chau and Thao A. Tong in Lai Chau province. "Tong was held in a sealed, dark cell where he nearly asphyxiated. He was eventually released under orders not to leave his home for more than one day without government permission," the center reported. Chau was severely beaten and is charged with "interfering with an officer doing his duty," a charge frequently used against religious people to avoid the appearance of religious persecution.

Another report describes the general situation in Lai Chau where police have installed themselves within Christians' homes to report on their every move. In other cases, groups of five or six police were stationed inside the homes of Christian families.

"The Vietnamese authorities are continuing to persecute tribal Christians in ways not only brutal, but bizarre," said Paul Marshall, senior fellow at the Center for Religious Freedom. "The U.S. government should continue to raise these issues until the Vietnam government allows general religious freedom."

The reports fit a pattern of official Vietnamese repression of minority faiths. In November 2002, Freedom House reported on the beating death of Mua Bua Senh, a young Hmong Christian. After his death, Senh's family sought refuge in Hoi Huong, a village where Vietnamese security officials from a group known as "Unit 184" attacked a church service with a form of noxious gas on Dec. 29, 2002. "Unit 184" is named after "Plan 184," an official, secret, anti-Christian plan obtained and published by Freedom House in November 2000.

GLEANINGS HERE AND THERE

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (EP)—Four priests, two of whom are dead, are accused of sexually abusing children over three decades in new lawsuits filed April 15 against the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Louisville. In all, 241 lawsuits alleging sexual abuse have been filed against the archdiocese since April of last year. Five have been settled. All four lawsuits argue that church officials knew or should have known of ongoing abuse by the priests and that the officials covered up allegations of abuse. This claim was bolstered by alleging that one of the priests,

Louis E. Miller, has now been named in more than 90 lawsuits.

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (EP)—The Ten Commandments monument in the lobby of the Alabama Judicial Building was installed to promote the religious beliefs of conservative Christian Chief Justice Roy Moore, according to a brief filed in federal appeals court. The brief filed on April 14 with the 11th U. S. Court of Appeals on behalf of three Alabama attorneys challenges the constitutionality of the 5,300-pound monument. Moore, a conservative Christian, had the monument moved into the building on the night of July 31, 2001, saying the Ten Commandments represented the moral foundation of American law. The Southern Poverty Law Center, the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed the lawsuit on behalf of the three Alabama attorneys. U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson ruled the monument is unconstitutional and ordered it removed from the judicial building. Moore has appealed Thompson's ruling to the 11th Circuit, which has scheduled oral arguments for June 4 in Montgomery.

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (EP)—An Australian advocate of euthanasia has suggested that humans turn to vets in order to be "put to sleep." Dr. Philip Nitschke, known as Australia's "Doctor Death," "suggested that suicidal people should ask for help from veterinarians to kill themselves, reported CNSNews.com. Nitschke made the comments on a recent tour of New Zealand designed to build public support for legislation that would make assisted suicide legal in that country. Assisted suicide is illegal in both Australia and New Zealand. Nitschke said that vets have easy access to the drug Nembutal, a fast, potent drug that is used in small amounts to put down animals. Pro-euthanasia groups claim that the drug is a "compassionate" alternative to other methods of suicide. "I'm telling people to get friendly with a vet because vets are the only people that have access to the very best of the drugs," Nitschke said during an interview on Australian television. Vets in New Zealand reacted to Nitschke's statements with disbelief. Dr. Jo Toia, president of the Australian Veterinary Association, told CNSNews.com that Nitschke's offensive comments violated the strong sense of "legal and ethical obligations" that vets follow. "We have legal requirements that we have to abide by," said Toia, who also commented that vets who provided lethal drugs to the public could be prosecuted for violating poison laws.

HAITI (EP)—Voodoo has been declared an official religion by the government of Haiti. During the first week of

April, Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide issued an executive decree declaring Voodoo a religion with the same status and rights as others on the island. Voodoo priests and priestesses now have the legal power to preside over marriages, baptisms and other religious ceremonies. In the decree, Aristide described Voodoo as an "ancestral religion" and an "essential part of national identity," reported the Associated Press. The religion is a conglomeration of African witchcraft and Catholic practices that developed during the slavery era in the Caribbean. Voodoo practitioners in Haiti applauded the action and said their religion has been misrepresented in books and television. Voodoo practices include offering sacrifices of animals and alcohol to spirits.

TUSTIN, Calif. (EP)—Drive-through service is not just for fast-food any longer. A California church has opened a drive-through prayer booth to minister to those in the community who might be intimidated at entering a worship center. The Los Angeles Times reported that Main Place Christian Fellowship Church has taken over an old drive-through photo booth in a strip mall across the street from the church. Volunteers and church staff man the booth during normal business hours during the week and offer prayer for those who pull up to the window. "The majority of the people around here are Christians, but they don't go to church," said pastor David Cottrill. "So when they have a problem, they don't have anyone to turn to." The booth advertises free prayers as well as flowers, Bibles and bottled water to patrons. "This is like a fast-food place for God," said a homeless visitor to the booth. Special needs encountered during the drive-through prayer sessions are referred to the church's main office.

WILMINGTON, N.C. (EP)—A 36-foot-wide billboard that mocks Jesus and urges people to go vegetarian was erected on I-40 near Wilmington and hasn't been sitting well with local churchgoers there. "It's a free country and people do what they want, but I am hurt by it," said Mike Parnell, pastor of Burgaw Baptist Church, which is near the billboard's location. Parnell and other travelers along east-bound I-40 just north of Wilmington for a few more weeks will see a 12-foot-tall image of a squinty-eyed pig next to words that read: "He Died For Your Sins. Go Vegetarian." The ad went up the Tuesday before Easter. It has been criticized by the state's hog industries, and it was rejected by every major billboard company in the state. A spokesman for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals said the group's ad was "part of an anti-meat campaign aimed at North Carolina and other farming states."

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—Sen. Rick Santorum, a conservative Republican senator, has run afoul of a homosexual rights group over comments he made about an upcoming Supreme Court decision. In an interview with the Associated Press, Santorum was asked about a pending Supreme Court case on the constitutionality of a Texas law prohibiting sodomy. Santorum responded by saying, "If the Supreme Court says that you have the right to consensual [gay] sex within your home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. You have the right to anything." For his comments, the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest pro-homosexual lobby, is insisting that Santorum be removed from his Senate leadership position. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee then demanded his resignation. Conservative activist Gary Bauer called the requests "absurd" and added that he was "astonished" by the silence of the Republican establishment in defense of Senator Santorum.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—A number of pro-family groups are urging the Bush administration to create a special commission regarding mothers in the military. Allan Carlson of the Howard Center and the Family Research Council is calling for a special presidential advisory commission on the role of women in the military. Carlson said that an increasing number of women in the military are mothers, and that the long separation of these women from their children and the possibility that they could be placed "in harm's way" means that the role of women in the military should be reexamined. One organization that looks at the role of women in the military already exists. However, the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services has been accused of using taxpayer money to push feminist issues in the military.

GLEN CAMPBELL, Pa. (EP)—A teacher's aid in a public school is challenging a one-year suspension she received from the school district after continually wearing a cross necklace to work. School officials say wearing the jewelry violates a Pennsylvania public school code, which prohibits employees from wearing religious items to school. "I think the public needs to know that there is a code out there that is against our freedom," said Brenda Nichol, the employee being suspended. She does acknowledge she was told of the rule as far back as 1997 and has been warned twice since March that she could be suspended.

Nichol has enlisted the help of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLI) and the group plans to file a federal court lawsuit. Vincent McCarthy, senior counsel for ADLJ, said, "Where the line is drawn is when what the teacher wears or has with them. . .has reached the point where they could say it becomes an endorsement of a particular religion by the school." McCarthy does not believe that is the case for Nichol.

FRANKFORT, Ken. (EP)—The U. S. Supreme Court has rejected an appeal by Kentucky of a ruling that barred the display of the Ten Commandments on the state Capitol grounds in Frankfort. The justices, without comment, let stand a Federal Appeals Court ruling that the display would be a violation of the Constitution, based on its religious character. The monument was given to the state in 1971 by the Fraternal Order of Eagles group. It was on display until 1980 when it was removed to allow for construction in the area. The intention was to eventually put it back, and that plan was behind a governor's resolution signed into law in 2000. That is when the American Civil Liberties Union launched a court challenge to keep the display from being placed on the Capitol grounds. Kentucky, along with several other states — Alabama, Indiana, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Utah — argued that the permissibility of government displays of the Ten Commandments raised a question of "national importance" because such displays acknowledge the Ten Commandments' historical role in American culture and law.

CONCORD, N.C. (EP)—A Southern Baptist church has been expelled from its local association after the pastor baptized two gay men and welcomed them into the congregation. Leaders of the Cabarrus Baptist Association, a regional group of 81 churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, voted April 28 to sever ties with McGill Baptist Church. Of 268 delegates at the meeting, 250 voted to withdraw McGill Baptist's membership. Eleven voted in favor of McGill. Seven abstained. Randy Wadford, the association's missions director, read a statement after the vote in which he said, "The homosexual lifestyle is contrary to God's will and plan for mankind. To allow individuals into the membership of a local church without evidence or testimony of true repentance is to condone the old lifestyle," he said. Cabarrus County commissioner Coy Privette, representing North Kannapolis Baptist, said homosexuality is "an anti-biblical standard of conduct," and that being baptized means repenting of such sins.

ALAMOGORDO, N.M. (EP)—Ala-

bama Chief Justice Roy Moore, who is being sued by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and others over his Ten Commandments monument in the judicial building rotunda in Montgomery, defended his actions at a conservative conference in New Mexico. Moore said he started displaying a Ten Commandments plaque in his circuit court in Gadsden in 1995. The ACLU sued Moore in federal court to remove the display, but the case was dismissed and then Gov. Fob James sued in state court seeking a ruling that such Ten Commandment displays are constitutional. Recently, Moore has set up a large granite monument to the Commandments in the Alabama Judicial Building's rotunda. The ACLU challenged him again, and the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is considering the case. On April 26 at the 6th annual Sovereignty and Your Rights seminar, Moore discussed the ACLU lawsuit, his love of God and how America has turned away from the faith of its founding fathers. People might be "living out what Jesus said would happen," he said, and the nation's "way of life is under attack" from a belief system in opposition to Christianity.

HAMBURG, Germany (EP)—A recent survey in Germany revealed that only four out of every 10 Germans consider themselves religious, reported Idea News Agency. The online survey, collected by German magazine *Stern* in partnership with a television station and a consulting firm, found that of the 54 million Germans who are church members, fewer than 32 million would add "religious" to a self-description. The survey also found that confidence in churches both Protestant and Catholic is extremely low among Germans. Around 17 percent said they have faith in the Protestant Church. The Catholic Church fared worse with only an 11 percent confidence rating.

TEHRAN, Iran (EP)—Iran's parliament rejected a proposal to give non-Muslims equal status in the eyes of Iranian law April 30. The Guardian Council of Iran voted against a bill that would have granted non-Muslim Iranians equal diyeh, or blood-price, in that country's sharia law system. According to that system, a human life is valued at diyeh, a standard number of livestock determined annually by the judicial branch of the Iranian government. If a person is murdered, the victim's family can demand diyeh from the murderer who, if he pays the prescribed amount, can avoid the death penalty. Diyeh values for Muslim men in Iran are twice that of a Muslim woman, and 12 times the amount for a non-Muslim. A bill to equalize the diyeh amount between Muslim and Jews, Christians and other religious minorities in Iran was submitted to the parliament in

January, but the measure died after the council voted against it on the last day of April. The Guardian Council, populated by Muslim clerics, told the Iranian daily *Jombouri-ye Eslami* that it rejected the bill because it contradicted with sharia, the Islamic code of conduct on which Iranian law is based. The council further said that the ultimate decision regarding diyeh should be decided by Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the religious and political leader of Iran, reported the IRNA, Iran's official news agency.

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (EP)—Federal Judge Paul V. Gadola has ordered the city of Royal Oak, Mich., to pay \$44,707.17 in damages and attorney's fees, and has permanently prohibited police from interfering with the rights of California resident Ronald Brock when he displays his pro-life and Christian messages on the public streets of that city. The lawsuit grew out of police action during the 2001 Woodward Dream Cruise, an annual event that celebrates the cars, music, and memories of "cruising" during the 1950s and 1960s and draws more than a million people. Brock was driving his motor home through Royal Oak during the celebration. Because the sides of Brock's motor home displayed Christian crosses, Bible quotes, and photographs of aborted babies and of the Nazi Holocaust, Royal Oak police ordered him to pull over, searched his vehicle, confiscated his personal property impounded his vehicle as evidence in a charge of "obscene literature." The April 30 ruling stipulated that the First Amendment protects the symbols, messages and signs, including those depicting images of aborted babies, displayed on Brock's motor home and that Brock's constitutional rights had been violated during the 2001 Dream Cruise. The judge permanently enjoined the city from interfering with Brock when he is peacefully displaying his pro-life, Christian and political symbols, messages and signs in the city, and permanently enjoined the city from stopping, searching and seizing Brock's motor home and his other property without probable cause, a warrant or consent.

COLUMBIA, S.C. (EP)—A recent study conducted at a South Carolina prison confirms what many have suspected for years—that transforming the heart can transform behavior. The study, conducted at the Broad River Correctional Institution, found that inmates who regularly participated in religious programming were not re-arrested after being released. "High rates of recidivism (re-arrest, re-conviction, re-incarceration) continue to cost American society dearly in terms of pain, trouble and community funds," says the study by Larry Navey and Dr. Stephen Farra. Navey, a senior psychology student at Columbia Interna-

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tional University (CIU), leads Bible studies at Broad River Correctional Institution. Farra, head of CIU's psychology department, sponsored Navey's study, which was funded by S.C. Independent Colleges and Universities. For the study, Navey and Farra tracked 50 prisoners, chosen because they regularly participated in four out of every five religious activities offered; and of those, not a single one of them has returned to the prison system in three years.

Short Thoughts

Weekly
Devotionals

by

Jeff Short



Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: (Phil. 1:1).

Our text is Paul's greeting to the Philippian believers. There was a great mutual love between Paul and those precious saints. This fact adds to Paul's concern over the false teachers that were seeking to leaven the church with their despicable doctrine. He warns them to **"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."** (Phi. 3:2). The Judaizers were seeking every opportunity against the truth. They were preaching Christ **"even of envy and strife.... of contention, not sincerely"** (Phi. 1:15-16). Paul wrote to the brethren, in part, to counteract this teaching lest it grow like a festering malignancy. I believe every word of Holy Writ to be inspired of God. I do not believe there is any wasted space and even in this greeting there are things that can be learned to our edification. Oftentimes the most unlikely of places will yield precious jewels if we dig deep.

Paul begins by addressing himself **"to all the saints."** "Saints" is not a mystical term or special title reserved for a select few especially saintly persons. The word that is translated "saints" means "holy ones." The saints are described in II Thess. 1:10 as **"all them that believe."** So every one that is saved is a saint according to the scriptures. This term encompasses the whole family of God

and not just a few. The saints are certainly not few as Revelation 7:9 tells us, **"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."**

Paul makes a noteworthy distinction. He does not simply address **"all the saints,"** but rather **"all the saints in Christ Jesus."** The Septuagint uses the same word for saints. The Judaizers and other Pharisaic Jews would consider themselves saints. They ultimately had rejected Christ with their belief of works for salvation and certainly were not saints according to scripture. We are only truly saints **"in Christ Jesus."** This phrase reveals to us the sum of Paul's Christianity. In his writings, Paul uses the phrase **"in Christ Jesus"** about 48 times. He uses **"in Christ"** about 34 times. He uses **"in the Lord"** about 50 times. He uses **"in Jesus"** and **"in Jesus Christ"** each about 3 times. He uses **"in Him"** about 18 times throughout his writings. This recurring theme shows us what Paul believed it meant to be a Christian. It means a vital union with Christ. This union is a positional one. It is also a practical one. Paul said, **"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."** (Phi. 3:12). Paul could never be any more **"in Christ"** than he was already concerning his salvation. But, he said that he had not attained and was pressing **"toward the mark."** Paul was striving to be conformed to the very image of Christ. He considered his whole life to be Christ in him. He desired that union to become stronger and stronger as far as his life was concerned.

We also notice that Paul addressed the saints first and then **"the bishops and deacons."** This order is one of importance. They were saints first and then bishops or deacons. They were saints first and then church members. Whatever else we may be, if we are in Christ then we are saints or Christians first and foremost. Christian, we would do well to embrace this truth. Whatever else we might be, we are Christians first. This truth lends credence to Paul saying, **"this one thing I do."** We must realize that whatever else we are, we are Christians first and whatever else we may do, we must live godly first. Oh, that we may put Christ first and our life to serve Him before anything else! For the saved it is true that whatever else they might be, they are Christians.

There is also a truth for the unsaved. If you are unsaved, whatever else you might be, you are first and foremost lost. You are not in Christ. You have no hope and are **"without God in the world."** In fact, you are **"condemned already"** and **"the wrath of God abideth"** on you. If this be your awful condition at this hour, then I give you the words of Christ when He came to Galilee preaching, **"repent ye, and believe the gospel."** (Mark 1:15). Repent of your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has never refused a sinner that has come seeking Him. **"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). **"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."** (John 10:9). Come to Christ and He will wash away your sins and you will join the other blood-bought saints around His throne.

Deuteronomy 4:39

Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else (Deut. 4:39).

It should be the life quest of every individual to know God and to increase our present knowledge of Him. We are instructed in the scriptures, **"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."** (Job 22:21). The worldly man loves to glory in all his accomplishments. He adores his beauty and youthful strength. He glories in his wisdom and earthly successes. He revels in his riches and spends his days flattering himself. All such glorying is vain, foolish, and wicked. God says, **"But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."** (Jer. 9:24). So far from pondering our own greatness, our text instructs us to know and consider God.

We see at once the sovereignty of God set before us for consideration. He rules with great power in heaven and upon the earth. A king on the earth is only king of his kingdom. Once outside his country, he has no executive powers. However, God is the king of a vast domain. Of a truth, He **"inhabiteth eternity."** His power knows no limits of potency or jurisdiction. He does whatever pleases Him to do. **"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."** (Psa. 14:1). The agnostic has said, "Well,

there is a God. But He is in the heavens and we can't know Him or worship Him. All such religion is futile." They go on their way unconcerned about the unknown God. They think Him far away and obscure. "He is in heaven and we are on earth. What do we have to do with Him?" This only gives more reason to fear Him. **"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."** (Psa. 115:3). It is not only in heaven that He does His will, but also **"among the inhabitants of the earth."** The hymn writer expressed it thus,

*There's not a sparrow, or a worm,
But's found in His decrees;
He raises monarchs to their throne,
And sinks them as He please.*

As absolute sovereignty demands, He is the one true God. Ten times in the scriptures when talking about God, we are told there is **"none else."** Our text is one of those occurrences. **"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."** (I Cor. 8:5-6). The world worships many gods. There is no shortage of knowledge of false gods. However, there is a dearth of knowledge of the one true God. He declares there is **"none else."** God has no peers. He alone is God. **"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."** (Isa. 42:8). He alone is worthy to be praised. God has no real rivals though His enemies are numerous. There is none else. There is none even close. He alone is God.

Ecclesiastes 9:18

Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good (Eccl. 9:18).

Solomon has highly esteemed wisdom in the book of Proverbs as well as in the book of Ecclesiastes. He has deemed it the choicest of treasures, more worthy to be diligently sought after than gold and silver hidden in a field. Solomon states, **"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."** (Pro. 4:7). Of all pursuits to consume our time, wisdom is by far the greatest. We should strive to acquire wisdom above all else. Wisdom can accomplish much good. It is **"an ornament of grace"** to them that possess it. The preacher says in our text, **"Wisdom is better**

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Short Thoughts

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than weapons of war." The greatness and safety of a city does not lie only in their machinery of defense. **"There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength."** (Psa. 33:16-17). He tells us that the race is not always won by the fastest, nor is it always the strongest that prevail in battle. Wisdom far excels all these carnal things. However, in our text, Solomon contrasts the good of wisdom with the destruction of sin for **"one sinner destroyeth much good."** Let us consider briefly some of the destructions of sin.

Firstly, a sinner destroys himself. Countless millions live lives of sin, **"Whose end is destruction."** They have never repented. They have never believed in Jesus Christ. Jesus said, **"If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins,"** and **"he that believeth not is condemned already."** In some cases, they have gained the whole world and lost their own souls. A life of sin is a wasted life that ultimately destroys itself. Do you realize the ruinous power of sin? Whatever good may be done is destroyed by the sin in your life. Outside of Christ, you cannot do any good works, no matter what your intentions might be. The Bible says, **"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."** (Rom. 8:8). The Word tells us **"without faith it is impossible to please him"** and **"whatsoever is not of faith is sin."** You may be kind to your family and neighbors. You may be benevolent toward the downcast. You may volunteer your time to help the sick and needy. You may attend church and even give offerings. With all your good works, you may think that you are building up a good account, but you are going to find that **"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds:"** (Rom. 2:5-6). All your works that seemed good are destroyed.

Secondly, a sinner destroys others. There may be much good intended and attempted by many of the righteous, **"but one sinner destroyeth much good."** **"A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends. A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that**

is not good." (Pro. 16:28-29). A sinner in the congregation destroys and hinders the good efforts of the concert. A sinner in the church will sew discord, tale-bear, and lead many astray. They are an ungodly example with their fleshly lives. They are always causing divisions and thwart the good desires of God's people. They bring reproach on the body and her head, Christ. They are much like Achan of old who brought wrath on all Israel. **"Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity."** (Josh. 22:20).

The church is required to cleanse itself of iniquity by purging out the old leaven. **"But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."** (I Cor. 5:13). The Lord's church must practice discipline and exclusion if necessary. The carnal Christians that are only interested in "nickels and noses" will shy away from such doctrine. Carnal reasoning says, "This one puts much money into the church. This one has the largest family. This one has a lot of influence in the community. Can we not just tolerate them and not rock the boat?" The answer is, "No!" The truth is, the church cannot afford to keep such an one in the body for **"one sinner destroyeth much good."** Do not suffer Jezebel to teach others to sin. Put her out. One sinner in the body will destroy the good name of the Church and erode your good influence by their bad example. The church cannot be just like the world. How much sin is in the world? **"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."** (I John 5:19). We cannot run with the world and hope to influence them for good for **"one sinner destroyeth much good."** We must follow the Word, **"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate"** (II Cor. 6:17). The world needs to see a holy church with holy Christians that are dedicated to give Christ glory with their lives. **"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."** (Eph. 3:21).

Proverbs 24:16

For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief (Pro. 24:16).

Probably nothing manifests the fact of our frail frame more than the stumbling we suffer many times. This is no teaching that we ought to fall, but

we do sometimes. It is a mark of the righteous that when they fall, they rise up again. This remarkable resilience confounds the wicked. **"They lie in wait"** for the righteous and rejoice when they fall, thinking that it is the end. The righteous **"riseth up again."** It is not so with the wicked, they **"fall into mischief."** Their stumbling and fall is ultimately their destruction. They are never recovered out of the snare. In truth, both are susceptible to falling, but it is the righteous that **"riseth up again."**

Now the wicked may be glad at the fall of the righteous but the word to the righteous concerning the fall of the wicked is, **"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:"** (Pro. 24:17). Never let just men assume the posture of the ungodly. Never let them sing the same songs of mirth over one that is fallen. Yes, the standard is higher for the child of God. We are not to rejoice at the fall of the wicked, and we should not rejoice at the fall of our brother. Let us have the **"spirit of meekness"** and restore one who is **"overtaken in a fault."** Now let us turn to our text and consider the falling of the righteous and their subsequent rising again.

Firstly, we observe that the saints do fall. The narrow way is not without its' difficulties. Though we sometimes walk with joy, we many times tread in sadness. We believe in the absolute sovereignty of God, which affords us comfort. We might be perplexed if not for the good providence of our Father. Paul knew that **"bonds and afflictions"** were abiding for him wherever he went. We also know **"that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."** Suffering is the peculiar lot of God's people in the earth. However, these sufferings are temporal, **"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;"** (II Cor. 4:17). Often through trials and perils we stumble and fall. But the good man of God will rise up again.

Many times our greatest occasion of stumbling is the flesh. No matter how hard we strive, we have not escaped the body of sin just yet. **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."** (I John 1:8). Only the Holy Lord Jesus lived a life completely without sin. No one of us can match His impeccability. We have not reached the mark. When sin has laid us low we must go to the Father, confessing our guilt for **"he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all**

unrighteousness." (I John 1:9). We have not fallen to where the Lord cannot reach us. He told Israel that His arm was not shortened. Have faith. He can reach all the way. Sometimes we have confessed and felt God's forgiveness, but the fall lingers in our memories. Our own frailty and inadequacy mock us. They seem as a great weight that holds us down. Christian, **"Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?"** (Num. 32:6). How long shall you wallow in the mire of self-pity and use your past failure as an excuse for your present inactivity? We have an advocate His ability to forgive sins. In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up! Simon Peter stumbled, as did John Mark, to name a couple. But they were restored to greater service. Our verse says, **"For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again."**

Secondly, we see that the righteous fall **"seven times."** Our first trial is sure not to be our last. Having begun on the way, let us hold on without wavering. We can be certain that trials wait, so long as we tabernacle in this body. There is warfare within and the battle shall not be over until we leave this world. There is hope in our verse. No matter how oft we stumble, the righteous **"riseth up again."** We sing the glad song of the righteous.

They may on the main of temptation be toss'd,

Their sorrow may swell as the sea;

But none of the ransomed shall ever be lost;

The righteous shall hold on his way.

Surrounded with sorrows, temptations and cares,

This truth with delight we survey;

And sing, as we pass thru this valley of tears;

The righteous shall hold on his way.

GLEANINGS



DAILY CONFLICT

By J. W. Alexander

Our resignation and our faith must not be merely general, but particular. It is in special instances we are put upon our trial. We must not say, I could endure another sort of vexation, but not this. I could bear a different annoyance, but not this. This is

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precisely the one which God assigns to us, and perhaps, for the very reason that we are so intolerant of it.

The duty of humble submission is as imperative under this as under any other trial. The privilege of faith is as great under this as under any choice. The promises of the Gospel are not excluded from this case. Could we look into the reasons of state in the mediatorial kingdom, we should see that we are visited with this annoyance rather than any other for a definite purpose, and that one of infinite grace. When this purpose is accomplished, it will assuredly be removed. But to bear it is better than to have it removed. True wisdom counsels us not to shrink from the trial, but to face it, in God's strength. Great fruits are reaped in this field. We account a man cowardly who shrinks from an enemy in natural things. We should apply this to our daily mortifications and distresses. It would be a noble habit of soul, if we could bring ourselves to regard every occurrence of this sort as a means of exercising our graces, and gaining new strength.

(Thoughts on Preaching, p. 53).

The Doubts of the Faithful

By Ray Bennett

Abraham's wavering faith finally believed and obeyed—by faith—that which he could not understand.

QUESTION: Have you ever doubted some of the truths of the Bible? Everyone has—to some degree.

Our finite minds can't fully accept all of the miracles, especially when we don't see them happening today, we don't seem to see the answers to our prayers, and so many of the blessings we have been taught to expect don't materialize. Faithful and true servants of God are struck down early in life, having what to our eyes seems an unproductive life.

We struggle with the Genesis account of creation in view of what our children are taught in the public schools. What we read in the first two chapters of Genesis is in direct contrast with what we are required to learn in most science classes.

We must contend with so called "higher critics" who tell us that the Bible contradicts itself, and then, we come face to face with what appears to us as conflicting accounts and opposing doctrinal statements in Scripture.

The very foundations of our religion are shaken.

From this the unbeliever finds excuses to reject the God of the Bible, the Bible's claims on his soul, and the absolute necessity of a super natural salvation through the substitutional and sacrificial death and shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The person who has academically accepted the Bible as the Word of God begins to question divine inspiration, and equates the Bible with the religious writings of other world religions. That's dangerous ground! If the Bible isn't inerrant and infallible, then its proclamation that there is no salvation in any other than Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12) becomes invalid. If we can't believe the *whole* Bible, then we have no basis for believing *any* of the Bible and no basis upon which to base our salvation.

Abraham serves as a good lesson in this matter.

Abraham was promised abundant descendants (Gen. 12:1 – great nation) but was seeing no seed. He and Sarai could produce no children so how could he expect to produce a great nation. He pleaded with God for evidence (Gen. 15:2-3) and was given another promise of an abundant seed (Gen. 15:13-14).

Still with no seed, Abram and Sarai doubted the veracity of God's promise and, by the works of the flesh and wisdom of man, tried to produce a seed another way (Gen. 16:1-4a), but *that* didn't work out (v. 4).

God changed Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah, both names promising an abundance of children, but Abraham doubted and laughed, and tried to get God to approve Ishmael (Gen. 17:15-18).

Sarah laughed, doubting the promise of children (Gen. 18:12).

God's word didn't make sufficient sense to Abraham for him to trust God's protective grace (Gen. 20:1-2) and his unbelief led to a repeat of the sin that had gotten him thrown out of Egypt (Gen. 12) years before. What a contrast with Samson's parents (Judges 13:22-23).

Then, finally, Isaac was born. It's significant that there is no promise given of abundance progeny here. Despite the advanced age and previous doubts, they were expected to see, in Isaac, that fulfillment of God's promise, and the promise of greater things.

Then, once God's word and promise is vindicated, and Abraham's trust in the Word of God is restored, God throws him another 'curve ball' that will destroy his confidence in the Word of God. "Take this one and only son, the promised son, the only one in and through whom all my promises can be fulfilled, and kill him."

I can almost here Abraham saying,

with Jeremiah, "**O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me**" (Jer. 20:7). "I can't trust you anymore. First you promise me a seed, and it doesn't come. Then when a seed finally *does* come, you make me kill him—as a sacrifice. And you are supposed to *hate* child or human sacrifices."

How do we vindicate all of this? I CAN'T! But there are still 4 lessons from God's Word that send me to my knees in total trust in God's Word.

1. The great truth of Isaiah 55:8-9 "**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts,**" teach us that mortal man cannot understand the ways of God, but is totally dependent on revelation *by* the Word of God.

2. The great element of trusting faith is its obedience, even, and especially, when we don't understand, and everything seems to be wrong and even contradictory.

3. Abraham's *obedience*, and continuing to believe, even in the face of doubts and confusion, was the evidence God wanted (wants) to see, that vindicates our faith.

4. And finally, God's faithfulness can have no advance vindication, but only *historic* vindication. After all is said and done, we see that God's word was true. The only *advance* vindication is His proven tract record of faithfulness (Ex. 33:12-16).

*Sometimes it seems, that all that I do is in vain.
In spite of my effort all I produce is more strain.
My doubts and delusions, all of my hopes soon erase.
God's grace is sufficient for every trial I face.*

*God's grace is sufficient for every trial I face.
In each situation He's promised to stand in my place.
He'll take me through the dark valley, to stand on
the mountain by grace.*

God's grace is sufficient for every trial I face.

ALMOST A CHRISTIAN

(From a Treatise by M. Meade, 1661)

There are two questions of very great importance which we should every one of us put to ourselves: "What am I?" and "Where am I?" Am I a child of God or not? Am I sincere in religion, or am I only a hypocrite under a profession? Am I yet in a natural state, or in a state of grace? Am I yet in the old root, in old Adam, or am I in the Root, Christ Jesus? Am I in the covenant of works that ministers only wrath and death, or am I in the covenant of grace that ministers life and peace? I press this upon you

that are professors, because many rest in a notion of godliness and outward show of religion, and yet remain in their natural condition. Many are hearers of the word and not doers of it, and so deceive their own souls (James 1:22). He that slight the ordinances cannot be a true Christian, but yet it is possible a man may own them and yet be no true Christian.

Errors in the first foundation are very dangerous. If we be not right in the main, the fundamental work; if the foundation be not laid in grace in the heart, all our following profession comes to nothing. The house built upon a sandy foundation, though it may stand for a while, yet when the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon it, great will be the fall of it. There are many things like grace that are not grace. Now it is the likeness of things that deceive. Many take gifts for grace, common knowledge for saving knowledge; whereas a man may have great gifts and no grace, great knowledge and yet *not know Jesus Christ*. Some take common faith for saving; whereas a man may believe all the truths of the gospel, all the promises, all the threatenings, all the articles of the creed to be true, and yet perish for want of saving faith. Some take morality and restraining grace for renewing grace; whereas it is common to have sin much restrained where the heart is not at all renewed. Some are deceived with a half-work, taking many mermaid Christians, or like Nebuchadnezzar's image, head of gold and feet of clay. Endless are the delusions that Satan fastens upon souls for want of this self-search. Satan will try us at one time or other. He will winnow us and sift us to the bottom, and if we now rest in a groundless confidence, it will then end in a comfortless despair. Nay, God Himself will search and try us, at the day of judgment especially, and who can abide that trial, that never tries his own heart?

Whatsoever a man's state be, whether he be altogether a Christian or not yet it is good to examine his own heart. If he find his heart good, his principles right and sound, this will be matter of rejoicing. If he find his heart rotten, his principles false and unsound, the discovery may be in order to a renewing. If a man have a disease upon him and know it, he may send to the physician in time, but what a sad vexation it will be not to see the disease till it be past cure! So for a man to be graceless and not see till it be too late, to think himself a Christian when he is not; that he is in the right way to Heaven when he is in the ready way to Hell, and yet not know it till a death bed or a judgment day confute

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WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans - Norfolk, Virginia

Anti-Christian Attacks Continue Without Cease



The most liberal court in the nation has outdone themselves in striking out "One Nation Under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance.

The ultra-leftist 9th Circuit Court in San Francisco outdid themselves with this outlandish ruling. The A.C.L.U. and Americans United for Separation of Church and State could not top this:

...remove "In God We Trust" from our currency.

...Stop Congress from opening each day with a prayer.

...End Christmas as a National holiday.

The American People will not stand for this. People will make known their demands from Senators and Congressmen.

The real problem is a small army of leftist, activist judges on the Federal Courts, (Many, but not all of them, appointed by Bill Clinton).

The real solution is a ready army of conservatives, judicial nominees that have been selected by George W. Bush.

But the main obstacles to getting dozens of these Constitutionally grounded justices into the federal court systems are Tom Daschle and the obstructionist, liberal Democrats in the Senate.

Liberals like Tom Daschle, Ted Kennedy and Hillary Rodham Clinton, totally agree with the decision and any other that erases any trace of religion from our society. That is why they will only confirm judges who share their twisted, anti-American, anti-family and anti-patriotism philosophy and why they are still arrogantly blocking dozens of judicial nominations submitted by President Bush.

Example: Miguel Estrada's confirmation for the U.S. Court of Appeals is held up by liberal Democrats. Judge Estrada is a most highly qualified candidate. Which is why it is now up to you and I to ensure that Daschle and company get out of the way and allow full Senate votes on dozens of President Bush's nominees to the judiciary. What's more, this is just the first battle in the looming war over the make-up of the Supreme Court.

Now, today, we are determined to knock down the wall from Tom Daschle and the liberal Democrats, that they are placing in front of President Bush's nominees to the judiciary and to prepare for what promises to be a bitter fight over the future of the

Supreme Court.

The founding fathers must be turning over in their graves over the recent ruling against the phrase "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. But this is just a symptom of a much greater ill of liberal judicial activism in the federal courts.

This is just the first shot in a looming war that is soon to come to determine the future make-up of the Supreme Court. There may soon be as many as three vacancies. And frankly, who will fill these vacancies will affect the future of the United States for a generation or more.

(Captain Evans is a retired U.S. Coast Guard officer and lives in Norfolk, Virginia).

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his confidence, this is the most irrecoverable misery. These are the grounds upon which I press this duty of examining our state. Oh, that God would help us in doing this necessary duty!

You will say: But how shall I come to know whether I am almost or altogether a Christian? If a man may go so far and yet miscarry, how shall I know when my foundation is right, when I am a Christian indeed?

Christ is a King, Priest, Prophet, and all as Mediator. Without any one of these offices, the work of salvation could not have been completed. As Priest He redeems us, as Prophet He instructs us, as King He sanctifies and saves us. Therefore the apostle says He is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Righteousness and redemption flow from Him as Priest, wisdom as a Prophet, sanctification as a King. Now many embrace Christ as a Priest, but yet they own Him not as

a King and Prophet. They like to share in His righteousness, but not to partake of His holiness. They would be redeemed by Him, but they would not submit to Him. They would be saved by His blood, but not submit to His power. Many love the privileges of the gospel, but not the duties of the gospel. Now these are but almost Christians, notwithstanding their close with Christ; for it is upon their own terms, but not upon God's. The *offices of Christ may be distinguished but they can never be divided.*

But the true Christian owns Christ in all His offices. He does not only close with Him as Jesus, but as Lord Jesus. He says with Thomas: "**My Lord, and my God.**" He does not only believe in the merit of His death, but also conforms to the manner of His life. As he believes in Him, so he lives to Him.

The altogether Christian has a thorough work of grace and sanctification wrought in the heart, as a spring of obedience. Regeneration is a whole change. All old things are done away, all things become new. It is a perfect work as to parts, though not as to degrees. Carnal men do duties but from an unsanctified heart, and that spoils all. A new piece of cloth never does well in an old garment, for the rent is made worse (Matt. 9:16). When a man's heart is thoroughly renewed by grace, the mind savingly enlightened, the conscience thoroughly convinced, the will truly humbled and subdued, the affections spiritually raised and sanctified, and when the mind and will and conscience and affections all join issue to help on with the performance of the duties commanded, then is a man altogether a Christian. Here the almost Christian fails. He does the same duties, but he does them not in the same manner. If he pray, he regards not faith and fervency in prayer; if he hears, he does not mind Christ's rule: "**Take heed how ye hear.**" If he obeys, he looks not to the frame of his heart in obedience; therefore miscarries in all he does. These defects spoil all.

The altogether Christian is much in duty and yet much above duty in regard of dependence. He lives in his

obedience, but not upon his obedience. He lives *upon Christ and His righteousness.* The almost Christian fails in this: He is much in duty, but not above it, but rests in it. He works for rest, and he rests in his works. He cannot come to believe and obey too. If he believes, then he thinks there is no need of obedience, and so casts off that; if he be much in obedience, then he casts off believing, and thinks there is no need of that. He cannot say with David: "**I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments**" (Ps. 119:166). The altogether Christian is universal in his obedience. He does not obey one command and neglect another, do one duty and cast off another; but he has respect to all the commandments. He endeavors to leave every sin, and love every duty. The almost Christian fails in this. His obedience is partial and piece-meal. If he obeys one command, he breaks another. The duties that least cross his lust, he is much in; but those that do, he lays aside. The Pharisees fasted, paid tithes, etc., but they did not lay aside their covetousness, their oppression; they "**devoured widows' houses**"; they were unnatural to parents.

The altogether Christian makes God the chief end of all his performances. Now the almost Christian fails in this. For *he that was never truly cast out of himself, can have no higher end than himself.* It is dangerous to be almost a Christian, in that it stills and serves to quiet conscience. Now it is very dangerous to quiet conscience with anything but the blood of Christ. It is bad being at peace till Christ speaks peace. *Nothing can truly pacify conscience less than that which pacifies God, and that is the blood of Christ* (Heb. 9:14). Now the almost Christian quiets conscience but not with the blood of Christ; it is not a peace flowing from Christ's propitiation, but a peace rising from a formal profession; not a peace of Christ's giving, but a peace of his own making. He silences and bridles conscience with a form of godliness and so makes it give way to an undoing soul-destroying peace. He rocks it asleep in the cradle of duties, and probably never wakes more till death or judgment. Ah, my brethren, it is better to have a conscience never quiet than quieted any way but by the blood of sprinkling. *A good conscience is the greatest affliction to saints, and an evil conscience quiet is the greatest judgment to sinners.*

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