

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

Landmarks on the Old Path

By Larry J. Killion
of Tacoma, Washington

A brief study on how Baptists got to where they are today and why they do not recognize other churches or religious organizations.

The one true God has revealed Himself to us in the Bible. He first spoke to Adam and later, after the fall; He spoke to Noah in the days of the flood. After that He spoke to Abraham and the patriarchs of the nation of Israel. These records of God dealing with mankind are recorded for us in the Old Testament books of the Bible. There we have the promise of the coming redeemer and the instructions for God's people to stay on the old paths. Unfortunately, because of our fallen nature, we refuse to go the way God said we should go.

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old



paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein" (Jer. 6:16).

One of the ways we can know that we are on the right path is to observe the landmarks along the way. This is what Baptists are very fond of doing. They consider the precepts taught in the Bible as landmarks to keep them on the old path. However, there are many who do not agree and have tried to remove the landmarks in order to go their own way.

"Remove not the ancient landmark,

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Wondrous Works of God

By Tom Ross
of South Point, Ohio

"Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God" (Job 37:14).

In our text Elihu is found rebuking Job for his presumption and impiety. Job had offered up many complaints unto God during the time of his affliction. Elihu wants Job to see the absolute power and greatness of the God that Job was contending with. Our God is not to be trifled with. His power and greatness is beyond finite human comprehension. Job 37:23 declares: **"Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict."** Elihu points Job specifically to the wonders of God's creation. When an individual takes an honest look at the vastness and variety



of God's creative powers he must bow in wonder and humility before the sovereign throne of the Almighty. It would be good for all of God's children to hearken to the exhortation of Elihu. We are all much like Job. We are oftentimes consumed with our own self interest and so caught up in the rat-race of life that we fail to meditate upon the wondrous works of our great God. We need to stand still and contemplate the greatness and glory of our God and the wondrous works that He has performed.

There are four wondrous works of God

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What Happened to Sin?

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"Fools make a mock at sin" (Prov. 14:9).

To multitudes of earth's population, sin is a laughing matter. They make light of their own sinful actions; they pass them off with a jest, calling evil good (Isa. 5:20). Sin to them is liberty and freedom--doing the real thing. They are ingenious at framing excuses for their evil deeds. When rebuked by the godly, they scoff and make fun of the very idea of a future judgment for sins committed. Such people can laugh their way into Hell, but they cannot laugh their way out. In the end sin will mock these people. They will one day call themselves in eternity what God calls them now---a fool!

THEOLOGICAL TEACHINGS

In our society the average man has little or no concept of sin. He may use the word "evil" but never "sin." Sin is a foreign word in his vocabulary. He has a great stream of psychological words which he uses to get rid of the word sin. He could



never want to be caught using the straightforward, one syllable word "sin." After all, it is not socially acceptable to do so in enlightened circles.

It is little wonder the man on the street has little knowledge of sin. The religious world is responsible for much of his confusion. Theologians cannot agree on just what sin really is. Some false cults deny the very existence of sin. Christian Science holds that sin is the absence of good. Mrs. Eddy said: "If God, or good, is real, then evil, the unlikeness of God, is unreal. . . . Man is incapable of sin, sickness, and death" (SCIENCE AND HEALTH, pp. 470, 475). This makes sin nothing but a negation. But the Bible declares sin and evil to have a positive existence and to be an offense to God (Ps. 51:4). This

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False Doctrines Concerning God Refuted

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

There are many false conceptions of God held in this world, and this accounts for the idolatry that is in the world. Let us take note of some of the false teachings concerning God.

1. *The first is the Ancient Error of Polytheism---many gods.* Recounting this error, Paul wrote, **"There are gods many and lords many."** All heathen religions start off with the belief in many gods. The ancient Greeks despite their culture had many gods and goddesses. Sometimes their family of gods up on Mt. Olympus got in a family wrangle and that brought about the thunder and lightning, and all the racket incident to it. The Bible teaches "monotheism"---one God. **"Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE LORD. . . . "I am God and beside me there is none else."**

2. *The Teaching of Unitarianism, is*



another unscriptural error. Unitarianism denies the Trinity, which reduces Jesus to a man and the Holy Spirit to some kind of an "influence." But the Bible beyond

question teaches that the ONE GOD is manifested in three Persons, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT. (Note Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19 and II Cor. 13:14). The Old Testament word most often used for God is PLURAL IN FORM. Note such Scriptures as Genesis 1:26; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8. It is impossible for men to unravel the mystery of the being of God, but we do know that the Bible reveals that God is One, manifested in three persons. As we sing---"God in three Persons, blessed

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"Such as have made a considerable improvement of their gifts and graces, have hearts as large as their heads; whereas most men's heads have outgrown their hearts." Thomas Brooks

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

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Landmarks on the

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which thy fathers have set" (Prov. 22:28).

In New Testament times God kept His promise and sent the redeemer. It was His only begotten Son. **"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"** (Heb. 1:1-3).

John the Baptist gave witness to the fact that Christ was the Lamb of God (John 1:26-36).

Jesus took baptized believers prepared by John the Baptist and organized them into His church (Luke 6:12-13, Acts 1:21-22).

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles" (I Cor. 12:28).

This first Church was authenticated on the Day of Pentecost and after persecution, her members spread out to other places and organized sister churches who stood for the same old landmarks that the church in Jerusalem stood for.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1).

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch" (Acts 11:19).

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed

to Cyprus" (Acts 13:1-4).

Saul was saved by the sovereign grace of God on the road to Damascus in Acts chapter nine and is now known as the Apostle Paul. See some of the historical landmarks in our Baptist heritage since the days of Christ and the Apostles.

The Apostle Paul was taught directly by the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ and was sent out as a foreign missionary from the church in Antioch Syria (Acts 13:1-3, Gal 1:15-21, II Cor 12:1-5). The church in Antioch Syria was constituted by baptized believers out of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1 & 4) and had an authoritative connection to the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-4, 22-31).

The very first Baptist churches to organize in Wales were the direct result of the Apostle Paul's ministry in Rome in AD63. The Welsh Baptists were not Protestant rejects of the Roman Catholic Church or separatists from the Church of England. (History of the Welsh Baptists by Davis p. 7, 6,17,20,21 and Acts 28:17,28-31 and II Tim 4:21)

The Old Particular Baptists of Wales and England were often scattered by their enemies and reorganized in secret only to flourish again depending on the intensity of their persecution and the out pouring of the Holy Spirit. Their persecutors always destroyed the writings and records of these ancient Baptists. Many who were led away by the teaching of infant baptism were brought back to the religion of their forefathers and baptized or dipped in the River Allen only 25 miles distant from Hill Cliffe. (History of the Baptist Church at Hill Cliffe by Kenworthy p.24) The Hill Cliffe Church, also known as Lollards, is believed to be connected with the ancient Waldensians according to certain unverified records.

The first Association meeting of these old-time Baptists after the reformation was in 1653. Though the records are lost, men like Dyfrig, Illyd, and Dynawt no doubt had their meetings long before Austin's slaughter of Welsh Baptists for the cause of Popery in AD 600. Before AD 600, believer's immersion was the only mode recognized in the British Isles as the baptism of the New Testament. (History of the Welsh Baptists by Davis p. 187, 14 and 15).

The Anabaptist church at Rhydwlilim associated with the Particular Baptists of Wales and England and was instrumental in publishing the 1689 London Confession of Faith, which was also adopted by the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1742 (The American Baptist Heritage In Wales by Joshua Thomas p. 93 & 94, and History of the Welsh Baptists by Davis p. 188).

The charter members of the Welsh Tract Church, for example Pastor Thomas Griffiths, came from the church at Rhydwlilim Wales which was called Anabaptist by their enemies but they felt unjustly so because theirs was the

only true kind of baptism (History of the Welsh Baptists by Davis p. 72). Welch Tract organized with 16 members at Pembrokeshire, South Wales in June of 1701 and sailed together to Philadelphia arriving September 8, 1701. Elder Abel Morgan from the Welch Tract Church was one of the messengers at the annual meeting of the Philadelphia Baptist Association when Opekon was received into the Association (Min of Phil Bapt. Assoc 1707-1807 p. 15). The churches in this association were all of like faith and order and recognized each other as true New Testament churches.

The old landmark Baptists of that day did not recognize other denominations as true churches because the other denominations all recognized and identified with the apostate Mother of Harlots referred to in Scripture as the Great Whore (Rev. 19:2). The old landmarkers of days gone by did not practice pulpit affiliation by inviting men to preach for them who did not stand for the Baptist distinctives referenced in this article no matter what they did to dress themselves up to appear as old landmark Baptists.

The Opekon Baptist Church was connected with the Philadelphia Baptist Association of churches and was officially received into the association October 8, 1754 (Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association From 1707 to 1807 p. 71).

Sandy Creek came out of the Opekon Baptist Church in Berkeley county, Virginia (History of the Baptists in Virginia by Semple p. 13). Other spellings for this church are Opequon and Opekon.

Abbott's Creek Baptist Church was Pastored by Daniel Marshall who came from Sandy Creek Baptist Church (History of the Baptists in Virginia by Semple p. 16).

Dan River Baptist Church came from Abbott's Creek (History of the Baptists in Virginia by Semple p. 17 & 65).

The Traveling Church came from Dan River Baptist Church and was organized as a Baptist Church on November 20, 1767 between the James and the Rappahanack rivers by Elders James Read, Sammuell Harris, and Dutton Lane (A History of the Baptists by John T. Christian p. 289 & 290 and History of the Baptists in Virginia by Semple p. 23).

The Bryan Station Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky was organized on April 15, 1786 by Elder Lewis Craig from "Craig's Church" also known as "The Traveling Church" which moved to Kentucky territory from Spotsylvania, Virginia (ECHOS FROM GLORY a Concise History Of The Bryan Station Baptist Church p. 5).

The South Park Missionary Baptist Church was organized by Elder Glen Tweet from the Bryan Station Baptist

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Church on July 4, 1957 in Seattle, Washington (Organization minutes of SPMBC).

The Lord's Baptist Church was organized by Elder Larry Killion from the South Park Missionary Baptist Church on January 26, 1980 in Tacoma, Washington (Organization minutes of TLBC).

Now historical records like these are precious to those of us who love the old landmarks of church truth and church authority but our enemies only seek to use these things to gainsay the truth and endeavor to discourage us by ridicule in various ways. They try to find discrepancies in any of the churches among these historical records and there by discredit us as having something out of order about our heritage. They have done this before and just as sure as you are reading this, there will be a backlash of retaliation from certain quarters after this article is published. They have even invented a new name of derision for us. Like the name Christians and the name Anabaptists, the new slur being placed upon us is Emdas. They invented this name to ridicule our conviction on an authoritative connection to a sound church for the organization of any true New Testament church. They call it "essential mother daughter authority" or emda. Such is life on the old paths.

The fact of the matter is that Christ organized His church during His earthly ministry. He gave it and it alone the Great Commission. He empowered it once and for all in New Testament times to do the work of the Great Commission. Members of the church in Jerusalem were dispersed to various other places and fitly framed local visible assemblies of Scripturally baptized believers were organized in those locations with like faith and order as the church that they came from. They in turn organized others like themselves. This is the New Testament Pattern and it is in harmony with the biblical teaching of "like begets like". It has worked from New Testament times all the way down to today.

There is no need for a new formula for church organization. Random baptized believers cannot organize them selves as a new church according to the biblical order without being properly dismissed by the authority of the churches where their membership was in the first place for the purpose of being received into the new church. It is not up to the individual to declare himself a member of a church. Church membership is a thing that is done under the authority of a true church.

Some of our earlier churches went into error about AD 251. They broke fellowship with the pure churches and

eventually evolved into the modern day universal hierarchy heresy that we call the apostate Mother of Harlots (Rev. 17:1-5). No true churches have ever identified with this movement in any way. It was this organization that martyred millions of members of true churches over the centuries for not recognizing their self-claimed authority. See *The Trail of Blood* by J.M. Carroll.

The so-called reformers and some modern renegades have the same hatred for true churches today as the Great Whore does. I fear they are attempting to attack us now from within by infiltration with a new "Pop-up Church" theory that ridicules authoritative connection to a sound church for proper organization.

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

If you come from nothing you have no more authority than the pompous papists. I plead with my beloved Baptist brethren that are leaning this way. Please do not depart from us. Jesus is coming soon! AMEN.



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What Happened to

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concept of sin reduces moral conduct to a meaningless phrase and makes the life of man an illusion.

A host of Christian theologians, following the old Pelegian view of sin, maintain that it consists only in the separate acts of the free will in man. They deny that man has a sinful nature. They have no place for what is called hereditary depravity or original sin. Children they say are born in a state of neutrality, beginning exactly like Adam, although handicapped by evil examples. Their future course must be determined by their own free choice. These people really believe in separate sinful acts, but not in sinners.

An example of this theology can be seen in a recent article which was printed in the ITAWAMBA COUNTY TIMES of Fulton, Miss. Frank Foust, minister of the Pine Grove Campbellite church, wrote: "Sin is not inherited, but committed! . . . Some say that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was conceived immaculately, or without 'original' sin. And certainly she was; so was I, and so were you! We are not born sinners as the creeds and councils of men teach. When we become responsible, accountable individuals, we sin by transgressing God's law."

Roman Catholics have an ambiguous view of sin. They maintain, according to the Council of Trent, that sin always consists in a conscious act of the will. Further they teach that the dispositions and habits, not in accord to the will of God, are of a sinful character; yet they cannot be called sins in the strict sense of the word. The indwelling concupiscence behind sin is merely the fuel of sin.

But these two views of sin are defective. Sin cannot be limited merely to the deliberate choice of the will and an overt act. The Bible teaches that thoughts and looks as well as the overt act are a sin. Jesus said: **"That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"** (Matt. 5:28). Proverbs 24:9 says: **"The thought of foolishness is sin."** James 4:17 declares: **"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."**

To limit sin to an overt act is to contradict the Scriptures which teach that sin is a state of our moral being and the overt act is simply the fruit it produces. Outward acts of sin are a development of what exists within. The seat of sin is in the heart of man out of which are the issues of life (Prov. 4:23). In Acts 8:21 Peter told Simon: **"Thy heart is not right in the sight of God."** Jesus said: **"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness,**

blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19).

Modernists do not conceive of man in his nature as being corrupt and sinful. Man, regardless of minor defects, is a growing, developing person. To the modernist man's very nature is divine, at least in its human possibilities. Sin is nothing more than vice inherited from the brute progenitors that can be removed as man mounts upward in the evolutionary process. Nothing is wrong unless it is injurious to a person or his fellow creatures. This concept of sin is totally opposed to the Scriptures and so un-Christian as to merit no further attention.

Today we have a host of new-liters among our Baptists who teach there is no sin that a believer can commit in the flesh. To them the only sin you can commit is to teach heresy. They pay no attention to such Scriptures as Romans 6:12 which says: **"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."** Those who can accept such an idea as no sin but a doctrinal sin have long ago thrown away their Bibles and are now following a man whom they believe is an infallible guide. If some apostate Baptist preacher wants to start a new false cult, he has the civil right to do so but not a Scriptural right. At least he should have the common decency to drop the name Baptist, for no true Baptist has ever believed such theological garbage!

VERBAL GYMNASTICS

With such a variety of contradictory ideas as to what sin really is in Christendom, it is no wonder the worldly-minded man is unable to define sin. Social workers and psychologists have added to this confusion by further watering down and adulterating the word "sin." They have tried to change the nature of sin by calling it some high sounding psychological term. They engage in verbal gymnastics with such phrases as "glandular disorders," "social maladjustments," "normal rebellion," "ignorance," "hereditary deficiency," "Neurosis," "under-privileged," "immaturity," and "bad taste." Even professing Christians are influenced by such thinking and speak of "errors," "mistakes," "miscalculations," "infractions," "deviations," and "little white lies." Never does anyone dare use the one syllable word "sin" any more!

If the prodigal son in Luke 15 lived today he would not be a sinner. He would be pronounced a "juvenile delinquent" for which his parents were to blame. His going into a far country for riotous living would be termed "a justifiable, normal rebellion against a hypocritical and unjust society." Social Do-Gooders would say that the boy was a victim of some traumatic experience. Maybe they would say his mother was over-protective, or his father whipped him

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for disobedience, warping the poor boy's mind. Or still they might say that he grew up in a bad environment. And if they could think of nothing else, they would say his parents were old-fashioned and believed in common decency and drove the poor boy from their home!

No one would dare to blame sin for the evil in the world. Social structures are to blame for society's problems. The government is to blame. Americans have rejected any idea of personal responsibility. No longer are men seen as being responsible to their fellow creatures or the Creator. When a man does wrong it is society that has failed him. We would have to revolutionize our outlook on life to ever conceive of the fact of individual failure by playing football with the laws of God!

America has reared a whole generation and taught them to believe the government owes everybody a guaranteed income. Modern youths coming out of schools and colleges in the main believe the government owes them food stamps, unemployment payments, welfare, and free hospitalization. And if they don't receive all this and more, they believe they are justified in killing and taking what they want! This is all supposed to be okay because society has failed these social misfits. May Almighty God open the eyes of America to see that she is living in a fool's paradise where the inhabitants make a mock of sin!

NOT A SIN TO SIN

Sinners are an endangered species. Someone should ask the government for a handout to save this dying breed. The social gospel, the new morality, and the new vocabulary has almost killed all sinners. The synonym for evil is "error," "blunder," "indiscretion," or something else and never sin! Sin is unknown and sinners have vanished from the earth! Sin is Victorian morality of a bygone age. Sin is a puritanical thing now extinct. Sin is bad taste. Sin is an ugly, cloudy, misty word people are afraid to mention. It is forbidden in society and taboo in the pulpits of our land. No one knows what it really is and nobody wants to find out. We have lost our sensitivity to sin. We live in a world of unreality, a world of camouflage, a fool's paradise where people make a mock of sin!

Many church people no longer believe it is a sin to commit a sin! If a church member wants to drink whiskey, gamble, engage in extramarital sex, be a gossip and a crooked business man, it is okay! If a student wants to smoke pot, engage in pre-marital sex, and cheat on his examinations, it is socially acceptable. If a politician wants to tell lies, engage in bribery, accept kickbacks, patronize prostitutes, and steal the taxpayer's

money, no one seems to care. The people will re-elect him in the next election. If a preacher wants to go on a spree, fail to pay his honest debts, tell dirty jokes, and talk about the myths of the Bible, he can get a big church and probably a chair in some seminary! The mass of religious people are given over to complete moral suicide!

Our people have gone to the Devil's dictionary for new terms to dress up old, ugly sins to meet the general public. Lying is no longer a sin. Lying is propaganda and diplomacy. Liars are thought to be people with creative ability. Lying is believed to be essential to good politics and business procedures.

Adultery is not a sin. There are no adulterers and adulteresses any more. What we used to call adultery is now a sex adventure or a bad case of biological maladjustment. People do not commit adultery; they are said to have an affair. Divorce and remarriage are looked upon as a mere exercise of one's "God-given right." Homosexuals and lesbians are biological weirdos. These people need our love and respect and acceptance. They need our acceptance in our pulpits and in the classrooms of public schools. Never does any person dare to call them sex-perverts and "brute beasts" (Jude 10).

Drunkenness is no longer a sin. It is letting off a little steam and enjoying the pleasures of life. Those who get drunk suffer an inferiority complex and cannot adjust to the problems of our complex society. Besides, alcoholism is not a sin; it is merely a disease we are told. The alcoholic can beat his wife, starve his children, wreck his car, destroy other people's property, and take the lives of others, yet he does no sin. He merely needs sympathetic understanding and the care of an institution.

Smut, pornography, and obscenity are whitewashed as "frankness" and "realism." Women murder their babies and brag about it. Vulgar and nudity parade on television. Preachers cuss in the pulpits of churches. Nobody knows how to blush any more. There is no shame. Everybody congratulates himself that the world is finally "telling it like it is." At least they are not being a hypocrite about it people say. The Bible replies to such statements: "**They declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves**" (Isa. 3:9).

How stupid can we get! When will we ever cease to rationalize away sin? When will we cease to minimize wrong-doing? When will we end trying to make good and evil co-exist? Sin is sin! What was sin a thousand years ago is still sin today. What was offensive to God in Moses' day is still offensive to Him today. Sin is not some unavoidable frailty in our animal nature; it is willful

rebellion against the moral order of God.

SIN DEFINED

It seems our modern day society needs to re-examine what the Bible says about sin. It matters little what politicians, psychologists, priests, and preachers think about sin. The important thing is, what does God think about sin? What definition does He give of it in His inspired Word?

Sin is a specific kind of evil. Most of the names that are used in the Scriptures to designate it point to its moral character. Sin is not weakness or imperfections for which man is not responsible. In Romans 1:18-32 Paul makes it plain that what some call "hardened sinners" are without excuse for their conduct and worthy of death for their actions.

Sin is an active opposition to God: "**Against thee, (God), thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight**" (Ps. 51:4). Sin is a positive transgression of God's law which brings guilt to the offender: "**For sin is the transgression of the law**" (1 John 3:4). Sin is lawlessness and anarchy; it is lack of conformity to God's moral standard and a denial of His legislative power and authority. Since the law of God corresponds to the constitution of the ideal man, sin can take as many phases as there are forms of departure from that ideal.

Sin may be viewed in four aspects: First, with respect to God it is rebellion (Luke 19:14; Ps. 2:1-3; 1 Sam. 15:23) and failure to love God supremely (Mark 12:30). Second, with respect to the Divine law of God it is willful transgression (Ps. 19:13; Num. 15:30) and violation through ignorance (Lev. 5:17). Third, with respect to man sin is injustice (Eccl. 5:8; 1 Thess. 4:7) and failure to love our neighbor (Lev. 12:8; Isa. 53:6; Phil. 2:21).

Sin is what is wrong with the world.



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Sin is the cause of sorrow, suffering, crime, wars, divorce, sickness, and death. It is what divides and destroys our society. It darkens the understanding of man. It warps his judgments. It stupefies his conscience. It perverts his will. It desecrates his affections. It corrupts the imaginations. It deprives man of happiness and makes the soul unfit for Heaven. Sin brings on the soul the miseries of Hell-fire.

How dreadful is this thing of sin! It defames and degrades human character. It dissipates human bodies. It disintegrates moral and mental faculties. It decimates civilization. How awful is this thing called sin? It rots a man's name, consumes his estate, torments his soul, and offends his God. Sin puts gravel in our bread and wormwood in our cup. Only fools make a mock of sin. There is more bitterness following upon sin's end than there is sweetness flowing from its practice. Those who think it is well to commit sin will suffer nothing but woe in conclusion. You that sin for your profit will never profit from your sins.

SALVATION FROM SIN

The Bible not only tells us of the reality of sin, but it also offers a solution to the sin problem. The Bible tells how Jesus Christ saves people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). Jesus Christ is not merely a fire escape from Hell; He saves sinners from their sins. There is no need to come to Christ unless you want to be saved from your sinful words and deeds.

You were born with a sinful nature and you are a sinner. Don't be deceived by the high sounding psychological terms men may tack on to your sins. Face the hard facts---you are an awful sinner. Your sins deserve the wrath of God. If your soul went to Hell the righteous law of God would approve that right well. You cannot save yourself from your sins. Apart from God's grace and Christ's power you cannot be emancipated from the dominion of sin. Oh, sinner, take your sins to God to be condemned and pardoned. Take them to Christ to be washed in His precious blood. Take them to the Holy Spirit to be subdued by His mighty power.

Don't wait until your sins find you out. Don't wait until you reap corruption for having sown to the flesh. Turn the tables on sin. Take your sins to God's appointed Sin-bearer, Jesus Christ, for it is written of Him: "**In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace**" (Eph. 1:7). Take them to Christ believing He will forgive those who trust His cleansing blood. Go to Christ knowing that God has said: "**All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men**" (Matt. 12:31).



Wondrous Works of

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that I want to consider in this treatise: 1) Creation; 2) Revelation; 3) Salvation; and 4) The Institution known as the Lord's Church. God alone is responsible for beginning and sustaining all of His wondrous works. Man cannot duplicate the wondrous works of God, though he always attempts to imitate and pervert the works of God. Depraved mankind has always sought to rob God of His power and glory, in spite of the fact that God has declared He will not share His glory with another: **"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).

CREATION

The very first verse of the sacred Scriptures opens with an express declaration of God's creative power: **"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"** (Gen. 1:1). God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were the direct agents in the creation of the world. God alone existed and inhabited the realms of eternity. Men, angels, and principalities had no existence when God sat alone in the solitude of eternity. When God created He manifested the greatness of His power. He did not need the assistance of man in the creation of the world. He created by mere fiat. He merely spoke the world into existence by the breath of His mouth. Psalms 33:6; 8-9 declare: **"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."** Men can make things from already existing materials, but God alone has the power to create something from nothing. Jeremiah 10:12 declares: **"He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion."** How we ought to bow in wonder and amazement as we consider the omnipotence of the Almighty in creation!

Not only did God create the world, He also sustains all of His creation by His mighty power. Hebrews 1:3 states: **"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power. . ."** II Peter 3:7 declares: **"But the heavens and the earth, which are now by the same word are kept in store. . ."** The very fact that we have air to breathe, water to drink, and food to eat is because of the sustaining power of God. If the hydrogen and oxygen levels in our atmosphere were just slightly altered the air would be unfit for human and animal survival. If God did not send the gentle

rains and the enriching snows our earth would not be fit to raise the crops that sustain us. If God did not sustain the health of men by His goodness all would quickly perish from off the earth. If the distance and orbital cycles of the planets from the sun were altered the existence of the entire universe would be in danger. But God holds all these things in place according to His own good pleasure and purpose. Psalms 145:9; 15-16 state: **"The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. . . The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."**

Because God alone is responsible for the creation of the world, He alone is fit to rule and reign over all the world. God is the Majestic Monarch and Sovereign Owner of all the universe. All things that happen in our universe in time are according to the wise discretion and counsel of our Holy Lord. As Creator He alone has the right to determine how He wants His universe to be governed. Psalms 115:3 declares: **"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."** Daniel 4:34-35 declares: **". . . And I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: AND NONE CAN STAY HIS HAND, OR SAY UNTO HIM, WHAT DOEST THOU"** (Emph. TR)? Because God is the Creator and Owner of the Universe, all men are accountable to Him for their thoughts, words, and actions.

If an individual acknowledges that God is the Creator of the universe, he must also acknowledge that He is the Sovereign Governor to whom he is accountable. It is for this reason that the lie of evolution was hatched out of Hell. Men try and rob God of His glory by declaring that the heavens and the earth just came into being by themselves through some atmospheric catastrophe. They also contend that men and animals have evolved from lower life forms over billions of years. One of the most basic laws of science, the second law of thermodynamics, declares that all things are running down in the universe, not getting better. The law of entropy completely contradicts and refutes the lie of evolution and the principles of uniformitarianism upon which the system is built. Scientists (falsely so called) have forged the lie of evolution in an attempt to dethrone God and rob Him of His creatorial rights and glory. The truth of creation by God and the lie of evolution forged by infidels must both

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be accepted by faith. No one but God was around to observe the origin of the universe. Evolutionists must reject the greatest book in all the world and believe the lies and speculations of sinful men to establish their theory. Evolutionists must place their faith in the systems of men rather than in God: **"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."** Jeremiah 8:9 describes the condition of all evolutionists: **"The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?"** It is far wiser to accept by faith that the wondrous work of creation is attributed to God alone Who is pleased to sustain and maintain our world. Hebrews 11:3 states: **"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."**

REVELATION

Another wondrous work that is attributed to God alone is the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Bible is God-breathed. The Sacred Scriptures are not the work of men, but rather the work of a Divine Author. It is true that God used men to write down His thoughts and words, but those men did not write according to their own will but according to the will of God. II Peter 1:21 declares: **"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."** II Timothy 3:16 declares: **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."** The writers of Scripture were merely penmen who were Divinely guided and inspired by the Almighty.

Because the Bible is an inspired Book it is infallible and inerrant. That is why the Scriptures are called **"the word of truth"** (II Tim. 2:15). If God is the Divine Author of the Holy Bible then there can be no errors or mistakes contained in the Holy Book. Proverbs 30:5-6 declares: **"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."** The children

of God ought to rejoice in knowing that they have a book that is inspired by God and without error! We have a Bible that reveals the nature and mind of God as well as His way of salvation. The Bible contains the answers to many of life's knotty questions. The Scriptures are a perfect Book of instruction. The Bible tells us who God is, what He requires, what His laws are, the way of salvation, how to live our lives, how to have a happy home, how to raise our children, what kind of church to go to, as well as many other things that pertain unto life and godliness.

The Bible is full to overflowing with truth and moral virtue. It is a wondrous Book of unity and conciseness. Men have written literally millions of volumes commenting upon certain aspects of the Bible, yet God's inspired Word is concise and accurate. All that God wants man to know about spiritual things is contained in one volume consisting of the sixty six books of the Old and New Testaments. There is a wonderful harmony found in the Scriptures in spite of the fact that God used many different types of men over a period of years to declare His infallible will. Basil Manly, the Baptist theologian, wrote the following in *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*: "Here is a volume made up of sixty-six different books, written in separate sections, by scores of different persons, during a period of fifteen hundred years, a volume antedating in its earlier records all other books in the world, touching human life and knowledge at hundreds of different points. Yet it avoids any absolute, assignable error in dealing with these innumerable themes. Of what other ancient book can this be said? Of what book even one hundred years old can this be said?"

To deny the Divine inspiration, authority, and harmony of God's Holy Book is to be void of reason and common sense. To further illustrate the marvelous unity of the Holy Book I quote David James Burrell who wrote: "If forty odd persons of different tongues and degrees of musical education were to pass through the organ-loft of a church at long intervals and, without any possibility of collusion, strike sixty-six notes each,

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which, when combined, should yield the theme of an oratorio, it is respectfully submitted that the man who regarded that as 'fortuitous circumstance' would by universal consent be regarded-to put it mildly-sadly deficient in common sense." It is the height of folly to deny the Divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures! Without the Scriptures men wander in darkness and ignorance with nothing of value to guide and instruct them. How much wiser it is to submit to the Scriptures and agree with the Psalmist when he wrote: **"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"** (Psa. 119:105).

Not only has God inspired the Bible, He has preserved it down through the ages for our edification. Psalms 12:6-7 declares: **"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven"** (Psa. 119:89). All of God's truth has been miraculously preserved and accurately maintained by the mighty hand of God. Just as God upholds and sustains His creation, He also has sustained and maintained the contents of His Holy Word without fail through the ages. Even though the Scriptures were written thousands of years ago we can be sure that they are accurate, trustworthy, and our final authority for all faith and practice today because God is the preserver of the sacred documents of truth.

What is even more astounding is the fact that God has been pleased to raise up men of learning and piety to accurately translate the ancient Scriptures from the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic texts into the common language of the people. God has been pleased to raise up men to translate the ancient Scriptures into literally thousands of languages over the face of the whole earth for the benefit and edification of all peoples and races of men. As English speaking people we are most blessed to have the King James Authorized Version of the Bible. There was probably not a more august company of linguistic scholars assembled at any one time to produce this sterling translation out of the original languages. It was first published in 1611 and there is not another English translation that even compares to it for accuracy, flow, and beauty. It was translated when the English language was at its zenith in purity and beauty. It is the height of folly for English speaking people to use inferior translations rather than the King James Authorized Version. All modern translations of the Scriptures are taken from the faulty *Vaticanus* and *Sinaticus*

which were Catholic manuscripts that had long since been discarded and unusable when Westcott and Hort (both Mariolators) began to promote them as the oldest manuscripts. The reason why they were the oldest manuscripts is not because of their superior accuracy and faithfulness to the originals. Rather they had been discarded and deemed unfit for use until Westcott and Hort began promoting them. The King James Bible on the other hand was translated from the Majority Text or the *Textus Receptus*, otherwise known as the Received Text. Any translation that is taken from manuscripts other than the Received Text will have errors and omissions. That is why I can take you to all the modern translations and point out several places where entire passages have been omitted, or where the blood sacrifice of Christ and His essential Deity have been removed. If the ancient Christians discarded the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaticus* manuscripts as inferior, then God's people today should likewise reject any translation that has come from them.

Because man is depraved and ungodly he wanted to cast doubt upon the inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures. In the latter part of the 1800's college professors and self-proclaimed scholars began to cast doubt upon the authenticity of the Bible. It started with German rationalism, which led to higher criticism, which led to a flood of inaccurate translations. Because of the doubts raised by infidels and higher critics the Bible is no longer considered as the Word of God in many circles. Because of the flood of inferior translations people are confused and dismayed. Many preachers are so bent on trying to correct the King James and show off their limited knowledge of the original languages they cast doubt upon the veracity of the Bible in the minds of their hearers. Brothers and sisters, you don't have to be a Greek and Hebrew scholar to read God's Word! We don't need popes and priests to tell us what we are to believe or not to believe. We don't have to go to Greek and Hebrew scholars in order to get the proper interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. We can humbly go to the Word of God itself and plead with God the Holy Spirit to open our eyes so that we may behold wondrous things out of God's law. We have an accurate and trustworthy translation in the King James Authorized Version that is unsurpassed. It is the only Bible that God has used among English speaking people during times of great awakenings and revivals through the years. You can trace the current apostasy back to the time when men began to use other translations and cast doubt upon the authoritative Word of God.

How blessed we are to have free access to God's revelation of His mind and will as contained in the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is the Word of God. Since the Bible is

Holy, infallible, trustworthy, instructive, and inerrant we ought to devote our lives to the study and application of its blessed contents. There is not a more important book in all the world than the Holy Bible. Why then do a majority of people rarely open the Sacred Book? Why are men and women engaged more in pleasure and worldly pursuits than the consistent perusal and application of the Holy Scriptures? May God stir both writer and reader alike to obey the admonition of II Timothy 2:15 which declares: **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** May God be pleased to stir us up to diligently search and apply the blessed truths of Scriptures to our lives. May we be able to say with Job: **"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food"** (Job 23:12).

SALVATION

Another one of God's wondrous works is that of salvation. Salvation, which is the deliverance from the penalty, power, and ultimately the presence of sin is all a work of God alone on behalf of sinful man. Like Jonah of old I ascribe to the Scriptural soteriology which says: **"Salvation is of the Lord"** (Jonah 2:9). Every aspect of salvation from beginning to end is a sovereign work of God on behalf of a helpless sinner. God purposed, purchased, and appropriates salvation in the behalf of His elect. Thus salvation is not a work of God along with the work of man, it is solely a work of God's amazing and sovereign grace apart from the works of man. The earnest student of Scripture will search in vain for any passage in the Bible that attributes salvation in whole or in part to the works of men. Every head of soteriology, whether it be regeneration, justification, redemption, sanctification, or glorification, attributes salvation to the work of God. One of the most classic passages where this is abundantly clear is

found in I Peter 1:2-5 which states: **"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."** Where are the works of man mentioned in this passage? I read of the work of the Father, Son and Spirit, but not the works of man in the grand and glorious plan of salvation. God is the designer, architect, buyer, builder, and worker of salvation in the hearts of His elect!

Before the world began God the Father entered into a Covenant of grace and redemption with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The terms of the agreement were as follows: God the Father unconditionally elected a specific number of individuals out of Adam's fallen race unto salvation, God the Son agreed to be Surety for all those whom the Father chose to save by paying their penalty for sin and redeeming them with His own precious blood, God the Spirit agreed to appropriate the purchased redemption to the elect in time through the work of regeneration. Ephesians 1:4-5 declares: **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."** According to this verse God chose a people in Christ before they ever existed and predestinated them to be saved and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ according to His own sovereign and wise counsel. Man was entirely passive in the decree of unconditional election. This election by the Father was according to God's own free will, not man's. Man is merely the recipient of sovereign grace. God the Father did all the choosing in eternity. Everyone who was elected by the Father will be saved by Jesus Christ the Son without fail according to John 6:37-39 which declares: **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."**

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Wondrous Works of

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Because of the total depravity and inability of the natural man to understand the things of God, the Holy Spirit must quicken the elect in regeneration and grace him with the gifts of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The natural man is considered to be dead in sins (Eph. 2:1), incapable of comprehending spiritual things (I Cor. 2:14), unwilling to come to Christ (John 3:19-20), and unable to come to Christ on his own (John 6:44). The condition of the natural man is adequately stated in Romans 8:7-8 which states: **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. SO THEN THEY THAT ARE IN THE FLESH CANNOT PLEASE GOD"** (Emph. TR). The natural man's heart, mind, will, and affections are enslaved to a fleshly nature that hates God and is averse to all of His ways. The natural man cannot rise above his own nature and choose Jesus Christ. Jeremiah 13:23 states: **"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."**

We may as well expect the river to cease to run into the sea, as expect the natural man to turn from the current of his sins. The enmity of His will must be slain by the effectual work of the Holy Spirit. When the total depravity and inability of the natural man is understood then it becomes perfectly clear that salvation is a wondrous work of God alone through sovereign grace apart from the work of man.

The Holy Spirit begins the work of salvation in man when He regenerates the dead sinner by His sovereign power. The sinner is totally passive in the new birth, it is solely a wondrous work of God the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the truth of God's Word applied to the heart in conversion. This truth is in total contradiction of today's theology which attributes regeneration to man's will or his decision making process. Preachers today say that repentance and faith are the moving causes of the new birth. However, man is dead in sins, he cannot repent and believe. He must be made alive by the Spirit in the new birth in order to repent and believe. There is not one Scripture in all the Bible that attributes regeneration or salvation to man's free will, but there are several Scriptures which attribute it solely to God's will and power.

John 1:13 declares: **"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD"** (Emph. TR).

Romans 9:15-16 declares: **"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have**

compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

James 1:17-18 states: **"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."**

I Peter 1:23 declares: **"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."**

In each of the foregoing Scriptures God is said to be the moving force behind the new birth, not man. In regeneration God creates a new man within the sinner in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). Thus the new birth is to be viewed as a creative act in the heart, soul and spirit of the dead sinner. Salvation is solely a work of God as Ephesians 2:8-10 declares: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith: AND NOT OF YOURSELVES: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"** (Emph. TR).

When the Holy Spirit performs the new birth on the elect sinner, and enables him to turn from sin and embrace Christ by faith as Lord and Savior the sinner is justified from all things. It is faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ that saves, and keeps a sinner saved. When Christ shed His precious blood upon the cross of Calvary He cried: **"It is finished"**, meaning that the work of redemption on behalf of His elect was accomplished through His sacrifice. Absolutely nothing can be added to the work of Christ for salvation. The elect are declared to be **"accepted in the beloved"** (Eph. 1:7), and **"complete in him"** (Col. 2:10). It is the wondrous work of Jesus Christ that saves sinners, not the vain works of men.

Just as God sustains and maintains His wondrous works of creation and revelation, He also preserves His elect in persevering grace. Philippians 1:6 declares: **"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ."** It is impossible for one of God's children, who have been born of the Spirit, and exercised saving faith to lose God's salvation and be ultimately lost. Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd Who laid down His life for the sheep, promised that He would not lose any of His people. John 10:27-28 declares: **"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."** Those who believe that God's children can lose their salvation are in essence calling Jesus



The Opolkas have remastered their former cassette tapes "My Eyes Are On Jesus" and "Trust In Him" to CD. The CD is 77 minutes of Christian music written and composed by Debbie and Karen Opolka with the exception of one song. The CD is available for \$12.50.

Also, they have a second CD called "Heaven's Road" with April Brewer on guitar. This CD is available for \$9.00. These can be ordered from our bookstore. Please add \$2.50 for S&H on one or both CDs

Christ a liar and doubting His power and ability to keep His sheep. Jude 24 declares: **"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."** The righteousness of Jesus Christ which is imputed to the sinner in justification can never be abolished or taken away according to Isaiah 51:6 which states: **"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: BUT MY SALVATION SHALL BE FOR EVER, AND MY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL NOT BE ABOLISHED."**

Just as in all the other wondrous works of God, man has always tried to duplicate the work of salvation. Baptismal regeneration, legalism, good works, free-willism, and church membership for salvation are all vain attempts of sinful man to duplicate and imitate the wondrous work of God in salvation. Those who preach works salvation and glorify the merits of men must be regarded as antichristian promulgators of heresy and error that seek to rob God of His glory and honor. God alone is the author and finisher of salvation. Man gets no glory or credit for the salvation of his soul, it belongs to God alone! As the eternal ages roll on the blood washed saints of God will be praising God for His wondrous work of salvation! Not one saint in Heaven will ever try to take any of the credit or glory that belongs solely to God. Rather the multitude of the redeemed will be found attributing all glory unto God as Revelation 5:12-13 makes abundantly clear: **"Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and**

wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and of the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

It is the height of folly to attribute the wondrous work of salvation to anyone or anything other than our Sovereign Lord and His matchless grace. Romans 11:6 should forever settle the issue: **"And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."**

THE INSTITUTION

Just as the wondrous works of creation, revelation, and salvation are solely attributed to God alone, the institution known as the Lord's New Testament church must also be regarded as a wondrous work of God that cannot be duplicated by man. Through the years men have attempted to start churches and denominations through their own ingenuity and instrumentality. However all denominations of human origin must be regarded as perverse imitations of the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is the builder and sustainer of His church. And I am not ashamed to say that the Lord's church throughout the centuries would today be identified as a Sovereign Grace, Landmark Baptist Church.

Jesus Christ started and organized the first church during His earthly ministry out of the materials prepared by John the Baptist. The first church had its beginning prior to the day of Pentecost. The church was not started by the Holy Spirit as many Protestants falsely believe, but rather by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Matthew 16:18 declares: **"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"** (Emph. TR). The first mention of the word **"church"** in the Bible should forever settle all controversies concerning the origin of the church. By calling it **"My church,"** Jesus distinguishes His kind of church from all previous assemblies before He came on the earthly scene, as well as all assemblies that claim to have originated after He left the planet earth. From a simple reading of the verse we may conclude that Jesus Christ is the foundation and founder of the church which implicitly dates the origin of the church's existence to the time of His earthly ministry. Jesus clearly stated that He Himself would build His church, not the Holy Spirit, or Paul, or Martin Luther. We must either take Christ at His word or call Him a liar. The verse also implies that the powers of darkness would never be able to prevail or overcome the church that Jesus

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Wondrous Works of

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started, meaning that it would have an uninterrupted existence. He either did or didn't start His kind of church and promise it perpetuity during His earthly ministry. I choose to accept the plain words of Christ rather than the deluded notions and theories of Protestants and Scofieldites! Any date assigned to the origin of the church prior to or after the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ must be regarded as inaccurate and false in light of this verse. A church is a called out assembly of baptized believers. In John chapter one Jesus called out the disciples who had been baptized by John the Baptist to follow Him, thus the first church was started during the first year of Christ's earthly ministry.

Jesus not only founded His kind of church during His earthly ministry, He also emphatically stated that He would personally perpetuate His church through the centuries until He comes again. Jesus Christ promised to preserve and sustain His church through the centuries without fail. After giving the responsibility to carry out the Great Commission to the church in Matthew 28:20 He declared: **"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. AMEN"** (Emph. TR). The force of this statement by Jesus Christ must not be underestimated. He promised that His kind of church would enjoy His presence and power until He returns. Since the times of Jesus Christ up until this present day there have been Baptist churches in existence that have been Scripturally organized, founded upon New Testament principles, carrying out the Great Commission, and earnestly contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints. John 15:16 contains another promise by Christ regarding the preservation and perpetuity of His kind of church: **"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen, you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, AND THAT YOUR FRUIT SHOULD REMAIN. . ."** (Emph. TR). The fruit of the first church at Jerusalem was the church at Antioch that believed and practiced the truth. From the church at Antioch Paul, Barnabas, and later Silas were sent out with authority to establish and organize New Testament churches that would likewise bear the fruits of Scriptural doctrines and practice. The fruit of the first church is still remaining up until this present day through Baptist churches that are still standing for the same truths that the Jerusalem church did. Like begets like, and Baptist churches have been begetting Baptist churches in succession through the centuries, bearing fruit, just as the Lord promised, without

fail.

Ephesians 3:21 declares: **"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus THROUGH ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN"** (Emph. TR). It should be immediately apparent to even the most casual reader that this verse means that Christ will receive glory in His kind of church throughout all ages. This logically leads to the conclusion that the kind of church that Jesus started during His earthly ministry must be preserved and sustained by Him in order for Him to receive glory in all ages. Christ has been receiving glory in His churches in every century without fail, and will continue to do so as the eternal ages roll on as He dwells with His Bride in the New Jerusalem. The institution started by Christ will be forever maintained and preserved by Christ. Scriptural and historical evidence point to the truth of Baptist succession and perpetuity.

If the foregoing promises of Christ regarding the preservation, perpetuity, and succession of His kind of church be true (and they are) then every Catholic, Protestant, and Cult member must be regarded as being in unscriptural organizations that have no authority to exist from the Scriptures or from Christ. Christ did not start, nor did He promise to be with and perpetuate the Roman Catholic Church. She is described as the Mother of Harlots in Revelation chapter 17. Those churches that emerged and evolved from the Protestant Reformation trace their authority to exist, as well as their ordinances and ordinations back to the Roman Catholic Church, which is an impure source. Martin Luther is the head and founder of the Lutheran Church, not Jesus Christ. King Henry VIII is the founder and head of the Episcopalian Church, not Jesus Christ. John Calvin is the founder and head of the Presbyterian Church, not Jesus Christ. John Wesley is the founder and head of the Methodist Church, nor Jesus Christ. Alexander Campbell is the founder and head of the so-called Church of Christ, not Jesus Christ. The Nazarene, Church of God, Free-Will Baptist, and Hardshell churches were all likewise movements whose founders and heads were men, not Jesus Christ. All of the cults and Charismatic churches that have arisen through the years have been founded by men.

Every one of these false organizations has several things in common. They were not started or promised perpetuity by Jesus Christ. They all trace their authority to exist back to a human founder. They are all permeated with doctrinal heresy and some form of serious error. The errors of infant baptism, baptismal regeneration, church hierarchy in government, works salvation, continuing revelation, universal invisible church, and a variety of other heresies are found in these organizations that were

not founded by Jesus Christ. They all have vainly attempted to duplicate and imitate the institution which Christ started during His earthly ministry. They all exist on the basic premise that Jesus Christ lied when He said that the gates of Hell would not prevail against His kind of Church, and that He would be with His Church until He returns. All of these false organizations named above were started by men who rejected the authority of New Testament Baptist churches to administer the ordinances of Christ as they were once delivered.

Our Baptist forefathers were hated, hounded, persecuted, tortured, and put to death for defending the precious truths that we maintain today. They braved dungeon, fire, sword, and incomprehensible cruelties for the cause of Christ. In every century our Baptist forefathers have shone as beacons in the night, preaching the truth and exposing error. They have not bowed to the dictates or threats of men, but rather chose to suffer affliction and worship Christ in Spirit and in truth. May God enable us to maintain and defend the precious truths of the Lord's church by obeying the admonition of Jude 3 which states: **"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that YE SHOULD EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS."**

CONCLUSION

1. As we consider the wondrous works of God in creation, revelation, salvation, and the institution known as the Lord's church our hearts should be filled with praise for our God Who alone has the power to begin and maintain

these wondrous works. God's purpose regarding His wondrous works can never be thwarted by men or devils. We must agree with the writer of Ecclesiastes 3:14: **"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."**

2. As we consider the wondrous works of God the depravity and sinfulness of man becomes painfully apparent. Sinful men have always tried to corrupt and pervert the wondrous works of God. Men have always tried to rob God of the glory and honor due to His holy name concerning the wondrous works of creation, revelation, salvation, and the institution of the church. The heart of sinful man has always been set upon evil in an attempt to dethrone God and reject His sovereignty and authority. We must conclude with the writer of Ecclesiastes 7:29: **"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright: but they have sought out many inventions."**

3. Lastly, if God has been pleased to reveal the truth of His wondrous works to your mind and heart respond with a life filled with thankfulness, service, and worship. If God has opened your eyes to the truth of creation, if He has blessed you with comprehension of His revelation, if He has graced you with the gift of salvation, and if He has placed you in His institution, the church, lift up your voice in praise and adoration to the Most High. Hearken to and obey the admonition of the author of all these wondrous works in Ecclesiastes 12:13 which states: **"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."**



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Sin Question

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4).

Sin is an act of the soul; the body is only the instrument of unrighteousness. Micah 6:7 speaks of **"the sin of my soul."** The God of the Bible is against sin and sinners. Psalm 5:5 says that God **"hateth all workers of iniquity."** It is the very nature of God to send **"tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil"** (Rom. 2:9).

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). The sinner who persists in sin shall certainly find that iniquity is his ruin. The

soul cannot cease to exist since it is immortal, but it can die morally and spiritually. It can be eternally separated from the favor of God. It can be made to lie under the wrath of God for all eternity. Sin is the death of the soul.

SIN IS STILL SIN

The word "sin" seems to be one of those words irrelevant to modern society. It has no place in the vocabulary of modern youth and many adults. We have come to a day of situation ethics and the new morality. Many people have substituted

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The Sin Question

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the word crime for sin. Most of the things which use to be sins against God have been reduced to crimes against society and individuals. To some, sins are social maladjustment, ignorance, hereditary deficiency, and immaturity.

But it is not possible to change the nature of sin by calling it some high-sounding psychological name. Sin is still sin and always will be wrong. All the lying liberals and religious do-gooders can never rid the world of sin and its awful consequences. The Bible still says: **"But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons"** (Col. 3:25).

WHAT IS SIN?

The word "sin" is "hamartia" in the Greek New Testament, and it means "a failing to hit the mark." Sin is any moral deviation from the Divine standard, either in going beyond or falling short. Those who sin in the Bible are said to **"come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23).

TRANSGRESSION OF LAW

The underlying idea of sin is that of a law and of a lawgiver. **"For where no law is, there is no transgression"** (Rom. 4:15). The Bible reveals God is man's Lawgiver: **"There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy"** (James 4:12). All sin is law-breaking: **"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law"** (I John 3:4). Sin rejects God's authority, and, consequently, rejects God Himself.

ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

I John 5:17 says: **"All unrighteousness is sin."** Any want of conformity on the part of the creature to the character of God, whether it be in act, disposition, or state, is sin. To sin is to be unlike God; therefore, sin displeases God.

LACK OF FAITH

Romans 14:23 declares: **"For whatsoever is not of faith is sin."** Questionable indulgence is sin. Whatever is done with a conviction that it is disagreeable to the will of God is sinful to the doer. The very fact that one doubts God will approve of his actions is enough to tell the doer it is sinful.

FOOLISH THOUGHTS

"The thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24:9). One becomes guilty of sin not only by foolish acts, but also by foolish thoughts. We pass off many things with a jest, which are really sin.

VAIN CONVERSATION

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin" (Prov. 10:19). In much speaking there is often much sinning. Generally, those who speak much speak much amiss. Jesus Christ said: **"But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these**

cometh of evil" (Matt. 5:37).

NEGLECT OF GOD

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). This verse discloses that omission of known good is wrong. To be free of sin one must not only refrain from evil, but he must practice good.

UNBELIEF

Speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit, our Saviour said: **"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me"** (John 16:8-9). Unbelief in Christ is behind all sins to some degree. It is the taproot of all sinning. Unbelief separates one from the cure of sin, Jesus Christ. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict men of sin by showing them their unbelief in Christ. He uses the sin of unbelief to intensify our sense of all other sins.

ALL MEN ARE SINNERS

He who doubts the existence of sin is a fool: **"Fools make a mock at sin"** (Prov. 14:9). Sin is no laughing matter; it is a sad and sorrowful reality.

The Old Testament declares that all men are sinners. **"For there is no man that sinneth not"** (I Kings 8:46). **"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not"** (Eccl. 7:20). **"The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one"** (Ps. 14:2-3).

The New Testament gives forth the same sound. **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23). **"But the scripture hath concluded all under sin"** (Gal. 3:22). **"For in many things we all stumble"** (James 3:2 ASV). **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"** (I John 1:8, 10).

EVERY SIN MUST BE PAID FOR

There has never been a sin committed by any creature in the universe that God failed to punish. God **"will by no means clear the guilty"** (Ex. 34:7). **"Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished"** (Prov. 11:21).

The sinner must pay for his sins by suffering eternally in the lake of fire, or he must receive Jesus as his Sin-Bearer. Even when the latter is done, the sins of the believer are punished in God's Substitute that His justice may not be slighted.

GOD FORGIVES THE SINS OF PENITENT BELIEVERS

It is a wonder of Divine grace that a holy God would forgive a lost sinner, but this is the gospel message that is to be sounded out to every creature. It is written in I John 2:12: **"Your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."** Christians are a forgiven people. The forgiveness of sin is the great

boon and blessing of the believer. The youngest disciple is a pardoned sinner.

When God forgives sins, how many sins does He forgive? just a few? all past sins? When God pardons sins it is said that He **"abundantly pardons"** (Isa. 55:7). The God of the Bible forgives the penitent believer of all past, present, and future sins. **"And by him all that believe are justified from all things"** (Acts 13:39), and **"all things"** certainly includes all sins. Those justified by God are acquitted from all their guilt, for if any sin be left charged to the sinner he is undone. By Jesus Christ all sins are forgiven because Christ has made a complete atonement for the believer's sins.

In Ephesians 4:32 it is written: **"God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."** No one can **"forgive sins but God only"** (Mark 2:7). Of the Lord the psalmist said: **"But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared"** (Ps. 130:4). The best news in all the world is not that God forgives sin, but that He takes pleasure in doing so. **"For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive"** (Ps. 86:5). The Bible says: **"All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men"** (Mark 3:28). The glorious gospel of Christ promises the penitent believer: **"If he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him"** (James 5:15).

God forgives the penitent believer his sins **"for Christ's sake."** The sinner can be forgiven only on account of the atonement of Christ. He is not forgiven for his own sake; nothing in him merits forgiveness. Jesus Christ satisfied the justice of God that the sinner might be forgiven. In Ephesians 1:7 it is written: **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."**

Since Christ has made a complete atonement for the believer's sins the believer has complete forgiveness. **"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"** (I John 1:7). Colossians 2:13 says God forgives **"all trespasses"** and Titus 2:14 tell us that Christ has redeemed us from all iniquity. The psalmist, speaking of God, said **"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities"** (Ps. 103:2).

An interesting story is related of a Scottish physician who was noted for his skill and piety. After his death, when his books were examined, several accounts had written across in red ink, "Forgiveness--too poor to pay."

His wife, who was of a different disposition, said, "These accounts must be paid." She thereafter sued for the money.

The judge asked her, "Is this your husband's handwriting in red ink?" She replied in the affirmative. "Then," said he, "there is not a tribunal in the land that can obtain the money where he has written 'forgiven.'"

So likewise when Jesus writes the word "forgiven" across our account in the ledger of Heaven, the believer is released from

the guilt and penalty of all his sins.

BLOTTED OUT

The Bible tells us that God blots out the sins of penitent believers: **"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins"** (Isa. 44:22). The transgressions of men are as a thick cloud; they hide the sunshine of God's face. They "separate between us and God" (Isa. 59:2). Our sins like clouds threaten of the rain of God's wrath upon sinners (Ps. 11:6).

When the Lord pardons sins, He blots out this thick cloud and opens intercourse between the upper and lower worlds. The Sun of Righteousness scatters this dark cloud to the four winds of Heaven. The comfort which comes to the soul when sin is blotted out is like the clear sunshine after clouds and rain.

A boy ran to his mother one day after he had read the promise: **"I will blot out, as a thick cloud, thy transgression,"** and said, "Mother, what does God mean when He says He will blot out my sins?"

The mother, who is always the best theologian for a child, said to the boy, "Didn't I see you yesterday writing on your slate?" "Yes," he said. "Well, show it to me." He brought the slate to his mother, who, holding it out in front of him, said, "Where is what you wrote?" "Oh, replied he, "I rubbed it out." "Well, she said, "That is what God does with the sins of a penitent believer."

COVERED

Sin makes a person appear naked and shameful before God. It is the duty of sinners to uncover their sins to God in a penitent confession: **"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy"** (Prov. 28:13). When God pardons a man's sins, He covers them from His vindictive justice. Psalm 32:1 reads: **"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."**

In salvation God covers the penitent sinner with the robe of Christ's righteousness, just as He covered Adam and Eve with animal skins. **"Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger"** (Ps. 85:2-3). When God forgives sin, He covers it; when He covers the sin of His people, He covers it all. It will never appear to His eyes again here or hereafter.

A minister was once talking to a Sunday school class and asked the boys if there was anything that God could not see. One little fellow answered: "Yes, sir." "Are you sure, my boy?" "Yes, sir, I am sure." "Well, what is it that God cannot see?" "He cannot see my sins when they are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ."

REMOVED

The psalmist said: **"As far as the**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Why is it that it seems that there are few people being saved in this country? Is it a lack of prayer, the type of lives modern Christians live, or is it just possible that the end is drawing near and a famine of hearing the word is plaguing this nation? – Mississippi

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God's elect, whom ever they may be, will be saved. They will be saved when and where He pleases. His elect will be saved thru the preaching of the gospel by whom ever He blesses to sow or water the gospel spoken to the lost. God gives the increase no matter how hard we pray or what words we pray with.

The condition of the saved never changes in the eyes of God. When the elect are saved they are saved forever. The lives of the elect are a direct reflection of their maturity in grace and knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to remember to know what the will of God is in our lives. Walk in the Spirit, not in darkness. God will enable His children to accomplish His will in His time by His means for His purpose.

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YES! All three are major contributive factors.

I frequently like to quote Dr. Robert H. Lescelius, "Revival comes by the sovereignty of God, but man is not passive." We get weary, complacent, casual, or all three in prayer. We also often have ulterior motives in our prayers.

There is a story told about a wife who had prayed for years for her husband to get saved, but her prayers went unanswered because she wasn't really concerned for his soul but wanted to make her life easier. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3). I might add that I have seen a number of situations which I'm quite sure were like that.

Scripture gives us several incentives to keep praying! "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with

him" (Psa. 126:5-6). "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them" (Luke 18:7)? "And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:29).

"The type of lives modern Christians live." This needs no explanation! When the world sees no difference between them and us – in the way we talk, the way we dress, our choices of entertainment, and in the way we worship (or find excuses to skip worship), they see our weak witness as just a humanistic choice of lifestyle. When the church uses their music, dresses like they do, and uses sales techniques to win them, they see no point in changing. It is Matthew 26:73 in reverse. "For thy speech bewrayeth thee." Our lives must be different in practice and appearance, not just in espoused doctrinal position! "...ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. 23:15).

"Or is this just possible that the end is drawing near and a famine of 'hearing' the word is plaguing this nation?"

The prophecy gurus can have a field day with this, but it may very well be true. I know of no prophecy for a "last days revival" but there are two of our Lord's prophecies that stand out in this regard. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold...Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth" (Matt. 24:12 and Luke 18:8)?

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There is no doubt there is a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord in our country. It is also true that many professing believers are worldly and apathetic. I look at my own prayer life and I must sadly confess that I am not as earnest and persevering as I ought to be. Our hearts are not burdened as they should be for the souls of men. Every believer ought to be fervently engaged in witnessing and telling others of the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Gospel. These are all no

doubt contributing factors as we look at our present circumstances from a human standpoint.

However, we do not know the secret things that belong to the Lord. Ultimately, the salvation of every sinner happens precisely according to the Lord's Divine and sovereign timetable. There is a time to be born in the physical and the spiritual realms. Let us pray more fervently to the Lord of the harvest to not only call more laborers, but also to save more sinners. We must do all that is lawful and within our power to get the Gospel out to every creature and then depend upon our gracious and sovereign God to save. I Corinthians 3:6-7 declares: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." Let us be faithful in plentifully sowing the Gospel seed and watering it with our prayers and tears of compassion. Then let us depend upon the God of all grace to give spiritual life, godly sorrow that leads to repentance, and saving faith to His elect.

TOM ROSS



The Sin Question

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east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgression from us" (Ps. 103:12). The Hebrew word "rachaq" translated here "removed" means "to put far off." Just how far off does God remove the sins of the penitent believer? The verse says as far as the east is from the west. Thank God for a verse like this!

You can travel north until you pass a certain point, then you will begin to travel south, or vice versa. But you cannot travel so far east that you will begin to go west. East and west never meet. This is God's way of saying the sins of the believer are gone for ever. They will never be laid to his charge or rise up in judgment against him.

CAST INTO THE SEA

The Prophet Micah gives an interesting revelation of what God does with our sins: "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

What a wonderful verse! The God of all grace does not put our sins near the shore where they may appear again at low tide. He casts them into the depth of the sea. This is not a few little mistakes, but it is true of all our sins without exception. They are gone forever like the Egyptians in the Red Sea. One day the sea may give up the dead bodies in it, but the sea will never give up the sins of God's people!

One time a minister put a shouting member in his study during church to read a book on geology, thinking that would be dry enough to keep him quite for one service. In the midst of the service the man began to shout the praises of God in the study. When the minister entered the study, he asked, "What did you find in that book to shout about?" The man replied, "It says in this book that the ocean is 8 miles deep in some places. The Bible says God will cast our sins into the sea. If a man wouldn't shout about that, what would make him shout?"

BEHIND GOD'S BACK

Of God Isaiah said: "For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Isa. 38:17). Here we learn when God pardons sins, He casts them behind His back. Such sins will never be looked upon again by the eyes of justice and jealousy. "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10:17). This does not make sin to cease to be sin, but it does deliver the sinner from the punishment his sins deserve.

If a person casts his own sins behind his back and fails to repent of them, God sets that person's sins before His face. But when the sinner repents, God cast the sins of the sinner behind His back. God is said to cast all our sins behind His back and to deliver our souls from going down into the pit. This Isaiah says God has done "in love to my soul."

Men want to hide their sins from God. It is said: "The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid" (Hos. 13:12). Ephraim hid his sins to shame and hypocrisy.

Sin may be hidden from man but never from God: "Thou has set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" (Ps. 90:8). Job 34:22 says: "There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves."

God takes notice of the sins which are not confessed and forsaken. He records them in His book of remembrance that He may reckon with the sinner afterward. The Lord says: "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" (Deut. 32:34-35).

The Lord keeps account of sin as it piles up against the sinner. Of the Amorite nation in the land of Canaan God said: "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16). Of the unbelieving Jews Paul wrote: "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost"

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Considering that our choices for an elected official (president) are anything but choices, would it be wrong to just not vote? – Mississippi

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II Samuel 24:11-13: **“For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David’s seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days’ pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.”**

David was given three potential choices. I’m sure he didn’t really want any of them. But he had to make a choice. Of the three choices it was obvious that the pestilence, sent from God, was the proverbial “lesser of (in this case three) evils” because God would be merciful. So David chooses that one.

Let me put it another way, a way I’m sure most people in the southern states will understand. On the way from my study to the house I find my path blocked by a rattlesnake and a cobra. I don’t want to deal with either one of them, but I can only kill one. I’d rather deal with the rattlesnake than the cobra, so I choose to kill the cobra and take my chances with the rattlesnake.

(BTW, my choice of snakes is in no way intended to refer to any of the particular candidates.)

I have seen three main excuses that Christians use for not voting.

1. Christians shouldn’t be involved in politics. WRONG! We have the right – and responsibility – to exercise a voice in selecting our leaders. As someone put it, “the surest way for evil to succeed is for good people to do nothing.” The sovereignty of God does not relieve us of Christian responsibility.

2. (Usually used by women) “If I vote differently than my husband I nullify his vote.” See above. Every woman has the right and responsibility to vote just as well as the man. “I Cor. 14:35: “...for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” does not forbid a woman from voting! I and many others served years

in the Armed Forces to protect that right for her.

Also, in a proper Christian home I would expect that a husband and wife would have prayed and talked over the decision and would be in agreement. To me, that excuse indicates a lack of communication in the home and potential trouble.

3. “I don’t like any of the candidates.” As of the time this will be printed there are three likely candidates for President. Of course, if the Democratic primaries are over that will be down to two. Surely you must think one candidate is better than the others. To not vote for the better choice is essentially a vote for the worse choice.

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As an American citizen it is my right to vote or not to vote in the upcoming presidential election. I will vote for the individual that I feel best represents my Christian values and principles. I can’t decide for the inquirer whether it is right or wrong for them not to vote. For me it would be wrong not to vote. I want to exercise my right to vote even if I have to write in Elder Garner Smith for president.

It is a sad fact that the candidates that remain viable in the major parties are less than desirable from a Christian point of view. However, I am not looking for a political messiah to rise up and bring our nation back to God. My hope is in the Lord. I will trust Him even if He is pleased to appoint a president who will be used as a rod of chastisement against our rebellious nation. Psalm 121:1-2 declares: **“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.”**

My gut feeling is that we are in for some troublesome times as a nation. We have been covetous, worldly, rebellious, covenant breakers, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, proud, haughty, greedy, unthankful, murderers of innocent children, etc. among other things. We have sown the whirlwind and it looks as though we are going to reap judgment. Our only hope is in the

mercy of God. We must repent and cast ourselves entirely upon the mercy of a sovereign God. We are unworthy of the least of His blessings, but He is gracious.

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The choices of candidates for president indeed, to the biblical view we should judge them by, are anemic of morality to say the least. I have never ascribed to the thought that we should just vote for the lesser of the two evils.

We have a responsibility to vote but I think we also have the same responsibility to withhold a vote. That being said, we also must obey those who are in authority over us as long as the laws and expectations do not offend the Gospel.

We must be as the children of Issachar who when the choice was to be made as to who should be king took a stand because of their devotion to the kingdom. **“And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment”** (I Chron. 12:32).

MIKE DEWITT



The Sin Question

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(I Thess. 2:16). Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees: **“Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers”** (Matt. 23:32).

The measure of sin gradually fills up. Finally, sin reaches the place when it is ripe for judgment and ruin. **“They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins”** (Hos. 9:9). It is written of the wicked: **“God layeth up his iniquity for his children. . . His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty”** (Job 21:19-20).

SIN MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED

There is no forgiveness until the sinner repents: **“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out”** (Acts 3:19). There can be no pardon and peace until the sinner owns his fault. The Lord says: **“Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God”** (Jer. 3:13).



False Doctrines

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Trinity”

3. Another false teaching is that Men Can Make Their Own Gods. Isaiah tells about the man who takes a tree and makes a god to worship out of part of it, and a stool to sit on out of the rest of it. Idolaters are fittingly described in Psalm 115:2-7. The writer says that idols have eyes but see not, ears but hear not---then he sums up by saying **“they that make them are like unto them.”**

4. Many who do not manufacture idols of wood or stone, Create a Mental God Who is as Far From the True God as any idol. Many a person who claims to believe in God doesn’t mean the God of the Bible---they mean the God of their own imagination. Let us name some examples of this:

(1) *The “Allah” of the Mohammedan*, is not the God of the Bible, but a cruel warlike creation of the depraved imagination.

(2) *The good old “grandfather”* of many sentimentalists, is an imaginary god. He is the king of being who is extolled in some of the hill-billy religious songs of today. He is the “Man Upstairs” of that vile piece of blasphemy that is blared forth over the air waves. He is conceived of as “too good” to punish sin. “Tut, tut my children---be good now---don’t do that.” What a caricature of the true God.

(3) *The Arminian god*. He is the god of the free-willites, who deny the full sovereignty of God, and make Him to be a creature who makes His choices after He looks and sees what human beings are going to choose.

(4) *The Hyper-Calvinistic God*. He is made to be a great hard-hearted being who has so predetermined everything that we are all tangled up in the web of fate such that we have no choice about anything. Fatalism proceeds from such a conception. The “Hard-shells” are the product of this type of thinking. When preachers go to extreme on election and predestination, they become fatalistic. They reason that prayer doesn’t do much good, that evangelism is useless, and missions unprofitable. One eye and half sense will show one that Paul and Jesus had no such attitude.

Human responsibility should always be preached in connection with unconditional election. “But I don’t understand. . . .” This is the cry raised. God doesn’t ask us to understand. He REVEALS to us that election is true, and that human responsibility is likewise true.

5. *Then there is the false teaching that Christianity Has A Goddess*. Catholicism makes Mary to be “the Mother of God.” They make her into a superior mediator who comes ahead of Jesus Himself. Prayer is offered to her. In short she is made to be a female goddess. But Mary called Jesus, **“God my Savior”** (Luke 1:47).

The kind of God a person has will

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False Doctrines

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determine the kind of person he is, and will determine his destination in eternity. If one's thinking concerning God is wrong, then there is little chance that he will be right, religiously, on any thing.



Mini-Edition

by Joseph Harris

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Is Mormonism Christian?

Forgetfulness is a part of human nature. The older I get, the more human I become. This tendency to forget is one reason why we as Christians must read our Bibles regularly. We usually know truth when we see it, but tend to "forget" when not constantly reminded.

For instance, amid the glimmering and positive image that is used to portray Mormonism, let's not forget that it is still a cult which denies fundamental Bible doctrines. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was established by Joseph Smith around the mid 1800's. He was disgruntled with the divided religious denominations of his day. Smith claims that when he asked God to show him which one of the current churches was the true church, God told him none of them . . . they were all wrong. God then stated he wanted JS to be his true prophet and "restore" the true gospel back into the world, since it had been lost through the corrupt churches.

Smith didn't restore the lost truth anymore than the reformers recovered true doctrine that had been "lost" through the Catholicism of the Dark Ages. The truths which the reformers claimed to restore were still being proclaimed and practiced by true Bible believing churches, known throughout church history by various names, and persecuted by Catholicism. From the time Christ started His church, to the present, true churches have perpetually existed preaching true doctrine. Bible doctrine has been "messed with" throughout church history, but was never lost.

Joseph Smith, using a buffet line mentality, picked and chose what he wanted from Christianity, sprinkled in a tablespoon of Freemasonry, added a dash of mysticism and created the smorgasbord of Mormonism. The problem is, God never hired him as the chef.

Mormonism claims JS is the last prophet for mankind, but Hebrews 1:1 plainly states Jesus is God's final prophet,

and that excludes Mohammed also. Mormonism teaches Jesus is a god, while the Scriptures teach Jesus is God, and not just divinity, but deity. Mormonism teaches salvation by righteous works and accountability before the judgment seat of a trinity of God, Jesus and Joseph Smith. All this and more, was supposedly revealed to Joseph Smith by an angel from Heaven.

Again, lest we forget, Mormonism is not true Biblical Christianity, but a mutated corruption, sprinkled with a fairy tale element (man may become God), which corrupts the simplicity of the Gospel (II Cor. 11:3). **"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed"** (Gal. 1:8).



Is It Better To Please God Than Men?

By J. W. Porter
(1863 - 1937)

Holy Writ says that it is better to please God than men, though we haven't found many men, even preachers, who appear to believe and practice this truth. Naturally, we all prefer to please, and dislike to be displeasing. Indeed, we so much dread displeasing those about us, that we perhaps, many times displease Him Who is above us, and over all, God blessed forever.

The young minister is particularly prone to crave popularity. He easily brings himself to believe that unless people are pleased with him, they will not hear him--and how can he help them unless they hear him? And thus it follows that many a preacher has paid a tragic price for popularity.

Paul, the greatest preacher among men, realizing the price of worldly praise, exclaimed, **"Woe unto me, when all men speak well of me."** He was not willing to win the "well done" of the world at the cost of the Cross. He was unwilling to compromise Christ to secure the compliments of the enemies of the Cross. He would rather shiver in the cold, than warm at the fire of those who murdered his Master. He preferred stripes and prison to the praise of a wicked and



adulterous generation.

The man who vigorously denounces sin is pretty apt to be denounced by sinners. This is particularly true to those who derive their income from their sinning. The saloon man and the gambler will help "pound the preacher," if the preacher will leave off pounding their sins. And just here the popular preacher is pound wise and penny foolish. The gift of a good fitting suit of clothes, has often unconsciously caused the preacher to quit his preaching to the man that suited him--a big price to pay for a suit of clothes.

An inordinate desire to be popular has caused a dearth in doctrinal preaching. In not a few of our Baptist churches, the distinctively doctrinal note is rarely heard. Indeed, we have fallen upon times, when we must learn from the sign over the door, rather than from the preaching in the pulpit, whether, or not we are in a Baptist church. In many pulpits, the great doctrines receive scant

attention, or are completely ignored. The pulpit must be popularized at all costs--perhaps it would be better to polarize the pulpit than to popularize the pew.

It was Pilate's desire to please the multitude, that occasioned the crucifixion of Christ, and led to his own miserable death. He was willing to show the Jews a pleasure that they might be pleased with him. The same motive will lead to a crucifixion of the Gospel, and to the everlasting hurt of humanity.

It is well too, to remember that praise and popularity are often short-lived. Those who praise today, may curse tomorrow. The same accursed crowd cried, and hissed through clenched teeth: **"Crucify Him, Crucify Him."**

Let us earnestly strive to please Him, with Whom we have to do, and before Whom we shall all stand in the day, for which all days are made.

(The Baptist Monthly Magazine, May, 1924).



THE

BIBLE NEWSPAPER

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

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

JUDGE RULES IN FAVOR OF 'IN GOD WE TRUST' LICENSE PLATES

(EP News)--A judge has upheld Indiana license plates bearing the message "In God We Trust," dismissing a constitutional challenge by the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana, Fox News reported. The lawsuit claimed the state gave preferential treatment to motorists wanting the plates, which also feature the U.S. flag, because they don't have to pay the \$15 administrative fee charged for most other Indiana specialty plates. More than 1.6 million people have selected the "In God We Trust" plate since it became available in January 2007, according to the state. Republican state Rep. Woody Burton of Greenwood, who sponsored the bill to create the plate, said he was pleased with the ruling and confident it would withstand an appeal. "When we wrote this law, we wrote it as a standard license plate costing no extra money -- we deliberately wrote it that way," Burton said.

LAWMAKERS OVERRIDE VETO OF PRO-LIFE BILL

(EP News)--The Oklahoma Legislature voted April 17 to override Gov. Brad Henry's veto of a bill that will require women to get an ultrasound before having an abortion.

The bill will become law on Nov. 1. Other provisions of the law: It will prohibit abortions to all minors without parental consent and allow health-care professionals to refuse to participate in abortions if it compromises their beliefs. The House and Senate votes to override the governor's veto "represent an affirmation for the value of each human life and speaks well of our elected officials' commitment to the most vulnerable members of our human family -- those waiting to be born," Tony Lauinger, chairman of Oklahomans for Life, told the Tulsa World.

SCHWARZENEGGER FLIP-FLOPS ON MARRIAGE

(EP News)--After first saying he would support it, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger now says he will oppose a state constitutional amendment upholding marriage as the union of one man and one woman. "I will always be there to fight against that," Schwarzenegger told about 200 people attending the annual convention of the Log Cabin Republicans, a homosexual group. Geoffrey Kors, executive director of the gay-activist group Equality California, told the Associated Press that Schwarzenegger's opposition could help defeat the amendment or even prevent

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it from getting enough signatures to qualify for the ballot. "We were thrilled. We have been asking him to do this," Kors said. "The governor's support to defeat it is critical."

FLORIDA GROUP RE-LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT MARRIAGE

(EP News)--The Florida4Marriage coalition officially launched its Yes2Marriage.org campaign April 17 to protect marriage in Florida. John Stemberger, president of the coalition, made the announcement at 10 press events throughout the state. "It was a series of powerful events and we're very pleased with the outcome," he said. Florida4Marriage gathered nearly 650,000 signatures last year to allow Floridians to vote on the marriage amendment – Amendment 2 – in November. If it passes, it will define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

VIRGINIA COURT TO HEAR LESBIAN CUSTODY BATTLE

(EP News)--The Virginia Supreme Court will move a step closer on April 17 to deciding whether a lesbian woman will win custody of her ex-partner's child, a decision that could undermine the state's marriage amendment. Janet Jenkins, who has no biological or adoptive ties to Lisa Miller's 6-year-old daughter, Isabella, is seeking parental rights because she was in a relationship with Miller when the child was born. Miller got pregnant through artificial insemination from an anonymous donor, and the couple eventually ended the relationship. Though Miller and Jenkins are Virginia residents, the Vermont Supreme Court, which issued the couple's civil union in 2000, recently granted parental rights to Jenkins.

FAMILY BREAKDOWN COSTS TAXPAYERS

(EP News)--The breakdown of the family isn't just costly to children. Divorce and unwed parenting cost U.S. taxpayers at least \$112 billion annually, according to a study released April 15. "This study documents for the first time that divorce and unwed childbearing -- besides being bad for children -- are also costing taxpayers a ton of money," said David Blankenhorn, president of the Institute for American Values, which is associated with the study. The national, state and local costs — which add up to more than \$1 trillion over the last decade — are caused, in part, by high poverty rates of single, female-headed households, which lead to higher spending on welfare, criminal justice and education

programs.

UNIQUE LAW PROTECTS PREGNANT WOMEN

(EP News)--Anyone in Idaho who forces a pregnant woman to have an abortion could be sentenced to five years in prison under a law signed April 11. And if someone is convicted of making a threat or taking part in a conspiracy to force an abortion, they could get six months in jail. Planned Parenthood of Ohio expressed opposition to the new law on its Web site.

CHRISTIAN PHOTOGRAPHER CHARGED WITH BIAS OVER SAME-SEX CEREMONY

(EP News)--The New Mexico Civil Rights Commission has upheld a charge of sexual-orientation bias against a Christian couple for refusing to photograph a same-sex "commitment ceremony." The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) is representing Jon and Elane Huguenin. ADF senior counsel Jordan Lorence said, "Here is an excellent example of how Christians who believe in traditional marriage defined as one man and one woman are going to get in trouble. (The photographer) is basically being forced by the law to promote the message of a same-sex ceremony that she totally disagrees with."

CITY ORDINANCE STALLS CHURCH'S MINISTRY TO PAROLEES

(EP News)--The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) filed suit in federal court late April after a new city ordinance forced a Texas church to suspend its ministry to parolees. The House Where Jesus Shines, sponsored by the Church of the Open Door, is suing the city of Bellmead after it changed the zoning on the ministry's new property to keep it from opening. The carefully tailored ordinance, which followed complaints from neighbors, prohibits the ministry from operating anywhere in the city. "Churches should not be singled out for discrimination by a city's zoning restrictions," ADF's Dan Dalton said. "City officials violated federal law when they chose to pass this discriminatory ordinance." The House Where Jesus Shines aims to provide faith-based transitional care, substance-abuse treatment, recovery services, job training and assistance in locating employment.

SACRAMENTO WILL KEEP PORN IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

(EP News)--Sacramento's 27 public libraries will continue to provide access to pornography on library computers after the board deadlocked in a 7-7 vote in late April. The board also voted to spend \$21,000 in taxpayer funds to purchase special desks for viewing pornography. David Sander, alternate Sacramento Library Board member, said

the issue should not be up for debate. "Pornography does not belong in public libraries, period," he said in a letter supplied to California Catholic Daily. "Libraries are places for kids and families to learn and explore, not a den of sexual exploitation where anything goes." In 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Children's Internet Protection Act, which requires libraries receiving certain federal funds to filter out pornography. Sacramento does not take such funding.

"MILLENNIAL" GENERATION SHOWS RESPECT FOR TRADITIONAL VALUES

(EP News)--The media portray "millennials" as self-absorbed slackers. But according to a new poll, these twentysomethings show a lot of respect for traditional values. The survey, by the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, found 94 percent respect parenthood and 84 percent have great esteem for marriage. Just a quarter said they respect Hollywood. Ann Mack, a spokeswoman for the agency, said she was surprised by the findings. "It could be because they are more idealistic as a generation," she said, "but it could be because they are so young and not yet jaded." Mark Johnson works with B2G (better2gether), a ministry of the Navigators for twentysomethings. He believes the younger generation is reacting to something. "At least half of them that we see have come out of some kind of dysfunctional or broken home," he said. "They are wanting something more or better than what they have come from."

HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARS "BIASED" REPORT ON ABSTINENCE EDUCATION

(EP News)--Six witnesses lambasted abstinence-based sex education before a House committee today. Dr. Stan Weed, director of the Institute for Research and Evaluation, was the lone voice on the side of abstinence education. Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., stacked the deck as his House Oversight and Government Reform Committee reviewed federal funding of abstinence education in public schools. The latest research by The Heritage Foundation supports abstinence education. In a review of 21 abstinence-education programs, 15 showed positive behavioral results in the students, including the delay or reduction of sexual activity. Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, said America's youth will pay for Washington's decisions. "It's tragic that Chairman Waxman ignores evidence showing that sexual abstinence is the healthiest behavior for youth," he said. "The government does not promote drug use or underage drinking, and it should not promote high-risk sexual behavior, either."

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN PUSHES SPECIAL RIGHTS FOR TRANSGENDER WORKERS

(EP News)--The Human Rights Campaign, a homosexual-activist group, has released a guide for employers that outlines practices for advancing transgenderism in the workplace. Transgender Inclusion in the Workplace includes "appropriate terminology with which to discuss gender identity" and suggestions for "policies that protect transgender workers" by creating special rights. Some states are considering laws that would open most workplace restrooms to men, women, transgender individuals and transsexuals.

VERMONT COMMISSION STOPS SHORT OF RECOMMENDING SAME-SEX "MARRIAGE"

(EP News)--Vermont's Commission on Family Recognition and Protection has stopped short of asking the state to recognize same-sex "marriage." In its report, issued April 21, the group handed eight conclusions to the Vermont Legislature. The report included testimony in favor of same-sex "marriage"; the status of marriage-protection amendments and marriage laws in other states; and studies on homosexual "marriage" and kids. Steve Cable, founder of Vermont Renewal, said the commission only heard half of the story. "They heard one side of Vermont, which were those in favor of same-sex 'marriage,'" he said. "Ten out of the 11 members of the commission ... had already publicly said they were leaning towards gay 'marriage.' There is a silver lining, he said. "They did not make a recommendation for same-sex 'marriage,'" Cable said. "We're pleased with that. But we do know that this report is going to be used next year to foster a vote on gay 'marriage' in the Vermont House and Senate."

CALIFORNIA MARRIAGE AMENDMENT HEADED TO BALLOT

(EP News)--Five months and 1.1 million signatures later, the California marriage amendment is headed to the November ballot. The last of the petitions are being boxed up and will be delivered to county registrars around the state in late April. Ron Prentice, executive director of the California Family Council, said, "The fact that we will turn in 1.1 million signatures is unprecedented, coming from the grassroots and the churches of this state. We know that the road ahead will be especially quarrelsome, but we look for Christians to stand up, to represent biblical truth and God's will for marriage." The amendment to the state constitution would protect marriage from the courts and the Legislature. The state Supreme Court is

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scheduled to rule by early June on a series of lawsuits challenging the state's existing one-man, one-woman marriage laws. The Legislature has passed back-to-back same-sex "marriage" bills, both of which were vetoed by the governor.

SENATE AGAIN TRIES TO SNEAK IN HATE-CRIMES LEGISLATION

(EP News)--Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., is trying to give special rights to homosexuals by sneaking hate-crimes legislation into a major Defense Authorization bill. The tactic has been tried before; last time, the hate-crimes amendment was dropped from the Defense bill. "They want to sneak it under the radar and force the president's hand," said Matt Barber, policy director for cultural issues at Concerned Women for America. The hate-crimes legislation would create a category of crime for actions said to be motivated by prejudice based on "sexual orientation" and "gender identity." Peter Sprigg, vice president for policy at the Family Research Council, said it's a freedom of speech issue. "It sends a very serious message, disturbing message, that opposition to homosexuality constitutes hate," he said.

SURVEY SHOWS UNWED MOTHERS MAY SEE ABORTION AS THEIR ONLY CHOICE

(EP News)--Abortion supporters try to sell their argument under the umbrella of "choice." But a new survey by Feminists for Life has revealed very few "choices" for unwed mothers; many think their only option is abortion. Feminists for Life asked pro-life college students around the country to learn what information was available on campus. Serrin Foster, the group's president, was troubled by what they found. "Students are either not aware, or resources do not exist," she said. If it's all about "choice," then life-affirming choices must be included, she said.

FOLLOWING LAWSUIT, VERMONT SCHOOL RECOGNIZES BIBLE CLUB

(EP News)--A Vermont high school Bible club will receive formal recognition following a lawsuit filed by the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF). Middlebury Union High School initially denied official recognition of the student-led Youth Alive club because its purpose is religious. The school denied its members access to the benefits available to other campus clubs, including the Gay/Straight Organization, the Arabic Club and the Student Coalition of Human Rights. "Christian student groups should not be penalized because of their beliefs," ADF Senior Counsel David Cortman

said. "They are entitled to the same rights and privileges as any other student group on campus. We are pleased the school has reversed course and will now officially recognize the Youth Alive club."

DOZENS OF STATES CONSIDER SCHOOL-CHOICE LEGISLATION

(EP News)--A record 44 states have introduced school-choice legislation this year. Lawmakers are using tax credits and other incentives to help low-income families get their children out of failing schools. Georgia started with a special-needs scholarship bill last year and expanded on the concept this year. "The Georgia Legislature approved a \$15 million corporate tax credit bill this year," said John Schilling, chief of staff of the Alliance for School Choice. "We are hopeful the governor will sign that bill." The bill would provide a tax credit for families and companies that give to private school-choice programs. Florida is considering legislation that would expand its corporate tax credit scholarship program.

GAY ACTIVISTS TARGET MINNEAPOLIS SCHOOLS WITH NEW CURRICULUM

(EP News)--The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) is urging public schools in Minneapolis to resist pressure to implement a curriculum aimed at helping students as young as kindergarten embrace homosexuality. The Welcoming Schools program was created by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a homosexual-activist group, under the guise of anti-bullying curriculum. HRC has targeted Minneapolis Public Schools for implementation of the project. "HRC says the program is designed to stop bullying, even though its true intent is to promote the homosexual agenda," ADF Senior Legal Counsel Austin R. Nimocks said. "If HRC merely cared about bullying, they would simply endorse the school district's vigorous bullying and hazing policy. Parents and school officials need to be aware of what HRC is really trying to do." The pilot program is in three school districts across the U.S. HRC hopes the project will expand.

PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL OFFERS LESSONS ON 'TRANSGENDERISM'

(EP News)--When officials at Chatham Park Elementary School in Pennsylvania learned that a 9-year-old student, with the support of his parents, had decided he was no longer a boy but a girl, they consulted with experts on "transgendered" children and sent a letter to parents. The letter informed parents that the guidance counselor would be meeting with the school's 100 third-graders to explain why their male classmate was dressing like a girl. Several parents objected to the session,

and many requested their children not attend. "While compassion needs to be used with respect to this child's struggles, the school must also avoid infringing on the rights of parents who do not want their children exposed to these discussions before they are emotionally ready," said Candi Cushman, education analyst for Focus on the Family Action. "It's important that the school respect all the parents' rights in this case."

KANSAS SUPREME COURT ALLOWS TILLER INVESTIGATION

(EP News)--On May 6, the Kansas Supreme Court sided with life advocates for the second time in a week. The court granted a grand jury access to abortion records in its investigation of notorious abortionist George Tiller, who is accused of performing illegal late-term abortions. The week before, in a separate case involving Planned Parenthood's Kansas City clinic, Johnson County District Attorney Phill Kline charged Planned Parenthood with 107 criminal counts in district court, including 23 felonies. The court ruled that Kline has proper legal clearance to be in possession of abortion records as he conducts his investigation. A letter from former Attorney General Paul Morrison that would have cleared Planned Parenthood of any wrongdoing was rejected by the court. That case is back in court June 12.

SIXTH-GRADERS ASKED TO DECIDE WHO'S MOST LIKELY TO GET PREGNANT, INFECTED

(EP News)--A Mississippi school is taking disciplinary action against a teacher who required sixth-graders to vote who among their classmates was most likely to get pregnant, contract HIV, go to jail or die by the age of 19. The Chastain Middle School science teacher wrote the students' names on the chalkboard ranked in lists for everyone to see. School officials told WorldNetDaily the assignment was designed to be an "exercise in statistics," but parents are outraged. Many said their children will receive counseling or will transfer to another school. Curtis Lyons, the father of a student voted most likely to get pregnant, called a meeting for parents. He is asking the school to fire the teacher and address the psychological effects the survey may have had on students.

NEW YORK WILL RECOGNIZE SAME-SEX 'MARRIAGES' PERFORMED OUT OF STATE

(EP News)--The Court of Appeals, the highest court in New York, decided May 6 to let stand a ruling that required the state to recognize same-sex "marriages" performed outside the state. The Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court in February ordered the

Community College in Rochester to extend health benefits to an employee's lesbian partner after they were legally married in Canada. That followed a judge's ruling in 2006 that the school did not have to provide benefits. Stephen Hayford, spokesman for the Coalition to Save Marriage in New York, said the court's decision poses huge problems. "Canada has decided to pass a same-sex 'marriage' law; New York state has not," he said. "It's not appropriate for Canada or anyone else to export same-sex 'marriage' into New York and force New York employers to recognize something that our state Legislature and our elected officials have not chosen to legalize." Bruce Hausknecht, judicial analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said the court, which ruled in favor of traditional marriage two years ago, is contradicting itself. "Inexplicably, the high court is letting stand a ruling that says that New York essentially has no public policy regarding same-sex 'marriages' performed elsewhere," he said. "It's ridiculous legal reasoning to insist that a state could recognize a type of 'marriage' from outside that it will not permit within the state. Yet that's exactly what the Court of Appeals has now done."

EUROPE SEES FURTHER COLLAPSE OF THE FAMILY

(EP News)--One marriage breaks up and one abortion occurs nearly every 30 seconds in Europe, according to a report by the Institute for Family Policy. The Evolution of the Family in Europe 2008, based on research from the 27 European Union countries, described the birthrate as "critical," with almost 1 million fewer babies born last year than in 1980. One in five pregnancies ends in abortion, and two out of three households have no children. In addition, the marriage rate fell by 24 percent between 1980 and 2006. Jenny Tyree, associate marriage analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said Europe's future hangs in the balance. "Children are a nation's hope for tomorrow," she said. "Abortion, coupled with fewer births and a high divorce rate, spells social disaster. Hopefully, this report will awaken European nations to the value of marriage and children, so these trends can be reversed."

WITHOUT KIDS, JAPAN FACES 'IMPENDING DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS'

(EP News)--Japan has fewer children 14 or younger than at any time since 1908. And 70 percent of its workforce will be lost by 2050. The Washington Post called the situation a slow-motion demographic catastrophe without precedent. Steven Mosher, who is president of the Population Research Institute and has lived in Japan, cited two reasons for the impending demographic

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crisis. "Religious faith in Japan is anemic," he said. "Historically, they don't think of children as blessings from God. Secondly, it's a highly urbanized society. They're living in crowded, urban apartments. Families have a very, very tiny amount of living space. The country is just not very family friendly." Mosher said he doesn't see Japan turning this around. In 2006, the U.S. birthrate hit a 45-year high. "The U.S. approach is very different," Mosher said. "We use tax credits. If you're worried about demographic decline, you have to shelter young couples from taxes."

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS MOST DOCTORS IN ITALY REFUSE TO PERFORM ABORTIONS

(EP News)--Nearly 70 percent of gynecologists in Italy have refused to perform abortions based on moral grounds, according to the Health Ministry. The result has been a 3 percent drop in abortions. Abortion was legalized in Italy in 1978. The Vatican's involvement has allowed doctors to refuse to participate based on conscientious objections.

SWISS GOVERNMENT GRANTS RIGHTS TO ANIMALS AND PLANTS

(EP News)--The same country that violates human dignity with legalized physician-assisted suicide and abortion is now granting rights and protection to animals and plants. Under a new law passed by the Swiss parliament, dog owners will be required to complete a canine treatment course, anglers must take classes on humane fishing and goldfish may no longer be flushed down the toilet. The Swiss government's ethics committee also is considering "plant dignity" rights to protect plant life. Wesley Smith, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, said this is what happens when people lose their understanding of the sanctity of human life. "Children die of malaria in Africa, genocide rages in the Sudan, and Switzerland is giving rights to plants and extending the concept of the proper care and treatment of animals to surrealistic proportions to the point that it may harm humans from thriving and prospering," he wrote on his blog. "This is the same country that has a constitutional right to assisted suicide for the mentally ill. Where is the 'creature dignity' in that?"

ONTARIO BIRTH RATE PLUMMETS, FORCING SCHOOL CLOSURES

(EP News)--Hundreds of schools in Ontario may be forced to close because there are not enough students to fill

them. The falling birth rate is to blame, according to a report released this week by People for Education. Schools across the province have 90,000 fewer students than they did six years ago, the group said. It predicts there will be 500,000 fewer students in Canada's schools in 10 years. Ontario's plummeting birth rate is similar to many European nations, including Italy, Germany and Spain. In contrast, the U.S. birth rate reached a 45-year high in 2006.



God Is Spirit

By A. H. Strong
(1836 - 1921)

Many years ago, when I was a pastor in Cleveland, report came to me that one of the members of my flock, superintendent

of my mission-school, and professor in a medical college, was teaching his Sunday School the most arrant materialism. I invited him

to a brotherly conference, and asked him what was his conception of God. He gave me an answer that would have done credit, or discredit, to a Mormon or a Swedenborgian. God, he said, was a being in human form, but of vast dimensions, spread out in space, with a body like our own, ---man himself, in fact, being only a miniature god.

When I reminded him that God is spirit, he replied that spirit is only a form of matter, thin and subtle, but capable of thought. I did not succeed in convincing him of his error. Dealing in his profession solely with the body, he could think only in terms of materialism: matter, space and time, were all and in all. Our conference ended in an amicable arrangement that he should resign his place as superintendent, while he still listened to my pastoral teaching as a faithful member of the church.

In all probability few of our church members have done their thinking so logically, or have carried their thinking so far. Yet I am persuaded that very many are handicapped in their Christian progress by similar misconceptions of God; and I begin my statement of doctrine by pointing out that "God is spirit" (John 4:24), and that this implies, not only that God has no visible form, but that He is also absolutely independent of space and time.

SPIRIT AND FORM, SPACE, TIME

My medical friend's misconception of God was due to his wrong beginning. Dealing in his profession only with the

body, he had come to believe that man is only body, and that God, in whose image man was made, must also consist only of body. He should have reflected that man is essentially spirit, and that spirit is not itself body, but that it only uses the body.

And spirit is invisible. I can never see you, with any outward sight: I can only see the body which you inhabit. Your inmost self, your ego, reveals itself in the play of your features and in the sound of your voice; but the cause of these changes is hidden from me; in fact, some men put on looks so false and use words so misleading, that their real selves are quite the opposite of what they seem.

Though spirit expresses itself in form, it has no form, though it lives in space and time, it is not the creature of space and time, but is independent of them. And since knowledge of ourselves is the only clue to our knowledge of God, we conclude that spirit in God, like spirit in man, implies absence of all external form, and complete independence of space and time.

THE TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURES

This is the clear teaching of the Scriptures. "No man hath seen God at any time," says John's gospel (John 1:18); He is "the invisible God" (Col. 1:15); "whom no man hath seen, nor can see," says the apostle Paul (I Tim. 6:16). Apart from His manifestations, God's being would be unknown.

Only as we penetrate into the secrets of our own being, can we understand Him; and even our philosophizing goes astray, unless corrected by God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. A part of that self-revelation is furnished us in the declaration of the book of Ecclesiastes that "God hath set eternity in our heart" (Eccl. 3:11 marg., and *Miscellanies*, 1:3313-334), and in the statement of Paul that in Christ we are made "citizens of heaven" (Phil. 3:20, and *Miscellanies*, 2:159-174). As spirit in us has no form, and is invisible, so God, as pure spirit, has no body, never can be seen, yet is present everywhere and always.

There was once an atheist who tried to teach his daughter by writing on the blackboard: "GOD IS NOWHERE." But the child read it more correctly: "GOD IS NOW HERE." The doctrine of omnipresence is simply this: The whole of God is present in every place and at every time.

MODERN THOUGHT AND A SPIRITUAL GOD

This conception of God as spirit antedates some of the conclusions to which modern science is drifting. Einstein's "relativity" is an assertion that time and space are simply relations of material being; they have no independent existence; without matter, they cease to be. Not only Science, but also Philosophy, now sees the world to be psychic.

But a psychic world demands a Psyche;

a universe demands a Unifier; for "psyche, or a soul." The philosophy that holds to universal thought, feeling and will, while it ignores or denies any soul, source or standard of truth, beauty or goodness, is like the smile in Alice's "Wonderland," which remained, after the face to which it belonged had disappeared.

William James well characterized such philosophy as "rotten;" by which I understand him to mean, cut off from its source of life, and therefore decayed, corrupt, and offensive to God and man. If the universe is psychic, there must be a Psyche and a Unifier. That Psyche, that Unifier, must be a mighty Will, creating, upholding, energizing all material things; material things indeed are only the forms of His volition, while He, as spirit, is the invisible cause of all.

THE TIMELESS GOD

This mighty Will, just yet benevolent, is according to Scripture "Kings of the ages" (I Tim. 1:17, marg.), that is, Creator of space and time; not subject to space and time, but including them in His own being. With Him, not only is "one day as a thousand years" (II Pet. 3:8), but He lives in an everlasting Now, in which all history, past, present and future, is condensed (*Miscellanies*, 1:313-334).

As He is essentially Will, we are created wills, capable of relatively independent action, while our bodies are products of his constant volition, and He "holdeth our soul in life" (Ps. 66:9), even when we use these bodies to sin against him ("Christ in Creation" 30-35).

GOD, PERSONAL AND TRIUNE

God is not only spirit; He is also personal. When we apply the term personal to God, we must not put into it any unspiritual or materialistic meaning. God is a personal being, because an intelligent and loving Will is impossible without self-knowledge. The very word "consciousness" implies duality, a subject that knows, and an object that is known.

But this duality of self-knowledge sometimes becomes contrariety and insanity; a man can hate himself and run away from himself, as from an alien enemy. The prodigal son "came to himself" (Luke 15:17), and so became normal. Duality can become fellowship, only through a third consciousness that the two are one; and this turns the duality into a trinity.

There are indeed instances even of a triple consciousness within the same human personality; and the case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, which Robert Louis Stevenson has detailed to us, is not mere matter of a novelist's imagination. But no analogy suffices here. Three persons in one Personality constitute a union so unique that earthly analogies are only imperfect pointers toward its absolute perfection, -- they simply suggest that there is nothing irrational, but rather the highest reason, in the conception that an eternal Word

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God Is Spirit

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stands over against the eternal God, as His expression and counterpart; and that an eternal Spirit completes the self-knowledge and voluntary activity of Deity.

The personality of God, as intelligent and holy Will, implies the existence of three distinctions in His being, which are best described as three persons, and which we name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is God unexpressed, and independent of space and time. The Son is His one and only medium of expression, His eternal object of knowledge and end in volition, His only word of communication to creatures. The Holy Spirit is the organ of fellowship; making the Trinity an infinite society of communion and love, even without the existence of creation.

Three persons are requisite, in one mighty Personality, to constitute that

“living Will that shall endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock;”

and a trinitarian theology is necessary, if we are to believe in a living, loving, and self-sufficient God.

CHRIST, THE REVEALER OF THE FATHER

I have already intimated that the second person of the Trinity is called not only the Son, but also the Word of God. By this last designation it is implied that He Who became flesh, and Who is known as Christ, is God's means of expression, not only to Himself, but to creatures. In truth, we may well say that God never thinks, speaks, or acts, except through Christ.

We know the significance of words, in our own intercourse with others. I meet a man casually in the street. As he brushes by me, a single profane word opens to me the depths of his evil heart. A little word of kindness and compassion, from a gentle woman to a child, tells me the whole story of a mother's love. But for those words, the spirit would have been hidden. The single word has expressed the inmost being.

“In the beginning was the Word,” says the prologue to John's gospel. “And the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1,2). In eternity past, as we may conceive it, Christ already existed as God's means of expression to Himself, and as the object of His knowledge and love. It is still through His eternal Word, that God reveals Himself in creation, providence, and redemption; and the whole physical universe is only the operation of Christ's will. This too is the assertion of Scripture, for John continues: “That which hath been made was life in him” (John 1:3,4 margin).

“THE LAMP THEREOF IS THE LAMB”

Let me make this relation of Christ to the Father more plain, by citing the allusion to it in the book of Revelation. There it is said of the heavenly city, that “the glory of God doth lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb” (Rev. 21:23). God is light; but light diffused is never seen; we see by it, but we never see it; only as light is concentrated, is it ever seen. Christ, the Lamb, is the concentrated light of God; He is the Lamp, in which God's light is made visible; even in Heaven, we shall never see the Father, except as He is expressed in Jesus Christ.

And so our Lord Himself says to Philip: “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; how sayest thou: Shew us the Father?” (John 14:9). And Paul sees “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” only “in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Cor. 4:6); while the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Christ as “the effulgence of God's glory and the very image of his substance” (Heb. 1:3).

All the light of God is concentrated in Jesus Christ, so that He is the only God with Whom we have to do; He is God manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16); in Him is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9); in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3).

Andrew Fuller once said that the doctrines of theology were “united together like chainshot, so that, whichever one enters the heart, the others must certainly follow.” This is peculiarly true with regard to our view of Christ; and what I have said of Him will determine and dominate my whole subsequent treatment of theology (Matt. 22:42).

(What Shall I Believe, pp. 13-22, 1922 edition).



Have You Believed A Lie?

by Raymond Bennett
of Ithaca, New York

Satan promised Eve, in the Garden of Eden, “Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5).

Ever since then man has thought he was able to decide what was right and what was wrong, what was good and what was evil, and what was sin and what was merely some



sickness.

Sin has lost its meaning to us!

In the wisdom of secular intelligence, those things which were once considered sin are now passed off as a mistake, simply poor judgment or just the “wild oats” of youth.

With maturity and education, it is supposed that man can be freed from those childish mistakes and made righteous.

But don't you believe it!

Then it is supposed that by some man-made system of punishment, in politically correct jargon called “correctional institutions,” man can either be rehabilitated so that he won't make those same mistakes anymore, or he will be deterred from making them in the first place?

But don't you believe that either!

The Bible, the divinely inspired Word of our righteous, just creator God, defines sin as “the transgression of the law” (I John. 3:4).

Sin is seen by the evidence of actions such as: “...adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like...” (Gal. 5:19-21).

The Biblical word for “sin” really includes the full scope of human behavior and activity, even those good things we do. The word for sin simply means “missing the mark,” or as Romans 3:23 puts it, coming “short of the glory of God.”

The “wages,” or penalty for sin is death, not just physical death but spiritual death, i.e.: separation from God, which is eternity in Hell. “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek. 18:4).

There is hope! But there is only one hope.

“...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ...” (I Tim. 1:15). That's why Christ died! He paid for the sin of all His elect.

If you are not a sinner, you don't need Christ! But the Bible says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23, italics added.) The Bible says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (I John. 1:8).

If you believe this, then there are two more verses you need to act upon. “...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ...” (Acts 16:31) and “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13).

If you don't believe that, then do nothing. But the Bible says, “...he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John. 3:18).

Would you rather believe the unchanging Word of God, or the ever changing words of human thinking?



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Are You Sinner?

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

In II Chronicles 28:10 there is found this question: **"But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God?"** The children of Israel had taken 200,000 captives of their brethren of the tribe of Judah. But God sent Oded to warn them concerning their bloodthirsty thoughts against their brethren. Our text is God's warning through the prophet to the Israelites, showing them that they, too, were sinners before Jehovah.

How timely is the question: **"But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God?"** What a home question! This gets down to the nitty gritty of the matter. We are prone to look at the sins of other people and forget our own. It is our nature to magnify the mote in our brother's eye and minimize the beam in our own eye. Yet it behooves men to clean their own houses, to sweep their own streets, and to purify their own streams.

Today I want you to forget about the failures of other people. Rid your mind of the hypocrites in the churches. Cleanse your thoughts of the follies of your immediate family. For a few moments concentrate on your own condition before the Lord. Ask yourself the question: "Is there not with me, even with me, some sins against the Lord my God?" To honestly face this question is to answer it in the affirmative.

The Bible expressly teaches that all the sons of Adam are sinners. Every son of Adam is a sinner in a fourfold sense. First, each descendant of Adam is a sinner by the original sin of his first father. Second, he is a sinner by the sinful nature inherited from Adam. Third, he is a sinner by practice. Fourth, he is a sinner by choice. Now I want us to consider these four facts in the order in which I mentioned them.

A SINNER BY ORIGINAL SIN

In the Garden of Eden, Adam, the father of the human race, had a choice between life and death, self and God, and sin and righteousness. By the exercise of his free will he chose evil instead of good and Satan rather than God. The consequence was two-fold: Physical death (Gen. 3:22; I Cor. 15:22) and spiritual death (Gen. 2:17). Since the fall man has been alienated from the life of God and a dying creature. In Eden man lost the moral likeness of God. His intellect was blinded, his affections corrupted, and his will enslaved. Seeking to be a god, he became a slave; seeking independence from God, he ceased to be master of himself. His sin caused him to be banished from Eden and to lose the fellowship of God.

Adam was the federal head of all his natural seed. His sin was as truly the sin of every one of his posterity as if it had been personally committed by him. In Romans 5:12 it is written: **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."** Death came through sin, and all who die are sinners. This proves that even infants are sinners in Adam. Paul said that **"death passed"** to all men, meaning it passed from father to son from one generation to another. Death is common to all men because all men are sinners before God.

By virtue of our organic unity (Acts 17:26), the sin of Adam is a sin charged to the whole human race: **"Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation. . . For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners. . ."** (Rom. 5:18-19). By the one offense of Adam **"judgment came upon all men to condemnation."** When Adam ate the forbidden fruit, he by that single act made us sinners. All mankind descending from Adam by ordinary generation sinned in him and fell with him in the first transgression. You, sir, are a son of Adam and every son of Adam is a sinner. There is with you, even with you, some sins against the Lord your God.

A SINNER BY NATURE

Man is born in the world with a sinful nature inherited from Adam. Sin is the heritage of man from the time of his conception, and it is present in human nature so early that it cannot possibly be considered as the result of imitation of parents. There is no birth without sin: **"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one"** (Job 14:4). A sinful woman cannot give birth to a sinless child. Each child born into the world has a sinful nature from birth.

It is an immutable law that like beget like all over the world. The nature of the hyena is propagated. The offspring of the lion is not a lamb but a young lion. The offspring of a wolf is not a lamb but a young wolf. Even so the offspring of a sinful woman is not an angel but a young sinner. The child has the same nature of his parents, the same moral character, the same proneness to evil. Those who go around and speak of "pure, sweet, innocent babies" are ignorant of the teachings of the Bible. Like begets like, and a clean child can no more come from unclean parents than grapes of thorns. Sin is a hereditary disease passed from one generation to another.

The psalmist said: **"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me"** (Ps. 51:5). Here David expresses a depravity so deep it had

its origin at the beginning of existence. The sense is as soon as the mass of human nature was shaped in the womb and united to a soul, sin was in him, and he was in sin. David was a sinner when he was conceived in his mother's womb. He does not say "my sin," but **"sin."** He being descended from Adam had a sinful nature which is common to all mankind.

If David, born of religious parents, famous for early piety, a man after God's own heart, and from whose seed the Messiah sprang was born a sinner, then every man comes into the world with a corrupt nature. We have from conception the snares of sin in our bodies, the seeds of sin in our souls, and the stain of sin upon both. This is what is called original sin, for it is as ancient as our origin and the cause of all actual transgressions. This is that foolishness bound in the heart of every child (Prov. 22:15). This is that evil imagination that man has from his youth (Gen. 8:21). This is that propensity to sin which causes even a child of the king to be bent to backsliding from God (Hos. 11:7).

David did not mean as some have supposed that his parents sinned by begetting and conceiving him. He was conceived in lawful wedlock. In other Psalms David speaks of his mother's piety and pleads his relation to her (Ps. 116:16). This he would not have done by Divine inspiration had his mother been an impure woman. Besides, if David were a bastard, he could not have entered into the congregation of the Lord (Deut. 23:2), yet we know that he often did (Ps. 42:4; 55:14).

Isaiah 48:8 says man is **"a transgressor from the womb."** Psalm 58:3 reads: **"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."** The first thing a baby does is not an act of holiness but an act of sin. His first speaking is lying and his first going is straying. The first developments of character are sinful. His depraved nature inherited from Adam makes it certain that he will act according to his nature. In Ephesians 2:3 Paul says the elect were **"by nature the children of wrath, even as others."** The term **"by nature"** points to something inborn and original, as distinguished from what is subsequently acquired.

Sin is original in man's nature. He is a sinner before he exercises a personal and conscious choice (Rom. 5:12-14). Sin exists in the case of infants prior to moral consciousness. Infants die, and death is the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23; James 1:15). The Scriptures teach all men are under condemnation and need redemption by Christ. Children are never made an exception to this rule. Hence infants are not innocent, being born with original sin. Yes, dear friend, there is with you, even with you, some sin against the Lord our God. You have been a sinner since the day you were born!

A SINNER BY PRACTICE

No mortal on earth is without sin. I Kings 8:46 says: **"For there is no man that sinneth not."** Such is the depravity of human nature, the temptation of Satan, and the treachery of the heart, men cannot cease from sin. Isaiah 53:6 says: **"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way."** Here it is seen that all men like silly sheep go astray from God. They deviate from His Word, err from the paths of righteousness, and walk in crooked paths which lead to destruction. You, dear friend, are this very hour going your own way. Yes, your own way---not God's way. It is this going about your own way that constitutes sin in the eyes of God.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 declares: **"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."** Some are quick to say, "I have been saved and sanctified." But you cannot say that you are perfectly free of sin. None that live on this side of Heaven live without sin. There is no man on earth who always practices good and never sins. Only Jesus Christ lived on earth without sin, and you, sir, are a far cry from Jesus Christ. There is with you, even with you, some sins against the Lord our God!

All the sons of Adam without exception make a practice of sinning. It is written in Romans 3:9-20: **"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."**

Not one man by nature possesses a righteousness that can meet the demands of God's holy law. These verses assert the universal sinfulness of the whole human race. Such expressions as, **"They are all," "they are together," "every one,"** and **"all the world"** show the universality of sin to be without exception. The multiplied negative terms, **"no flesh,"** and **"there is none,"** four times over, beside **"no, not one"** twice, means the universal practice of sin is common to the whole human race. Finally, the Apostle Paul says: **"For**

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Are You A Sinner?

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all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). If you are a descendant from Adam, and you most certainly are, then you make a practice of sinning. There is with you, even with you, some sins against the Lord your God.

Every violation of God's moral standard of conduct is a sin: **"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law"** (I John 3:4). James 2:10 declares: **"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."** Who are you kidding? You know that you daily transgress the moral law of God. This means that you are a law-breaker. Even failure to do known good is sin: **"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin"** (James 4:17). Every day of your life you could do more good deeds than you do. Yes, there is with you, even with you, some sins against the Lord our God.

The Bible says foolish thoughts are sinful: **"The thought of foolishness is sin"** (Prov. 24:9). Vain conversation is a sin: **"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin"** (Prov. 10:19). Don't you think about things which should not enter your mind? Don't you say things you should not? Do not many of your words offend and make people angry? If you were to claim to be sinless, your own mind and mouth would condemn you. Yes, there is with you, even with you, some sins against the Lord our God.

Verily in the light of such lofty requirements of us in the Bible, **"Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"** (Prov. 20:9). I John 1:8, 10 declares: **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."** To deny that you are a sinner is to be guilty of self-deception. It is to demonstrate to all that God's Word has no place in your heart and that you are ignorant of its teachings. Don't lie to yourself. There is with you, even with you, some sins against the Lord our God.

The best performances of the Adamic man are defective. Even what we call righteous acts are **"filthy rags"** in the sight of God (Isa. 64:6). Men are so corrupt and polluted that they are only fit to be cast to the dunghill. The finest duties of the children of men are full of sin and corruption. All our prayers, sacrifices, alms, and praises are mingled with pollution. In the Adamic nature there **"dwelleth no good thing"** (Rom. 7:18). **"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God"** (Rom. 8:8). You still live in the flesh. You do not have a sinless body yet. Therefore, there is with you, even with you, some sins against the

Lord our God.

A SINNER BY CHOICE

God calls upon a man to choose good and refuse evil (Deut. 30:19). But because of the depravity of his heart man always chooses evil rather than good. In Isaiah 65:12 it is written: **"Because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not."** Apart from saving grace man will always persist in the choice and pursuit of that which is evil. It is this choice of sin which so highly displeases God. In Isaiah 66:3 it is said: **"Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations."** Here again we are told how the Adamic man chooses the way of his own wicked heart. He so often chooses to sin that the Bible says he **"drinketh iniquity like water"** (Job 15:16). An unsaved man constantly chooses to sin by satisfying the appetites of the old man.

The more a man sins, the more he chooses to sin. He chooses to continue in sin from one day to the next. Is the adulterer ready to quit his adultery? Is the blasphemer ready to cease his blasphemy? Is the liar ready to terminate his lying? Is the drunkard ready to become a sober man? No! No! A thousand times, No! They by deliberate action of their wills choose to go on sinning. Sin is man's master, and man is its slave. Jesus said: **"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"** (John 8:34).

The sons of Adam love darkness rather than light, and God holds men responsible for their wretched choice of sin and Satan instead of the Saviour. **"For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices"** (Prov. 1:29-31).

By deliberate choice growing out of their depraved hearts, all sinners hate the knowledge of God. They regard not His gracious counsel. They despise all his reproof. They refuse to choose the fear of the Lord. Their end will be according to their works. They shall perish in their sins. They are to reap the fruit of their own devices. They cannot blame others for their ruin. They cannot blame God, for His does not force them to choose sin. They cannot blame Adam, for they have chosen to sin as much as Adam did. Man is without excuse for his wretched choice of sin, and he is totally responsible for his miserable end.

CONCLUSION

Sin in the heart, when loved and obeyed, is a killing serpent. James 1:15 tells us: **"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."** In this verse lust is personified as a harlot who conceives and bears a child, sin. Sin then

conceives and brings forth a grandchild, death. This same idea is presented in Psalms 7:14: **"Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood."** Lust is the bud, sin is the blossom, and death the fruit.

My friend, you are playing with the most deadly thing in all the world---sin. It is not something to be trifled with. It is not a minor sickness of the soul. By daily sinning you are killing yourself. You are making your life on earth miserable. You are damning your soul for eternity. Sin killed Achan, Ahab, Herod, and Judas Iscariot. It will kill you unless you forsake it, confess it, and flee to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to save sinners. If you know yourself to be a sinner, then Jesus Christ came to save you. In I Timothy 1:15 it is written: **"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."**

Your friends know that you are a sinner. Your conscience admits the same. The Bible declares it to be true. Your experience proves that there is with you, even with you, some sins against the Lord our God. What are you going to do about these sins? Will you continue in them until they destroy your physical life and bring your soul to eternal torment? The command of God to you is: **"Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin"** (Ezek. 18:30). Why not join with the psalmist in saying: **"For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great"** (Ps. 25:11). Claim the cleansing blood of Christ as your only hope of forgiveness of sins, for it is written that His blood **"cleanseth us from all sin"** (I John 1:7).



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

4-1-2008 to 4-30-2008

Beginning Balance	\$11,321.84
RECEIPTS:	
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
.....	475.00
TOTAL	11,796.84
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	400.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	400.00
.....	\$11,396.84
Interest	+ 2.02
.....	11,398.86
Less Corbin, KY des.	-1,050.92
ENDING BALANCE	\$10,347.94

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,250.92
RECEIPTS:	
.....	1,250.92
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	200.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,050.92

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

4-1-2008 to 4-30-2008

Beginning Balance	\$9,070.46
RECEIPTS:	
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	46.65
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV	100.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL	50.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA	150.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	500.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testamnet B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC ..	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH	75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Walnut Creek B. C., Grove City, OH	50.00
Subscriptions	115.00
Anon	230.00
Dividing Checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,556.65
TOTAL	\$12,627.11
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	581.71
Postage	943.43
Wages	2,000.00
FICA	152.95
Dividing Checks	150.00
Supplies	97.00
Total Expenditures	3,925.09
ENDING BALANCE	\$8,702.02

Do Not Sin Against This Child

By C. H. Spurgeon
(1834 - 1892)

"And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required" (Gen. 42:22).

You know how Joseph's brethren, through envy, sold him into Egypt; and how ultimately they were themselves compelled to go down into Egypt to buy corn. When they were treated roughly by the governor of that country, whom they did not know to be their brother, their consciences smote them, and they said one to another, **"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that**

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Do Not Sin Against

(Continued from page 358) ♦

we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. While their consciences were thus accusing them, the voice of their elder brother chimed in, saying, **"Said I not unto you, Do not sin against the child?"** From which I gather that, if we commit sin after being warned, the voice of consciences will be all the more condemning, for it will be supported by the memory of disregarded admonitions, which will revive again, and with solemn voices say to us, "Said we not unto you, Do not sin against the child?" We who know what is due to children will be far more guilty than others if we sin against their souls. Wiser views as to the needs and hopes of the little ones are now abroad in the world than those which ruled the public mind fifty years ago, and we shall be doubly criminal if now we bring evil upon the little ones.

The advice of Reuben may well be given to all grown-up persons, **"Do not sin against the child."** Thus would I speak to every parent, to every elder brother or sister, to every schoolmaster, to every employer, to every man and woman, whether they have families or not, **"Do not sin against the child."** neither against your own child, nor against anybody's child, nor against the poor waif of the street whom they call "nobody's child." If you sin against adults, **"do not sin against the child."** If a man must be profane, let him have too much reverence for a child to pollute its little ear with blasphemy. If a man must drink, let him have too much respect for childhood to entice his boy to sip at the intoxicating cup. If there be aught of lewdness or coarseness on foot, screen the young child from the sight and hearing of it. O ye parents, do not follow trades which will ruin your children, do not select houses where they will be cast into evil society, do not bring depraved persons within your doors to defile them! For a man to lead others like himself into temptation is bad enough; but to sow the vile seed of vice in hearts that are as yet untainted by any gross, actual sin, is a hideous piece of wickedness. Do not commit spiritual infanticide. For God's sake, in the name of common humanity, I pray you, if you have any sort of feeling left, do not play the Herod by morally murdering the innocents. I have heard that when, in the cruel sack of a city, a soldier was about to kill a child, his hand was stayed by the little one's crying out, "O sir, please don't kill me; I am so little!" The feebleness and littleness of childhood should appeal to the worst of men, and restrain them from sinning against the child.

According to the story of Joseph, there are three ways of sinning against

the child. The first was contained in the proposition of the envious brothers, **"Let us slay him, . . . and we shall see what will become of his dreams."** "Shed no blood," said Reuben, who had reasons of his own for wishing to save Joseph's life. There is such a thing as morally and spiritually slaying boys and girls, and here even the Reubens unite with us; even those who are not so good as they should be will join in the earnest protest, **"Do not sin against the child,"** ---do not train him in dishonesty, lying, drunkenness, and vice. No one among us would wish to do so, but it is continually done by bad example. Many sons are ruined by their fathers. Those who gave them birth give them their death. They brought them into the world of sin, and they seem intent to bring them into the world of punishment, and will succeed in the fearful attempt unless the grace of God shall interfere. Many are doing all they can, by their own conduct at home and abroad, to educate their offspring into pests of society and plagues to their country. When I see the number of juvenile criminals, I cannot help asking, "Who slew all these?" and it is sad to have for an answer, "These are mostly the victims of their parents' sin." The fiercest beasts of prey will not destroy their own young, but sin makes men unnatural, so that they destroy their offspring's souls without thought. To teach a child a lascivious song is unutterably wicked; to introduce him to the wine cup is evil. To take children to places of amusement where everything is polluting, ---where the quick-witted boy soon spies out vice, and learns to be precocious in it; where the girl, while sitting to see the play, has kindles within her passions which need no fuel, ---to do this is to act the tempter's part. Would you poison young hearts, and do them lifelong mischief? I wish that the guardians of public morals would put down all open impurity; but if that cannot be, at least let the young be shielded. He who instructs a youth in the vices of the world is a despicable wretch, a panderer for the devil, for whom contempt is a feeling too lenient. No, even though thou art thyself of all men most hardened, there can be no need to worry the lambs, and offer the babes before the shrine of Moloch.

The same evil may be committed by indoctrinating children with evil teachings. They learn so soon that it is a sad thing to teach them error. It is a dreadful thing when the infidel father sneers at the cross of Christ in the presence of his boy, when he utters horrible things against our blessed Lord in the hearing of tender youth. It is sad to the last degree that those who have been singing holy hymns in the Sabbath-school should go home to hear God blasphemed, and to see holy things spit upon and despised. To the very worst unbelievers we might well say, ---Do not

thus ruin your child's immortal soul; if you are yourself resolved to perish, do not drag your child downward too.

But there is a second way of sinning against the child, of which Reuben's own proposition may serve as an illustration. Though not with a bad motive, Reuben said, **"Cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him."** The idea of many is to leave the child as a child, and then look him up in after days, and seek to deliver him from destruction. Do not kill him, but leave him alone till riper years. Do not kill him, that would be wicked murder; but leave him in the wilderness till a more convenient season, when, like Reuben, you hope to come to his rescue. Upon this point I shall touch many more than upon the first. Many professing Christians ignore the multitudes of children around them, and act as if there were no such living beings. They may go to Sunday-school or not; they do not know, and do not care. At any rate, those good people cannot trouble themselves with teaching children. I would earnestly say, "Do not sin against the child by such neglect." "No," says Reuben, "we will look after him when he is a man. He is in the pit now, but we are in hopes of getting him out afterwards." That is the common notion, ---that the children are to grow up unconverted, and that they are to be saved in after life.

They are to be left in the pit now, and to be drawn out by-and-by. This pernicious notion is sinning against the child. No word of Holy Scriptures gives countenance to such a policy of delay and neglect. Neither nature nor grace pleads for it. It was the complaint of Jeremiah, **"Even the sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness."** Let not such a charge lie against any one of us. Our design and object should be that our children, while they are yet children, should be brought to Christ; and I ask those dear brothers and sisters here present who love the lord not to doubt about the conversion of their little ones, but to seek it at once with all their hearts. Why should our Josephs remain in the pit of nature's corruption? Let us pray the Lord at once to take them up out of the horrible pit, and save them with a great salvation.

There is yet a third way of sinning against the child, which plan was actually tried upon Joseph: they sold him, ---sold him to the Midianite merchantmen. They offered twenty pieces of silver for him, and his brothers readily handed him over for that reward. I am afraid that some are half inclined to do the same now. It is imagined that, now we have School-boards, we shall not want Sabbath-schools so much, but may give over the young to the Secularists. Because the children are to be taught the multiplication table,

they will not need to be taught the fear of the Lord! Strange reasoning this! Can geography teach them the way of Heaven, or arithmetic remove their countless sins? The more of secular knowledge our juveniles acquire, the more will they need to be taught in the fear of the Lord. To leave our youthful population in the hands of secular teachers will be to sell them to the Ishmaelites. Nor is it less perilous to leave them to the seductive arts of Ritualists and Papists. We who love the gospel must not let the children slip through our hands into the power of those who would enslave their minds by superstitious dogmas. We sin against the child if we hand it over to teachers of error.

The same selling of the young Josephs can be effected by looking only to their worldly interests, and forgetting their souls. A great many parents sell their children by putting them out as apprentices to men of no character, or by placing them in situations where ungodliness is the paramount influence. Frequently, the father does not ask where the boy can go on the Sabbath-day, and the mother does not inquire whether her girl can hear the gospel when she gets out; but good wages are looked after, and not much else. They count themselves very staunch if they draw a line at Roman Catholics, but worldliness and even profligacy are not reckoned as barriers in many cases. How many there are of those who call themselves Christians who sell their daughters in marriage to rich men! The men have no religion whatever, but "it is a splendid match," because they move in high society. Young men and women are put into the matrimonial market, and disposed of to the highest bidder: God is not thought of in the matter. Thus the rich depart from the Lord, and curse their children quite as much as the poor. I am sure you would not literally sell your offspring for slaves, and yet to sell their souls is by no means less abominable. **"Do not sin against the child."** Do not sell him to the Ishmaelites. "Ah!" say you, "the money is always handy." Will you take the price of blood? Shall the blood of your children's souls be on your skirts? I pray you, pause awhile ere you do this.

Sometimes, a child may be sinned against because he is disliked. The excuse for undue harshness and severity is, "He is such a strange child!" You have heard of the cygnet that has hatched in a duck's nest. Neither duck, nor drake, nor ducklings could make anything out of the ugly bird; and yet, in truth, it was superior to all the rest. Joseph was the swan in Jacob's nest, and his brothers and even his father did not understand him. His father rebuked him and said, **"Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"** He was not understood by his own kin. I should fancy that he was a

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Do Not Sin Against

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most uncomfortable boy to live with, for, when his elder brothers transgressed, he felt bound to bring unto his father **"their evil report."** I doubt not that they called him "a little sneak," though, indeed, he was a gracious child. His dreams also were very odd, and considerably provoking, for he was always the hero of them. His brothers called him **"this dreamer,"** and evidently, thought him to be a mere fool. He was his father's pet boy, and this made him even more obnoxious to the other sons. Yet that very child, who was so despised by his brothers, was the Joseph among them. History repeats itself, and the difference in your child, which now causes him to be pecked at, may perhaps arise from a superiority which as yet has not found its sphere; at any rate, **"do not sin against the child"** because he is singular, for he may rise to special distinction. Do not, of course, show him partiality, and make him a coat of many colors; because, if you do, his brothers will have some excuse for their envy; but, on the other hand, do not suffer him to be snubbed, and do not allow his spirit to be crushed.

I have known some who, when they have met with a little Joseph, have sinned against him by foolish flattery. The boy has said something rather good, and then they have set him upon the table so that everybody might see him, and admire what he had to say, while he was coaxed into repeating his sage observations. Thus the child was made self-conceited, forward, and pert. Children who are much exhibited are usually spoiled in the operation. I think I hear the proud parents say, "Now do see---do see what a wonderful boy my Harry is!" Yes, I do see; I do see what a wonderful stupid his mother is. I do see how unwise his father is to expose his boy to such peril. Do not sin against the child by fostering his pride, which, as it is an ill weed, will grow apace of itself.

In many cases, the sin is of quite the opposite character. Contemptuous sneers have chilled many a good desire, and ridicule has nipped in the bud many a sincere purpose. Beware of checking youthful enthusiasm for good things. God forbid that you or I should quench one tiny spark of grace in a lad's heart, or destroy a single bud of promise! We believe in the piety of children; let us never speak, or act, or look as if we despised it.

"Do not sin against the child," whoever you may be. Whether you are teacher or parent, take care that, if there is any trace of the little Joseph in your child, even though it be but in his dreams, you do not sin against him by attempting to repress the noble flame which God may be kindling in his soul. I cannot just now

mention the many, many ways in which we may be offending against one of the Lord's little ones; but I would have you recollect that, if the Lord's love should light upon your boy, and he should grow up to be a distinguished servant of the Lord, your conscience will prick you, and a voice will say in your soul, **"Said I not unto you, Do not sin against the child?"** And if, on the other hand, your child should not become a Joseph, but an Absalom, it will be a horrible thing to be compelled to mingle with your lamentations the overwhelming consciousness that you led your child into the sin by which he became the dishonor of your family. If I see my child perish, and know that he becomes a reprobate through my ill teaching and example, I shall have to wring my hands with dread remorse and cry, "I slew my child! I slew my child! and when I did it, I knew better, but I disregarded the voice which said to me, **"Do not sin against the child."**

Now dear Sunday-school teachers, I will mention one or two matters which concern you. "Do not sin against the child" by coming to your class with a chilly heart. Why should you make your children cold towards divine things? Do not sin against them by coming too late, for that will make them think that punctuality is not a virtue, and that the Sunday-school is of no very great importance. **"Do not sin against the child"** by coming irregularly, and absenting yourself on the smallest pretense, for that is distinctly saying to the child, "You can neglect to serve God when you please, for you see that this is what I do." **"Do not sin against the child"** by merely going through class routine, without really teaching and instructing. That is the shadow of Sunday-school teaching, and not the substance, and it is in some respects worse than nothing. **"Do not sin against the child"** by merely telling him a number of stories without setting forth the Savior, for that will be giving him a stone instead of bread. **"Do not sin against the child"** by aiming at anything short of his conversion to God through Jesus Christ the Savior.

And then, you parents, do not sin against the child by being so very soon angry. I have frequently heard grown-up people repeat that verse, **"Children,**

obey your parents in all things." It is a very proper text, ---a very proper text, and boys and girls should carefully attend to it. I like to hear fathers and mothers preach from it; but there is that other one, you know; there is that other one, --- **"Likewise, ye fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."** Do not pick up every little thing against a good child, and throw it in his or her teeth, and say, "Ah, if you were a Christian child, you would not do this and you would not do that!" I am not so sure about that; you who are heads of families do a great many wrong things yourselves, and yet I hope you are Christian; and if your Father in Heaven were sometimes to be as severe with you as you are with the sincere little ones when you are out of temper, I am afraid it would go very hard with you. Be gentle, and kind, and tender, and loving.

At the same time, do not sin against any child by over-indulgence. Spoiled children are like spoiled fruit, the less we see of them the better. In some families, the master of the house is the youngest boy, though he is not yet big enough to wear knickerbockers. He manages his mother, and his mother, of course, manages his father, and so, in that way, he rules the whole house. This is unwise, unnatural, and highly perilous to the pampered child. Keep boys and girls in proper subjection, for they cannot be happy themselves, nor can you be so, unless they are in their places. Do not water your young plants either with vinegar or with syrup. Neither use too much nor too little of rebuke. Seek wisdom of the Lord, and keep the middle of the way.

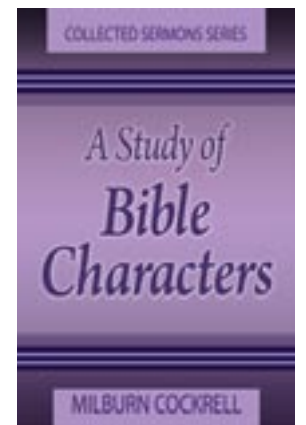
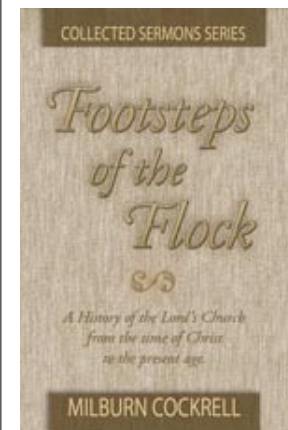
In a word, **"do not sin against the child,"** but train it in the way it should go, and bring it to Jesus that He may bless it. Cease not to pray for the child till his young heart is given to the Lord. May the Holy Spirit make you wise to deal with these young immortals! Like plastic clay, they are on the wheel. Oh, that he would teach us how to mold and fashion their characters! Above all, may he put his own hand to the work, and then it will be done indeed!



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Two New Titles!



We have two new books available by Milburn Cockrell. Price of each is \$4.25. Please see P & H chart on page 356.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, Alabama and interim Pastor Wm. Doyal Thomas will be hosting the Quarterly Fellowship on June 28th, 2008.

Scheduled speakers are Elder Todd Bryant – Pastor of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Northport, Alabama and Brother Chris McCool – Member of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Columbus, Mississippi.

Services will begin at 10:00 AM.

The church will provide a lunch meal for all of our guests.

For any further information you may contact Elder Thomas at (256) 773-1474 or coralton@charter.net

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Leighton, AL and Pastor Phillip Potter will be conducting special services on June 15th thru 18th. Bro. Forrest Keener is the scheduled speaker.

Service times are Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., and Monday thru Wednesday at 7 p.m.

The church is located at 2750 Highway 157, Leighton, AL.

For more information contact Pastor Potter at (256) 446-6515.
