

# The Berea Baptist Banner

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

## The Christian and the Law

By Wm. Doyal Thomas  
(1932 - 2018)

What is a Christian? What is meant by the term, "the law"?

A Christian is one who has been "born from above" (John 1:13), and has, by this transaction of God, been made to be a "new creation" (II Cor. 5:17).

A Christian is a believer, or follower, and as such, has been

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## "When I Am Weak, Then Am I Strong"

By C. H. Spurgeon  
(1834 - 1892)

I draw my subject from the words of Paul in II Corinthians 12:10. **"When I am weak, then am I strong."** I shall not be guilty of uttering anything fresh upon my theme, neither shall I be able to say anything forcible upon it. The

◊ (Continued on page 6)



## The Sovereignty of God

By Timothy J. Hille  
of Ashland, Illinois

**"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good"** (Matt. 20:15)?

The reason we should and do look into the Scriptures to dig out, as it were, from the gold mine of heavenly knowledge that God



has given us in His divinely inspired Word, these gems of truth is because we need to know God. You

cannot worship right if you do not know the truth about God.

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## Be Strong in the Lord

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

My text is found in II Chronicles 15:7, **"Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded."** These are the words that the Lord delivered to King Asa, through Azariah the prophet. All of us face difficulties in this life. And, all of us need to depend upon God for



our daily needs. However, it seems that, from time to time, we are compelled to set everything else aside, and lean completely

and totally on the strength of the Lord God. Now, I want us to think

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## Desperately Crying Out for God

By Curtis Pugh  
(1944 - 2018)

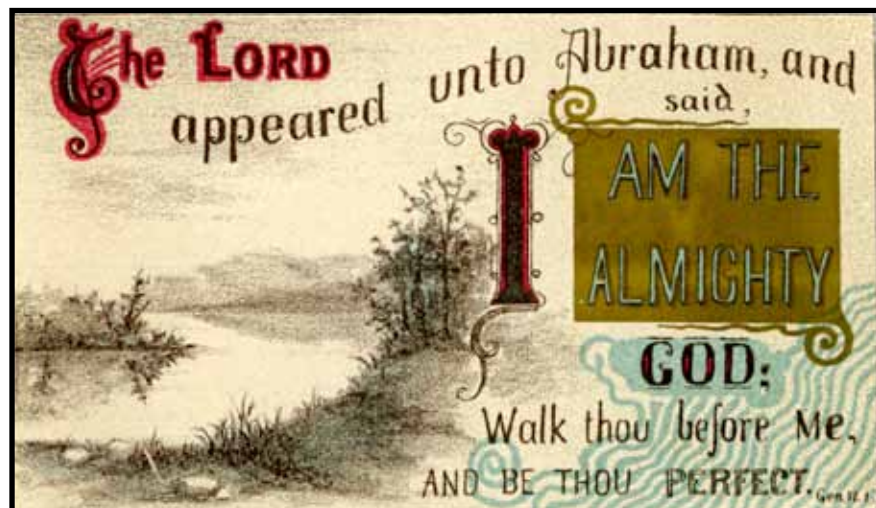
The Psalmist wrote of his personal crying out for God, saying: **"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God"** (Ps. 42:1). The picture presented by the King James translators in the text is that of a deer in the desert:



a deer gasping in thirst for one thing – one necessary thing: life sustaining water. Without water the deer will soon

perish. The Hebrew word is found

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

## The Christian and

(Continued from page 1) ♦

rendered teachable by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit when He regenerated and made new that which had been slain by sin, and is responsible to so act in accordance with the new man that now exists and did not exist before.

It is acknowledged that one can indeed be a Christian, and yet lapse into a mode of conduct that is, to say the least, most unbecoming to the state into which he has been placed. Thus, a disobedient Christian is here in view; but still a Christian, and one who has subjected himself, or herself to the disapproving frown of our Holy God.

By the term, "the law," we mean, "That standard that God has declared to be the mark of acceptable behavior and conduct before Him, in holiness."

I would also remind myself, and you, that man has NEVER been allowed to be apart from the law of God, but has ALWAYS been responsible to his Maker to obey Him, and is fully accountable for every failure in doing so.

It was deliberate, pre-meditated rebellion that Adam exhibited when he chose to be with, that is, to be in harmony with his wife, now deceived by Satan, in the Garden of Eden. He had been commanded to obey God, but he violated God's law, and the consequent penalty fell upon him. Was Adam free from the "law of God"? If he was, then why did the penalty come upon him? If he was not free from the "law of God," then it is EVIDENT why the penalty fell upon him.

In studying this stupendous subject, "The Christian and the Law," we will divide our examination into two parts. Part

I will deal with the Christian and his responsible conduct toward God. Part II will deal with the Christian in his responsibility to the laws of the government under which he lives, before God.

**"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we give you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness"** (I Thess. 4:1-7).

According to the teaching of Scripture, as set forth in the text of verse 4, specifically, as well as throughout all of Holy Writ, the Christian is to walk in a manner that is worthy of God who has called him to walk. Thus, the walk is to be both acceptable and pleasing to God. It is to God that man is responsible. There is not, nor can there be any other meaning of this Scripture. God's people are to walk before Him in an acceptable and pleasing manner.

We now pose four questions, which become the criteria by which we will ascertain the quality of our walk before God, as His professing, believing children. Everything that we do

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should allow us to answer in the affirmative each of these four questions.

Is our walk God honoring?

Is our walk Christ magnifying?

Is our walk Holy Spirit sanctioned?

Is our walk good for us?

## IS OUR WALK GOD HONORING?

Our text has clearly enunciated the requirement that God has levied against us that our walk honor Him. Of this fact there can be no doubt. **“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more”** (I Thess. 4:1).

A careful exposition of this text, in the setting of the context that is established through verse 7 of this chapter will reveal some remarkably clear instructions, and any deviation from these plain teachings will, without fail, render the ones here addressed as **“brethren”** without excuse before God. There will be no possibility of misunderstanding, nor any violation of these directions acceptable to God who has commanded these things. And He has commanded. He has not presented an optional package from which **“brethren”** can pick and choose that which appeals to his or her personal, carnally influenced preferences.

Take note, **“..ye have received...”** referring to instructions given in the form of commands. These commands are God given, and are so designed by Him as to produce “pleasing” to Him when obeyed and observed by those He addresses. In this case, **“brethren,”** which I believe also implies

“Christians.” So, the commands are directed to Christians, for their instruction and obedience. Are Christians, in any way, at any time, free to disregard these commands? When? Under what circumstances?

Verse 7 of these texts declares that God has not called His people to a life, even temporarily or momentarily, to be lived in an unclean or impure manner. Rather, and quite contrary, the Christian has been called unto holiness. So, he is required to walk.

Peter, in his writings, was led by God to so teach as well. When you read the words that God the Holy Spirit “breathed” (theoneustos), you are reading the exact, specific, and unerring words that were directly sent forth from the mind and will of a Holy God. Note carefully what Peter said: **“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy; for I am holy”** (I Peter 1:13-16).

In the heavenly scene described by the Apostle John, we read words that declare that God is holy, and that His creatures are to recognize Him as such, and are to honor Him because He is so. And they, being His creatures, must worship Him who is holy. **“And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come”** (Rev. 4:8).

God is holy. He is also just, and righteous, and merciful, and

omniscient, and omnipotent; and every other attribute by which He presents Himself. But he is essentially, eternally holy. Note: In this text, it was not said of Him that He is Omniscient, omniscient, omniscient; nor that He is Omnipotent, omnipotent, omnipotent. BUT, that He is Holy, holy, holy.

And Peter had instructed believers, or Christians, to **“be ye holy, for I am holy.”** Thus, without possibility of honest misunderstanding, God’s people are taught to walk pleasing to Him, in all manner of conversation, striving to live a holy and honorable life. This kind of life is God honoring, and therefore is the answer to our first question as we, in this life seek to live qualitatively before Him.

Christian, you and I are enjoined to examine our walk, and to make self-judgment of that walk so as to put off those thoughts and actions that are motivated by self-will, and to put on those thoughts and actions that truly adorn us with that which is well pleasing in His sight. We are instructed to **“walk in the Spirit,”** and the result is, you **“shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh”** (Gal. 5:16). For every moment that you are walking in the Spirit, for that same moment at least, you are not fulfilling the lust of the flesh. And as you seek His mercy and divine enablement to walk more pleasingly, you will indeed be experiencing His sanctifying power progressively leading you to become more and more pleasing and acceptable in your walk.

It is scripturally undeniable that when Christians walk as God commands them to walk, then they honor Him. Obedience on our part is what honors Him. As Christians, we are required to obey Him, and to so honor Him.

Christians are without excuse when they do not so obey and so walk. And at the Bema of Christ, all these wayward excursions will be revealed, and there will be suffered loss of reward for the wood, hay, and stubble that was so produced.

Let me take a moment and tell you what responsibility really is in this matter. God, in His wondrous creative work has given us intellect, sensibility, and will. He has endowed us with the element known as conscience which is in man, the power of judgment. Conscience evaluates our acts and declares them to either conform, or not to conform to the law of God, as He made it known. Those acts that conform become obligatory. Those acts that do not conform are forbidden. What is responsibility then? To obey God so as to walk pleasing, or in conformity with the law of God. That is responsibility, and nothing short of that kind of a walk before God is acceptable to Him.

## IS OUR WALK CHRIST MAGNIFYING?

Does the quality of the walk of a Christian magnify the Name, Person and work of God’s Christ and our Saviour?

In the Lord’s prayer, Jesus, praying to the Father said, **“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word”** (John

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# The Christian and

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17:3-6).

Our dear Lord, as expressed here, has so wonderfully interceded with the Father in behalf of the elect, and His words are so very much instructive to us. Listen to Him! He says that He has manifested the Name of God before men. How did He do it? One way that stands out is this: He, though He were God, **“... humbled Himself and became obedient, unto death, even to the death of the cross”** (Phil. 2:8). By becoming obedient, Jesus Christ magnified God, the only Lawgiver, by becoming submissive to the Eternal Will by keeping the law of God, nothing lacking.

Do the Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ kept the law of God? Listen to Isaiah as he speaks prophetically of the Lord's Messiah. **“The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable”** (Isaiah 42:21). Isaiah is declaring (theoneustos) the LORD (Yahweh) is well pleased with the work and accomplishments of “His Righteousness.” This is clearly a representation of the Messiah Himself, Jesus Christ. And why is Yahweh well pleased? Here is why. His Righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ will **“magnify the law, and make it honourable.”**

Did Christ accomplish this prophetic end? **“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth”** (Rom. 10:4). All that the law of God demanded of men was met in the Person of Jesus Christ when He, in perfect obedience fulfilled all requirements, so that judicially speaking, the elect were successful in meeting these requirements, but in their Substitute, Jesus

Christ the Righteous.

Now, as a Christian, the obedience that Jesus accomplished is shown to be the expected conduct of each one that is found to be in Him. **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”** (Phil. 2:5). Clearly, Christians are instructed to be obedient to the commands and instructions of God. And when this occurs, the Name, Person, and work of Jesus Christ is magnified in the life of that obedient child.

Would you magnify Him? Then walk in accordance with His ways and give heed to observe and do all that He has told you to observe and do. Would you bring to Him great glory, honor, and praise? Then walk in His precepts, principles, and ways. You can not honor Him while you walk contrary to His ways.

## IS OUR WALK HOLY SPIRIT SANCTIONED?

When men act in accordance with the **“lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”** (I John 2:16) are they acting with Holy Spirit sanction? Obviously, they are not, for the Scriptures teach that these things are not of the Father, but of the world. And further, these things are condemned by God to pass away along with the world. There is no honor shown to Christ when this is the nature of the walk. Rather, great dishonor is shown by this mode of conduct.

This being established, we need to look at the manner of life that Jesus lived that brought forth the manifestly declared and displayed sanction of God the Holy Spirit. When we can ascertain from the Scriptures what things the Holy Spirit sanctioned in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can also see how we ought to live if we expect to receive the sanction of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Upon preparation arrangements that Jesus submitted to as He set out to enter public ministry (service), we see notable example in the book of Matthew. **“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”** (Matt. 3:13-17).

In this remarkable narrative, we can discern much spiritual truth, and thus, much spiritual instruction. Obedience is here taught. And Jesus Christ, God Himself, in His humanity is the Perfect Example of obedience and humility. When He said to John, **“...for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness,”** He was declaring that servants must be motivated to walk pleasing to the Father. By submitting thusly, He did that which not only God the Father had directed, and then declared His satisfaction with the Son's performance, but that also which God, the Holy Spirit sanctioned. Witness the appearing of the Spirit of God in the form of the dove that descended and lighted on Him. Would God have sanctioned this act of perfect obedience had it not been an act of perfect obedience?

We also learn that the work that Jesus accomplished during His sojourn among men was always that which “pleased the

Father” (John 8:29). In this same discourse, Jesus also said that the Father bears witness of Him. Likewise, He teaches us that the Holy Spirit never bears witness of Himself, but rather, the Holy Spirit always bears witness of the Son. (c.f. John 16:13-15).

When the Lord Jesus had fully kept the law of God, and had magnified it before men. He was then subjected to the greatest passion that was ever, or shall ever be exhibited. He was brought under the judgment of lying, sinful men who brought all manner of false accusation against Him, and proceeded to crucify Him as a common criminal. And God permitted this to be so, for it was the eternal purpose of God that this innocent One would die in the room and in the stead of guilty, depraved, but elect sinners. And God, the Holy Spirit, in eternal covenant stipulation had fore sanctioned this awesome work.

But in addition to what God had permitted wicked men to purpose in their evil hearts to do, He had also determined that the perfect obedience that His Son had accomplished in keeping the law of God, magnifying it, and declaring it to be holy. He would also bring His holy, righteous judgment to bear upon His Son. Sin must be punished, and Jesus was now openly manifested, the Lamb of God. God would now, in His Person, punish sin to the full extent of divine justice.

When, therefore, the judgment and wrath of Holy God fell upon the Person of Holy God, it was still God, the Holy Spirit that sanctioned the death, and manifested that eternal propitiation had been extracted. He did this by raising from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ and

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# Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of  
Plant City, Florida



## SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON - BIBLE SURVEY #2 THE WORD OF GOD IS...

TEXT: Deuteronomy 8:3

DEVOTIONAL READING: John 17:17; Psalm 119:89

SUGGESTED HYMN: Thy Word Is A Lamp To My Feet

AIM: To show the usefulness of God's Word in the Hand of the Lord

INTRODUCTION—We live in a world that does not find God's written Word to be very useful. Yet, the Scriptures declare just how useful it is. Our text verse tells us **"...man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live"** (Deut. 8:3).

In this lesson we will observe five things that God's Word is likened unto that show its usefulness in our lives: 1) Lamp and Light, 2) Water, 3) Fire, 4) Hammer, 5) Sword

I. GOD'S WORD IS LIKENED UNTO A LAMP AND LIGHT—**"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"** (Ps. 119:105). Both of these signify the usage of light so that we may see. Man is in darkness; he loves it (John 3:19). It is God's Word that shows man his true condition of sin (Matt. 4:12-17; II Cor. 4:4-6). The Word of God is not only used to show lost sinners their true condition. God uses His Word to guide His people throughout our lives (Prov. 6:23).

It is a lamp to our feet and light to our path. We are pilgrims in this world. We are often called to go out into it. It is a present evil world (Gal. 1:4). It is a world of darkness both literal and figurative. The world is full of deception, falsehoods, evil in its teachings. But, God has given us His Word that we may navigate this world. The lamp is kindled especially for the hours of darkness. Life is so full of perils. We must not trust our own eye-sight, but use the Light of God's Word. To live our lives contrary to God's Word, is to walk in darkness. To live our lives in agreement with God's Word, having it govern our thoughts, words, and deeds is to walk in light (I John 1:5-7).

II. GOD'S WORD IS LIKENED UNTO WATER—Water is symbolic of cleansing. **"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"** (Eph. 5:26). The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We must be cleansed in our ways. This is done by God's Word—**"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word"** (Ps. 119:9). Lost sinners must be made clean. The filth of sin has defiled the sinner. It is God's Word which cleanses lost sinners and makes them clean (John 15:3).

Furthermore, the child of God, by living in this world comes into contact with filth. Jesus taught that He must wash our feet (John 13:8-10). This was symbolic that we must be cleansed with God's Word. This is done in the church by the preaching of God's Word—**"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"** (Eph. 5:26).

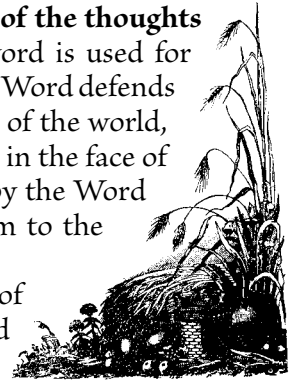
III. GOD'S WORD IS LIKENED UNTO A FIRE—**"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD"** (Jer. 23:29). Jesus said, **"I am come to send fire on the earth"** (Luke 12:29). The law of God is stated to have been a **"fiery law"** (Deut. 33:2). Fire has different properties; and different effects depending on the subject and substance it is used upon. For example, fire: hardens clay, but softens wax; it consumes the dross, but purifies the gold. Fire speaks of judgment and to the lost sinner, God's word is in judgment of their sins—manifesting how sinful they are. Yet, fire is also that which saves! Fire produces light and warmth—all of which is needful for salvation. So, too, does God's Word warn sinners of their sinful condition, but also points to the Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord. To the child of God, the Word of God is that which is used to purify us by burning off impurities (Isa. 1:25). So the Word of God is to some a savor of life unto life, to others of death unto death (II Cor. 2:16).

IV. GOD'S WORD IS LIKENED UNTO A HAMMER—**"Is not my word...like a hammer that breaketh in pieces"** (Jer. 23:29)? The Holy Spirit says that sinful man's heart is like a stone (Zech. 7:12; Ezek. 36:26—**"stony heart"**). A hammer is used for many things. Here it is spoken of as that which breaks up hardened stone. In the hand of the Lord, the Word of God breaks up the hardest of hearts and turns them into hearts of flesh, pliable and writeable.

V. GOD'S WORD IS LIKENED UNTO A SWORD—**"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart"** (Heb. 4:12). A sword is used for defending one's self as well as for attacking. The Word defends God's people against the onslaught and attacks of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Jesus quoted Scripture in the face of opposition. God's Word attacks us too! It is by the Word that God pierces the hearts of men, cuts them to the quick, and lays them open.

See how useful God's Word is in the Hand of the Lord. Oh that the Lord may use His Word on us in this fashion for His glory!

(Nathaniel Hille is pastor of the Bible Baptist Church of Plant City, Florida)



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openly putting Him on display before witnesses that it might be affirmed that God was satisfied. Praise the Lord, the Holy Spirit has sanctioned the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in His keeping the law of God! It is done, and God has published abroad the purpose, intent, and result of it all. **"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but**

**by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one"** (I John 5:6-8).

**IS OUR WALK GOOD FOR US?**

My dear one, at every mention

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# The Christian and

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of those benefits that accrue to Christians, we have scriptural affirmation that it is and has always been in the best interest of God's elect that they walk pleasing with the stipulations of the law of God. Not a single instance can be found, and not a single suggestion contrary, can be produced that will indicate that it would be better for Christians if they did not walk according to the demands of the law of God.

Can you and I not come to the position that allows us to see that the only alternative to walking as a God fearing, law of God believing Christian is to walk as a complete and utter outlaw? Think of this. If you and I do not walk as an obedient child, being guided, led, and directed by the Holy Spirit into a manner of life that is lawful, then we are, without doubt, an outlaw. And this designation, "outlaw" is not too severe. If you and I are not a law-abiding person, then you and I are outlawed! What saith the Scriptures? **"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"** (Rom. 8:9).

Is our walk good for us? If one is born of God, then that one has the Spirit of God, and that one has the good benefits that come by and through the work of the Holy Spirit who is in that one. It is good for them then to walk in harmony with the leading and teachings of the Holy Spirit who guides and directs a life that is in keeping with the law of God.

On the other hand, if one is still unregenerate, then the Holy Spirit does not dwell within that one, and old things are still old

things. Nothing is newly created, and consequently all thoughts, motives, and actions flow from the old fallen, sinful man. In this awful state and condition, nothing that comes forth is good for the individual so afflicted. Nothing good can come out of a cesspool of sin and corruption. From an evil heart still proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, blasphemies, etc. It is not good to be a dead sinner in whom there can be no steps taken that even resembles a lawful and pleasing walk before God.

But for the Christian, in whom God the Holy Spirit dwells, there is now godly, honorable motive that produces in the re-created being a walk in lawful pleasing. Admittedly, the walk is often times feeble and faulty, but nevertheless, it is a walk that is being more and more conformed to that perfect walk of accomplished sanctification that God has begun, and will most surely complete.

Remember, no man can keep the law that God wrote down and gave to Israel. That law does not give life, neither was it intended to give life. Rather, that law condemns men for not doing all that it demands of them. But Christ kept that law for us, and has placed us under the perfectly completed righteousness that He accomplished for us. And now He has insured that we be under the law of God to walk by the Spirit's leadership so as to exhibit and manifest that He has placed us there so that under leadership of the Holy Spirit we can be led to walk step by step in a way that will please God. Being His people, He enables us now to walk as He directs. And it is good for us to do so.

God said to Israel, as His representative people, **"Blessed**

**is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee"** (Ps. 128: 1-2). **"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he"** (Prov. 29:18).

And to the Lord's saints during the age of the New Testament Church, even now, He said, **"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"** (Titus 2:11-14).

And Peter wrote to present day saints and he said, **"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"** (II Peter 3:11-13).

What about Christians and the law?

**"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more"** (I Thess. 4:1).



# When I am Weak

(Continued from page 1) ♦

weak side of the experience will come out most observably; I can only pray that the strong side may not be hidden. My own feelings supply me with a commentary upon the text, and that is all the exposition I shall aim at. Our text is not only written in the Bible, but it is inscribed upon the lives of the saints. Though we are not apostles, and shall never be able to claim the inspiration of Paul, yet in this one particular we are as instructed as he was, for we have learned by experience, **"When I am weak, then am I strong."** This sentence has passed into a Christian proverb; it is a paradox which has ceased to perplex any child of God; it is at once a warning and a consolation, bidding the strong behold the weakness of power, and setting before the feeble the strength of weakness.

Here is, first, A DEPRESSING EXPERIENCE: **"When I am weak."** When is that? Truly we are so always. Is there ever a time when the strongest Christian is not comparatively weak?

But there are certain seasons when we are consciously weak. Take Paul's case as an illustration. He had been caught up to the third heaven, but he could not bear revelations so well as John, who had enough of them to fill a book, and yet was never elated by them; but Paul was not so well qualified to be a seer, for he was more at home with arguments than with visions; and, therefore, when he saw a vision, he set great store by it. He kept his secret for fifteen years; but it was such a very remarkable thing for him, and so much out of his natural line of things, that the tendency in him was to **"be exalted above**

♦ (Continued on page 7)



# Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of  
Temperance, Michigan

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God" (Deuteronomy 32:2-3).



## STRONG CORE

About a year ago I suffered a minor back injury that left me stooped over and in terrible pain. I was carrying a great deal of weight while going up a set of stairs. Though I knew better, I twisted my body awkwardly as I climbed the steps, resulting in a shot through my lower spine and hip like a bolt of lightning.

At just about every job I have ever had, I have been required to watch safety videos and complete training modules so I could learn about lifting large amounts of weight closer to the body, and with my knees. I had done it correctly probably a million times in my life, but this time I neglected the knowledge and suffered the consequences.

John 15:5-8 says, **"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."**

Jesus points out in the above text that we are safer the closer we dwell with Him. The fruit of the Spirit is described as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,

goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. The closer we are to what we want to become, the more likely we are to achieve that goal. Jesus says we must abide in Him to be fruitful; we must have sight of what it is we want to achieve. If we want to be skinny, we follow the directions on how to eat healthy rather than eating whatever is in front of us. If we want to be smarter on a subject, we discipline ourselves to study and read. Proverbs 29:18 says, **"Where there is no vision, the people perish..."**

With proper lifting, I could have avoided an injury that still nags me today. With a stronger core, I could have recovered faster. This core strength comes from that pursuit. Of course with the body, it would be working out, stretching, and eating foods that build up the body. To avoid the same injury to our Christian walk, we must be built up too. In the book of I Corinthians, Paul likes to use the word "edify" to describe this building up. He says that all things should be done to the edifying of the church body. It is in the church that we gather strength from our brothers and sisters who are on this journey with us. It is the working out of our faith together that strengthens our core and keeps us ready for the heavy lifting ahead.

(Joseph Sidders is pastor of the Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Temperance, Michigan)



## When I am Weak

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**measure through the abundance of the revelations**" and therefore the Lord sent, not Satan, but **"the messenger of Satan,"**—a mean, despicable spirit,—not to fight with him with sword and buckler, but to "buffet" him, as boys do their playmates. Have you never had an insignificant thing to vex you, like a fly buzzing around you? Have you not felt the trial to be intensely worrying, and yet meanly trifling? You could have girded yourself to meet a lion; but this trouble was a mere yelping cur, and it irritated you to the last degree, and inflicted a pain upon you. Paul does not describe his trial as the cut of a sword, else he would have bound it up; it was only the prick of a thorn; he could scarcely see the cause of the pain, or he would have taken a needle, and extracted it; but it was a little thorn which had buried itself in the flesh, and festered there.

This was Paul's worry, and it was sent to keep him humble. Paul might have gloried in wrestling with the devil; but this **"thorn in the flesh"** was a wretched business. To grapple with a great temptation, and to hurl it to the ground, has a grandeur in it which inspires you; but it is very different when you are assailed by a thing so small that you despise yourself for taking notice of it, and yet it frets your soul. You say to yourself, "How weak I am! Why am I thus irritated and disturbed? If anyone else made half this fuss about a little thorn, I should say, 'You ought to know better;' and yet here am I, a preacher of the gospel, greatly tried by a trifle, and beseeching the Lord thrice to take it away from me, for I cannot bear it." Do we ever get into such a condition? I wish that, at such a time, we would confess our

abject weakness, and cast ourselves upon God, for then should we be made strong.

This festering of the thorn does not afflict us all, because it does not happen to all of us to see visions; but many servants of God are made to feel their weakness in another way, by an oppressive sense of responsibility. Brethren, I speak to you as unto wise men, who will not misunderstand me. I hope you will always feel your responsibility before God; but do not carry the feeling too far. We may feel our responsibility so deeply that we may become unable to sustain it; it may cripple our joy, and make slaves of us. Do not take an exaggerated view of what the Lord expects of you. He will not blame you for not doing that which is beyond your mental power or physical strength. You are required to be faithful, but you are not bound to be successful. You are to teach, but you cannot compel people to learn. You are to make things plain, but you cannot give carnal men an understanding of spiritual things. We are not the Father, nor the Savior, nor the Comforter of the Church. We cannot take the responsibility of the universe upon our shoulders. While vexing ourselves with fancied obligations, we may overlook our real burdens. I could sit down, and meditate, until I felt the responsibility of the whole South of London upon my back, and this would render me unable to look after my own church. What is the practical result of making yourself, as one man, responsible for the work of twenty men? Will you do any more? Will you do it any better? I saw a horse, this morning, which was pulling at a three-horse load. How he tugged! How he strained himself! I thought to myself, "There is a good horse being ruined. His master

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# When I am Weak

(Continued from page 7) ♦

ought to take off part of his load, or else put more horses to pull with him." Does our Lord and Master treat us in this fashion? No; we overload ourselves. We get tugging away as if the salvation of the world depended upon our straining ourselves to death. Now, I do not want you to get away from feeling a due measure of responsibility; but then you are not God, and you do not stand in God's place; you are not the rulers of providence, and you have not been elected sole managers of the covenant of grace; therefore do not act as if you were.

But, dear brethren, having said this much by way of caveat, lest I should lead any of you to despair, let me now ask, Have we, any of us, fully felt the measure of our responsibility? If there be one such here, let him speak; but I shall not believe him. We have not done what we should have done, what we could have done, nor what we ought to have done, nor what we will yet do in God's strength. Perhaps we have worked up to the full of what was expected of us in quantity; but how about the quality? It may be we have attended quite enough meetings, and delivered quite enough sermons; but then, has this been done in an apostolic spirit, and night and day with tears have we warned men, and pleaded with them as in the sight of God? Our responsibilities, when they are thoroughly felt, crush us, and then are we weak indeed; but this weakness is the road to strength. **"When I am weak, then am I strong."**

And do we not often feel weak in the sense of utter unfitness for being ministers at all by reason of our own sinfulness? Paul said of his calling to the ministry, **"Woe is unto me, if I preach not the**

**gospel!"** We can say that, too; yet, sometimes, we feel as if we would speak no more for Christ, and we should sink into silence were it not that His Word is as a fire in our bones; and we cannot refrain. Then we think we will go away into the far West, and in some log cabin teach a few children the way of salvation, for we do not feel fit for anything higher. Our shortcomings and our failures stare us out of countenance, and then are we painfully weak; but this also is the highway to strength: **"When I am weak, then am I strong."**

Sometimes we grow depressed and weak because our sphere of labor seems specially difficult. This is not the time to dilate upon the peculiar trials of our pastorates. Ministers in London could tell a tale that would astonish you, for they see things which are their burden day and night. As for our country brethren, what some of them have had to put up with! They cannot move the deacons and the church at all, perhaps the deacons wish to move them; they cannot get at the people, and though they preach their hearts out, they preach to empty pews. If we could only put certain men into the positions which their brethren faithfully occupy under great discouragement, they would know themselves better, and leave off boasting, and instead of finding fault, they would wonder that so much has been accomplished under such circumstances. By that way also we become strong; when God makes us feel that our work is impossible to us without His aid, then are we driven to His strength.

Some of you are quite alone as to the helpful fellowship of kindred spirits. This is a trying deprivation, and may well depress you. Beside this, many of you are poor, and you hardly know how to support

your families. As I listened to the prayer of the brother who led our devotions just now, and remembered what he is suffering, and how he has actually worked in the harvest-fields with working-men, so that he might earn his bread, and preach the gospel, I felt that I could rejoice in him. Still, I know that poverty often makes a man feel sadly weak; when his children are without shoes, and the wife's dress is nearly worn-out, and he knows not where any more are to come from, his heart sinks within him.

In addition to this, it may be that reproach comes undeservedly. A scandalous story from the father of lies may be forged against you, and you may be quite unable to defend yourself. You fear lest, in trying to erase the blot, you might spoil the page. Hearts are broken over this matter. Oh, how weak a man becomes when this is the case; he may half feel himself guilty after having heard the accusation repeated again and again, although all the while he is as pure as the driven snow. This brings a weakness which may paralyze a man. Oh, to be strong in the Lord at such times!

I suppose you do not think that I ever get dried up and find it difficult to say anything fresh in my sermons; yet, so it is. Think, dear brethren; I have already so many volumes of sermons in print. It grows harder to say anything new as those volumes increase. "Where will the next sermon come from?" is the question we have asked ourselves again and again; we have feared that we could not keep up the supply, and we have felt our own weakness to a terrible degree; but this, also, is the way to strength. So prepare yourselves, my younger brethren, to become weaker and weaker; prepare yourselves for sinking lower and lower in self-

esteem; prepare yourselves for self-annihilation, and pray God to expedite the process.

Certain brethren know nothing of this experience, they are not weak at all; but despise such confessions. Have you never met with preachers who can keep on and on, though they never did say anything, and never will? Yet they never know what it is to be weak; they are just as able today as ever they were. I have heard of an old Scotch preacher, whose divisions were very numerous, and whose subdivisions were almost innumerable; so one day the people, one by one, went away, until at last the boy took the keys up, and said to him, "You can lock the church up when you have done." Some are so very long in saying nothing, and are so surely emptying their places, that it would be wise to hand them the keys so that they might retire when they are quite through.

As for some of us, we are consciously feeble; and when we prose, we know it. We come out of the pulpit, at times, feeling that we are less fit than ever for the holy work. Our last sermon we judge to be our worst, and frequently for that reason it is our best; we grow, and among other growths we grow downwards. We shall go on feeling less fit, and still less fit, and all the while we shall be becoming more ready to be used of the Lord. I know one who said, the other night, when she was reading, that it seemed as if her eyes had dropped out. The truth was, her spectacles had fallen off. Go on losing your spectacles, and be sure that you get rid of all those holy tones and whines, and grotesque methods, and stiffnesses and mannerisms, which are not your eyes, but only shockingly bad spectacles. (*An All-Round Ministry*).







# Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of  
Clendenin, West Virginia

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

## SATISFACTION

Isaiah 53:10-11 is one of the sections of Scripture the saints of God, **"enquired and searched diligently"** into the grace of the LORD (I Pet. 1:10-12). God reveals what man could not know regarding the transaction between the Father and the Son on the cross (I Cor. 2:9-10). Isaiah tells us it pleased the Father to bruise the Lord Jesus, the high exalted Messiah. The One who has done no violence or spoken no lie. It is striking to read, especially when it is we who despised and rejected the Lord, who saw no beauty in the Lord's Christ. We esteemed Him not, nor believed the report. And yet, it pleased the Lord to bruise HIM, and not us. Why? Because on the cross, the Lord Jesus was punished on our behalf. It was the Father's love for us, that sent His only begotten Son to be our sin bearer. Being made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13), Jesus bore our sins in His own body on that cursed tree (I Pet. 2:24). He suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, a sin sacrifice (I Pet. 3:18). It pleased the Father that Christ was fulfilling the eternal plan of redemption. It pleased the Father that through the sacrifice of the Son, he was securing the eternal salvation and happiness of the elect. It pleased the Father to deal with sin and see justice and peace come together on the cross. It pleased the Father that the Son, in His sacrifice, would honor and glorify the attributes of God like no other event in history.

We also see something unique in verse 11. The Father saw **"the travail of his [Christ's] soul, and shall be satisfied."** As Christ suffered, and as the wrath of God was poured out on Jesus for my sins, the Father was satisfied. When the Father said it was enough, Jesus said, **"It is finished"** (John 19:30). It was unique, because this is the only time and only place where this will happen. Pharaoh has been in Hell for thousands of years and the wrath of God has not been satisfied. One day, Pharaoh will stand before God at the Great White Throne judgment, and then will be cast in the Lake of Fire. The wrath of God will not be satisfied. Crimes against an eternal and infinite God require eternal punishment. Time does not lessen the offense against the God who is beyond time. Sin against God is ever before Him. A sinner will never satisfy God's wrath against sin. But Isaiah told us the wrath of God was satisfied in Christ. The perfect, spotless, Lamb of God bore all the sins of all His people, and offered His soul as a substitute. The Eternal Son of God, the Godman, Jesus Christ, bore that infinite wrath, and the sinless blood was shed for remission of sin, and the Father accepted His substitutionary, perfect atonement. On the cross, we see the display of God's attributes in perfect consistency.

## EVERY WISE WOMAN BUILDS

The Bible says every single wise

woman is a builder. Proverbs 14:1, **"Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands."** She does not lay the foundation, build the frame, and do the roofing. But she does build up the home in an equally important way, making it her mission to build, keep, and maintain the well-being of her home. She uses the gifts God gives her to build and preserve a godly home, being faithful to her calling.

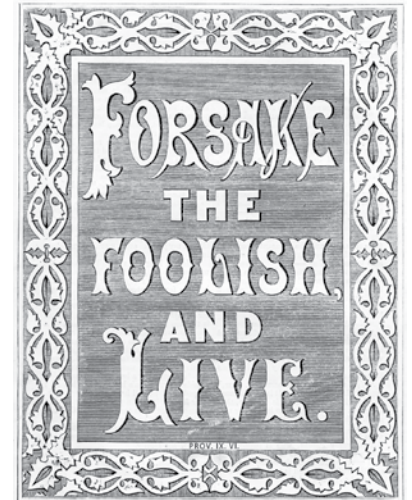
Every wise woman builds her home with wisdom and knowledge (Prov. 24:3-4). She thinks about what kind of home she wants. She knows the strengths, weakness, and the hearts of those who live in her care and labors to build up and strengthen her family. Every wise woman builds her home with pleasantness (Prov. 24:3-4) and makes it a place where her family wants to be. A home with godly peace and pleasantness is a treasure, much to be desired. Every wise woman builds her home with love because she loves God and loves those God gave her. Every wise woman goes outside of herself for wisdom to build her house. And no, I am not talking about Pinterest, but the Bible. She will not find recipes, suggestions for paint schemes and home décor, but she will find everything she needs to know about herself, her husband, her children, and how she can build a stable homelife for her family. It is better to live in a house built by love than to live in a picture perfect, modern home, sitting around a feast with a perfectly dressed and mannered family (Prov. 15:17).

The foolish woman, however, does not build, but tears down her home. She will leave it rubble. She is a one-woman demolition crew of her own home and one day will look up from the ash heap and wonder, "what happened?"

The foolish woman does not want to bring her house to ruins, but it is inevitable. Foolishness never builds a strong family. She tears down her own house with selfishness. When she puts herself first and her family is always last, she will destroy her home. This is the principle for any relationship. Any leader who puts themselves first will have control and get what they want in the short term but destroys the foundations in the long-term. Where the foolish woman lives for today, the wise thinks toward the future. The foolish woman tears down with anger (Prov. 21:9). An angry home is an empty home. She tears down her own house with contentions (Prov. 19:13). A small leak in the roof over time with a continual drip will bring a home to ruin. The constant and continual quarrelsomeness of the foolish woman slowly tears her home apart.

Like anything worth building, it takes hard work, planning, dedication, and a commitment to see it through. A home is not built in a day. Thank you, wise wives and mothers for all you do.

(Doug Newell IV is pastor of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Wake Forest, North Carolina)



# The Sovereignty of

(Continued from page 1) ♦

Once, before the Lord saved me, I stood in ignorance of God. I knew there was a God, and I knew that the Bible was the Word of God; but I did not know God anymore than I knew the president of the United States. God was unknown to me; and He is unknown to you if you are lost and outside of Christ, never having repented of your sins and turned to God in faith, receiving the gift of eternal life. Unless God reveals Himself to you, you will not know Him, you will not know salvation, and you will not know eternal life. To you that are saved, He who is now your God says, **“learn of me,”** (Matt. 11:29).

Jesus is speaking in our text, and this verse which we have read is at the end of a parable which He spoke unto His disciples concerning the kingdom of Heaven. The question is, in the parable, being asked by a householder unto the laborers whom he had hired to work in his vineyard. Being the householder, the house was his, the vineyard was his, the laborers who worked for him were his, and the wages they were paid were his. All things were his, and as the question aptly illustrates, he had the right to do with that which was his as he saw fit; and it was right for him to do with that which was his as he saw fit. A parable being an illustrative story told to show by way of comparison truths about another subject, and the subject being in this case the kingdom of heaven, the householder is an illustration or type of God; and God has the right to do as He sees fit with that which is His, and in doing so He is right.

The doctrine of the sovereignty of God is one of the most hated Bible doctrines in all the world.

The reason that people the world over reject this doctrine, and therefore reject the truth, God's Word being truth, is that it gives all supremacy, control, and right to rule as He pleases to God, and makes man responsible, not to himself, but to God. When we say that God is sovereign, we are saying simply what the Scriptures state, that God is on the throne; He is in complete control; His will is right for no other reason than that it is His will; His will and His pleasure are and will be performed, and none can thwart His will and His pleasure; that man is responsible before Him; and all praise and glory belong to Him. The truth, then, is humbling with respect to man, and is glorifying with respect to God. When the truth is proclaimed as revealed in the Scriptures, God is exalted and man is abased. Now people will rail against this truth and speak evil of the God of the Bible, claiming that the sovereignty of God makes Him a monster (and other such vain, foolish, and sinful statements). Nevertheless, God is God: He can be nothing less than who He is, and it is impossible for Him to be more. Because people speak evil of God does not make God evil; hence the question, **“Is thine eye evil, because I am good?”** Simply because sinners do not like the truth that God is in control, that His will is always accomplished, and that they are responsible before Him as sinners and He alone is able to save them does not diminish the truth.

In considering the sovereignty of God, we shall seek to do no more than what we should, and that is to note what God's Word has to say concerning the subject, not holding back from all that the Bible states and not going beyond that which the Bible teaches. If we shall stick with the Bible, on

this and on all matters, we shall do very well. Jesus reveals this truth concerning God, in the form of a question, **“Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?”** We note that God has a will, He is right in exercising His will, and He exercises His will over those that belong to Him (Ps. 24:1). The whole world and all the inhabitants of the world are under the rule of God. He can do what He will with any and all, and He is right in all that He does. God never asks any if they think He is right. The truth is that God is right because He is God (Dan. 4:34-35; Rev. 4:11). All things fall under this heading with respect to God's right over them: **“mine own.”** He made all things, and all things are His to do with as He wills to do.

In that God is sovereign, having a will which is right and doing His will, He is absolutely sovereign. God is not partially right, nor does He partially do what He pleases. He does all His will, and both His will and the performing of His will are always right. Nothing God purposes ever falls to the ground; nothing He decrees is left unfinished; and nothing He does can be held back or called into judgment. Man began to think that he could resist and sit in judgment of the will of God in the garden of Eden because he allowed the doctrine of the devil to invade his thoughts (Gen. 3:1-6). Man failed, God did not. Man's purpose was not accomplished; but God's is accomplished. Man thought to be as God; but God is God, and none can resist Him. The penalty which He prescribed against eating of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not avoided. His will was performed. Man cannot sit in judgment of God or hold back the will of God; rather,

man is always subject to the will of God. After man sinned and the whole human race fell into utter depravity, being made a race of sinners, the only redemption for man is the redemption that is according to the will of God: He saves, He saves whom He will, He saves all whom He will, He is right to save them, He saves them only His way, and none can keep Him from saving them.

Let us, for a moment, survey the Scriptures with respect to this truth before mentioning or thinking anymore upon it, letting our thinking and expounding be thoroughly ruled by the Word of God, even as we trust we have done up to this point (Ps. 47:2, 7-8; 103:19; 115:3; 135:6; Isa. 46:9-11; Acts 5:38-39; Eph. 1:9-11). There are many other Scriptures which we could note, and some that we shall; but these should suffice that, if our hearts be full of faith from God, we can see that God is sovereign. He has a purpose which He performs according as He pleases, and His purpose cannot be halted, deviated, or changed. He rules, and none can overcome Him or judge His rule unrighteous. When men say that God is unfair, or that God, if He were to do such and such a thing would be unrighteous, they are showing that they themselves have thought to sit in judgment of a sovereign God. They do so because, as the Scripture states, **“There is no fear of God before their eyes”** (Rom. 3:18). Man says in his wicked and rebellious and sinful heart that he himself is king over himself, and he defies in his mind the will of God. Because men deny and hate the sovereignty of God does not take away from God's sovereignty. Cannot He who is the Potter fashion the clay vessels of His design as He pleases,

♦ (Continued on page 11)



# Brief Truths

By Randy Johnson of  
Texarkana, Texas

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13).



## HAVING ALL YOURS SINS FORGIVEN

**"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13).**

One day we who have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus will truly understand what it means to **"..having forgiven you all trespasses."** Some people who think of themselves as Christians have never had their sins forgiven, they are falsely chasing a theology that will only send them to Hell when they die. If your sins are not forgiven or have been cleansed by the blood of the Saviour Jesus Christ, then you are not saved. People cannot save themselves; they cannot go through life without sinning, not even a single day, it is impossible. The theology or doctrine that they are trusting in is false in every way, it is anti-Scripture and anti-God. But to us who have been saved, to us who have been cleansed by the blood of the Saviour, we will one day understand what it means to have been cleansed from our transgressions.

The Psalmist wrote, **"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile"** (Ps. 32:1-2). Three blessings here (1) you are **"forgiven,"** (2) your sins are **"covered,"** and (3) God will not

"impute" your sins to you. When God "forgives" a sinner their sins are carried away, they no longer have them, they are eternally gone. When God says your sins are **"covered"** He means they are covered by the blood of His dear Son and He will never see them again, ever! And there is the fact He **"imputeth not iniquity."** When God fails to impute your sins it means God will not charge you with your sins. It does not mean they are not charged, or not paid for, but rather that you will not pay for them, Jesus paid for them at Calvary. This is not past sins, or present sins, but all your sins, you are actually sin-free as though you have never committed a single sin. They have been forgiven, covered, and paid for by God the Father Who sent Jesus Christ to the cross to die for them.

What a blessing the Psalmist wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When we get to Heaven, we will be sin-free for the very first time, Satan will no longer tempt us, our natural man is gone, and sin will never cross our mind or heart again, EVER! **"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses"** (Acts 13:38-39).

There is nothing for you to do, Jesus has done it all by carrying all your sins to the cross with Him.

Believe on Him and your sins, too, will be forgiven. **"And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"** (Acts 16:30-31).



## The Sovereignty of

*(Continued from page 10) ♦*

and can He not do with them whatsoever He will (Isa. 45:9, 12-13, 23-24)?

What means the sovereignty of God to man? More particularly, what means the sovereignty of God to lost men, women, boys, and girls? Here is God who has a will, whose will is right, and He performs His will. If He says, **"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else"** (Isa. 45:22); then surely we know that if a lost sinner shall look to God as He declares, he or she shall be saved. If God says that there is none else who can save, but only He, then we may also know that all who do not look to Him shall not be saved, and they shall perish. When Jesus commanded His kind of church to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, He stated, **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:16). If this then is the set decree of God, and God is sovereign, then you, lost sinner, may conclude that believing thou shalt be saved and in not believing but remaining in your natural defiant state you will be damned. This is the will of God, and His will is performed. God's mercy toward those who are in Christ and God's fierceness toward those who are outside of Christ are right, and they are irresistible.

The Scriptures are clear that God **"now commandeth all men every where to repent,"** (Acts 17:30); and if you do not repent, you can be sure that you will not be able to resist the fierceness and wrath of God against all unrighteousness of men. You can also be sure that, if you be in Christ, you shall not miss the mercy of God to deliver souls from death and everlasting destruction. Jesus Himself stated, **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"** (John 6:37).



## Be Strong in the

*(Continued from page 1) ♦*

about being strong in the Lord.

### KINGS OF JUDAH THAT WERE STRONG IN THE LORD

We read in the previous chapter about the victory that God gave unto Asa and the children of Judah. In a battle against the Ethiopians, Asa and the children of Judah were pitted against an adversary, Zerah, who had at his disposal an army of a million Ethiopians (II Chron. 14:9-10). However, we see that Asa and the children of Judah put their trust in the Lord God of Israel, rather than in the strength of man (II Chron. 14:11). Because of this, the Lord gave Asa a victory over this mighty host (II Chron. 14:12-15). Later on, we read about another king of Judah, and another invading enemy. In II Chronicles 20:1-25, we read about King Jehoshaphat of Judah, and an invasion of Moabites and Ammonites (II Chron. 20:1-2). Once again, we find that the King of Judah and the people of Judah and Jerusalem put their trust in the strength of the Lord (II

♦ (Continued on page 15)



# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What was the purpose of Moses removing his shoes in Exodus 3:5?

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Exodus 3:3-6 states: **"And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."**

In this familiar passage of Scripture we find Moses encountering God in the preincarnate appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, theologically referred to as a Theophanies. Moses marveled that the bush was burning but was not consumed. God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush and commanded him to take off his shoes because the place where he was standing was holy ground. The presence and power of God Almighty was there, and as such Moses must approach God with a worshipful sense of awe, reverence, respect, and godly fear. Moses must be prepared to listen carefully to God's instruction. God was revealing the glory, holiness, and excellency of His person in the symbolism of the burning bush.

God wanted Moses to understand this was a special and extraordinary display of His glory and holiness. The covenant

keeping God of his fathers was revealing Himself to Moses. As such, Moses must remember that God demands reverence and despises levity in worship. All true worship and service to God must be rendered with a profound sense of respect and holy awe as Hebrews 12:28-29 records: **"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."** We are not to serve and worship God flippantly or irreverently. We must daily approach His throne of grace with godly fear, coupled with a holy desire to serve Him in a manner that is pleasing in His sight. To do this effectively we must be separated from worldly lusts and consecrated to sanctified service.

I fear that much of what passes for worship, service, and prayer in modern day expressions of Churchianity and Religiosity is nothing more than an irreverent stench in the nostrils of a holy God. It is the offering of strange fire like that of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2) which was rejected by God.

As we endeavor to worship and serve the living God let us do so by symbolically removing our shoes and all of the dirt and grime of the world, to draw nigh to God. Along with the metaphorical shoes, let us put off all attitudes that defile us such as bitterness, wrath, envy, lust, and covetousness. Let us come into the secret place of the Most High in prayer with a holy desire to commune with God. Let

us come into the congregation of the Lord with a longing to be fully consecrated to the service of God.

A. W. Pink commented on these verses:

"It was in holiness God was about to deal both with the Egyptians and with His own people, and of this Moses needed to be instructed. He must put off the shoes of every day walk and life, and draw near in the spirit of true worship. Another important lesson is this for the servant of God today. Each laborer in the vineyard needs to keep constantly before him the fact that the One with whom he has to do, and whom he serves is holy, thrice holy. A realization of this would check the lightness and levity of the flesh." (Gleanings in Exodus, page 25).

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Years ago I was involved in Aikido (a form of Martial Arts). One of the things that we learned was, when you walked into the Dojo you removed your shoes. It showed a sign of respect and reverence in someone else's house. Even today I will remove my shoes when entering someone else's house out of respect. I have been told by some to keep them on, and so I do, but some people would prefer you remove them so as not to soil their carpet.

The same thing applies here. Actually there are several lessons to be learned here. God is Holy; we need to meet Him in such a way. I think God was instructing Moses, that God is Holy and

he should remove the dirt and the dust that stuck to his shoes, "sandals," (Spurgeon said, "Shoes were not worn commonly, even by the Egyptians, until a late period, and would certainly not be known in the land of Midian at this time"). Spurgeon also states, "The practice of putting them off before entering a temple, a palace, or even the private apartments of a house, was, and is, universal in the East—the rationale of it being that the shoes or sandals have dust or dirt attaching to them."

It was a sign of reverence in a holy place. Not that that piece of ground was any holier than the rest of the ground, but it was the place where God dwelled and was Holy Ground. I consider the church building Holy Ground when we meet there, because the presence of God is there. Also these commands prevented Moses from carelessly encroaching, unprepared, into the presence of God.

I like the way John Gill puts it when he said, "put off thy shoes from off thy feet; dust and dirt cleaving to shoes, and these being ordered to be put off from the feet, the instrument of walking, show that those that draw nigh to God, and are worshippers of him, ought to be of pure and holy lives and conversations." A.W. Pink stated, "He must put off the shoes of everyday walk and life, and draw near in the spirit of true worship."

I know there are some that believe they can wear whatever to church, but I wholeheartedly disagree with that. If I am going in the presence of a Holy God I feel I should dress with the very best I have. We have become so slack and indifferent on this matter, that folks are wearing shorts and pajamas to church. **"A little leaven"**

◇ (Continued on page 14)

## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Are our modern churches overburdened with worldly goods more than reaching the lost? It seems most churches want more stuff rather than seeing sinners saved. Am I wrong in thinking this?

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I am thinking you are in the wrong kind of church. If your church(es), according to the question, is 1) modern, 2) active in worldly goods, and 3) wants more stuff, you are NOT in one of the Lord's New Testament Baptist churches at all. I would be very concerned for your family if you are exposing them to such liberal social groups. Selah! Think about it!

God's kind of church is a Baptist church that is found in Matthew 28:18-20: 1) Preaching the gospel every service and sending their members out each week to live the witness of grace before the community. 2) Baptizing their converts and separating them from the worldly goods and modern stuff of this dark world and her liberalism. (Consecration is necessary physically, as well as doctrinally and spiritually). 3) Teaching them to observe all things in the Law and the prophets. So many try to "live under grace" and run so hard from "living under the Law" that they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. **"...certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the (sovereign) grace of**

**our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Jude 1:4).

The "modern churches" alluded to in the question, are more like Satan's assemblies, than the churches of Jesus Christ. God has promised to keep His churches pure and spotless, so while some of those attributes of Laodicea, Sardis, or Thyatira may find some followers at times, the Lord promised to take His candlestick away from those congregations before they get as far as modern churches have gone. If you find that your church is starting to "change" and "leave" previously held scriptural and Baptistic tenets, beware. Selah! Think about it!

God's true churches are still the sovereign grace, landmark, missionary, independent Baptist churches that: 1) preach the gospel of sovereign grace, of total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance and preservation of the saints. 2) God's churches are unapologetically landmark, local church only, and preach Baptist bride and practice chain-link succession authority. Shame on any "modern" affiliation with reformed Baptists, who are not really Baptists at all, but a mere Protestant "break off" from the Roman Catholic whore of Revelation 17:5-6, **"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND**

**ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus..."** 3) God's English churches still use the King James Version in their services. He is not the author of confusion. 4) God's churches have services of humble submission, where the ladies are still covered, still silent and still glorious in praise to our orderly God. 5) God's churches still use unleavened elements (wine and bread) and exercise closed communion, because they understand church discipline, purity, and authority. 6) God's churches still abstain from Catholic holy days and urge all others to **"...Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"** (Rev. 18:4). 7) God's churches still proclaim a supernatural God that created the entire universe in six literal days, by fiat and command, He sent His Son to be born miraculously of a virgin, to walk on water, bring mighty storms and calm them just as easily. He can bring down fire from Heaven on LGBTQ cities or He can feed 5,000 men, plus women and children. Our churches believe in a God that avenges abortion as vile murder and drowns them in the Red Sea (of their choice). 8) God's churches believe that Jesus Christ is coming back soon (very soon!) to Rapture His saints and subject those left behind to the most excruciating period of judgment ever conceived.

The last question asked, "Am I wrong in thinking this?" As I pondered the question, I hope the one that asked such a question is not mired in such a church, as he describes for us. If he has experienced such modernity, and lust for worldly goods and more

stuff, then the answer is not to be worried about thinking, but the answer is to leave that kind of social organization and please, beloved reader, find your family a sovereign grace, landmark, independent, missionary Baptist church to join. In such a Baptist church, you will not have to worry about those signs of Satan's synagogues. God's churches will not be in that number. Selah! Think about it!

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This is a hard question to answer due to the difficulty of knowing precisely the conditions that exist in all modern day churches. There is no doubt that generally speaking, modern churches (and I am using the term loosely) are made up of lots of folks who are consumed with covetousness, worldliness, and selfishness. Many churchgoers and the religious assemblies they attend are concerned with outward show, the magnificence of their building and furnishings, the entertainment they provide, the amount of money they take in, and the number of people in the pews. Many modern day churches bear a resemblance to the church at Laodicea that Jesus rebuked in Revelation 3:15-17: **"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and**

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## Forum Question #1

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**leaveneth the whole lump**" (Gal. 5:9). We have let it creep in little by little and now look what it has produced. **"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"** (Gal. 6:7).

I fear we will have much to answer for when the Lord returns. Things will be different though when Jesus sets up His Kingdom on this earth for a thousand years for He will rule with an iron rod. God Bless!

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**"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was"** (Ex. 20:18-21). Coming into the very presence of God, is a big deal! Selah! Think about it!

**"And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the (burning) bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw**

**not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God"** (Ex. 3:4-6). This is the only passage in Scripture with the phrase **"holy ground,"** so that makes it pretty unique. The only parallel, where shoe removal is voiced audibly is in Joshua 5:13-15, **"...behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."**

But these are not the only times that holy ground required bare feet. According to Jewish tradition, and verified by the lack of instruction from God as to shoe (construct) in the pertinent chapters of Exodus 28 and Leviticus 16, it is apparent to Bible readers that the priests in their "holy ground" ministrations in the Tabernacle and Temple, were not allowed to wear sandals/shoes, but their bare feet alone trod the sanctified ground. The brass laver is for the washing of those dusty feet, before entering into the hallowed areas. This principle is also seen in Exodus 20:25-26, **"And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it,**

**thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon."** No shoes or man-made products are to be between us and God, when we approach His holy presence. Selah! Think about it!

To quote researcher, Jacob Nacht in his valuable booklet: "Our first source of information concerning the shoe is the Bible. Here the shoe partakes of the character of the profane, symbolizing the earthly in contrast with the holy. Removing the shoes signifies putting off something profane, obligatory upon those who approach the Holy. **"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground,"** is the command to Moses... The Levites, whose function it was to carry the vessels of the Tabernacle, were required to take off their shoes while performing (their) holy service. The priests, likewise had to be barefooted when performing their service in the Sanctuary..." (*Symbolism of the Shoes in Reference to Jewish Sources*).

"By virtue of the bathing of both hands and feet in the bronze laver, which Moses, Aaron, and the priests were required to do, was one able to enter the Holy of Holies. I found a Babylonian tractate (Therefore there must be nothing interrupting between the priests and the floor (BT Zevachim 2, 1), and every Jewish source states that the High Priests (and all the priests) ministered barefoot in performance of their duties. This is why feet are washed, and shoes are not mentioned for the priest's clothing." (Tau- Bible Hermeneutics Stack Exchange)

A New Testament equivalent is the worship of the males (audible prayers, speakers and teachers) without a headcovering. **"Every**

**man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head:..."** (I Cor. 11:4-5). Men are to be "unveiled" for the same reason as the priests to be "unshod"- that there be no "mundane man-made material" between God and worship. With the spiritual worship available through the "rent veil" by Christ at Calvary, the "floor" is not hallowed, so much as the "heavenly access," pictured by the bare head of men and the still yet veiled heads of the ladies (those in submission). **"But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out,..."** (Ex. 34:34), (Ex. 34:29-35: II Cor. 3:12-16).

MATTHEW STEPP



## Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

**increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."** Like the church at Laodicea I am sure that many modern churches think they have need of nothing due to their outward displays of prosperity. Yet they know nothing of the presence and power of God or the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have had the privilege of worshiping in and among the Lord's churches for nearly thirty-nine years of my Christian life. In that time, I have been a member of only three New Testament Baptist churches. The one I was saved in, and the two that I have had the privilege of ministering

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## Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 14) ♦

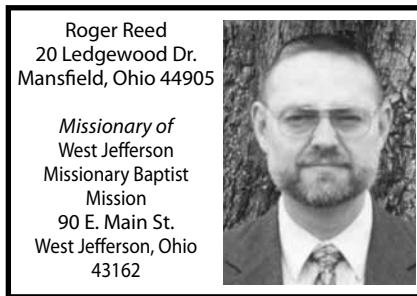
unto. I thank God that in each of the churches there has always been a missionary spirit and a concern for the souls of men. Sometimes the desire to see sinners saved has been stronger than at other times, but in the main I believe there has been a genuine desire to see sinners saved. In each of the churches, the membership has been committed to supporting God called missionaries. We have also reached out in our communities by witnessing to family, friends, neighbors, and also by systematically going door to door with the Gospel. Our members are encouraged to pass out tracts and to direct family and friends to our Sermon Audio account. I encourage our people to do something every day to reach out to people wherever they are.

I have had the honor of preaching in several of the Lord's churches over the years and I have observed in their prayers, worship, and services an overall desire to see people saved. Most of our churches are not outwardly wealthy according to the standards of the world.

Is there room for improvement personally and among our churches? Absolutely! We need to be committed to the awesome task of carrying out the Great Commission. We could all be more sacrificial in our missions giving. We could all be more zealous in witnessing on a daily basis. May God be pleased to deliver us from covetousness and worldliness so that our focus may be on the souls of men and the glory of God. Shame on those whose philosophy of missions is simply a sign on the church house. We must go where sinners are if

we are to follow the example of the early churches as set forth in the Book of Acts. That is what real Baptists do! **"And daily in the temple, and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also"** (Acts 5:42; 17:6b). Oh, that God would stir us with a holy zeal that characterized the Lord's churches in the first century! May the example of the first church be found in all the Lord's churches: **"Therefore they that were scattered abroad WENT EVERY WHERE PREACHING THE WORD"** (Acts 8:4) (emph. TR).

TOM ROSS



Before I explain what I believe, I will answer, no, you are not wrong in thinking that way. But a few things have to be considered here before we become dogmatic in our answer.

The question states modern churches, not Sovereign Grace New Testament Baptist churches. Most New Testament churches today can barely keep their heads above water and have very little money to be overburdened with worldly goods. On the other hand the modern super mega churches are focused on elaborate and glitziness. And in order to have all that they have, to have the numbers and try to get people in any way they can, forget about the gospel.

Let me continue, but focus on just Sovereign Grace New Testament Baptist churches

today. And let us consider a couple of things. I believe in tithing, there is no reason why anyone would not. Along with that our churches should tithe. There are some that do not and sit on a lot of money that could be used for the purpose of the gospel. Being a missionary I am convinced more than ever that the best way for our churches to tithe and get the gospel out is through missions, but not exclusively. What I mean is, there are things that the money, that is given in tithes and offerings, should be used more for the furtherance of the gospel instead of buying elaborate things the church does not really need. Do not misunderstand, monies should be laid back for future repairs and updates, but to have a large bank account with no goal in sight to me is sin.

We need always to remember the tithes are the Lord's and He will require an account of every penny that we use or do not use. Our Lord has given us the precious gospel and we are to use it to make disciples. Read "The Parable of the Talents" in Matthew 25:14-30 and "The Parable of the Ten Pounds" in Luke 19:11-27. We are to use what we have been given and not hide it away or save it for a rainy day.

Personally, I think too much of the Lord's money is spent on Bible Conferences and not the gospel ministry. There is always the hope that there would be someone saved at a Revival or Bible conference, but that is no substitute for getting the gospel message out to your local community!

If your church is not involved in mission work, that is wrong. Some may say that we only have a few members and we can not support missions. My response to that is you can not afford not to. If your church only brings in a little bit, ten

percent should be tithed whether for missions or something else to spread the gospel message. You will be surprised how the Lord will bless. So I believe elaborate or worldly goods should be cast out and reaching the lost should be the main focus for the Lord's churches. God Bless!

ROGER REED



## Be Strong in the

(Continued from page 11) ♦

Chron. 20:3-13). And, once again, we see that the Lord responds, through one of His prophets, to the faithfulness of the King and the people (II Chron. 20:14-19). On this occasion, though, we find that the army that is assembled to fight against the invaders does not even have to fight (II Chron. 20:20-26).

Let me give you one more example of a king of Judah who was strong in the Lord. We read about King Hezekiah and the attack of the Assyrians in II Chronicles 32:1-3. And we read about the faith of Hezekiah, and Who it is that he placed his trust and hope in (II Chron. 32:6-8). Once again we find that the Lord promises to be the strength of His people (II Kings 19:32-34). And we see that the Lord has the power and strength to act upon His promises, and to be the strength of His people (II Kings 19:35-37; II Chron. 32:20-23).

The reason I spent so much time examining these three kings and the salvation the Lord delivered unto them and His people, is because we can see that there is no situation you and I might face that can be considered any more dire, difficult, or dangerous, than the situations confronting the people of God we have just examined.

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# Be Strong in the

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I also want to point out that in the first example I noted, the Lord used the army of Asa to defeat a mighty enemy. In the second example we noticed, we can see that Jehoshaphat had a mighty army, but the Lord only used them to carry away the spoil of the enemy He had already destroyed. In the last example, we notice that in the case of Hezekiah, there was not an army of the people of Judah at all – at least not to speak of. In this last example, the Lord proves that He does not need men at all in order to accomplish His Will, and in order to defeat any enemy. In this case **“...the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand...”** (II Kings 19:35).

So, we find in these examples, that as the children of Judah become more and more wicked; and as they become more and more worldly; and as they rely more and more on themselves; the Lord gives them a witness and a testimony that emphasizes, more and more the sovereignty of God, and the strength that lies in Him – and emphasizes less and less, the abilities and strengths of man.

Even in the New Testament these men and their strength in the Lord is remembered. **“Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens”** (Heb. 11:33-34). I want to point out also, that these verses indicate that in order to truly prosper in the strength of the Lord, one must have faith,

and one must work righteousness. Certainly these Old Testament kings did express faith in God; and certainly these Old Testament kings did desire to work the righteousness of God.

## GOD'S STRENGTH IS OUR STRENGTH

As we consider these events and persons we have just studied, is it not an amazing thing to realize that this same God who delivered these kings and these people, is the same God who delivers us today? Is it not an amazing thing to realize that the strength of God that we have at our disposal today, is the same strength that Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah depended on? The Lord said through Isaiah the prophet, **“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness”** (Is. 41:10).

You know, we will never get to the place, or come to the point, where the situation we face exceeds the strength of God. However, so much of life that we face, does exceed our own strength or ability. All of us who are born into this world, are born frail and weak. Truly, it takes very little to exceed the limits of our own strengths. The Scriptures tell us of some words that Jesus Christ had for Peter: **“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak”** (Matt. 26:41).

And yet, the Lord told the Apostle Paul, **“...My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...”** (II Cor. 12:9). When we lean on the strength that is in the Lord, then we acknowledge our own frailties and weaknesses and inabilities. When man is demeaned and his

strength is lessened, then God is exalted and His strength is magnified. If we pick up where we just left off in II Corinthians 12, we read the following words of the Apostle Paul: **“...Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong”** (vv. 9-10). Really, this should be our goal – to magnify God and His strength through our very dependence upon Him. And sometimes this is how God does get Him glory – He allows troubles and terrors to come upon His people, so that when they look to Him for strength, and when they overcome the troubles through the strength of God alone, then God's name and might and strength is gloriously exalted.

Certainly, we can tell now, after these events have taken place, the Lord God of Israel ordained that King Asa would encounter an enemy force that exceeded his own strength, so that the strength of the Lord could be magnified. And, King Jehoshaphat also was attacked by an enemy that was too strong for him, so the strength of the Lord could be exalted. And, King Hezekiah was besieged by the Assyrians, just so the strength of the Lord, and the name of God could be glorified in all the earth. We read in Romans 9:17, **“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”** We find it is true, that the Lord God gave unto these kings of these wicked nations of the earth, the strength they had, just so

He could manifest that His own strength is far greater. Consider that Zerah and the Ethiopians became a mighty force – a force that exceeded the strength of Asa and the Nation of Judah – just so that God could strike them down. Consider also, that God gave the Moabites and the Ammonites a strength that exceeded the physical strength of Jehoshaphat and the children of Israel, just so that God could destroy them, and exalt His own strength and His own name. Consider, too, that the Assyrians became a mighty nation, and their King Sennacherib, conquered many nations, so that the Lord could make them mighty and powerful – and then could bring them down. In fact, many nations and false gods were laid low under the might and power of Sennacherib, just so the Lord could manifest His omnipotent strength. We read about the strength of Sennacherib in II Kings 18:33-35, **“Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?”** Truly the Assyrian King was a mighty (albeit proud and boastful) king. And, in the face of such strength, and in the case of such a (comparatively) weak and small kingdom such as Judah; when Judah is delivered, then the strength of the Lord God is exalted even more.

Today, when you and I are in need of the strength of the Lord,

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# Be Strong in the

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we do not expect a prophet of the Lord to come to us, such as came to the kings of Judah in their times of need. King Asa had the prophet Azariah the son of Oded (II Chron. 15:1); King Jehoshaphat had the words of the Levite Singer, Jahaziel (II Chron. 20:14); and King Hezekiah had the comforting words of the prophet Isaiah (II Chron. 32:20). However, though we do not have an Old Testament prophet of the Lord to speak to us, we do have the Word of God, and the presence of the Spirit of God. In fact, as the Lord Jesus Christ has said unto us, we have the Spirit of our Saviour to comfort us and strengthen us. The Lord Jesus told the disciples, **"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you"** (John 14:15-18). We can say with Hezekiah, even today, that, **"...There are more with us then with him (the world)!"**

If you want to know what it is that is the secret of strength in the Lord, then consider the words of the Apostle Paul: **"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be**

**able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"** (Eph. 3:14-21).

Remember, the title of my message is **"To Be Strong in the Lord."** Well, in this passage we have just read, we find out what it means to be strong in the Lord. Here we find that, to be strong in the Lord, is to have **"hearts"** that are strengthened **"by faith."** And, to be strong in the Lord, is to be **"rooted and grounded in love."** Also, to be strong in the Lord, is to **"know the love of Christ."** And finally, to be strong in the Lord, is to **"be filled with all the fullness of God."**

In effect, if you desire to be strong in the Lord, then empty yourself of the strength and ability of man, and be filled with the Lord Jesus Christ.

## CONCLUSION

Keep in mind what Asa said to the Lord in front of the people of Judah and Benjamin: **"...help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee..."** (II Chron. 14:11). And remember what Jehoshaphat prayed to the Lord in the presence of the people of Judah and Jerusalem, when the Moabites and Ammonites were gathered against them: **"O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee"** (II Chron. 20:12). And, lastly, let me remind

you of the words of Hezekiah as he addressed the people of Judah and Jerusalem, when the Assyrians were besieging the city of Jerusalem: **"Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah"** (II Chron. 32:7-8).

When we are in need of strength, let us, also, turn to the Lord. **"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint"** (Isa. 40:29-31).

Let me close with this thought: The strength that comes from the Lord, is not the same strength that men and women seek in this world. In this world, some seek after physical strength, and they seek it through fitness and physical exercise. Some seek mental strength, and they seek it through learning and mental exercise. Some seek after worldly acclaim, and seek to have strength with men. But, to be strong in the Lord, is to have so much more. To be strong in the Lord, is to have His strength at your disposal. In the strength of the Lord, we can live, suffer, rejoice, and even die without faltering. This is the strength that I desire, and I hope this is the strength that you desire.



# Desperately Crying

(Continued from page 1) ♦

only three times in the Bible: the Old Testament of course. While it is twice in the verse just quoted it also appears in Joel 1:20 also speaking of wildlife longing after that necessary thing: water. To their thirst in this text is added the need of pasture. Joel wrote: **"The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness."** It should also be pointed out that the King James translators in their marginal note informed us that **"panteth"** can also be translated as **"cry."** So what we have is two verses where the same word in Hebrew appears, but in which the translators chose to render in two different ways. Why they did this is not clear, but they informed us of this practice in their introductory materials – which few of us have even read, let alone made ourselves familiar.

So we have tried to capture the essence of this word by titling this article **"Desperately Crying Out For God."** Surely the truly regenerated individual indwelt as he or she is by the Spirit of God, sorrowing to the point of continual repentance, experiences this desperate cry: this panting in thirst – desperate thirst for God.

Dissatisfaction with self and this world is the experience of all those who have tasted and found the LORD to be good (see Psalm 34:8). Again we quote the Psalmist who understood this dissatisfaction with things and self. He wrote: **"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness"** (Ps. 17:15). The confident expectation that we shall one day be like Him whom

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# Desperately Crying

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we love – and more importantly the One who loved us and gave Himself for us **“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...”** (Heb. 6:19) keeps us from drifting and being lost in the sea of unbelief. But at the same time the Psalmist's experience was that of all the regenerate. He would never be satisfied until he resurrected with God's likeness – i.e. apart from both the effects of sin and from sin itself. Think of it! One day the curse – the consequences of both the sin nature and our acts of sins will have been removed: or perhaps better we should understand that we shall be removed from this awful thing. And then, completely free from not only the penalty of sin and sins we shall be totally and forever free from the power of sin as well as the very presence of that awful thing that is the cause of our suffering and ruin.

In our desperate dissatisfaction no doubt, we all have fallen into the sin of God's Old Testament people. Jeremiah said their sins were two in number, saying **“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water”** (Jer. 2:13). Coldness and that awful lukewarmness that precedes it and fosters it is one thing, but as awful as that is, we join to that the sin of seeking satisfaction from the things of the world. We hew out for ourselves **“cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”**

Water from a living, clear flowing spring, cold, and clear is one thing. In my youth I had occasion to drink water

in Western Oklahoma: water that was stored in a cistern: no comparison. Good cold spring water is delightful while cistern water is merely wet if I may say it that way. In drinking water from a cistern I experienced an unpleasant taste with a lingering aftertaste although it was pure rainwater caught from the clean shingles of a house and piped directly into the cistern. What is worse is that the cisterns we hew out for ourselves really are like those Jeremiah mentioned: they are broken: they are cracked: they leak out water and allow impurities and vermin from the soil to enter the water. Is there any wonder that Hebrews 3:13 speaks of **“...the deceitfulness of sin”**? Satan and the world and our stinking flesh lies to us. This water from the broken cisterns of the world they say will be pleasant and satisfying, but to those who have tasted the living water it is only in the end distasteful.

Now these worldly cisterns are of various sorts. Each sort appeals to individuals of various tastes and preferences. Whether sports, illicit sex, drugs, alcohol, music, religious ritual, religious enthusiasm, seeking after signs and wonders, fast cars, comforts, prosperity, popularity, or whatever – and we could go on and on – none of these things satisfy the regenerate. They are broken cisterns and their polluted waters are foul-tasting and unsatisfying.

The worldling – those whose total realm of experience is fleshly things – those spiritually dead individuals who have never experienced life: never tasted the water of life – these seem often quite content with their cistern-water. It is all they have known or are capable of knowing. They have never heard with the hearing ear either the voice of Christ or even

one sound sermon. The Word of God, called **“...the things of the Spirit of God...”** in I Corinthians 2:14 are things they have never “heard” or received. Why? Because **“...they are foolishness unto him [the unregenerate]: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”** In the estimation of the unregenerate the Word of God is foolishness and so he scorns its sayings. But behind his rejection of God's Word lies something deeper: such individuals lack the Holy Spirit who is the One whose presence and work enables them to be **“spiritually discerned.”** They lack the “needed equipment” – life – and cannot know the truths of God's Word in a spiritually profitable way. A dead and dry head knowledge is all that is possible to him who exists only in physical life while being spiritually dead.

Is it any wonder that this matter of calling on the name of the Lord is shown by the Scriptures to be not a once-upon-a-time thing (as the decisional regenerationists often teach), but that it is an ongoing thing. Oh yes, there was a first time that the regenerate called upon the Lord, but is there ever a last time: a time when crying out to Him ceases? In Heaven? Perhaps but then there will be no need and most certainly no dissatisfaction! What saith the Scripture? **“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours”** (I Cor. 1:2). Paul wrote that there are **“sanctified”** (set apart) folk, called with a call that makes them **“saints,”** and that they like **“all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ.”** He did

not say that they “called” once-upon-a-time for fire insurance, if you please, but that theirs is a life of continual calling.

Why the continual calling? Is it not because the regenerate have been shown their sin and like the patriarch cry out, **“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes”** (Job 42:6). Or are we better than this ancient one who walked with God? The prophet cried, **“Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts** (Isaiah 6:5). Micah the prophet wrote of his continual dissatisfaction in the following graphic simile: **“Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit”** (Micah 7:1). Compounding his dissatisfaction with self, Micah saw the corruption of all those around them, saying, **“That they may do evil with both hands earnestly...”** (Micah 7:3). What a picture of this world's unregenerate population!

At no time shall the regenerate cease their desperate crying out to God. Are there not times of refreshment from the Lord? Are there not joys along the way? Do we not partake of the good things of God: the brief foretastes of that glory which shall be ours? Certainly! God's children are sustained by both His presence and His blessings! Praise the Lord for these! But as is recorded in Acts 7:59, even until death faithful Stephen was found to be calling upon God for we read: **“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”** And so

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# Desperately Crying

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it seems clear to me that as long as the children of God in this life remain of sound mind they shall be found **“calling upon God”** for God has fixed us that way.

The Word of God has established the facts: the regenerate are those, **“...which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh”** (Phil. 3:3). How shall such a people live and not continually call upon the Lord? Is not such calling along with other things shown by the Book of God to be evidences of spiritual life? Should we not be distressed if we never find ourselves crying out to God just as if we find ourselves to be lacking godly sorrow, repentance, faith, and a changed life? If we lack conversion – that outward fruit of regeneration – how shall we dare think that we possess spiritual life which is the cause of conversion?

Reader, have you not been made to see yourself? Have you not been caused to abhor that which you have seen? Do not such views of self prompt cries of “woe is me” and a constant reliance upon Christ and Him alone: a constantly renewed dependence upon His finished work on behalf of His sheep? Are you satisfied with self and with the pleasures of this world? If in such a condition dare you think that you are anything but an unregenerate pleasure-seeking animal devoted to self-gratification? Oh, be reconciled to God! **“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God”** (II Cor. 5:20).



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# BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

## TEACHER ORDERED TO STOP PRAYING WITH CHILDREN BEFORE LUNCH

(CH)--A first-grade teacher who prayed with her class before lunch every day has been told to stop due to a complaint from a parent and an atheist organization. The unidentified teacher at Norwood Elementary School in Birmingham, Ala., led her class in prayers each day at lunchtime, according to a letter from the Freedom From Religion Foundation to the school superintendent. The teacher also allegedly taught her students Bible verses and Christian songs.

“Public school teachers and administrators may not promote religion by leading students in prayer, encouraging students to pray, participating in student-initiated prayer, or otherwise endorsing religion to students,” attorney Christopher Line of the Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote to the Birmingham City Schools superintendent. The same letter alleged the principal began meetings with prayer. A teacher-parent conference also was held to “address the parent’s concerns.” The teacher was advised to refrain from conducting any religious instruction and teacher-led prayer.

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## A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNOR IS SET TO SIGN AN ABORTION BAN INTO LAW

(CH)--The conventional wisdom that says pro-life laws are a Republican-only issue may be challenged soon in Louisiana, where a Democratic governor has signaled support for a heartbeat bill banning abortion as early as six weeks of pregnancy. It wouldn’t be the first time

Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards has bucked his party’s platform. Last year he signed a bill prohibiting abortion after 15 weeks. In 2016, he signed a bill requiring a 72-hour waiting period before obtaining an abortion. Both are being challenged in court.

Louisiana’s heartbeat bill, SB 184, makes it unlawful to “knowingly perform an abortion with the specific intent of causing or abetting the termination of the life of an unborn human being when a fetal heartbeat has been detected.” It makes exceptions for the life or the mother and to “prevent a serious risk of the substantial and irreversible impairment of a major bodily function.” It would take effect only if a similar Mississippi law, which is being challenged in the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, is upheld. The bill passed the state Senate, 31-5, this month, and is expected to pass the House. A Democrat, state Sen. John Milkovich, is the sponsor.

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## ‘SAVE CHICK-FIL-A BILL’ PASSES TEXAS HOUSE, BANNING RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

(CH)--A bill that would prevent the government from targeting Chick-fil-A and other businesses for their donations to religious organizations passed the Texas state House Monday and appears set to become law.

The bill, SB 1978, gained momentum in the legislature after San Antonio’s City Council voted 6-4 in March to exclude Chick-fil-A from the airport, in part due to the company’s donations to the Salvation Army and Fellowship of Christian Athletes, as Christian Headlines previously reported. The

website Think Progress claimed the organizations had a history of “anti-LGBT discrimination.” The bill would prevent such a scenario. “A governmental entity may not take any adverse action against any person based wholly or partly on the person’s membership in, affiliation with, or contribution, donation, or other support provided to a religious organization,” the bill’s text says.

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## TRUMP OPPOSES LGBT EQUALITY ACT – IT’S ‘FILLED WITH POISON PILLS’

(CH)--The Trump administration has come out against the Equality Act, which could face a floor vote and would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected classes in non-discrimination laws. Religious liberty and conservative groups warn the bill, if passed and signed into law, could have devastating effects on women’s rights and religious freedom.

“The Trump administration absolutely opposes discrimination of any kind and supports the equal treatment of all; however, this bill in its current form is filled with poison pills that threaten to undermine parental and conscience rights,” a senior administration official told media outlets.

The Equality Act (H.R. 5) would amend federal laws to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in public accommodations and facilities, education, federal funding, employment, housing, credit and the jury system. Among the amended laws would be the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Fair Housing Act. It would be the most significant LGBT rights bill ever passed. It has 240 co-sponsors, only three of which are Republicans. The rest are Democrats. But religious liberty groups are warning the bill is not as innocent as its name indicates.

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## ALABAMA’S NEAR-TOTAL ABORTION BAN SIGNED INTO

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## LAW

(CH)--On Wednesday, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey signed a near-total abortion ban into law, effectively making it one of the most restrictive abortion bans in the nation. "To the bill's many supporters, this legislation stands as a powerful testament to Alabamians' deeply held belief that every life is precious and that every life is a sacred gift from God," Ivey said. The bill makes abortion a felony punishable by up to 99 years in prison for any healthcare provider or doctor who performs the procedure. In 2017, over 6,700 abortions were performed in Alabama, according to the Alabama Department of Public Health. Over 5,700 happened at or before 12 weeks of gestation.

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## VERMONT PASSES BILL MAKING ABORTION A 'FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT'

(CH)--A Vermont bill declaring abortion a "fundamental right" that cannot be infringed is headed to the desk of the state's Republican governor. The bill, H. 57, cleared its final hurdle, thrusting the state into a national debate over the unborn. The Vermont Right to Life Committee is calling the bill the "most radical anti-life legislation in the nation." Democrats control both chambers. It passed the Senate, 24-6, and the House, 106-37. "The State of Vermont recognizes the fundamental right of every individual who becomes pregnant to choose to carry a pregnancy to term, to give birth to a child, or to have an abortion," the bill's text says.

Additionally, the bill says the state's public entities shall not "interfere with an individual's fundamental rights" to "choose to carry a pregnancy to term, to give birth to a child, or to obtain an abortion." The bill defines public entity as the "Legislative, Executive, or Judicial Branch of State Government." The bill even protects women who perform their own abortions. "No State or local

law enforcement shall prosecute any individual for inducing, performing, or attempting to induce or perform the individual's own abortion," it says.

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## PARENTS KEEP 700 STUDENTS HOME TO PROTEST LGBT ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

(CH)-- Two days after a California school board approved new curriculum that includes LGBT history, parents of more than 700 students kept their children home in protest. The Rocklin School District Board OK'd the curriculum May 1 by a vote of 3-2, requiring students in kindergarten through fifth grades to learn about the contributions of key LGBT figures in history and social studies curriculum. A group of parents known as the Informed Parents of Rocklin had urged the board not to include the curriculum in elementary grades. The board's action was in response to a new state law requiring schools to include the contributions of "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans" in history lessons. Unlike sex-ed, there is no opt-out for parents in the law. Parents of more than 700 students kept their children home on May 3. "We believe that anyone who has made a significant contribution to society should, of course, be included in our history textbooks," Rachel Crutchfield, spokeswoman for Informed Parents of Rocklin had said. "However, the concept of sexual orientation is far too complex of a topic for elementary-aged children to be introduced to at school. ... Let's let kids be kids."

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## 2ND GOVERNOR VETOES BILL PROTECTING BABIES WHO SURVIVE ABORTION

(CH)--Montana's Democratic governor vetoed a bill Wednesday that would have protected babies who survive abortion, saying it interferes with "deeply personal medical decisions." Gov. Steve Bullock became the second governor this year to veto such a bill, following his counterpart in North

Carolina. The bill, SB 354, passed the state Senate 32-18 and the state House 54-43. It was titled the "Montana Born-Alive Infant Protection Act." "A health care provider performing an abortion shall take all medically appropriate and reasonable steps to preserve the life and health of a born-alive infant who is viable," the bill says. The abortion facility also must "call 9-1-1 for an emergency transfer of the infant to a hospital that shall provide medically appropriate and reasonable care and treatment to the infant," according to the bill's text.

State Sen. Albert Olszewski, a Republican and the bill's sponsor, said the bill would have prevented "legal infanticide." "There is a national debate attempting to legitimize the intentional killing of a baby born alive if the medical provider and the parents deem or decide that it is necessary or should happen."

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## CALIFORNIA INSTALLS NEW SEX EDUCATION GUIDELINES THAT TEACH 5-YEAR-OLDS ABOUT TRANSGENDERISM

(CH)--The California Department of Education has been praised by the LGBT community for approving new education guidelines that discuss the issue of gender fluidity with kids as young as five. Alongside explaining transgenderism to young children, the sweeping new guidelines also encourage teachers to advise LGBT teenagers on practices of safe sex and address masturbation with middle-schoolers.

In protest at the decision, hundreds of worried parents gathered at the state Capitol Wednesday carrying signs that read "stop sexualizing my kids," "respect parental rights" and "too much too soon." Most of those in attendance agreed that sensitive issues surrounding sexual behavior and transgenderism should be discussed in the home and not mandated by the education system. "It's just scary what they are going to be teaching. It's pornography," one mother said. "If this continues, I'm not sending them to school."

Teachers are also rightly concerned

over the new guidelines. Educators are afraid they will be forced to teach concepts that go against their conscious, and use non-binary terms or else they could lose their jobs. "I shouldn't be teaching that stuff," declared one elementary school teacher. "That's for parents to do."

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## PORN IS A 'PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS' THAT CAN SPARK CRIME, ARIZONA LEGISLATURE SAYS

(CH)--The Arizona Senate this week passed a resolution calling pornography a "public health crisis," two months after the state House approved the same text. The resolution passed the Senate 16-13 and says porn "perpetuates a sexually toxic environment that damages all areas of our society." It passed the House, 32-28, in February. Pornography, the resolution says, can lead to crime. It further says the use of pornography has an "adverse effect on the family as it is correlated with decreased desire in young men to marry, dissatisfaction in marriage and infidelity." Children, the resolution says, are harmed, too. Democratic Sen. Jamescita Peshlakai, a Democrat, voted against the resolution.

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## CHICK-FIL-A TO BECOME 3RD LARGEST RESTAURANT CHAIN, DESPITE BEING CLOSED ON SUNDAYS

(CH)--Chick-fil-A, the Christian-owned company that's often targeted by the Left, will soon become the third-largest restaurant chain in the United States. It has been reported that the chain is on pace to become the third-largest restaurant in sales this year, passing Subway and trailing only McDonald's and Starbucks. Chick-fil-A will reach No. 3 "despite all the controversy and despite the fact that it's closed on Sundays," she said.

Chick-fil-A founder Truett Cathy decided to close on Sundays in 1946 when he opened the first restaurant in Hapeville, GA. Having worked seven

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days a week in restaurants open 24 hours, Truett saw the importance of closing on Sundays so that he and his employees could set aside one day to rest and worship if they choose – a practice they uphold today. “Despite being open only six out of seven days a week, we’ve been able to consistently generate more sales than competitors who are open every day,” Jodee Morgan said. “And I do think customers appreciate our policy. I know our employees do.”

**“Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed”** (Ex. 23:12).

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## POW’S WWII BIBLE MUST BE REMOVED FROM VETERANS DISPLAY, SUIT DEMANDS

(CH)--A civil rights group filed suit Tuesday seeking the removal of a historic World War II Bible from a public display case at a veterans hospital, saying it violates the constitutional prohibition on government establishment of religion. The Bible at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Manchester, N.H., is part of a POW/MIA display that honors those who have been imprisoned or never were found. The Bible sits atop a table with a plate, drinking glass, candle, flower, American flag and salt shaker. An empty chair also is part of the display. The Bible is protected behind a locked plexiglass box. It was donated by Herman “Herk” Streitburger of Bedford, N.H., who was held in a German prisoner of war camp during World War II. He was a U.S. Army Air Corps technical sergeant.

“We would all be outraged if the MVAMC only provided care to Christians, or denied care to non-believers, or those who worship their God in other ways,” the federal suit says. “The placement of a Christian Bible on this sacred table is just as

objectionable.” It was filed on behalf of James Chamberlain, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force who receives treatment at the facility. He is a member of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Barrington, N.H. “Despite his strong personal religious beliefs, he believes that the Christian Bible has no place being displayed on the POW/MIA table at the entrance way to the MVAMC, where he gets his care,” the suit says. “As a Christian, he respects and loves all his military brothers and sisters and does not want to be exclusionary by the placement of the Christian Bible.” The Department of Veterans Affairs, though, says the Bible is staying.

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## GEORGIA GOV. DEFIES HOLLYWOOD THREATS, SIGNS PRO-LIFE HEARTBEAT BILL

(CH)--Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp defied threats of a Hollywood boycott and pressure from pro-choice groups to sign a bill Tuesday banning abortion after a heartbeat is detected. The Writers Guild of America had said Kemp’s signing the law would force talent “in our industry” to “leave the state or decide not to bring productions there.” But Kemp, during a ceremony with supporters, said the law is needed because “Georgia is a state that values life.” The bill, HB 481, is known as the Living Infants Fairness and Equality (LIFE) Act. “We protect the innocent, we champion, the vulnerable. We stand up and speak for those unable to speak for themselves,” Kemp said. “... I realize that some may challenge it in the court of law, but our job is to do what is right – not what is easy. Through the Life Act, we will allow precious babies to grow up and realize their full God-given potential.” The new law states that “no abortion is authorized or shall be performed if an unborn child has been determined ... to have a detectable human heartbeat.” It makes exceptions for rape, incest, medical emergencies and if a doctor determines a “pregnancy is medically futile.” A heartbeat can be detected as early as six weeks’ gestation,

according to the bill’s text.

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## 80 PERCENT OF WORLD’S PERSECUTED ARE CHRISTIANS, NEW REPORT SAYS

(CH)--An estimated 80 percent of all persecuted religious believers around the world are Christians, according to new British report that also says the level of persecution in some areas is arguably coming close to meeting the international definition of genocide.” The report was prepared by a panel within the Church of England, and commissioned by the British Foreign Secretary.

The worldwide persecution of Christians, the report says, is only worsening. Christianity now faces the possibility of being wiped-out in parts of the Middle East where its roots go back furthest. In Palestine, Christian numbers are below 1.5 percent; in Syria the Christian population has declined from 1.7 million in 2011 to below 450,000 and in Iraq, Christian numbers have slumped from 1.5 million before 2003 to below 120,000 today. Christianity is at risk of disappearing, representing a massive setback for plurality in the region. Christians are fleeing some countries, the report says, due to persecution that is nearing genocide levels. “In some regions, the level and nature of persecution is arguably coming close to meeting the international definition of genocide, according to that adopted by the UN,” the report says. The eradication of Christians and other minorities on pain of ‘the sword’ or other violent means was revealed to be the specific and stated objective of extremist groups in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, north-east Nigeria and the Philippines. An intent to erase all evidence of the Christian presence was made plain by the removal of crosses, the destruction of church buildings and other church symbols.

The report cited other studies that said:

\*Christians were targeted in 144 countries in 2016, an increase from 125

in 2015.

\*A total of 245 million Christians suffered “high levels of persecution” according to a 2019 report – an increase of 30 million from the previous year.

\*736 attacks on India’s Christians were recorded in 2017, up from 348 in 2016.

\*As many as 2,000 churches in China’s Zheijiang province were targeted between 2014 and 2016. They either were completely destroyed or had their crosses removed by government officials.

\*More Christians were killed in 2018 in Nigeria because of their religious faith than in any other country in the world. Nigeria accounted for 3,731 of 4,136 fatalities in that category. About 200,000 Nigerian Christians are at risk of being killed.

An estimated 80 percent of all persecuted religious believers are Christians, the report says. “Given the scale of persecution of Christians today, indications that it is getting worse and that its impact involves the decimation of some of the faith group’s oldest and most enduring communities, the need for governments to give increasing priority and specific targeted support to this faith community is not only necessary but increasingly urgent,” it says.

**“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter”** (Rom. 8:36).

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## SCHOOL STOPS SAYING ‘GOD BLESS AMERICA’ AFTER ATHEISTS COMPLAIN

(CH)--A Pennsylvania school stopped saying “God Bless America” over the loudspeaker after a parent complained and an organization comprised of atheists and agnostics got involved. Sabold Elementary School in Springfield, Pa., had a custom of allowing users of the loudspeaker to say “God Bless America” after the morning Pledge of Allegiance. The Freedom

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# Bible & the Newspaper

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From Religion Foundation, acting on a complaint from a parent, wrote the superintendent and argued the action was unconstitutional. “The repeated recitation of a religious message in the school setting violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which prohibits public schools from advancing, supporting or promoting religion,” FFRF attorney Christopher Line wrote. “‘God Bless America’ is a prayer. The song that the phrase originates from begins, ‘As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer.’ A prayer hosted by a publicly supported school does not pass constitutional muster.” An FFRF press release said saying the phrase “sends a message to its students that the school is endorsing and compelling belief in God.” The school ended the practice.

**“God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah” (Ps. 67:1).**

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## TEXAS SCHOOL SURVEY TELLS STUDENTS ‘GENDER IS HOW A PERSON FEELS’

(CH)--A recent survey given to all Austin public school students—as young as the third grade – told children, “Sex is what a person is born (sic). Gender is how a person feels.” The survey went on to ask pupils to select whether they feel they are a “girl/woman,” “boy/man,” or “identify in some other way.” The test also provided a blank box where students were asked to “describe how you identify.”

The Student Climate Survey was obtained by The Federalist through an open records request. The Austin Independent School District has been administering the survey to grades 3-11 since the 2003-04 school year. According to The Federalist, similar surveys are conducted at school districts across the country as part of the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act, the K-12 federal law that updated No Child Left Behind. One of the components of ESSA

allows states to show “accountability” to the federal government on non-objective criteria such as children’s “socioemotional learning” (SEL). In many instances, parents are not even aware their students are taking the surveys because of waivers they sign at the start of the school year.

Pediatrician and education researcher Karen Effrem told The Federalist such surveys can be harmful to the children. “Whether it’s comprehensive sex education or a survey, if you’re bringing stuff like that [sexuality] up, you are potentially creating upset or conflict or just planting the idea” in young minds that may not be developmentally ready for it,” Effrem said.

Not all of the survey questions deal with sexuality, but even so, they often tread on sensitive topics that parents in many communities have argued are outside the purview of an academic setting.

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## GALLUP: NUMBER OF AMERICANS WHO BELONG TO A CHURCH OR HOUSE OF WORSHIP PLUMMETS

(RNS) — Most Americans still say they believe in God, but their involvement in organized religion continues to wane. A new Gallup report found that only half of Americans say they belong to a church or other religious body, down from 69% two decades earlier. Most of the decline is tied to the rise of the so-called “nones” — those who claim no religious affiliation. Gallup found that the share of Americans who claim a religious identity declined from 90% to 77% in recent decades. But even those who claim a faith tradition may not belong to a religious congregation or community, according to the report, which compared data from 1998-2000 to data from 2016-2018. At the turn of the century, Gallup said, 73% of religious Americans belonged to a house of worship. That’s dropped to 64% today. “The still-sizable proportion of religious Americans also contribute to declining church membership, as fewer in this

group belong to a church than did so two decades ago,” the report states.

Age and generational differences appear to play a role in whether Americans join a house of worship. “Just 42 percent of millennials are members of churches, on average,” according to the report. “By comparison, 20 years ago, 62 percent of members of Generation X belonged to a church, when they were about the same age as millennials are today.” The poll found that 68% of “traditionalists” — which Gallup identifies as those born before 1945 — are part of a church or other religious body. That percentage has declined from 78% two decades ago. Gallup’s study also found that 89% of traditionalists have a religious identity, compared with 68% of millennials, which it defines as those born between 1980 and 2000. “Not only are millennials less likely than older Americans to identify with a religion, but millennials who are religious are significantly less likely to belong to a church,” according to the report. “Fifty-seven percent of religious millennials belong to a church, compared with 65 percent or more in older generations.”

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## INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS TAIWAN BECOMES FIRST ASIAN COUNTRY TO LEGALIZE GAY MARRIAGE

(CH)--Taiwan has approved same-sex marriage, becoming the first in Asia. The Taiwan legislature will allow full marriage rights to same-sex couples. The Taiwan Constitutional Court ruled in May 2017 that the constitution allows same-sex marriages, and it gave parliament two years to adjust laws if needed. The new law will go into effect May 24.

The island of Taiwan reportedly has a large gay community and even hosts an annual gay pride event. However, in November 2018, the country tried to pass a referendum approving same-sex marriage. Nearly 70 percent of voters rejected the referendum. Taiwanese lawmakers voted on a Cabinet bill to approve same-sex marriages.

Also commenting on the vote was Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, who tweeted, “We took a big step towards true equality, and made Taiwan a better country.”

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## 4-YEAR-OLD BOY HAS ‘GENDER DYSPHORIA,’ SHOULD DRESS LIKE A GIRL, JUDGE RULES

A British judge is supporting the parents of a 4-year-old who believe their child is transgender and who want to dress him in a girl’s uniform for school. Social workers, though, say the parents are acting too fast. At issue is a young boy who identifies as a girl. The local social workers said the parents had “actively encouraged” the child’s gender transition and “acted in a precipitate manner in relation to perceived gender dysphoria.” The parents had sent the boy to school in a girl’s uniform. A gender specialist told the judge that the boy’s actions were “consistent with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria.” The judge agreed. The boy, the specialist said, “appeared to be a content, alert and socially engaged little girl.” The judge, Justice Williams of the Royal Courts of Justice in Westminster, labeled the mother and father “good parents.” He further said the child had not been harmed from the “complete transition into a female occurring at a very young age.” The 4-year-old child has a 6-year-old brother who told the court his little brother was now a “girl and would grow up to be a woman.”

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## SCHOOL RENAMES MOTHER’S DAY EVENT: ‘WE NO LONGER SUBSCRIBE TO A BINARY WORLD’

(CH)--An Australian school renamed a Mother’s Day fundraiser this year and plans to do the same with a Father’s Day event because, the principal says, the world has changed. Brunswick East Primary School in Melbourne traditionally holds a fundraiser each May called a “Mother’s Day stall” where homemade food is sold. This

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# Bible & the Newspaper

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year's stall, though, was re-named the "Appreciation stall." "I sincerely hope that this change in name will show that we as a community recognize that our families are not made up of any particular combination of people and that we no longer subscribe to a binary world," principal Janet Di Pilla wrote to families in a newsletter. She also apologized to families who were offended by the previous name. "I am sorry that in the past we have offended some members of our community and I hope that this acknowledgment goes some way to address any hurt which has occurred in the past," Di Pilla wrote.

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## CHINESE OFFICIALS WARN: CHRISTIANITY CAUSES 'ENORMOUS HARM' TO SOCIETY

(CH)--Government leaders in China's third most-populous province held a seminar last month to warn communist officials of the "enormous harm" Christianity poses on China's security, according to China Aid, which promotes religious freedom within the country. The seminar in Hebi, Henan, for members of the Communist Party of China encouraged the members to "maintain 'correct views' in regards to the religion and avoid being persuaded by its ideology," China Aid reported. The seminar was titled, "Christianity's Enormous Harm on China's Security." With an estimated 94 million people, Henan ranks No. 3 in population among China's provinces. "The Chinese government often views religions, including Christianity, as foreign attempts to undermine its rule, even though there is no evidential basis for such a claim," China Aid said. "As a result, they often try to suppress religious adherents, and they openly forbid Communist Party members from practicing a religion."

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## The Burden

By James Smith  
(1802 - 1862)

**"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death"** (Rom 7:24)?

This is the language of the Apostle Paul, and conveys to the mind some idea of the strong inward conflict he endured. He speaks in the first person singular all through the connexion, and uses language which it is difficult to misunderstand, unless the mind is prejudiced against the truth. Here is Paul's heart laid open, the working of his mind set forth, the conflict in his bosom exposed; the flesh was lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that he could not do the things that he would. He delighted in the law of God, which none but a Christian can do; he panted for holiness as with every breath, but he felt evil working in his nature, and sometimes prevailing against him, and he cries out, **"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"**

He was burdened, and he groaned being burdened. But his burden was nothing external; he could triumph over all his external trials, and say, **"None of these things move me."** Nor was it his natural body, which he inhabited as an inconvenient tabernacle. But it was the corruption of his nature; the plague of the heart or the law in his members, warring against the law of his mind; and this, like a dead corpse fastened to a living

body, was weighty, loathsome, deadly, and a constant hindrance to him. It was the consequence of Adam's sin, and is in the seat of life; and, like a flowing fountain, sends out streams of corruption, which defile the thoughts, desires, motives, plans, affections, and operations. Its parts, are the lusts of the flesh working powerfully; its tendency, is to death, or separation from God; and while it is a part of the Christian, he renounces it, disowns it, and says, "It is no more I, but the sin that dwelleth in me." Still it bears him down to earth, hinders him in every holy exercise, depresses him and sinks his spirit in gloom, unfits him for the enjoyment of the high and holy privileges of the gospel, and causes him in bitterness of soul to cry, **"O wretched man that I am!"**

But we are not to suppose the Apostle was positively unhappy, for he was not. He was delivered from guilt; and though occasionally overcome, he was not a slave, but a son of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. Still he felt sin working, lust rising, and pollution flowing; these things hindered him. They were powerful, he hated them; they put him to grief and pain, and as a person grieved in spirit, he groaned; as one opposed, he wrestled; as one in pain, he sighed for ease; as sorrowful, he pined for comfort; as wearied, he longed for rest; as unable to deliver himself, he applied to his God; as conscious that it would last through life, he cried, **"O wretched man that I am!"**

**"Who shall deliver me?"** He knew Who would deliver him, and he thanks God for it; it is not the language of ignorance, but of impassioned desire. He longs for deliverance, and that, because he knew that his God hated sin, and his one ruling desire was to please

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## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 4-1-2019 to 4-30-2019

Beginning Balance .....	\$474.79
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV .....	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	300.00
Carol Willett, Georgetown, TX .....	70.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY .....	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR .....	200.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	56.00
Anonymous .....	2,920.00
Dividing checks .....	300.00
Sub Total .....	\$5,388.50
TOTAL .....	\$5,863.29
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	490.00
Postage .....	527.58
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.90
Dividing checks .....	300.00
Returned check .....	6.00
Bank Charge .....	2.50
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,801.98
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,061.31



## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 4-1-2019 to 4-30-2019

Beginning Balance .....	\$2,154.44
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	200.00
Calvary Ind. B. C., Sumas, WA .....	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
.....	625.00
TOTAL .....	2,779.44
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	403.98
Program production .....	195.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	598.98
.....	2,180.46
Interest .....	+02
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,180.48





# ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Indore Baptist Church of Indore, WV, and Pastor Paul Stepp would like to announce their annual Bible Conference scheduled for June 14th thru 16th.

Service are Friday at 7:00 p.m., Saturday 9:30 a.m., and Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

Scheduled speakers are: Elders Matthew Stepp, Benjamin Stepp, David Green, Andy Proctor, Tom Ross, Joe Collins, Doug Newell, Justin Meier, Jonathan Bailless, Leroy Pack and Dan Stepp.

All are invited to attend.  
For more information contact Pastor Stepp at (304) 807-5069.

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The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will be having their Annual Fellowship meeting June 29th. Service time is 10:00 a.m. Scheduled speakers are Elder Lyle Thomas, and one other.

A meal following the service will be provided by the church.

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The Portland Baptist Church of Plumerville Arkansas is seeking a full time pastor. Due to aging and failing health (cancer), Elder Lindy Davis is resigning as pastor. For more information call Bro. Davis at (501) 354-1859, or Email pbchurch@tcworks.net.

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The Grace Landmark Baptist Church of Buckhannon, WV, is seeking a pastor. The church is Sovereign Grace and Landmark in doctrine and practice. Any interested called pastor of like faith may contact Brother Brad Butcher at (304) 669-4738 or (304) 745-6226.

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The Stephens Branch Baptist Church of Martin, Kentucky is in need of a pastor. They are an Independent, Sovereign Grace,

Landmark, Missionary Baptist church holding to the doctrines of grace and the King James Bible. If you are interested in being considered or would like more information on the church you can call Brother Lonnie Edwards at (859) 629-1413 or write the church at: Stephens Branch Baptist Church, 1025 Stephens Branch Road, Martin, Kentucky 41649.

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The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, Alabama is seeking the Lord's guidance in calling His eternally appointed man to fill the vacancy left when He called His faithful servant Elder Wm. Doyal Thomas unto his everlasting home September 29, 2018.

If any brother of like faith and order would like to be considered for that pastorate or would like information on the church please call or text Brother Mike Gibson at (256) 303-7747 or email Brother James Reynolds at admin@pbcofdecaturalabama.org. or text (ONLY) 931-452-1158.

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The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, Mississippi is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact (662) 282-7794 or Email:request@bereabaptistchurch.org.

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The Lord's Baptist Church in Tacoma Washington is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Gaylen Russell at 360-879-5565 (home) or 253-495-4567 (cell) or by Email: gaylenr@rainierconnect.com.

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The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact the church in writing at SGBC, 400 N. Main St., Caldwell, KS 67022, or by phone Brother Darin Wiley 620-863-2431.

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

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## Gleanings

(Continued from page 23) ♦

God in all things. He found also, that his burden prevented or interrupted his fellowship with God; and being led away by its effects sometimes, his Father hid His face from him. His evident love to holiness had become natural; consequently his hatred to sin, in every shape and form, especially in himself, was strong and painful. He found also, that sin dwelling in

him, unfitted him for those high and holy duties which devolved upon him; and indisposed him occasionally for attending to them. It led him into evil, and gave Satan and the world a degree of power over him. All which things raised in his soul a burning desire for entire deliverance from this body of death, this fountain of impurity, this law in the members; and therefore he cries out, **"Who shall deliver me?"**

See, my Christian reader, the nature and tendency of sin; it plagued, pained, hindered, and caused an Apostle to call himself a wretched man. See also what we are to expect below, even sorrow, grief, hindrances, and pains; the body of death will burden us, press us down, and cause us sometimes to long to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Believer, thy case is not singular, or new; but thy experience is the experience of all the saints, even of those who were most highly favoured; Paul felt just as you feel, groaned as you groan, and longed for deliverance as you do now. Nothing affects the true believer so painfully as sin; and when his conduct is so correct, that those around him can see no cause for sorrow or complaint, he feels enough to mourn over, on account of the sin that dwelleth in him.

*"Why should a soul redeem'd with blood,  
Called by grace and born of God,  
Feel a perpetual war within,  
'Twix reigning grace and striving sin?"*

*'Tis but to make him ev'ry day  
From self to Jesus turn away;  
And 'tis a sign of life within,  
To groan beneath a load of sin.*

*Who but the soul who feels his woe,  
Will to the blood of sprinkling go?  
And seek salvation only there,  
From all that he shall feel or fear."*



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