

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

Did Paul Eat the Lord's Supper with the Church at Troas?

By Curtis Pugh

Bocsa, Caras-Severin, Romania

"And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. These



Curtis Pugh

going before tarried for us at Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his

life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted" (Acts 20:4-12 – Emphasis added).

As this text has been used much

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Good Works

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

(1834 - 1892)

"Zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). We shall not be afraid of leading any of you into a legal spirit this morning through what we shall say, for after our frequent exhortations to avoid anything like trusting in your works, attended as they have been, we trust, by the Holy Spirit, we are not afraid that you will so misunderstand us, as to suppose that



Charles Spurgeon

when we speak of good works, today, we shall in any way whatsoever wish you to imagine that they can promote your eternal salvation. We labored when here the Sabbath morning before last, to let you know the difference

between the two covenants, the covenant of grace and the covenant of works; we shall beg you to remember what we then said, and if by any slips of the tongue we should say anything that should look like legality, we beg you will put the two together, and wherein we shall err from the great truth of justification by faith, to reject our testimony.

"Zealous of good works." There are some who hear us preach high doctrine, and constantly declare that we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, who, therefore, suppose that we cannot preach good works, and that we could not preach a good sermon of exhortation to Christians, to live in holiness. Well, we will not say that we can preach a good

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A Sure and Mighty Faith

By Jeff Short

Mantachie, Mississippi

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12). Paul wrote these words to Timothy from prison. He said, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (II Tim. 4:6). His life was very swiftly coming to a close when he made this statement.

In our text, Paul makes a bold statement of assurance in his salvation. He says, "I know.....and am persuaded." Paul is saying, "There is no doubt. I am



Jeff Short

absolutely sure. I am completely convinced that I have cast the keeping of my soul upon the Lord Jesus Christ and that at the time when my eyes close in death upon this earth, my eyes will open and will look upon the Lord that has saved me." He had complete assurance in his faith – no room for doubt.

There are some great statements of

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The Motives of Missions

By Milburn Cockrell

(1941 - 2002)

"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Rom. 1:14-15).

Paul felt obligated to preach the gospel to all classes of people. He looked upon himself as the trusted bearer of the tidings of infinite importance directly from Heaven. He regarded himself as owing a debt to men of all races. Very few have ever felt the gospel debt so profoundly, or discharged it so fully as did the Apostle Paul. His entire life



Milburn Cockrell

was given to paying the debt both in preaching and writing. But was Paul the only gospel debtor? Was he a debtor in any different sense from what other Christians are? Did not the Saviour commission His church to go into all the world with the gospel? Are not we also entrusted with the Word of salva-

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The Lord's Going Before

By John Warburton

Part 2

(1776 - 1857)

3. The Lord has gone before His people in the way of Grace.

What I understand by Grace is simply this—that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are one God, the undivided and immortal Jehovah, who has wrought out the work of Redemption. Some people want to know how it is that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God in one nature, and how it is that they are not three Gods. A man once asked me how I made it out. I told him that I never began to make it out; but that if he asked me how God made me out, I could tell him. He



John Warburton bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." My soul believes it, and I have cause to believe it. I have proved the Father to be just in my conscience; and I proved

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the Son to be merciful in delivering me from the wrath to come; and I have proved the Holy Spirit in bearing witness in my heart that I am a child of God and that God is my Father, and therefore I have the witness in myself, in my conscience. So I am not brought on the ground of human reason. When I speak of God as a God of Grace, it is the Father's love and eternal purpose of which I speak, in setting apart His elect from everlasting, from before the foundation of the world. The sovereign love of the Son of God, in standing in the place of His chosen, taking human nature into union with the divine nature and all the imperfections and sins of the people upon Himself, standing in the gap for them, and completely, unchangeably, and immutably perfecting their salvation. The work of the Holy Spirit in revealing these truths, carrying out the design of Redeeming Grace, and bringing His elect

safe home to glory. This is what I understand by a God of Grace.

You will say, if this is what you understand by a God of Grace, then the elect must be saved whether they will or not. No such thing: I am a *free willer*; but not one of your fashionable sort. I hold that the elect must be saved—but recollect it is not deprived of free will. No, that very free will of man is made to bend to the purpose of God. I would willingly have gone on in sin and drunkenness, and mocked at God's people. I would willingly have run the same race for eternity, but God was determined that my former free will should not have its way and stopped me, and at one blow killed me dead. I don't mean He killed me dead naturally; He killed my soul to the pleasures of sin, and brought me willingly to bow at the feet of Jesus and to cry for mercy and salvation; so that I was made willing in the day of His power. Thus those who are saved, retain their free will.

Then you will say, they are saved by free will. Yes; they are saved by free will, too. It was the free will of God the Father, who chose them before the foundation of the world. It was the free will the Son of God who redeemed them. It was the free will of the Holy Ghost who sanctified them, and stopped them in their mad career of sin. The sinner that is stopped and has the work of God's grace in his heart, his soul is brought as free and willing as an act of grace and free favour, and his soul is brought to beg for redemption through Christ's pardoning blood, and made willing in the day of God's power. Thus, you see, it is all free will. God give me to this day, to have a free will when his face is hid from me—to reveal Himself again. My soul has a free will, when God makes me do all, and leave all for His honour and glory. Have you such a will as this in your hearts? Do you know anything about it? Let us see how the Lord has gone before you. Has not the Lord gone before you to incline you to obey His righteous laws, notwithstanding all your wandering and all your rebellion, and all your abominable iniquities, past, present and to come, all in one mass? For He who was born of a woman, and was made under the law to redeem you from all your iniquities. What a wonderful act of grace was this. He became bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh, that all your transgressions might be emptied upon Him, and He took all as His own. What a wonder of grace is this: He was taken as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep to the shearer, and He opened not His mouth. He was to receive all the iniquities of the elect upon His own account, and therefore He came to suffer according to covenant engagement and to punish transgression and to make an end of sin, and He has done it, and so completely that damnation is out of the question.

A child of God may be sunk down and have a burden of sin and afraid that he

will never be brought to glory, and that there never can be redemption for him. All this is to teach him the evil of sin, the heinous nature of sin; to teach him to come to Christ and beg for the blessing, that God may have the honour, to answer his petition and to give him rest and to see that there is redemption through the blood of Jesus.

Let us see what God's Word says. The Apostle Paul writes the Lord Jesus Christ was made of God "**wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.**" "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us." Who then can unmake Him? Can sin do it? Christ has taken sin away by the sacrifice of Himself. Can the devil do it? No, Christ has bruised the serpent's head, and spoiled all his power. Can God do it? No; God is just and right, and here mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have embraced each other. Here, justice, love, mercy and power shine in the blessed forgiveness of sins, through the righteousness of the Son of God; so that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ. He is made of God unto us wisdom. Why then, it is these poor souls that have all the wisdom. "Ah," says one, "I have none, I am just a blind man groping for a wall—the greatest fool in the world." Amen. That is wisdom. You are one of these wise men. Your wisdom is to see yourself a fool; God has two ends in view, and therefore says, "If any man be wise in his own eyes, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." No fool can see his own blindness; but they are those that God has blessed. It is the wisdom of God for a man to see what a wretch he is. Christ was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. By one offering He has for ever perfected them that are sanctified. God goes before His people in the work of Redemption; He wrought out an everlasting righteousness, paid the ransom price; the debt is discharged—and the flock of Christ is presented to the Father, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Ah! Poor soul, what has God not done to bless you, in giving you this glorious hope of an accomplishment of His promises that He has gone before you. "But," say some people, "this is foul Antinomianism." Some when they hear of these things say, "It is shocking; if Jesus has atoned for the sins of the elect, they may do as they please." My friends, God's people can neither be as good as they please, nor as bad as they please; they are not their own. The Apostle says, "they are bought with a price." "Well, then," say some, "if that is the case, they may go on in sin." But the Apostle reasons very differently; "You are not your own," says he, "therefore because you are not your own, you can neither save nor damn yourselves; therefore because God's love has saved you, and the Holy Spirit sanctified you, the power of God is around you, and

heaven is yours, and you shall be brought there in spite of sin, the world, and the devil; therefore, glorify Him with your bodies and your spirits, which are God's." As though he said, "You are not your own property, and cannot continue in sin, that grace may abound." There is one secret the natural man can never enter. It is a blessing to God's own people. The natural man prefers there should be no heaven and no hell. If he thought there was no hell, what delight would he take in the joys of sin, and in the pleasures and amusements of life? There are tens of thousands that know there is a hell, that form their ideas from the belief that to be wicked is to swear and cheat and defraud, but to be righteous is to go to church, and to do their duty as moral people. Now if they believed that there is no hell, they would have no check whatever. But God's people being brought to know that there is a heaven, and that Christ has redeemed them from the curse of the law. He has given them a testimony in their hearts that they shall go to heaven. The feeling of this keeps them from sin, and they would not under that feeling, commit one sin for the world, not because they are afraid that sin would send them to hell, but because they love God. The natural man cannot make this out. What does it arise from? It arises from the love of God in the heart, and the knowledge of redeeming love in the soul cleanses the conscience from dead works, so that the soul that has this in his conscience is an honest man.

You may trust God's people in the dark—sin to them is hateful. I don't mean merely drunkenness and whoredom, but every appearance of evil. Some people think their heart's good and that all is right, but the child of God knows the state of his heart, and feels the cursed working of that abominable thing. How he cries to his God, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Wash me thoroughly and I shall be clean." I can assure you that this view of the Lord going before His people is not a licentious doctrine. It does not produce sin that grace may abound. You are known characters. How can you hold these doctrines and plunge into drunkenness, or any other sin? I never knew one that had grace in their hearts do it. I dare say you have known people who pretended to have grace in their hearts, go on in sin. The difference is that the people of God have the active principle in their souls of which others are destitute.

The Lord has gone out before His people in all their afflictions, in all their trials and in all their griefs. There is not one affliction but the Lord has gone before you. He has borne all your griefs and your afflictions. You think sometimes that your afflictions and miseries are greater than ever were endured, that there are none like yours, and that you will never be able to bear them. But in all

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their afflictions, the people of God have had consolation, and the Angel of His presence has saved them. In His love and pity He redeemed them, and blessed be His name. There is not a warfare God's people come into but it is for their benefit, but you want to know if the Lord is with you, and is standing by you. My soul has been lately in affliction that had nearly sunk me. I have no particular trials about paying rent, and having something to eat; but there is something under the buttons—I know such a heart, O! such a heart! I think there never was such a heart dwelt in a child of God, so often departing from God, so rebellious and ungrateful, peevish, and sinking under darkness and confusion, and ready to give all up for lost. I wanted the Saviour to appear once again to give me another testimony that He has gone before me, and to give me an assurance out of His Word that I am a child of God.

On Saturday, when I left my friends in the country, I had been as carnal and as dead, and as barren, and had as little feeling after God as a beast. I could only feel my misery, and when I got by myself I sat me down, and had such a strong feeling of my misery I knew not how to bear it. I said, "My God, what am I come here for? I know that I am worse than a beast; I cannot preach, nor read, nor pray. Am I a Christian? Have I the Spirit of grace in my heart?" I felt a secret desire spring up in my soul, and I said, "Oh, Lord, give me a token that Thou art with me; I don't ask Thee for silver, or gold, or honor, nor for men's smiles," and then I felt a little stronger; and I said, "There are not many want a token from Thee, do not deny such poor wretches as want Thy smiles," and then the words of the text came into my soul, "Is not this the day that the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand? Is not the Lord gone out before thee?" Then a little light shone upon me, and I felt assured that the Lord would stand by me, and give me a word to some souls that should not be lost to their heart; and I felt a little assured there were some poor odds and ends of fools on whom the Lord would have a little pity.

To these I would say, "Come, poor souls, the Lord has gone before you, and you cannot do without Him, He will

come again." What a sweet moment was that when the two disciples going to Emmaus, talking together as they went, met a stranger and He said, "What are your communications by the way?" "What," said they, "art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and knowest not what the scribes and Pharisees have done to Jesus, whom they took and crucified?" When they had told Him the lamentable tale, He turned round upon them and said, "**O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought, not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?**" And He began at Moses and the prophets and opened up the Scriptures. What a commentary was that! How were they struck with amazement and astonishment, as He expounded the law and the prophets; and when He took the bread and brake it and then vanished out of their sight.

But the blessed Jesus will come again. He has gone before His people, and has bound Himself never to leave them. The disciples said "**Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?**" It is Jesus' love in the heart that warms the soul; it is not a little outside religion; it is the blessed unction and power, that comes home to the heart.

Well, away the two disciples ran and got the other disciples together, and told them that they had seen the Lord, and in He comes, the door being shut, and says, "**Peace be unto you.**" Thus did the Saviour reveal Himself, to comfort His desponding, dispirited followers. Christian, God has led you through many afflictions, and Jesus has gone before you in all your temptations, and in all your trials. Many a child of God is sunk and harassed by the devil's temptations; and perhaps believes that he has committed the unpardonable sin and never can be a Christian. But Jesus was tempted in all points like you; He withstood forty days the tempter who offered him the world. Let me tell you dear soul, no temptation can happen to you but what is common to man. In every temptation Jesus has gone before you even into the arms of death.

How the children of God sometimes tremble at the thoughts of death—that monster, death! What an awful thing it is to reflect upon; to be laid up with racking pains, and to experience all the agonies of dissolution, and to go we know not where and have no hope that our sins are forgiven.

I remember a poor old woman who was for many years tormented with the fear of death. She had been forty years in the wilderness and never had a bright testimony that God was hers. She used to talk to me by the hour together, and she had nothing but 'ifs' and 'buts.' She used to ask me, "Do you think my religion is real?" "Yes," I said, "If your desires are for Christ, look at the Scriptures, and you will find that the desires of the righteous shall be granted." Then I had to preach a sermon to her about the righteous, and about grace in the heart. Then she would say, "I am afraid mine is nothing but a foolish belief;" so I went backwards and forwards to her for some time, and at least left her. The poor soul soon after was laid upon her dying bed; I was from home at the time, and she had such a desire to live to see the pastor once more. The reason was that the Lord had appeared and set her soul at happy liberty, and she longed to tell the parson. So I was sent for at my return and I stood beside the bed. The poor creature smiled and blessed the Lord that she had seen my face once again. She said, "I am going to the bosom of Jesus." I said, "Come now, Hester, come now, don't be presumptuous, suppose your faith should not be real, you do but deceive yourself, now suppose this should all be delusion." She said, "Ah parson, 'ifs' and 'buts' are all gone; my Lord has come in, he has lifted up upon me his smiling countenance, and said *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.* Death," she said, "is the greatest friend I have in the world. Let the charioteers come; Jesus has been in the arms of death; He has taken away the sting of death; for me He takes away the fear of death which brings the soul into bondage. "The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be unto God, he hath taken away the sting of death, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! death, where is thy sting? Oh! grave, where is thy victory?" The body of Christ laid in the grave, and why should I be afraid to be laid in the grave with my dear Lord? But He arose again and ascended up on high, and has taken possession of the inheritance as the first fruits of them that slept. He has ascended up on high, and led captivity captive and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also."

That was the text that delivered my soul from under the curse of the law; it was God who spoke it into my heart, and if He does so in yours it will carry all before it. I went into a Chapel in deep distress, and when those words were spoken, damnation and hell were all gone. I wondered what was the matter. My soul was all at once led to see Jesus; to see Him conquer death and hell, and lead captivity captive. When I came to look for my sins, I could not find them. All the sweet promises of God's word came to my soul. I was led up into glory. I had no idea but of going to heaven directly. What a sweet state it is when Jesus comes to be yours!

You enter into the very heavens, and have a sight of His glory!

You will say, "You have got so high we cannot follow you." There is nothing so comfortable as when the soul is led up to a sight of that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Sometimes when I have got above some poor doubting, limping souls, I have seen them twitching their shoulders about as if they wanted me to come down into the place where they were. I have said to them, "Stop a bit until I come that way—I know what you want—you want to see your parson down in the dirt where you are; cruel creatures, cannot bear your parson to get a little out of the dirt." So I have left them there till I came that way, for at that time I had got above, out of the dirt, and they wanted God to bring me down, to pick them up. God wills that His ministers should take stumbling-blocks out of the way of His people. Some persons have no idea beyond the letter of the word and ridicule others who have, and those who cannot remove all their stumbling-blocks they think as stupid as the blocks themselves. They say, "The preacher makes a great noise; but he never gets into my case. There is nothing but sound. A preacher must go into the pulpit in his own feelings, as black and as foul as possible, and believe that God is against him, and go on preaching and groaning in the pulpit, and speak of things experimentally." Then another sort of people will say, "This man doesn't preach Christ; he preaches nothing but corruption; nothing but himself; he is not leading the people to Christ." I have seen some poor souls looking towards the Chapel, and the devil tempting them to go home again, saying that if they went, God would smite the Chapel; and sometimes they would just crawl into the Chapel afraid that God would strike them dead. God plants His word in their souls, and sets their feet on the rock. Is not this preaching Christ, and glorifying Christ? Then they will come into the vestry and say how God has blessed the word to their souls.

I came out of the Chapel one morning, and I thought nobody should make a fool of me. As I was going through the yard, I overheard one woman saying to another, "Well, how did you get on this morning?" "Oh," she said, "don't speak to me, ask the parson, he can tell you; he knows all about it," and the poor creature went on her way rejoicing. And that text came home to my soul, that it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. I thought if it pleased God it ought not to displease me; and God and my soul had sweet communion together, and I said, Let me thus preach Christ, and I care nothing about what people say of me. My friends, to preach Christ, is to pour out His truth into the hearts of His people, and to lead

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Berea Baptist Broadcast

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

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them instrumentally to look at what the Lord has done.

In conclusion, I would say, Look forward, for the Lord has gone out before you. He has taken possession of the inheritance for His people, and we are all traveling heavenward, for He says, **"I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also."** I pray the blessing of God to rest upon these remarks for His name and mercy's sake. Amen.

Did Paul Eat the

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against the strict Baptists, it has been on my heart for several months to point out some things about this passage. I believe the truth of it will strengthen the position held by those Baptists whom I regard as sound in their practice with regard to the Lord's Table. I refer to local-church only, closed-communication Baptists as being sound in their practice. Those who believe in a universal-church, open-communication or denominational-communication have had a field day with this passage. They say this passage proves that Paul ate the Lord's Supper with a Church of which he was not a member, i.e. the "Church at Troas." They say that Paul preached to this "Church at Troas" a lengthy sermon that continued until the dawn. They often also say that the early Churches observed the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day, but space forbids us to enter into that discussion here. I shall attempt to answer these questions by asking and answering some questions myself.

First question: What are the undisputed facts in the case? Let me answer this question by making nine brief statements: (1) Paul intends on returning to Syria (v. 3), but because of danger from the Jews he makes his way through Macedonia. (2) He sends a group of friends and fellow laborers in the Gospel on ahead of him to Troas. Those men were Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus. They are listed for us in verse 4. (3) Paul and Luke (and possibly others) traveled together to Troas. We know this because the writer (Luke) says that these above-mentioned men waited for "US" at Troas, thus including himself (and possibly others) as being in the company of Paul. (4) Paul and Luke and others if there were any with them, sailed from Philippi to Troas in five days, arriving there either on the Lord's Day evening or early on our Monday morning (v. 6). (5) After seven days, on the first day of the week, Paul and "the disciples" came together to "break bread" (v. 7). (6) Paul spoke with them until midnight when a

young man fell asleep as Paul spoke and fell down from the third level to the ground (v. 9). (7) He was taken up as dead, but Paul went down and embraced him, saying that his life was in him. (8) Paul returned to the upper chamber and after he "had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while" even until the dawn, he departed. (9) Because the young man was alive, those remaining were greatly comforted.

Second question: What are the disputed facts? It is here that the issues of local-church only and closed communion come to the fore. The dispute arises concerning these things: (1) Who were the disciples that gathered in the upper chamber? (2) What is meant by the phrase "to break bread?" (3) Did Paul preach a sermon to this group or engage in a prolonged conversation with them? If Paul gathered with a Church in Troas and took the Lord's Supper with them, we must conclude that Paul was not a local-church only, closed-communication Baptist after all and if our position is not destroyed altogether, it is most certainly weakened. So let us proceed with more questions and answers.

Third question: Was there a Church in Troas? And if I may, let me also at this point ask, "who founded it?" The facts are these: While some attempt to maintain that Paul founded a Church in Troas on his first missionary journey, there is absolutely no support for such a claim! The Word of God says, **"And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them"** (Acts 16:8-10). It does not sound to me as if there was an opportunity to preach the Gospel and establish a Church in Troas on this first missionary tour as many claim.

Later Paul would write these words concerning his visit to Troas: **"Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia"** (2 Corinthians 2:12, 13). Paul here says that he had an open door to preach the Gospel in Troas, but that he left that place and went into Macedonia because God spoke to him in a vision. Writing about this verse (2 Cor. 2:12), A.T. Robertson says, *"Here was an open door that he could not enter."* Although Paul wanted to preach the Gospel in Troas, Titus did not keep his appointment to meet Paul there and Paul, having seen a vision, **"immediately"** (Acts 16:10) took his leave of them and **"went from thence into Macedonia"**

according to 2 Cor. 2:13. So there is no time for Paul to establish a Church in Troas.

In fact, we have no biblical record at all of any Church being established in Troas: period. There is no secular record, according to J.R. Graves, of any church being established in Troas until the second century. John Gill mentions this fact as well. So we have neither a record of the founding or the existence of a church at Troas in the Bible nor even within the first Christian century, if I may call it that. It looks bad for the open-communication, but it gets even worse!

Let us consider another important question: If there was not a Church at Troas, just who were the "disciples" who gathered with Paul on this occasion? We know the names of some of them, at least. There were **"Sopater..., Aristarchus..., Secundus..., Gaius..., Timotheus..., Tychicus... Trophimus"** according to the text quoted at the first of this article. These seven, plus Luke and Paul, and perhaps others who traveled with them, made up the group of disciples who gathered in that upper chamber. So there were at least nine men present. Eutyclus, the sleepy young man, was probably not a disciple, but may have been a servant of the owner of the upper chamber which doubtless they rented for their stay in Troas. There may have been others, perhaps all the members of the family whom we think rented the room to Paul and his entourage. It is possible and perhaps even likely that Eutyclus and others were present to serve the meal and look after the supply of food and drink. While we cannot go further than the Bible, we can at least see that it is possible that a significant number of people would have been together in that upper chamber and also about the house in cooking and preparing food, and in transporting it to the upper chamber, etc.

In this text, as in all the Bible, let us not be guilty of eisegesis, i.e. of reading into the Scripture what is not there. We believe our loose-communication friends are guilty of that and we charge them to be faithful in drawing out the meaning of the text rather than reading their preconceived ideas into it. There is just no hint, statement, or reason given in the Bible to cause us to believe there was a previously existing Church in Troas when Paul made this visit. Only the suppositions of some commentators would lead us to believe that there was. But let us proceed to the next question in our search for the truth in this matter.

Let us consider exactly what is meant by the phrase "to break bread?" Open-communicationists (those who believe in allowing all professing believers to partake of the Supper) and denominational-communicationists (those who believe in allowing the members of other Baptist Churches to partake with them in the Supper) say that the phrase means to take

the Lord's Supper. A.T. Robertson, famous Greek scholar and either an open-communicationist or a denominational-communicationist admits that the words themselves refer to the "agape" feast of ordinary food. Both he and Matthew Poole argue that this "agape" feast was followed by the Lord's Supper and that the Supper is what is intended here. But they do so from prejudice, I fear, and not from anything warranted by the words, for they admit that the words refer to taking a meal of ordinary food. The word used for bread in verses 7 and 11, by the way, is an ordinary word for bread and while it can include unleavened bread, often means raised or leavened bread, so another question might be raised here: Did Paul eat leavened bread in the Lord's Supper with the Church at Troas? But we are in process of showing that Paul did NOT eat the Lord's Supper, nor did anyone in this instance and so we shall not digress into a discussion of what kind of bread was used that night.

The same language describing eating ordinary food is used both here (vs. 7, 11), and definitely also in Acts 27:35 where Paul, as a prisoner on board a ship and in the midst of a storm says, **"...he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat."** If our friends who are "loose" on the Supper can demonstrate to us and state with a straight face that Paul took the Lord's Supper on the ship, I will readily admit that he ate the Supper at Troas in the text before us in Acts chapter twenty. The words used in Acts twenty of Paul and also of Paul in Troas are ordinary words used of an ordinary meal and do not indicate that the Lord's Supper was intended.

And so we come to our final question: Did Paul "preach" a sermon to this group or engage in a dialog with them? Those who maintain that a communion service was observed at Troas when Paul was there also maintain that he preached to them. However, the Greek word for "preached" in verse 7 and "preaching" in verse 9 is used 13 times in the New Testament. The King James translators translated it as "dispute" six times; "reason with" two times; "reason" two times; "preach unto" one time (here in verse 7); "preaching" once (here in verse 9); and "speak" one time. So here is a word that is NOWHERE ELSE IN THE BIBLE translated as "preach" and yet some insist that it ought to portray to us an orderly Church meeting with Paul standing before a silent congregation and delivering a sermon. It just does not portray that! It is IN BOTH PLACES the Greek word that transliterates as "dialegomai" - from which we get our English word "dialog." Now a sermon is the speaking of one man, but a dialog is a conversation or interchange of words and sentences between at least two persons, perhaps more.

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Did Paul Eat the

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Webster gives as two possible meanings these: "dialog: a conversation between two or more persons" and "an exchange of ideas and opinions" (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary). A dialog is NOT preaching! Paul did not preach this night at Troas! He and the men with him spent the evening in conversation, in exchanging ideas, but there is nothing in the Bible to cause us to think that Paul preached a sermon in that place at that time.

So what do we have in this much-disputed text? (1) We have no evidence that there was a Church in Troas at the time Paul visited there. (2) We have biblical evidence that Paul, in fact, did not spend much time in Troas on his first visit and did not preach and organize a Church there at that time – when most if not all commentators say he did. (3) We have language descriptive of an ordinary meal used to describe what took place when these disciples gathered together that First Day evening. (Baptists do eat on Sunday, you know!) (4) We find no evidence that Paul preached on this occasion, but rather that he and those with him lingered in conversation until midnight when the bored and uninterested young man, Eutychus, having nothing to do, fell asleep and fell down from the third level of the building. After restoring him to life, Paul continues his dialog – he **"talked a long while, even till break of day."** Why the lengthy discussion? Perhaps Paul and the disciples continued long in dialog because Paul was going to go afoot (Acts 20:13) and meet the disciples who labored with him at the seaport of Assos. He was continually in danger and varied his route and method of transport to confound his enemies (Acts 20:3) and it seems that that may have been his motive in leaving them on this occasion. These co-workers with Paul loved him and knew not if they would see him again after this night in Troas for he would depart on the morrow. Let it be remembered that Paul was going up to Jerusalem. He will meet with the elders of the Ephesus Church at their seaport of Miletus where there will be much weeping because they know that they will see his face no more (Acts 20:37, 38). Considering what lay ahead, it is little wonder that Paul and these men who love him and labored with him would continue their conversation throughout the night. The meeting described for us is one of tenderness and brotherly affection in an informal setting as these travelers were about to part company once again.

And so we conclude that Paul did NOT eat the Lord's Supper with the supposed Church at Troas. We have sound and biblical reasons for our conclusion. We can say with confidence that he did

not even serve the supper nor was there a communion service held in that place at that time. There is no evidence that there even existed a Church in Troas at the time of this visit. Our open-communion friends and denominational-communion friends have neither leg nor foot to stand on to support their views in Acts chapter 20! Let them attempt to defend their position from somewhere else, for they have no ammunition here! Let us who would follow the Bible resolve to study it carefully and follow it faithfully and continue with the biblical practice of closed, local-church only communion.

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tion? Does not our having received the gospel make us a debtor to share that message with other people? Ten thousand times, yes!

If men are in darkness and I have the light, how great is my obligation? If men are blind and I have eyesalve by which they can see, how serious is my responsibility? If men are dying of spiritual hunger and I have the Bread of Life, must not I do my utmost to reach them? If I see a man dying with a disease and I have a remedy which will cure him and fail to tell the dying man, I am guilty of criminal neglect.

All Unbelievers Are Lost

Some are so foolish as to believe that God will somehow save the heathen without the gospel. But the Bible teaches there is no salvation to the unbelievers. **"He that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:16). **"He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:18). **"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him"** (John 3:36). Revelation 21:8 reveals that the **"unbelieving...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."**

There can be no saving faith apart from the preaching of the gospel: **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"** (Rom. 10:17). There can be no hearing of the gospel apart from a church-sent missionary: **"And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"** (Rom. 10:14-15). Then the real question is not what God is going to do with the heathen who has not heard the gospel, but rather what will He do with us if we fail to send him the Word of salvation?

While we sit comparatively unmoved in our homes before the television set, there are countless millions of our races under the undisturbed dominion of Satan. They live in poverty, tragedy, mis-

ery, and sin with their hearts filled with superstition and fear. They have no churches, no hymns, no Bibles, no salvation, and no Saviour! Look at them as they travel into eternity! How vast is the procession they form, how close their ranks, how continuous the line, how constant and steady their advance into the fires of Hell! God of mercy! Forgive us who possess the saving message, we know not what we do!

Hell is Real

Hell is not a fairy tale or some medieval superstition. It is an awful reality and a Bible fact. Jesus Christ said Hell was a literal place of torment in Luke 16:28. There is fire in Hell. Christ spoke of **"hell fire"** in Matthew 5:22. The rich man in Hell cried out: **"I am tormented in this flame"** (Luke 16:24). That fire is unquenchable (Matt. 3:12) and it burns for all eternity (Matt. 25:41).

Hell is the place where all unbelievers go at death: **"The rich man also died, and was buried: And in hell he lift up his eyes"** (Luke 16:22-23). The fire in Hell torments those who go there: **"He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone"** (Rev. 14:10). The Bible discloses that the inhabitants of Hell **"have no rest day nor night"** (Rev. 14:11). The pain of those who are there is so intense that they weep and grit their teeth: **"And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall wailing and gnashing of teeth"** (Matt. 13:42).

Do not let false teachers lead you astray. There is no annihilation of the wicked. There is no purgatory or place of purification. The restoration theory is false. There is no second chance after death. If the things which are used by God in this life to lead men to repentance, such as the preaching of the gospel and the striving of the Spirit have no avail here, what is there to lead men to God in Hell where their environment is wholly evil?

The issues of eternity are settled in time: **"Behold, now is the day of salvation"** (II Cor. 6:2). Men will be the same in eternity that they were in time: **"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still"** (Rev. 22:11). King Solomon declared: **"In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be"** (Eccl. 11:3). If men die impenitent, they can never go where Jesus is: **"I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come"** (John 8:21).

Who cares if men go to this awful place? Does our President and Congress care? Does the Commercial World care? the Educational World? the Social World? I am afraid the answer is found in Philippians 2:21: **"For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."**

Does the church of the living God care? Does the church member who

never attends church care? Does the non-tither care? Does the backslider care? Do those who love Christ and His church care? If so, do we care enough to take some positive action to prove it? Or, can the heathen world honestly say: **"I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul"** (Ps. 142:4)?

*While the world rushes on in its folly and sin
And millions go down in despair
To reign where demons are shrieking within,
If men go to Hell, who cares?*

*While the people of earth are forgetting the
Lord
And church pews are empty and bare;
There comes to my heart these pitiful words,
If men go to Hell, who cares?*

The Command of Christ

World missions is God's command; it is God's will. Jesus Christ told His church before leaving this sin-cursed world: **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"** (Mark 16:15). He again said: **"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"** (Acts 1:8).

The question is, are we preaching the gospel to every creature? Are we going into all the world with the tidings of grace and salvation? Are we proclaiming the message of deliverance to every tribe by life and by lip, by prayer and by purse?

Jesus Christ said: **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"** (John 14:15). If I love Christ I will gladly spend and be spent to take the riches of grace to the heirs of salvation. The measure of my zeal for missions is the measure of my love for Christ. The measure of my support of missionaries is the measure of my appreciation of Christ's saving work. The love of Christ constrains us to be missionaries in profession and practice.

The Fields Are White

In John 4:35-36, we find Christ saying: **"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."**

These words were spoken as the Samaritans were coming out of Sychar with the witnessing woman who had been at Jacob's well with Christ. He spoke, not of real fields which may have been nearby, but these approaching lost souls. The reference is to the believer's work of gathering souls by preaching the gospel. The proclaimer of the message of grace has more to encourage him than the farmer

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has to raise his crop. Gospel times are harvest times, and gospel work is harvest work.

The present population of the world is about four billion. Of the four billion, 967,793,450 people profess Christianity. This means no less than two-thirds of the world is headed to Hell as fast as time can carry them. Then how many of those who profess to know Christ really know Him? These figures include Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestants, and Baptists.

There are 50,000,000 Baptists in the world who profess to know Christ. But how many, even of these, know anything of an experience of grace? I feel I can safely say that no less than 10 percent of the world is truly Christian. This means 90 percent of the world is traveling to eternity without Christ!

The population of open mission fields in the world is about 1,400,000,000. There are 40,000,000 Christians in these open fields. Something like 38,327 foreign missionaries are at work there, accompanied by 154,679 native workers. The ratio of Christians to the population is 1 to 35, and of missionary workers 1 to 7,254. This includes the missionary societies of all denominations.

The Baptist denomination of Christians has 353 missionary fields where they have 5,218 missionaries and 18,517 national workers. We have 14,530 mission churches with a membership of 1,648,101. This does not include the missionaries of independent Baptists, which give no statistics. They have far more missionaries than many are aware of. In 1880, Baptists had 162 missionaries, 1052 native preachers and pastors, 908 churches, and 85,308 members.

Africa

Africa is a continent of 11,506,000 square miles with a total population of 374,000,000. Forty percent of all missionary work is being done there today. Out of a population of 374,000,000, there are only 98,862,000 professed Christians. Only 46,865 claim to be Baptists and Protestants. There are 41 tribal languages in West Africa into which the Scriptures have not been translated, and 15 language groups in the African Congo who have no Bibles. In Kenya, there are 13 tribes with a population of 250,000 yet unreached with the gospel.

Europe

Europe is a continent of many small countries with a 3,745,000 square mile area, and a population of 659,000,000. Of this total number, only 37,242,500 claim to be Christians and only 12,536,100 of these are Baptists and Protestants. Active church membership there runs from 1 to 6 percent of the total population.

To have a better understanding of con-

ditions in Europe, we need only to look at one country there. France has 3,600 towns without a gospel witness. Approximately 65 percent of the men there are agnostics. Only 23 Baptist churches are known to exist there.

Great Britain, Holland, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and West Germany, all have a Protestant majority. Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain all have large Catholic majorities.

Asia

In Asia, there is a land area of 16,988,000 square miles with a population of 2,265,000,000. Fifty-eight percent of the world population lives on this continent, yet the Christian population there is only 967,793,450, of which only 324,263,750 are Baptists and Protestants. In most of these countries, Communism is a substitute for religion. It offers redemption by science. It demands consecration and dedication. It promotes the worship of its leaders. There exists in many of these countries, small underground churches. But mostly mission work is prohibited, our help to these millions must be by smuggled literature and now by short-wave radio broadcasting.

Oorania

In Australia and New Zealand, there is a population of 659,000,000. Of this number, 20,609,000 are professed Christians, yet only 15,730,000 are Baptists and Protestants.

South America

To the south of us lies a continent of 6,795,000 square miles with a population of 206,000,000. In South America, there are 163,567,000 professed believers in Christ with only 5,882,000 who are Baptists and Protestants. Seventy-five percent of all the people down there belong to the Roman Catholic Church, and 10 percent are Baptists and Protestants.

North America

On the continent of North America where we live, there is a population of 335,000,000. Of this number, 224,933,250 profess to be the friends of Christ, but only 91,820,750 of these are Baptists and Protestants. Our continent is only nominally Christian. Seven percent of the citizens of this country attend religious services on Sunday morning and 2 percent on Sunday night. Observance has convinced me that most Americans are practical atheists. The average church is an extremely ripe field of evangelism.

When we look at the priest-ridden South America, sin-bound Europe, atheistic Asia, idolatrous Africa, and pleasure-loving, Bible-denying, gospel-hardened North America, we can see that truly the fields are white unto harvest. Missionary doors are closing all over the world, yet thousands of doors are still open at this moment. Spiritual darkness still covers much of the earth. Satan is the god of

multitudes. This should move the entire church to unsparing effort to preach the whole gospel to the whole world before He comes.

Bloody Hands

In Ezekiel 3:18, we are given a stern admonition: **"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."**

This teaching of blood guiltiness is not confined to the Old Testament. Some rejected the gospel which Paul preached at Corinth. To these, Paul said: **"Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles"** (Acts 18:6). The Apostle, having preached the gospel in Ephesus, said: **"I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"** (Acts 20:26-27).

Paul recognized a blood guiltiness until he had proclaimed Christ to the Corinthians and Ephesians. If they rejected the gospel, the responsibility was theirs. But it was first his responsibility to give them the gospel.

You and I cannot evade this obligation. If we do not do all we can to take the gospel to every person in every nation in this generation, God will hold us responsible. When at the judgment, we stand before the Judge of all, what will we say when He asks us: "Where is thy heathen brother?" Will we be forced to reply: "He went down to Hell unwanted, unloved, and unwarned by me."

*A hundred thousand souls a day,
Are passing one by one away,
In Christless guilt and gloom,
Without one ray of hope or light,
With future dark as endless night,
They are passing to their doom.*

*They're passing, passing fast away,
A hundred thousand souls a day,
In Christless guilt and gloom,
O Church of Christ, what wilt thou say
When in the awful judgment day,
They charge thee with their doom?*

—A. B. Simpson

Good Works

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sermon, but we will say that we will try and preach one as to that matter that shall be as good as theirs, and as much lead the children of God to live in holiness as any of their exhortations can do, grounded as they are on trusting in the flesh, and based as they are on threatenings, regulations and promises, which they hope will induce God's children, but which are well enough for slaves, though of little avail in operating on the true-born believer. The

children of God are a holy people;—for this very purpose were they born and brought into the world, that they should be holy; for this they were redeemed with blood and made a peculiar people. God's end in election, the end of all his purposes, is not answered until they become a people **"zealous of good works."**

Now, this morning, we shall first of all tell you *the nature of good works*, for there are many things called good works that are not so at all; secondly, we shall *trace good works to their origin*—find where good works come from; thirdly, we shall attempt to show you *the use of good works*; and we shall close up by endeavoring to *prove that our doctrines, those of free, distinguishing, discriminating grace, have a tendency to make us who believe them "zealous of good works."*

I. First, then, we are about to answer the question, WHAT ARE GOOD WORKS? Now, I dare say we shall offend many here when we tell them what good works are; for in our opinion good works are the rarest things in the world, and we believe we might walk for many a mile before we should see a good work at all. We use the word good now in its proper sense. There are many works, which are good enough between man and man, but we shall use the word good in a higher sense today as regards God. We think we shall be able to show you that there are very few good works anywhere, and that there are none out of the pale of Christ's church. We think, if we read Scripture rightly, that no work can be good unless it is commanded of God. How this cuts off a large portion of what men will do in order to win salvation! The Pharisee said he tithed mint, anise, and cumin; could he prove that God commanded him to tithe his mint, his anise, and his cumin? Perhaps not. He said he fasted so many times a week; could he prove that God told him to fast? If not, his fasting was no obedience. If I do a thing that I am not commanded to do, I do not obey in doing it. Vain, then, are all the pretences of men, that by mortifying their bodies, by denying their flesh, by doing this, that, or the other, they shall therefore win the favor of God. No work is good unless God has commanded it. A man may build a long row of almshouses, but if he builds without reference to the commandment, he has performed no good work.

Again: *nothing is a good work unless it is done with a good motive*; and there is no motive, which can be said to be good but the glory of God. He, who performs good works with a view to save himself, does not do them from a good motive, because his motive is selfish. He, who does them also to gain the esteem of his fellows and for the good of society, has a laudable motive, so far as man is concerned; but it is, after all, an inferior motive. What end had we in view? If for the benefit of our fellow-creatures, then let our fellow-

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creatures pay us; but that has naught to do with God. Work is not good, unless a man does it with a view to God's glory, and he has been brought into subjection to God's divine will, so that in everything he has an eye to the Most High, and works in order to promote his glory and honor in the world.

And even, beloved, when our works are done from the best motives, nothing is a good work unless it is done with faith; for **"without faith it is impossible to please God."** Like Cain, we may build the altar, and lay the first fruits of the salt of faith, there it will lie—it will not be accepted by God, for without faith it is impossible to please him. Bring me a man who all his life long has been spending his health and strength for his fellow-creatures; fetch me some public officer, who has fully discharged his trust, who has labored night and day, even to the wearing down of his constitution, because he believed that England expected every man to do his duty, and he wished to do it; bring me that man; let me see all his charitable works; let me witness the most lavish benevolence, the most profuse bounty; tell me that he has always, with a consistent motive, labored for his country; and then, if he cannot answer this question. "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" I shall be bound in all honesty to tell him that he has not done a solitary good work in all his life, so far as God is concerned.

Furthermore, *when we have faith in God, and perform all our works with the best of motives, even then we have not so much as a solitary good work, until the blood of Christ is sprinkled thereon.* Looking on all that we have ever done in our lives, can we find a solitary thing, which we dare call good until Christ's blood is put upon it? Grant there is something good about it, for the Spirit wrought it in our souls; there is much also that is evil about it, for even our best exercises are so terribly spoiled, marred, and ruined by the sins and imperfections that are in them, that we dare not call them good, until Jesus Christ hath sprinkled them with his blood, and taken the stain away. Oh how often have I thought to myself, "Now, I have labored to preach God's word; I have not spared, at all times, before friends or foes, and I hope I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God!" And yet, beloved, how many of those sermons have not been good works at all, because I had not an eye to my Master's honor at the time, or because there was not faith mixed with them but I preached in a desponding, low, miserable frame; or, perhaps, I had some natural aim, even in the winning of souls; for I have often feared, even when we rejoice to see souls converted, that we may have some evil motive, such as honoring

ourselves, that the world may say, "See how many souls are brought to God by him!" And even when the church associates in doing holy works, have you not noticed that something selfish creeps in—a wish to exalt our own church, to glorify our own people, and to make ourselves mighty. I am sure, beloved, if you sit down and pull your good works to pieces, you will find so many bad stitches in them that they need to be all unstitched and done over again. There are so many spots and blurs about them, that you need to have them washed in the blood of Christ to make them good for anything.

And now, beloved, do you think you have any good works? "Oh!" you say "I am afraid I have not many myself – nay, I know I have not; but thanks be unto his love, he who accepted my person in Christ, accepts my works through Christ; and he who blessed me in him, that I should be a chosen vessel, has been pleased to accept that which he himself poured into the vessel, **'to the praise of the glory of his grace, where he hath made me accepted in the beloved.'**"

And now, ye *moralists*, ye who have trusted in yourselves that ye are righteous, if what I have said be true, what has become of all your holiness? You are saying, "I am a charitable man." Grant that you are! I tell you to go and appeal to your fellow-creatures, and let them pay you for your charity. You say, "Ay, but I am a consistent and moral man. I am a great credit to the country; if all men would act as I do, what a good thing for this world and generation!" Of course, you have served your generation. Then send in your bill, and let your generation pay you. I tell you, you have toiled for naught; you have only sown the wind, and likely enough, you will reap the whirlwind. God owes you nothing; you have not lived to his honor; you must honestly confess that you have not performed a single action with a desire to please him; you have labored to please yourself—that has been the highest motive you have had; you felt that if you were good you would go to heaven, and that if you were evil you would be sure to go to hell. You have been thoroughly selfish, from first to last. Reckon up your accounts and settle with yourself. God owes you nothing; you have done nothing for him; and if you have, then consider within yourself, you have so much violated God's commands, and so frequently done all you could to injure your Maker, if it were possible, that all your accounts are easily struck off. And as for your good works, where are they? Where are they? Ah! It is a figment and a fiction, a laugh and a dream. Good works in sinners? There are no such things. Augustine well said, "Good works, as they are called, in sinners, are nothing but splendid sins." This is true of the best works of the best man, who is out of

Christ; they are nothing but splendid sins—vanished sins. God forgive you, dear friends, for your good works! You have as great need to be forgiven for your good works as you have for your bad ones, if you are out of Christ; for I reckon they are both alike, bad, if they come to be sifted.

II. And now, secondly, WHERE DO GOOD WORKS COME FROM?

It is an old maxim that nature can never rise above itself. Water, coming from the top of a hill, will rise as high as its source; but unless there is some extraordinary pressure put upon it, it will never rise higher. So of human nature, Scripture says it is exceedingly vile; we cannot expect good works out of an evil nature. Can a bitter well send forth sweet water? As poison groweth not on healthful trees, with healthful fruit, so cannot healthy fruit grow on poisonous trees. We must not look for good works in an evil nature any more than we should look for the grapes of Sorek on the vines of Gomorrah. We cannot expect to find good works coming from nature; truly, it is vain and idle to think that good works can arise from the natural man. "Where, then," you ask, "Do they come from?" We answer; good works come from a real conversion, brought about by the Spirit of God. Until our conversion, there is not the shadow of goodness about us. In the eye of the world, we may be reputable and respectable, but in the eye of God, we are nothing of the sort. Could we look into our hearts, as we sometimes look into other people's faces, we should see very much there, which would drive out of our souls the very imagination of good works before our heart, is changed. How many things there are in the world, which we have upon our tables and which we even eat, that if we were to put beneath our microscope we should be afraid to touch, for we should see all kinds of loathsome creatures creeping and crawling about in them—such things, as we never conceived! And so it is with human nature. When once the human heart is put under the microscope of Scripture, and we see it with a spiritual eye, we see it to be so vile and filthy, that we are quite sure that until we have a new heart and a right spirit, it would be just as impossible to expect to find good works in an unrighteous, unconverted man, as to hope to see fire burning in the midst of the ocean. The two things would be incongruous. Our good works, if we have any, spring from a real conversion; yet more, they spring also from a constant spiritual influence exercised upon us, from the time of conversion even until the hour of death. Ah! Christian, thou wouldst have no good works if thou hadst no fresh influence day by day. Thou wouldst not find the grace given thee at the first hour sufficient to produce fruit today. It is not like the planting of a tree in our hearts, which naturally of itself

bringeth forth fruit; but the sap cometh up from the root of Jesus Christ. We are not trees by ourselves, but we are branches fixed on the living vine. Good works, I know whence you come! Ye come floating down on the stream of grace, and if I did not have that stream of grace always flowing, I should never find good works coming from me. Good works from the creature? Impossible! Good works are the gifts of God, his choice pearls, which he sendeth down with his grace.

And again: we think that *good works spring from union with Christ.* We believe that the more a man knows and feels himself to be one with Jesus, the more holy will he be. The very fact that Christ and the Christian become one, makes the Christian Christ-like. Why is a Christian's character like Christ's character? Only for this reason, that he is joined and united to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why doth that branch bring forth grapes? Simply because it has been engrafted into the vine, and therefore it partakes of the nature of the stem. So, Christian, the only way whereby thou canst bring forth fruit to God is by being grafted into Christ and united with him. You Christians who think you can walk in holiness without keeping up perpetual fellowship with Christ have made a great mistake. If you would be holy, you must live close to Jesus. Good works spring only thence. Hence we draw the most powerful reasons against anything like trusting in works; for as works are only the gift of God, how utterly impossible does it become for an unrighteous, unconverted, ungodly man, to produce any such good works in himself. And if they are God's gifts, how little merit can there be in them.

III. We have thus tried to trace good works to their origin and foundation. And now we come to the third point, which is, WHAT IS THE USE OF GOOD WORKS?

I am rather fond of being called an Antinomian, for this reason, that the term generally applied to those who hold truth very firmly and will not let it go. But I should not be fond of being an Antinomian. We are not against the law of God. We believe it is no longer binding on us as the covenant of salvation; but we have nothing to say against the law of God. "The law is holy; we are carnal, sold under sin." None shall charge us truthfully with being Antinomians. We do quarrel with Antinomians; but as for some poor souls, who are so inconsistent as to say the law is not binding, and yet try to keep it with all their might, we do not quarrel with them! They will never do much mischief; but we think they might learn to distinguish between the law as a covenant of life and a direction after we have obtained life.

Well, we do love good works. Do you

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Good Works

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ask, "Of what use are they?" I reply, first: *Good works are useful as evidences of grace.* The Antinomian says, "But I do not require evidences; I can live without them." This is unreasonable. Do you see yonder clock? That is the evidence of the time of day. The hour would be precisely the same if we had not that evidence. Still, we find the clock of great use. So we say, good works are the best evidence of spiritual life in the soul. Is it not written, **"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren?"** Loving the brethren is a good work. Again, **"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."** Fruits of righteousness are good works, and they are evidence that we abide in Christ. If I am living in sin day by day, what right have I to conclude I am a child of God? A man comes to this chapel, and while he hears the gospel, he exclaims, "What delicious truth! What heavenly doctrine!" Yet when he leaves the place, you may see him enter one public-house or another, and get intoxicated. Has this man any right to think himself an heir of heaven? The man who comes to God's house, and drinks **"wines on the lees well refined,"** and then goes away and drinks the cup and enjoys the company of the ungodly, gives no evidence that he is a partaker of divine grace. He says, "I do not like good works." Of course, he does not. "I know I shall not be saved by good works." Of this, we are certain, for he has none to be saved by. Many are ready enough to say, "Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to thy cross I cling;" who believe they are children of God, because, though they have no good works as evidence, they think they have faith. Ah, sir! You have faith, and there is another gentleman quite as respectable as you are, who has faith; I shall not tell you his name this morning, but he is better than you are, for it is said, "He believes and trembles," while you sit unmoved by the most powerful appeals. Yes, you who think you are children of God while you live in sin; you are in the most dreadful error. There is no delusion, if you except the delusion of the Pharisee, which is more dreadful than the delusion of a man, who thinks that sin and grace can reign together. The Christian has sins of heart, over which he groans and laments, but as regards his outward life, he is kept, so that the evil one touches him not; the Lord keeps him under the shadow of his wing; he doth not, except in some falls, allow him to turn out of the way. Works are the evidence of our faith; by faith, our souls are justified before God; by works, our faith is justified before ourselves and fellow-men.

Secondly, we think good works are *the*

witnesses or testimony to other people of the truth of what we believe. Every Christian was sent into the world to be a preacher; and just like every other creature, that God has made, he will always be preaching about his Lord. Doth not the whole world preach God? Do not the stars, while they shine, look down from heaven and say there is a God? Do not the winds chant God's name in their mighty howling? Do not the waves murmur it upon the shore, or thunder it in the storms? Do not the floods and the fields, the skies and the plains, the mountains and the valleys, the streamlets and the rivers, all speak for God? Assuredly, they do; and a newborn creature—the man created in Christ—must preach Jesus Christ wherever he goes. This is the use of good works. He will preach, not with his mouth always, but with his life. The use of good works is that they are a Christian's sermon. A sermon is not what a man says, but what he does. You who practice are preaching; it is not preaching and practicing, but practicing is preaching. The sermon that is preached by the mouth is soon forgotten, but what we preach by our lives is never forgotten. There is nothing like faithful practice and holy living, if we would preach to the world. The reason why Christianity does not advance with a mightier stride, is simply this:—that professors are in a large measure a disgrace to religion, and many of those who are joined to the church have no more godliness than those who are out of it. If I preached such a contradictory sermon on a Sunday as some of you have preached the most part of your lives, you would go out and say, "We will not go again till he can be a little more consistent with himself." There is a difference in the very tone of the voice of some people when they are in the chapel engaged in prayer, and when they are in the workshop; you would hardly think them the same persons. Out upon your inconsistency! Professors, take heed lest your inconsistencies should blot your evidence, and some of you should be found manifesting, not inconsistency, but a most fearful consistency, because living in sin and iniquity, and therefore being consistent with yourselves in hypocrisy.

In the third place, *good works are of us to a Christian as an adornment.* You will all remember that passage in the Scriptures, which tells us how a woman should adorn herself. **"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."** The adornment of good works, the adornment in which we hope to enter heaven, is the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ; but the adornment of a Christian here below, is his holiness, his

piety, his consistency. If some people had a little more piety, they would not require such a showy dress; if they had a little more godliness, to set them off, they would have no need whatever to be always decorating themselves. The best earrings that a woman can wear are the earrings of hearing the Word with attention. The very best ring that we can have upon our finger is the ring, which the father puts upon the finger of the prodigal son, when he is brought back; and the very best dress we can ever wear, is a garment wrought by the Holy Spirit, the garment of a consistent conduct.

But it is marvelous, while many are taking all the trouble they can to array this poor body, they have very few ornaments for their soul; they forgot to dress the soul. Oh! No! They are too late at chapel, all because of that other pin, which they might have left out. They come here just when the service is beginning, because, forsooth, they have so much to put on, they could not be expected to be here in time.

And there are Christian men and Christian women, who forget what God has written in his word, which is as true now as ever it was that Christian women should array themselves with modesty. It would be a good thing, perhaps, if we went back to Wesley's rule, to come out from the world in our apparel, and to dress as plainly and neatly as the Quakers, though alas! They have sadly gone from their primitive simplicity.

I am obliged to depart a little sometimes, from what we call the high things of the gospel; for really the children of God cannot now be told by outward appearance from the children of the devil, and they really ought to be; there should be some distinction between the one and the other; and although religion allows distinction of rank and dress, yet everything in the Bible cries out against our arraying ourselves, and making ourselves proud, by reason of the godliness of our apparel. Some will say, "I wish you would leave that alone!" Of course you do, because it applies to yourself. But we let nothing alone which we believe to be in the Scriptures; and while I would not spare any man's soul, honesty to every man's conscience and honesty to myself demands, that I should always speak of that which I see to be an evil breaking out in the Church. We should always take care that in everything we keep as near as possible to the written Word. If you want ornaments, here they are. Here are jewels, rings, dresses, and all kinds of ornament; men and women, ye may dress yourselves up till ye shine like angels. How can you do it? By dressing yourselves out in benevolence, in love to the saints, in honesty and integrity, in uprightness, in godliness, in brotherly-kindness, in charity. These are the ornaments which angels themselves admire, and which even the world will

admire; for men must give admiration to the man or the woman who is arrayed in the jewels of a holy life and godly conversation. I beseech you, brethren, **"adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."**

IV. Thus have I told you the use of good works. Now just a moment or two to tell you that the religion which we profess in this place, and which we preach, is **CALCULATED TO PRODUCE GOOD WORKS IN THE CHILD OF GOD.**

Some say that what is called Calvinism, which is an *alias* for the true gospel, is calculated to lead men into sin. Now, we will refute that, just by reminding them, that the holiest people in the world have been those who professed the doctrine, which we hold. If you ask who in the dark ages were the great moral lights of the world, the answer will be, such as Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom; and then coming lower still, such men as Wickliffe, Jerome of Prague, and Calvin; and every one of these held the doctrines which we love to proclaim. And just let me remind you, there never were better men in the world than the Puritans, and every one of them held fast the truth we love. I happened to find in a book the other day a statement which pleased me so much, that I thought I would read it to you. The writer says, "The Puritans were the most resolved Protestants in the nation; zealous Calvinists; warm and affectionate preachers. They were the most pious and devout people in the land; men of prayer in secret and in public, as well as in their families. Their manner of devotion was fervent and solemn, depending on the assistance of the Divine Spirit. They had a profound reverence for the holy name of God, and were great enemies not only to profane swearing, but to foolish talking and jesting. They were strict observers of the Lord's day, spending the whole of it in public and private devotion and charity. It was the distinguishing mark of a Puritan, in these times, to see him going to church twice a day, with his Bible under his arm; and while others were at plays and interludes, at revels, or walking in the fields, or at the diversions of bowling, fencing, &c., on the eve of the Sabbath, these with their families were employed in reading the Scriptures, singing psalms, repeating sermons, catechizing their children, and prayer. Nor was this the work only of the Lord's day, but they had their hours of family devotion in the week days; they were circumspect, as to all excess in eating and drinking, apparel, and lawful diversions; being frugal, industrious, exact in their dealings, and solicitous to give every one his own." That is a noble testimony to puritanic truth and the power of the gospel. But I have one, which I think will please you, in another part of the book.

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Outlines for Country Preachers

by a Country Preacher

Sermon Outlines by Milburn Cockrell

CONVERSION AND CONSECRATION

Colossians. 2:6

We must not confuse conversion with consecration. In conversion we receive; in consecration we give. In conversion we receive eternal life from God; in consecration we offer up ourselves in self-surrender to God. In one, we appropriate the work of Christ done for us, in the other we fulfill the work of the Spirit in us.

Those who have been partakers of His converting grace must consecrate themselves to God. Consecration should crown our conversion. If God has shown His love to us by giving His Son to die as a sacrifice for our sins, let us show our love by giving ourselves to live in daily sacrifice for Him (Rom. 12:1). There must be self-surrender to Him Who surrendered Himself for us, before Christ is indeed our all in all.

I. CONVERSION—“AS YE HAVE THEREFORE RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD.”

1. This text is not addressed to the ungodly or strangers to grace, but to Christians who have received Christ Jesus the Lord. All Christians have done this. Not merely His words, but Christ Himself!
2. This is the language of free grace—“**received**,” not earned, purchased, or won. There is no evolution from within, but a gift from without. We had no claim to God’s grace (John 1:11-13). This strips us of all boasting for all we did was receive.
3. By faith they received a whole Christ—His Godhead and humanity—Savior and Redeemer from sin and wrath—As Christ, the anointed and commissioned by God—the only Teacher and Lawgiver.
4. They received Him as their Sovereign Lord to rule and reign over them with individual sway.
5. They received Him into their knowledge, their understanding, their affection, and their life at their new birth.

II. CONSECRATION—“SO WALK YE IN HIM.”

1. The great concern of those who receive Christ is to walk in Him. As you received Christ, so walk in Him; as you have been rooted in Him, so grow up into Him; as you have been founded on Him, so be built up in Him.
2. Christian progress is not growing up from Christ as a starting point, but into Christ as our goal. To grow you must remain in fellowship with Christ.
3. Christ in us by faith is the source of life; Christ within us through the Spirit is the source of a more abundant life. Faith secures salvation; consecration enables us to glorify God in our Christian life.
4. We may give our possessions instead of giving ourselves (II Cor. 8:5). The devotement of self must go before the devotement of property and possessions.
5. “**Walk**” implies motion, activity, progress (Gen. 5:24; 6:9). A walk implies personal activity and progress to some end. The person who remains where he started is not walking!
6. We must not stay at the starting point—saved and satisfied. This is as far as some seem to get—walk in a circle. We ought to go from babes to young men and on to fathers.
7. Walking in Christ excludes a walking in self. The more that a man walks in Christ, the more he walks out of self. As Christ comes in self goes out—when Christ is received self is expelled.
8. To take a few steps is not to walk. To walk in Christ is a constant, permanent, persevering, and continued thing. A door moves on hinges, but it never gets anywhere—it does not walk.
9. George Whitfield wrote: “When the Bishop laid his hands upon my head, if my evil heart doth not deceive me, I offered up my whole spirit, soul, and body, to the service of God’s sanctuary. Let come what will, life or death, depth or height, I shall henceforth live like Christ. . . I can call heaven and earth to witness that, when the Bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself up, to be a martyr for Him Who hung upon the cross for me. Know unto Him are all future events and contingencies. I have thrown myself blindfolded, and I trust without reserve, into His almighty hands.”
10. John Frederick Oberlin wrote: “In the name of the Lord of hosts, I this day renounce all former lords that have had dominion over me, the joys of the world in which I have too much delighted, and all carnal desires. I renounce things in order that God may constitute my All. I consecrate to Thee all that I am, and all that I have; the

faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my fortune, and my time. Grant me grace, O Father of mercies, to employ all to Thy glory, in obedience to Thy commands. For ardently and humbly I desire to be Thine through the endless ages of eternity.”

CONCLUSION.

Be sure to begin right, but don’t stop there! Live under the influence of the conception, which you had of the Savior when you first embraced Him. Always look to Him, lean on Him, and receive grace and strength from Him. Walk in His doctrines and ordinances! Walk, Walk, Walk, etc.

Good Works

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A learned Infidel says of the modern Calvinists and Jansenists, that “When compared with their antagonists, they have excelled, in no small degree, in the most rigid and respectable virtues; that they have been an honor to their own age, and the best model for imitation to every age succeeding.” Only think of an infidel speaking like that. I think it was an infidel that said, “Go to the Arminians to hear about good works; but go to the Calvinists to see them exhibited.” And even Dr. Priestly, who was a Unitarian, admits that, “They who hold the doctrines of grace, have less apparent conformity to the world, and more of a principle of real religion, than his own followers: and that they who, from a principle of religion, ascribe more to God and less to man than others, have the greatest elevation of piety.”

And just now, as the Unitarians are bringing up all their great men—so great that we never heard their names to this day—and endeavoring to do all they can in London, to bring people to Unitarianism, we would just tell them this fact. Dr. Priestly ascribes the coolness of Unitarianism to their becoming more indifferent to religious doctrine—and accounts for the fact of their chapels not being well attended, by saying that Unitarians have a very slight attachment to their religious doctrines. What a mercy! For if they continued to hold them, they would inevitably be lost. A man who denies the divinity of Christ is sure to be lost. It is idle for them to talk of their being Christians; they might as well talk of being holy angels. The best proof I can give you of the holy tendency of our doctrines is this great fact, viz.:—that in every age those who have held the doctrines of grace have exhibited in their lives a holy walk and conversation.

But once more: in just hastily running over the doctrines, we ask, *what could more tend to make men holy, than the truths we preach?* Do we not teach you, that God has chosen to himself a people who must be holy? Is that an unholy doctrine? Do we not tell you that God has chosen to himself a people who in this world shall show forth his praise, by holy living? Is that an unholy doctrine? And we have told you that the Holy Ghost gives a new heart, and a right spirit, and that there is

something more required than you can do yourselves; that you are unable to perform such good things as God expects from you, therefore God the Spirit must renovate you. Do you call that an unholy doctrine? Is the doctrine, that men by nature are vile and need renewing grace, unholy? And the doctrine that the true saints will certainly hold on to the end: is that unholy?

Methinks the contrary to these doctrines are the most unholy in the world. Is the doctrine that only those who believe have an interest in the blood of Christ an unholy thing? Is the doctrine that I preach, that Christ has redeemed only such as live in holiness, having been brought thereto by the Holy Ghost, an unholy thing? Methinks not. We challenge all those who love to speak against our doctrines to prove that there is a single one of them, which has an unholy tendency. Charge us with not holding good works? Come and try to get into our church, and you will soon have a proof that you are wrong. Why, we would not have you, sir, if you would give us a thousand pounds, unless we considered you were a holy man. If you have not good works, it will be a long time before we will receive you; and if you were to steal into our church, you would be turned out in a week, if you lived in sin and unrighteousness; for it would soon be reported to the pastor and deacons, and you would see whether we did not hold the necessity of good works. If you did not exhibit them every day we would cast you out from amongst us, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Our church order is the best refutation of the calumny.

What more can we say, then? We hope we have proved our points to all honest and consistent men. We only send you away, ye hypocrites, with this ringing in your ears, “Except ye have the spirit of Christ, ye are none of his.” Except ye live like Christ, ye shall not be with Christ at last; if your spirit be not sanctified in this world, you will not find that God will sanctify you when you come before his throne. But you, poor sinners, who have no holiness of your own and no good works at all; I know you have not any, because you are not a child of God. Do you feel that you have not? Come then, and Christ will give you some: he will give you himself. If you believe on the Lord

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

1. In reference to Hebrews 10:29, can a Christian be guilty of the three offences mentioned? ---California



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"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29). In order for us to understand what is taught in this passage we must look at the context in which it was written.

First, this passage is written to professing believers. **"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering"** (Heb. 10:23). **"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins"** (Heb. 10:26). Notice that the writer includes himself in these statements by using the words "we" and "us". Notice also that in verse 29 the scripture says, **"and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing."** Only a true Christian has been sanctified by the blood of the covenant. This cannot be said of any false professor. Second, this passage is written in reference to Christians who sin willfully (verse 26 is key here), and to those who are guilty of the things mentioned in verse 29. This passage is then very simple to understand. It simply shows God's displeasure with sin in His people. Is not God righteous in punishing sin? Surely you don't think that we can be saved and then sin willfully without God punishing us? The Lord always chastens those whom He loves (Heb. 12:6).

Third, it is God who has the right to judge his people. **"For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people"** (Heb. 10:30). It is God's business to judge whether a professing believer is truly saved or not. It is our business to take heed to this warning, which is given to all who profess salvation, and know that there is certain punishment for those who willfully and knowingly sin against God. **"It is a fearful thing to fall into**

the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

Hebrews 10:29 applies to all professing Christians, for all of us are capable of committing these offences. Why else would this warning be given to us if we were not capable of sinning this way? Do not render the scripture meaningless by saying that it does not apply to you, but rather **"give diligence to make your calling and election sure"** (II Pet. 1:10). For many Christians have fallen into sin because they failed to realize just how feeble and depraved the old flesh is.

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Hebrews 10:29 declares: **"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"**

No, a genuine Christian cannot be included as one who counts Christ, His blood, and His Spirit as unholy things. I believe this verse clearly is relating to those who have claimed to know Christ through a false profession of faith. False professors may be baptized church members who forsake the assembly and then deny their professed allegiance to Christ by the way in which they live. A greater and more severe punishment awaits apostates who professed Christ with their mouths and then denied Him with their lives. I fear that the onslaught of easy believism over the last 100 years has produced multitudes of this ilk who will be judged by the Almighty. A similar passage is recorded in II Peter 2:20-22: **"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.**

But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

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Hebrews 10:29 says, **"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"**

First of all, the punishment spoken of here is more than capital punishment. It is eternal punishment. Since the elect will never receive eternal punishment (John. 10:28), obviously this is not referring to saved individuals. However, let us examine the blasphemous sins spoken of in this verse.

The first offense is trodding **"under foot the Son of God."** This speaks of those who have the greatest of contempt for the Son of God. A Christian does not feel this way. In fact, Jesus plainly tells us that saved people love Him (John. 8:42). Not only does this offense speak of hatred, but, that these who do have this great contempt for our Lord would actually pull Him from the right hand of God and trample on Him if it were possible. Surely, a child of God doesn't have this type of hatred of Jesus.

The second offense is counting the blood of Christ as **"an unholy thing."** We, as children of God, see the blood of Jesus as precious and priceless. Without it, we have no hope for eternal life for **"without" the "shedding of blood" there "is no remission"** of sins (Heb. 9:22). Jesus shed His blood for His elect children when it is our blood that should be shed. This verse does say that the ones who commit this sin are "sanctified" and this might be the part of the verse, which has brought on the posing of this question. This speaks of one who has gone through religious ceremonies and has convinced many (possibly himself) that he was a

believer. However, these actions prove that this one had a profession (of faith) without possession (of this Spirit). I am saddened when I consider how often this occurs today especially in this day of "easy believism" and "decision making." Many turn on the Lord's churches proving that they never were believers (I John. 2:19). The third offense is insulting **"the Spirit of Grace."** This doesn't mean rejecting Him, as the Arminian would have us believe. This means that the person spoken of in this verse rejects that He is the author of changed lives and miracles worked during the days of the apostles. Perhaps, this one even believes that Satan worked these miracles.

As you can see, all of these blasphemous sins are not the fruits of a Christian. These are and will be the fruits of the lost and are worthy of eternal punishment as the workers of these things will receive.

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I definitely believe that the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul is speaking to those who have identified themselves as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the preceding scriptures of Hebrews these believers have been warned against being careless in their Christian demeanor. They had begun to depart from their instruction from God's word, and then proceeded to doubt His word, grown cold toward God's teachers and then they deliberately showed despite to the blessings of God's grace that had made them believers. This was not just referring to one sin but to a continual deliberate trend of sinning.

In this scripture we are shown the exceeding inestimable value or regard God has for the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ for the sinner's salvation. It shows what a terrible sin it is to in any way neglect so great salvation that was wrought by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God cannot let such deliberate neglect go without chastisement, Heb. 2:3. The neglect of some of these Hebrews is shown by their drifting from the high regard a believer should have for the price that was paid for their salvation. To continue such willful sin as mentioned in verse 25, (unfaithfulness to the Lord's church for which He died, Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25), is to demonstrate how little value one has for the shed blood of Christ, as though it meant no more than the dust they trod under foot, count the blood

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

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2. Whose "belly" is referred to in John 7:38- the belly of the believer or the belly of Jesus? Where in the Old Testament does the "Scripture" say this will take place?" ---Alabama



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John 7:38 states: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." I believe that it is clear that the rivers of living water flow out of the believer who is united to Christ who is the fountain of living water. Our union to Christ is formed by the Holy Spirit in regeneration producing the gift of faith that enables us to drink of Christ's saving provision. This union insures the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within the child of God. The Holy Spirit works in and through the heart, soul, and mind (belly is a metaphor for these faculties) as the seat of His government.

There are many texts of Old Testament Scripture that would allude to the blessing promised in John 7:38. Proverbs 1:23, Joel 2:28; Isaiah 44:3, and Zechariah 12:10 all speak of God pouring out His Spirit upon the elect. Those who are partakers of the Spirit's outpouring are likened to a spring of water in Isaiah 58:11 which states: "And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." There may also be a veiled reference in Song of Solomon where the Lord's church is likened to "A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon" (4:15).

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"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). To answer the first question, the belly here is referring to the belly of the believer

not the belly of Christ. This is made clear by simply reading the following verse "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." Jesus Christ is talking about believers who shall receive the Holy Spirit after He is glorified. He is by no means talking about Himself, except that He is the one whom saints believe on.

To answer the second question, this passage is not found in the Old Testament exactly the way it appears here. I personally believe that Christ is making a reference to Isaiah 58:11 which reads, "And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

Some people think that the phrase "as the scripture hath said" is referring to the previous expression "he that believeth on me" and that it is not even referring to the following statement about living water flowing out of the belly. In other words it could be said like this, "He that believeth on me as the Messiah according to what the Scripture said, shall have rivers of living water flow out of his belly." I cannot find fault with this interpretation, however I am not an expert in the grammar of the Greek language.

Another interpretation is that Christ was not speaking of any specific Scripture at all, but rather He was speaking in general terms of this principle found in the Old Testament Scriptures. I have no problem with this interpretation either. Regardless, what is important is that we recognize what Christ says as absolute truth and believe it.

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John 7:38 says, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The "belly" referred to in this verse is the belly of the believer. Just as Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman about "living

water" in John. 4:4-15, which will quench thirst eternally, so He is speaking of something similar here. Obviously, the thirst being quenched in John 4 is that of the Samaritan woman (representative of that which happens to all believers).

Secondly, the "as the Scripture hath said" in our verse most likely refers to the first part of the verse which speaks of believing in Christ and not to the latter part of the verse which speaks of rivers of "living water." Therefore, we could look to verses such as Isaiah 28:16 as the reference. However, the general teaching of "believing in Christ" is taught in many places in the Old Testament. It could be this general teaching that Christ refers to here.

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I believe to get the true meaning of verse 38 we must look at the context by reading verse 37 through 39.

I believe the meaning of these verses can be seen in the fact that Jesus said in verse 37 that if anyone thirsted he should come to Jesus to drink indicating that Jesus was the source of living water which would quench such a thirst. It stands to reason then the belly that was to overflow was the one who received the living flowing water from Christ. Therefore I believe the belly referred to here is the belly of the believer in Christ and then the result of that filling by Christ the believer will have the life giving water flow from them to other thirsting souls. John 4:10 tells us that Jesus is the fountain or source, of living water and anyone who drinks from the well becomes the means of the water of life flowing to others that thirst. Jesus is the source of living water but He distributes that living water through those that believe on Him, verse 38 and John 17:18; II Cor. 5:18-21.

To answer the question as to where in the Old Testament the term, "as the scripture hath said," I do not know of nor believe that this is a direct quotation from any one scripture in the Old Testament but rather is expressing a general sense of

how a person receives salvation (living water) as presented in many Old Testament Scriptures such as: Isa. 12:3; 35:6-7; 41:18; 44:3, and Zech. 14:8.

Since Zechariah 14 was read in public in the temple on the first day of The Feast of Tabernacles, one can easily assume that the Lord may have had this in mind when He made this statement. Therefore along with John 7:37, we can see that Jesus was using water as a type of the Holy Spirit that would come and of the office work of regeneration, conviction, and conversion after His ascension, which describes how the Lord works through His church with His Word and the Holy Spirit.

I would like to end my answer by giving a quotation by J. C. Ryle in his "Expository Thoughts On The Bible," Vol. 3, page 46. "I venture to think that the true interpretation of the verse is as follows: "He that believeth on me or comes to me by faith as his Savior, is the man out of whose belly shall flow rivers of living water, as the Scripture hath said it would be."

Therefore the resulting conclusion is that by the Spirit of Christ a believer receives eternal life and becomes the instrument the Holy Spirit uses to declare salvation is of the Lord to thirsty souls.

GARNER SMITH

Good Works

Continued from page 289

Jesus, he will wash you from all your sins, give you a new heart, and henceforth your life shall be holy, your conduct shall be consistent, he shall keep you to the end, and you shall most assuredly be saved. God bless this testimony to any such as are living in sin, that they may be reclaimed from it; for Christ's sake! Amen.



Forum #1

Continued from page 290

which sanctified the believer from the damned as unholy, and act as though to deny the deity and work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in salvation.

What a terrible testimony against the grace of God. God will not hold such guiltless and will not allow such a degrading despicable witness go without chastisement by a sovereign Holy God, verses 30-31.

GARNER SMITH

Mini-Edition

By Joseph Harris
Chairman of Biblical Studies
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Bush Facts; The Truth Speaks and It Hurts

I'm confused. I once thought I had clarity of mind, but now I'm not sure. As a rule, the Democratic party stands for big government, gun control, more taxes, bigger social programs, is pro-homosexual, and pro-death (that's pro-abortion for the uninformed). The Republican party, on the other hand, traditionally takes the opposite view on all the aforementioned.....until recently. I am confused because of the actions of our Republican president, George W. Bush. Listed below are some Bush facts. The truth is the truth and we can either accept it or reject it. Conservative Christian Republicans, fasten your seat belts for the remainder of this Mini Edition. Those who swear blind allegiance to a party or politician rather than principle won't like what is about to come, yet truth is truth, and I speak as a conservative Christian Republican Bush supporter.

Truth Number 1.

Our president supported a renewing of the Clinton administration ban of so-called assault rifles last year. The president said he supported reauthorization of the Feinstein/Schumer bill which is currently law and set to expire this year. Assault rifles are not a threat to the general safety of the public since they are used in less than 1% of violent crimes. Traditionally, conservatives have opposed gun bans.

Truth Number 2.

The illegal alien issue. Our President has shown an alarming willingness to not only forgive the trespasses of illegal aliens, but reward their criminal behavior with amnesty, while denying it is amnesty. The security of this nation is further jeopardized by such a self-serving political act. My confusion deepens when I hear him repeat his commitment to protect America from terrorism. Protection, like charity, begins at home, Mr. President.

Truth Number 3.

Blatant disregard for the constitution. President Bush went to war without following the constitutional provision that only Congress can declare war. Sadaam was a cruel despot with a potential threat to the USA, but President Bush took authority not granted him and Congress shirked its authority. Either the constitution means what it says or it doesn't. Since when can we just ignore the document that is supposed to guide government? We might as well just run it through a shredder. Why not? Liberal federal judges and courts have already trampled

it underfoot.

Truth Number 4.

A feeble attempt to stand for pro-life. Remember the \$15 billion dollar AIDS plan for Africa which was promoted by President Bush? He pushed this debacle through against the counsel of conservatives with the knowledge that some of the agencies receiving the money provide abortions with the money. Fighting AIDS is one thing, paying for abortions is inexcusable. Add to this that Planned Parenthood receives one third of its money from federal funding through Medicaid. Their funding was increased, thanks to the Public Service Health Act of President Bush, contributing to the \$36 million dollars it received the following year. His attempt at banning partial life abortion was aborted by a federal judge, so no lives have been saved from partial birth abortions. The President and his administration knew this would happen as it surely did immediately after his signing. Unfortunately, this issue is a great conservative talking point, but is not high on his agenda.

Truth Number 5.

An ever growing government with no end in sight. Consider the monstrous social prescription and medical pork bill recently birthed last year. Republicans have traditionally been against expanding government, and now under a Republican administration, government has grown bigger than under the ultra liberal Clinton administration, yet, the leading conservative talk show hosts and commentators have little to say about it.

Government spending under President Bush is the greatest now since the welfare expansion days of President Lyndon B. Johnson. The "conservative" Republican lawmakers have been his ready accomplices. They held the reins tighter under Bill Clinton, but have now pushed the spending horse to a full gallop.

Truth Number 6.

The Homosexual issue. Though the President has made conservative-like statements about homosexuality, it has been little more than lip service. He has appointed homosexuals in government positions and though he goes on record as being against homosexual marriage, he favors homosexual civil unions. Huhh? Sorry President Bush, but that sounds like it's taken straight from the Clinton handbook on politics. He appointed four gay rights advocates, who were homosexual, to his presidential campaign committee. He even signed a bill allowing domestic partners of Washington D.C. government employees to receive health benefits. He also

appointed a Homosexual as the ambassador to Romania. This ambassador accompanied to Romania by his partner. You judge whether or not President Bush is pro-homosexual. The truth speaks.

There are also some other issues that don't rate being listed with the above but deserve an honorable mention.

Honorable Mention 1.

Consider the homeland security program and privacy issues. I don't think the current provisions go too far.....yet, but measures are in place that could trample on the liberties of citizens after a decade of tweaking by politicians.

Honorable Mention 2.

Then, there is the faith based initiative. Any marriage between a government that is primarily anti-god and doesn't respect religion can eventually develop strings that reach out and tighten around the throat of religious groups, especially with a government that is growing and unaccountable to "we the people."

Honorable Mention 3.

And then there is the proposal to increase funding to the National Endowment for the Arts, totaling \$139 million dollars in 2005. Remember, this is the group that revels in promoting blasphemous, anti-God "art", if you want to call it that.

I am upset and feel betrayed by Mr. Bush AND the many elected Republicans who have left their roots. So, the most obvious question for a person like me is who to support. Well, there is absolutely no way I will vote for John Kerry, or any of the other current clowns who are slobbering at the mouth for their chance to ruin this country. But If I do vote for President Bush again, this time I will have to hold my nose. However, I am waiting for a *real conservative Christian statesman* (not politician) to enter the race. If it happens, they've got my vote. And don't chant that tired old mantra of "losing my vote" if I don't vote for one of the BIG TWO. Any vote based on principle and prayer is not a lost vote and, it allows the voter to stand before God with a clear conscience.....and sleep at night.

Now, the truth has been revealed as even Fox news won't report it. All statements in this Mini Edition can be documented. Remember if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck and looks like a duck, then it's probably a duck.....or a conservative acting like a liberal for political expediency.

Underachieving, Good.....Overachieving, Bad

Forget the honor roll. It's bad to honor hard work. Students who can't make the honor roll in a Nashville school are embarrassed and their self-esteem is hurt when their names are not publicly posted

on the honor roll. So the school wants to ax it. Parents of the honor roll students are up in arms over the decision of the school. Another excuse being used is that the public posting violates a state privacy law for students. Does the all too descriptive word BALONEY fit in this situation? I might could understand if the students not on the honor roll had their names posted on a dishonor roll.

In other words, good work and "over" achieving is bad. Actually, this is not overachieving; it's just simply doing a good job in school. Besides, how can one overachieve? A reward system is simply a motivation program. Unfortunately, lazy students and irresponsible parents would like to see a de-motivation system in place.

As usual, the real picture is not being seen. The "underachievers" in this situation are equating the absence of a name on the honor roll with lack of intelligence. Nothing could be further from the truth in many cases. Albert Einstein was not considered honor roll material by his teachers, yet look at his IQ.

Motivation is usually the problem for underachievement. Consider the findings of an Australian educational organization on achievement. In a list containing 12 of the most common characteristics of under-achievers, a very high IQ was listed as number 1. In other words, there is nothing wrong with the IQ of most underachievers. This was actually the only positive characteristic. Some of the others included: poor work habits, low self esteem, negative attitudes towards self and peers, lack of effort in tasks, etc.

One Nashville teacher said he discouraged competitive games at school because "They just don't fit my world view of what a school should be." AHA! The problem is now revealed. He is just parroting what he was probably taught in some sensitivity seminar. The powers that be have decided that schools should no longer teach the fundamental basics, but become social engineering laboratories where the playing field is level for all with all achieving the same, which usually means no one does much or learns much. Promoting multiculturalism, tolerance and other mind numbing "subjects" is now the focus in many institutions.

But back to the problem, which is motivation. To be fair, the government school system should not be given total credit for the failure of education that is prevalent. It also goes back to the home. Let's be honest; children, who come from good homes where they receive support, nurture, training in character and encouragement, can do fairly well, even in poor school systems, because they are motivated. So then, why not send children from those families to

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Mini-Edition

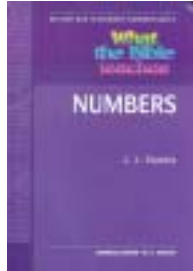
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government schools? Because, of all the failures and shortcomings that could be named with most government schools, the list is topped off with a dominant anti-God and/or atheistic worldview philosophy, and any education that denies or ignores God is incomplete. The best education is one with a God centered worldview. Unfortunately, God centered education is only available through home education or in a real Christian school (not some private academy that offers a Bible class and chapel).

Students must be motivated to produce. Positive and negative motivation can be used. The time tested honor roll is simply a positive motivational tool. Apparently, some view an honor roll as a statement that all students **not** on it are dumb, when it is actually a statement some have excelled. That's all. As long as society punishes those who excel, or at least refuses to reward them, expect a mediocre attitude to prevail.

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MASSACHUSETTS COURT RULES IN FAVOR OF SAME-SEX 'MARRIAGE' – NATION'S FIRST HOMOSEXUAL 'MARRIAGES' COULD TAKE PLACE AS EARLY AS MAY

BOSTON (EP) – May is typically a big month for weddings. And after a new state court decision, this May promises to be an especially big month for nuptials in the state of Massachusetts. That's because beginning in May – for the first time in American history – a state will allow men to "marry" men, and women to "marry" women.

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court handed down a 4-3 advisory ruling Feb. 4 saying that homosexuals are "entitled to all the benefits of marriage." The opinion came three months after the court's original ruling that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. That ruling prompted the state Senate to ask the court if civil unions – similar to the ones in Vermont – would satisfy the court.

The February ruling brought the court's answer: no. The four justices in favor of the ruling called the prohibition of same-sex marriages discriminatory. "For no rational reason the marriage laws of the Commonwealth discriminate against a defined class; no amount of tinkering with language will

eradicate that stain."

But many lawmakers believe that there are plenty of rational reasons for prohibiting homosexual marriage. Massachusetts Representative Eugene O'Flaherty is one of several legislators planning to craft a bill providing a rational basis for excluding homosexuals from marriage benefits.

"The court has overstepped its boundary and has not left the legislative process to unfold the way it has on other issues," O'Flaherty told The Associated Press.

President Bush quickly expressed his disapproval of the Massachusetts ruling, calling it "deeply troubling" in a statement. "Marriage is a sacred institution between a man and woman," Bush said. "If activist judges insist on redefining marriage by a court order, the only alternative will be the constitutional process. We must do what is legally necessary to defend the sanctity of marriage."

The president's statement was one of the most definitive he has made regarding his potential support of a constitutional amendment to defend traditional marriage.

Christian leaders were encouraged by Bush's remarks. Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, said, "I would not be surprised at all to see the president come out very soon calling on Congress to

act."

And the Alliance Defense fund, based in Scottsdale, Ariz., took Bush's remarks as all but an endorsement of a constitutional amendment. "This morning, President Bush agreed to join the effort to push for the passage of this amendment."

Other conservative groups say they have been confident of Bush's support for an amendment all along. "We were given direct assurances from the very top," Kelly Shackelford, president of the Texas-based Free Market Foundation, told AP. "There's no doubt. It's our understanding that the president is waiting for a day when there is not a massive news story to do it himself."

While the possibility of an amendment continues to play itself out on the national stage, lawmakers and elected officials in Massachusetts are focusing on upholding traditional marriage in their own state.

The next step for opponents of homosexual marriage in Massachusetts is supporting an amendment to the state constitution that would limit marriage to heterosexual couples. The amendment already has the strong support of Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney.

The governor explained his position in a Feb. 5 opinion piece for "The Wall Street Journal." "Contrary to the court's opinion, marriage is not an 'evolving paradigm,'" Romney said. "It is deeply rooted in the history, culture and tradition of a civil society. It predates our Constitution and our nation by millennia. The institution of marriage was not created by government and should not be redefined by government."

All eyes are now on the Constitutional Convention scheduled for the second week of February. Lawmakers may use the convention as an opportunity to discuss the possibility of an amendment.

For an amendment to be passed into law, the citizens of Massachusetts would have to vote on it. The earliest an amendment could be placed on the ballot would be 2006.

A public vote is something Romney believes is vital for the state. "No matter how you feel about gay marriage," he said in a statement, "we should be able to agree that the citizens and their elected representatives must not be excluded from a decision as fundamental to society as the definition of marriage."

TEXAS PHARMACIST DISCIPLINED AFTER REFUSING TO DISPENSE "MORNING AFTER PILL"

DENTON, Texas (EP) – A Texas pharmacist who refused to fill a prescription for the "morning after pill" for a customer at an Eckerd's drug store is facing disciplinary action by the Florida-based company.

"Apparently there was a request for a prescription to be filled and the prescription was denied based on a moral or ethical decision made by the pharmacist, and that's not in accordance with our corporate policy," Joan Gallagher, the vice president of communications for Eckerd Corp., told reporters.

"A prescription is filled regardless of one's

religious, moral or ethical belief. Failure to comply would result in disciplinary action, and that has occurred," Gallagher said in Feb. 3 editions of the "Denton Record-Chronicle." According to a recent study by Americans United for Life, Texas ranks second in the nation for having the most effective pro-life laws in the U.S. Among other state pro-life legislation, Texas law says that a physician, nurse, staff member or employee of a hospital who objects to participating directly or indirectly in an abortion, may not be required to participate.

But state law does not protect pharmacists who do not want to dispense drugs that could induce abortions.

Morning-after pills carry higher doses of the hormones in regular birth control pills and have been sold under the brand names Plan B and Preven since 1998.

Taken within 72 hours of unprotected sexual intercourse, the pills are at least 75 percent effective at preventing pregnancy. They work by preventing ovulation or fertilization of an egg. If fertilization already has occurred, they prevent the egg from implanting into the uterus, terminating the pregnancy.

An unidentified friend of the woman seeking the prescription told the newspaper she got the drug from a neighboring pharmacy after being raped.

TWO NEW CHRISTIAN CHURCHES BEING BUILT IN CHINESE CAPITAL – SOME CALL CONSTRUCTION AN ATTEMPT BY CHINESE GOVT. TO MAKE THE NATION APPEAR MORE APPEALING

BEIJING (EP) – It's a sight that hasn't been seen in China in over half a century. Two Christian churches are being built in the Chinese capital for the first time since the Communist Party took power in 1949.

It's a striking sight for a country whose government controls religious activity tightly and persecutes underground worshippers.

But some think that instead of signaling greater freedom for Christians, the new churches instead signal an attempt by the Chinese government to make the nation appear more appealing to the rest of the world.

The Beijing Religious Affairs Office confirmed reports of the new buildings Feb. 4, saying only that the churches in eastern and southwestern Beijing should be completed by Christmas.

"The city seriously lacks ritual places, and the current distribution of religious sites is unbalanced," the "People's Daily," the country's official newspaper said, citing Na Cang, a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, an advisory group to the government.

The churches however, will be of the state-sanctioned variety, monitored closely by the Chinese government and with no official ties to organizations abroad. The government is extremely sensitive about any organized movement that could challenge its authority.

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Bible & The Newspaper

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The number of Christians has grown significantly since the end of Mao's Cultural Revolution in 1976, and many lack places where they can worship. Beijing's few churches are old and cramped; many are dilapidated.

China's government, officially atheist, says it protects religious practices, including Christianity. But Christian groups outside China accuse authorities of harassing and arresting anyone who worships outside state-approved churches. And the U.S. State Department has consistently criticized the government's treatment of Christians.

Official figures put the number of Chinese Catholics at 10 million and Protestants at 15 million. But tens of millions more believers belong to unauthorized churches.

Some experts say that it's more likely the new churches represent an effort by an increasingly savvy leadership to entice Chinese Christians into joining the state-backed faith, thus making them abandon their underground congregations and rendering them less of a threat.

"Building new churches is indeed a new step, and it's a good publicity move," Rudolf Wagner, chairman of the Institute of Chinese Studies at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, told The Associated Press.

"There's a doublehanded approach – crack down on anything that's not registered activity and pull people into the government-sponsored churches," Wagner said. "It could represent an offer – you can go legal, if you stay within the rules."

DARBY, Mont. (EP) – The Montana School Boards Association voted Feb. 9 to change schools' science curriculum so it includes a discussion of creationism. The school board voted for a policy advanced by the Rev. Curtis Brickley of Darby, who wants the school to teach criticism of the Darwinian theory of evolution, pointing out that it is, in fact, a theory. School board member Doug Banks, who voted for the policy, said it is a way to teach both sides of the evolution debate. However, the board does not have a detailed plan for providing such instruction, and there are no plans for teacher training. Elizabeth Kaleva, the board's attorney through her position as the attorney for the Montana School Boards Association, had urged the board to come up with a proposed curriculum and submit it to state officials for approval. Kaleva had also warned the board that it would likely be sued over the policy by people who consider the policy a way to put religion in science classes. The trustees voting in favor of the policy said it has no religious purpose.

RICHMOND (EP) – A federal district court judge struck down Virginia's ban on partial-birth abortion Feb. 2, saying the law violated privacy rights and failed to make an exception for the health of the woman. Judge

Richard L. Williams, who called the ban "impermissibly void for vagueness," had blocked the law last July, the day it went into effect. He also has challenged the use of the term "partial-birth infanticide" by the law's backers, saying it was an attempt to alarm the public. The Virginia law outlawed partial-birth abortions – procedures in which a baby is partially delivered before being killed – in the second or third trimester. About 30 states have enacted versions of partial-birth abortion bans, but in many cases they have been overturned in court. The newly passed federal ban on partial-birth abortion is being challenged in Nebraska, New York and California.

TOPEKA, Kan. (EP) – CitizenLink reports that a state appellate court in Kansas has upheld the conviction and sentence of a man who sodomized a minor, turning down a request by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to overturn a law protecting minors from sexual exploitation by adults. According to Liberty Counsel, which filed a legal brief on behalf of 25 Kansas lawmakers, the ACLU had argued that a Kansas law criminalizing sex between an adult and a child was unconstitutional in light of last year's Supreme Court ruling in *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down consensual adult homosexual sodomy laws. The lawsuit stems from the conviction of a registered sex offender who sodomized a 14-year-old developmentally disabled boy. In rejecting the ACLU's argument, the court stated, "Traditional sexual mores concerning marriage and procreation have been important to the very survival of the human race Throughout history, governments have extolled the virtues of procreation as a way to furnish new workers, soldiers, and other useful members of society. The survival of society requires a continuous replenishment of its members."

MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATORS CONSIDER "GAY MARRIAGE"

BOSTON, Mass. (EP) – The eyes of the nation focused on Massachusetts Feb. 11 as the Massachusetts legislature began a constitutional convention to respond to the state's Supreme Judicial Court's decision that anything less than full marriage benefits for homosexual couples violated the state's constitution.

Activists on both sides of the controversy converged in Boston as deliberations began. At issue is whether the legislature would grant full benefits to homosexual couples, or craft a constitutional amendment that would prohibit same sex benefits.

On the first day of deliberations, two versions of an amendment to ban same-sex marriage were narrowly defeated. Conservatives, including Senate Minority Leader Brian Lees, said he was "cautiously optimistic" that language banning same-sex marriage could be found that could be passed by a majority.

Even if a constitutional amendment is approved by the legislature, the amendment would not become the law of Massachusetts

until it is approved by the voters in November 2006.

The deliberations are taking place under the glare of a national media spotlight and so many spectators that the legislators themselves are having trouble getting to meetings. More than 4,000 spectators and lobbyists crowded the statehouse on the first day of the constitutional convention. On Feb. 12, the second day of the convention, there were fewer spectators, but the lobbyists were even more passionate, many carrying signs and shouting slogans at the lawmakers.

The debates have blurred the lines and strained relationships among and between traditional political coalitions in Massachusetts. The Associated Press reports, for example, that black clergy in the state are divided over the issue. Many black leaders, who traditionally line up with liberal Democrats on fiscal issues, are considerably more conservative on moral issues. Likewise, many Catholics raised on Boston "machine" politics, are adamantly opposed to same-sex marriage on religious grounds.

Rep. Stephen Buoniconti, a Catholic and a Democrat, said he would oppose same-sex marriage. He told the Associated Press, "It's the value system that I was raised with. I'm just not comfortable with gay marriage."

Social conservatives see this constitutional convention as a critical moment in the fight to preserve the family. Focus on the Family, the American Family Association, the Family Research Council, and other national groups have all sent representatives to Massachusetts or have appeared in national media debates on the subject. Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship stated the matter succinctly: "The re-definers of marriage are working tirelessly in our nation. Their agenda is to tear down traditional marriage and make it meaningless by removing its distinctives," he said.

S.C. HOUSE PASSES RESOLUTION ASKING CONGRESS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ON TEN COMMANDMENTS

COLUMBIA, S.C. (EP) – South Carolina plans to ask Congress to amend the U.S. Constitution to allow public displays of the Ten Commandments. A resolution asking for the amendment passed the House Feb. 11. The resolution asks for an amendment that will allow displays of the Commandments in schools and public buildings.

Rep. Thad Viers, R-Myrtle Beach, sponsored the resolution in response to the dismissal of Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore for refusing to comply with a court order to remove a Commandments display he had placed in the Alabama Judicial Building.

The resolution sparked more than an hour of emotional debate on the floor of the House. A number of Democrats defended their Christian beliefs, but objected to the resolution which they say forces Christianity on the public.

Defenders of the resolution emphasized that the Ten Commandments is not only a religious document but a historical basis for

the law.

MEL GIBSON SAYS PROTESTANTS MAY BE GOING TO HELL

MELBOURNE, Australia (EP) – Mel Gibson's new film "The Passion of the Christ" has been marketed heavily to evangelical Protestant churches around the world, and it has met with almost universal acclaim from such leaders as Chuck Colson, Billy Graham, and James Dobson.

And the film has not been without controversy. Gibson has been accused of anti-semitism because some say the film is hard on Jews. Now, Gibson has generated new controversy by saying that Protestants may be doomed to hell.

In an interview in the "Herald Sun" of Melbourne, Gibson said, "There is no salvation for those outside the [Catholic] Church." Gibson said that even his wife, an Episcopalian, may not go to heaven. He explained, "My wife is a saint. She's a much better person than I am. Honestly. She's, like, Episcopalian, Church of England. She prays, she believes in God, she knows Jesus, she believes in that stuff. And it's just not fair if she doesn't make it."

Gibson's movie opens Feb. 25 and already pre-sales of tickets are leading some entertainment experts to say that it could end up the largest grossing independently produced movie in history, largely because of support of evangelical Protestants in the United States.

SOUTH DAKOTA HOUSE PASSES BILL BANNING MOST ABORTIONS

PIERRE, S.D. (EP) – The South Dakota House passed a bill Feb. 10 that would outlaw most abortions in South Dakota. The bill, which passed 54-15, would outlaw abortion unless a mother's life is in danger.

The bill does not make an exception for potential health problems a mother could experience if she delivered a child. Pro-life supporters of the bill say that's an exception that is not needed.

"When we're considering an innocent life, the health of the mother is not a substantial enough justification to take the innocent life," said Republican Rep. Matt McCaulley, chief sponsor of the bill.

Opponents argued that if the Senate approves the bill and it becomes law, it will be thrown out in court because it runs counter to U.S. Supreme Court decisions that have found abortion to be legal. They noted that courts have rejected state abortion restrictions twice in recent years.

The bill would punish those who perform abortions with up to five years in prison and \$5,000 fines.

FLORIDA HOMOSEXUAL ADOPTION BAN UPHELD

By Sonja Swiatkiewicz, CitizenLink
Federal appeals court finds that children fare better in mother-father households.

ATLANTA (EP) – The 11th U.S. Circuit

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Court of Appeals in Atlanta upheld Florida's 1977 ban on adoption by homosexual individuals or couples, noting that children thrive most in households headed by a mother and father who are married. The three-judge panel's Jan. 28 unanimous decision, written by Judge Stanley Birch, declared that "Florida has made the determination that it is not in the best interests of its displaced children to be adopted by individuals who 'engage in current, voluntary homosexual activity,' and we have found nothing in the Constitution that forbids this policy judgment."

Dr. James Dobson, founder and chairman of Focus on the Family, applauded the court for "confirming what we have known for decades – that children need a mother and a father."

"While special circumstances may require kids being raised in special arrangements," Dobson said, "the 11th Circuit Court has recognized that Florida has a legitimate interest in placing children in stable homes headed by opposite-sex parents."

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council (FRC), found the ruling a welcome change from a pattern of judicial tyranny from the bench.

"Study after study has proven that households with a married mother and father create the best developmental environment for children, and as the 11th Circuit noted, the plaintiffs in this case were unable to refute that evidence," Perkins said. "This ruling is a breath of fresh air at a time when courts around the nation are overstepping their bounds and pushing the homosexual agenda." Most recently, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) attempted to legalize same-sex "marriage" – a proposition which the Coalition for Marriage, of which Focus and FRC are members, is working to prevent. The coalition is leading a grass-roots effort to pass the Marriage Affirmation and Protection Amendment, which would codify in the state constitution the traditional definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

"The court has declared that the right of children to be raised in a home that is headed by a mother and father, who are married, supersedes the desires of individuals who seek legitimization of their sexual behavior through state-sanctioned adoption rights," Coalition Chairman Tom Shields said.

The ruling also held another surprise: the judges not only refused to legislate from the bench, they went so far as to denounce judicial activism as a legitimate role of the judiciary.

"The legislature is the proper forum for this debate," Judge Birch wrote, "and we do not sit as a superlegislature 'to award by judicial decree what was not achievable by political consensus.'"

Dobson praised that assertion. "This decision perfectly highlights the proper role

of the judiciary – to interpret the law and not create law based on whims of the majority of the judges," he said. "Much as the courts in Arizona, Indiana and New Jersey recognized that it was not their constitutional role to redefine marriage in those states, this federal court has refused to redefine the family through judicial fiat."

The adoption case was an appeal of a suit filed in 1999 by four homosexual men seeking to adopt the foster children in their care. Wednesday's ruling confirmed the 2001 decision of a U.S. district judge in favor of the Florida law.

The plaintiffs had been banking on last summer's *Lawrence v. Texas* decision, in which the U.S. Supreme Court found that Texas did not have a compelling interest in prohibiting consensual homosexual activities conducted in the privacy of the bedroom. But the *Lawrence* decision was based heavily on the fact that only adults were involved, and the Court merely extended the right to privacy – it did not create a new right.

"We conclude that it is a strained and ultimately incorrect reading of *Lawrence* to interpret it to announce a new fundamental right," Birch explained in the ruling. "We conclude that the *Lawrence* decision cannot be extrapolated to create a right to adopt for homosexual persons."

THE NEW PERSECUTORS: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ADVOCATES PUSH FOR GREATER SCRUTINY OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Many countries outlaw minority religions and jail their adherents. Yet somehow they manage to avoid the stigma of appearing on the U.S. government's official list of religious persecutors. But this year religious-freedom advocates are pushing Washington to stop giving a free pass to five of the worst violators. The State Department may finally be listening

By Priya Abraham, *WORLD* magazine

WASHINGTON (EP) – Formally documenting religious persecution across 191 countries is no small task. The vast State Department bureaucracy certainly has the manpower to do it, but nonetheless missed by three months the scheduled release date for its 2003 report.

But the tardy paperwork would be worth it, religious-freedom advocates say, if five more countries were added to an exclusive list of the world's fiercest persecutors: Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Eritrea, and Uzbekistan.

The dubious distinction carries the possibility of economic sanctions or severed U.S. aid – and the certainty of an uncomfortable international spotlight. According to the law, those designated as "countries of particular concern" have tolerated "systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom."

In recent years the religious-freedom gauge has taken a higher profile because persecuting countries tend to become breeding grounds for terrorism. Three of six countries named as persecutors by the State

Department last year—Iran, Iraq, and North Korea – also were designated by President Bush as the "axis of evil."

Now lawmakers and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) are pushing the State Department to add the five new persecutors to this year's list, and a State Department official confirmed that each is under consideration.

The final list, which is probably still a few months away, must win approval by the president and will have to survive bureaucratic wrangling and diplomatic pressure. But five years after Congress passed (and President Clinton signed) a law promoting international religious freedom, commission members and analysts wonder why State isn't naming more offending countries to the list – or acting more forcefully against those already on it.

"We've seen some movement on some of these countries," allowed Tad Stahnke, the USCIRF's deputy policy director. "The commission is looking forward to seeing more."

The commission is an independent federal agency created by the 1998 law to critique State's annual religious-freedom reports and make policy recommendations independent of the bureaucracy. The current slate of commissioners includes one Hindu, one Buddhist, one Muslim, one Jew, one Mormon, and four Christians. By law the White House appoints three commissioners and Congress appoints six (two from the party in the White House, four from the party out of executive power). Each year commission members send an official letter to the secretary of state, recommending countries that State should identify as persecutors. In five years State Department officials have acted on only about half the names on the list.

The State Department has also declined to punish even the chosen ones, allowing existing trade sanctions (as in the case of Iraq and North Korea) to work double-time for religious-freedom abuses. That hasn't been enough, said Stahnke. For violators like China, which enjoys normal trade relations with the United States, the designation has become a meaningless slap on the wrist.

Of the five under consideration for this year's State Department "countries of particular concern" list, the likeliest to be fingered are Turkmenistan and Vietnam, said Nina Shea, director of Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom and a member of USCIRF. Communist Vietnam has been jailing and persecuting its highland Hmong Christians with growing intensity for the last two years. Turkmenistan forbids all religions except state-scrutinized Islam, and its president requires all schools to teach a self-idolizing tome on Turkmen history.

Saudi Arabia, which has been an annual contender since the list of persecutors began in 1999, will probably receive another pass. Each year realpolitik trumps religious freedom. The State Department also keeps

track of oil imports, and Saudi oil accounts for 20 percent of U.S. crude imports. Saudi Arabia is also the biggest export market in the Middle East for the United States. And the Saudis have been cooperating in the war against terror, particularly after May terrorist bombings last year struck home in Riyadh.

Little has improved on the religious-freedom front, however. The state allows only its strict interpretation of Sunni Islam called Wahhabism. Shiite Muslims, Christians, and other minorities may not worship in public. Sharing other religions with Muslims is illegal. Muslims who convert to other religions risk the death penalty. Until now Saudi influence in Washington has translated into U.S. acquiescence over the country's religious-freedom record.

"It's only been in the last year that our government has really started pressing them on this," a State Department official said. "The Saudis have fervent defenders in this department. But there are others in the department who are frustrated at Saudi Arabia's intolerance and are taking a fresh look at our countries' relations. People are really starting to see a connection between religious intolerance and terrorism."

While they wait, the USCIRF commissioners aren't averse to cranking all the tools in their box. Instead of burying recommendations in a report, commissioners wrote a letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell this year outlining policy suggestions tailored for each country named as a persecutor. The designations don't automatically trigger sanctions, but often the very prospect of landing on the list will spur a persecutor to the negotiating table. Imprisoned a Pentecostal pastor? We'll let him out. Dozens of unregistered Jehovah's Witnesses? We'll not jail them. The system is meant to allow some wiggle room for diplomatic give and take. But with this crop of new persecutors, the State Department already has proven itself more adept at offering carrots than sticks.

"What I sense is that the State Department takes a case approach to these things," said Larry Uzzell, president of International Religious Freedom Watch. "The trouble is these countries have a limitless supply of religious minorities they can imprison and release in order not to get on the list. They have to look at the system itself and not on a case-by-case basis."

The State Department's mechanical approach doesn't surprise Michael Horowitz, one of the original authors of the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act. The department's ethos, he said, favors quiet diplomacy and forging agreements. "The faith of religiously persecuted people becomes trade bait for other issues," he said. When he and others helped craft the legislation, Horowitz said their vision rested on the religious-freedom commission lighting "prairie fires" – educating Americans on the atrocities committed abroad against Christians and followers of other religions.

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The commission has only just begun to do that, he said, pointing to a January hearing in Los Angeles where victims of North Korean abuse testified. "The religious-freedom issue is not an important enough issue in the State Department, and never will be until the American people make it so."

ATLANTA (EP) – Homosexuals from the University of Georgia traveled to Atlanta Jan. 30 in an effort to convince senators to vote down a newly proposed amendment to the state constitution banning same-sex marriage. If passed, the bill would legally define marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Opponents of the legislation say it is an attempt to play politics during an election year. Senate Majority Leader Bill Stephens (R-Canton), who proposed the amendment, rejected the idea that politics played a role in the crafting or timing of the bill. "Every other year is an election year in Georgia," Stephens said. "Certainly people will always try to throw politics into it." University of Georgia political science professor Charles Bullock said if the bill passes and is placed on the November referendum it would most likely serve to mobilize conservatives.

LOSING SOME PASSION

Mel Gibson will delete a scene from his upcoming film, *The Passion of the Christ*, that blames the Jewish people for Jesus's death, *the New York Times* reported last week.

Gibson has been criticized for failing to take into consideration Jewish sensitivities, the Vatican II reforms that absolved Jews, and collective guilt in the death of Jesus. He will reportedly ax a scene from his \$25 million epic in which the Jewish high priest Caiaphas declares, "His blood be on us and on our children" (*The Jerusalem Post*, 2/13/04).

STUDENT PUNISHED FOR SAYING "GOD BLESS" ON TV

God bless and Goodbye: James Lord, anchorman of "Tiger's Eye News," the daily TV broadcast at Dupo High School, in Dupo, Ill., was suspended from his job for signing off with "God bless."

Just before Christmas Vacation—er, Winter Break—Lord closed with these offending words: "All of us here at Tiger's Eye News would like to remind you to give and not be greedy, and have a safe and happy holiday. God bless."

In retribution, the school banished Lord from the broadcast until February 1.

Principal Jonathan Heerboth told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: "We can't allow one person to use school time to express any personal religious beliefs."

The American Center for Law and Justice prepared a lawsuit, and the school board relented, reinstating Lord after he promised not to say "God bless" every blessed day. "[T]he School Board," reported the *Post-*

Dispatch, "doesn't have a problem with an occasional 'God bless.'"

Wonder how they'd have handled Janet Jackson? (*Human Events*, 2/9/04).

EQUAL TIME FOR CHILD MOLESTERS

Inspired by Lawrence v. Texas, the Supreme Court opinion that declared same-sex sodomy a constitutional right, the ACLU and Lambda Legal foundation are now making demands on behalf of child molesters.

Three years ago, Kansas convicted Matthew Limon, then 18, of having sex with a 14-year-old boy. It was Limon's third child-molestation conviction, and he was sentenced to 17 years.

The ACLU argued on appeal that the sentence was unconstitutional because it is harsher than the penalty Kansas law demands for 18-year-old boys convicted of sexual relations with 14-year-old girls. The Kansas Court of Appeals voted 2 to 1 to reject the ACLU's argument.

Kansas Atty. Gen. Phill Kline told the Associated Press that the ACLU was trying to depict Limon as having "a loving teen relationship" when in fact he was "convicted for the third time of molesting a child." ACLU attorney Tamara Lange, who told the AP she intends to appeal again, called the ruling "a victory for prejudice and fear."

Lambda legal attorney Susan Sommer said: "This is an opinion that reflects an archaic set of attitudes about homosexuality that the U.S. Supreme Court completely transcended" (*Human Events*, 2/9/04).

THE EVER-DECLINING DOLLAR

"The first panacea for a mismanaged nation is inflation of the currency; the second is war," observed Ernest Hemingway. "Both bring a temporary prosperity; both bring a permanent ruin. But both are the refuge of political and economic opportunists." The Bush administration's agenda of perpetual war and unchecked spending is sowing the seeds of national ruin.

"Every day, foreign individuals, companies and governments plow \$1.5 billion into U.S. stocks, Treasury bonds, factories, companies and real estate," noted the January 15 *Wall Street Journal*. "This money is the economic lifeblood of America. It helps the U.S. expand and modernize factories, secure mortgages, build highways—even fight the war in Iraq. Two decades ago, Americans sent more money abroad than foreigners invested here. But since then, the U.S. has essentially been living beyond its means, consuming more than it makes, investing more than it saves by borrowing from abroad."

"In the past few months," continued the *Journal*, "the dollar has been falling against the euro, the Japanese yen and the British pound. It's a symptom of waning demand for the U.S. currency, an indication that foreigners may be growing less enthusiastic about investing in the U.S. Were foreign investors to flee the U.S., it would depress the dollar further and faster. Reduced foreign purchases of U.S.

stocks could cause the market to tumble. Reducing foreign purchases of U.S. bonds could boost the interest rates set in bond markets. If the foreign flight were severe enough, it could push the U.S. back into recession."

Given the unprecedented profligacy of the current Republican-led administration and Congress, it's almost certain that the dollar's value will continue to plummet. James McCormick, head of global currency research at Lehman Brothers, told the *Agence France Presse*, "The foreign exchange market is being very clear that what matters is whether policymakers care about what's going on." Simon Derrick, head currency strategist for London's branch of the Bank of New York, told the AFP that "the new year brings with it little prospect of respite for the dollar, given continuing fundamental worries over the ability of the United States to finance its current account deficit at current exchange rates."

Adding to the trouble is the Federal Reserve's determination to keep interest rates at historic lows in order to encourage consumer spending. Low interest rates, notes the AFP, "are making it difficult for the country to attract capital to finance the current account gap" (*The New American*, 2/9/04).

SCHOLAR WANTS FAVORITE BIBLE TRANSLATION TO DOMINATE

By Douglas Todd

Religious News Service

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA (RNS)—A noted American academic wants to see a Bible translation put together by scores of conservative scholars become the one Bible everyone uses.

Alan Jacobs, an English professor at Wheaton College near Chicago, said the new English Standard Version Bible, whose translation was overseen by Vancouver's James Packer, is the only one with the potential to become the universal Bible of all English-speaking Christians.

Jacobs, a respected professor at Wheaton, a major evangelical university, said he laments the end of the era when most English speaking Protestants read and quoted from the same Bible—the King James Version, first published in England in 1611.

"Everyone who grew up with the (King James Version) feels the loss of a shared language, of particular words and phrases that resonated in the common ear," Jacobs wrote in the recent issue of *First Things Magazine*, a Christian journal.

"BEST AVAILABLE?"

With more than 100 English-language Bible translations now competing against one another, Jacobs called the English Standard Version "the best available English Bible."

It was created two years ago by a team of about 100 conservative Protestants led by Packer, of Regent College, an evangelical postgraduate school on the University of British Columbia campus.

But some Bible scholars say Jacob's high-profile campaign to champion one common

English-language Bible is quixotic and misguided at best and imperialistic at worst.

"It sounds like ecclesiastical and scholarly tyranny we shouldn't put up with," said Professor Lloyd Gaston, a veteran Bible scholar at the Vancouver School of Theology.

"The more Bible translations we have the better," Gaston said. It's good for people of faith to realize, he said, that there are many different ways of interpreting ancient Bible stories, which were first told orally and then written down in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

Additionally, convincing Southern Baptist leaders to endorse the English Standard Version could be problematic, as LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention has prepared its own Holman Christian Standard Bible. LifeWay already has released the Holman New Testament and plans to release the full Bible in April.

Although Jacobs had no role in translating the ESV, he is a friend of Packer and a fellow evangelical.

The literary chairman of the ESV translation team is Jacobs' English faculty colleague at Wheaton College, Leland Ryken, who routinely criticizes modern Bible translations.

Even Packer, the translation's general editor, backed away from Jacob's hope that one Bible translation would dominate the world's English language Christian community.

"FOOLISH" IDEA

There is no such thing as a definitive translation of the Bible, Packer said in an interview, and it would be "foolish" of him and his colleagues to suggest that theirs is the last word.

"People have different cultural backgrounds. They talk and read English at different levels," said Packer, 77.

Packer said the audience for his team's translation is "the kind of people who are bewildered by the pressure to embrace novel understandings of the faith and paraphrased translations of the Bible. We believe there's a large constituency of people who appreciate a more conservative Bible."

The ESV translation, which Packer prepared with other biblical scholars from throughout North America, is a more literal translation than other translations, he said, and sought to use as many of the precise words used in original texts as possible.

Jacobs said one of his main reasons for arguing for the supremacy of the ESV is his concern that other modern Bible translations lack good English style.

The ESV slightly reworks the popular 1952 Revised Standard Version, for instance, dropping "thees" and "thous."

Still, Jacobs favors "deference to existing excellence"—if a King James or Revised Standard Version phrase is accurate and understandable, keep it (*Western Recorder*, 2/10/04).



A Sure and Mighty

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assurance recorded in the Word of God. These statements amaze me. Consider the statement of Job, **“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me”** (Job 19:25-27). Job said he knew he was going to see His Redeemer that lived and that He was going to stand upon the earth. Job said that even after he laid down his body and it was destroyed, he had assurance that his body was going to be resurrected at that day and he was going to see his Savior.

Job also said, **“Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand? Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him”** (Job 13:14). Job had a sure and mighty faith. He said, **“Though the almighty, all-powerful hand of God would be moved against me upon this earth and take my very life, I trust in Him fully and completely.”** This is bold assurance. Every child of God should seek to have this kind of assurance.

Keep in mind, Paul wrote this letter at the end of his life. He wrote this with confidence, boldness, and assurance, but he did not always have this strong assurance. He was not always at the point of faith and grace that he was when he made this statement. Paul had progressed and developed in grace and faith until he came to the place where he made this statement. He had developed a strong faith over his lifetime.

Let us now consider that sure and mighty faith of assurance. Firstly, I wish to note the development of the Apostle's faith. Secondly, I shall submit three reasons for his bold assurance. And, thirdly, I hope to impress upon you that higher degrees of faith and grace are possible.

I. In the first place, let us note the development of Paul's faith. Paul was saved on the road to Damascus and knew he had seen the Lord Jesus Christ. As a newborn babe in Christ, there were some things he knew and did not know. He started out as every newborn child of God does. He had to grow, learn and develop.

If we trace his early preaching through the book of Acts and then later in his epistles, we note how his message of Christ developed, became fuller and more complete over his years as a preacher. He grew and the Lord used him mightily. He progressed from one state of grace to another. He said he had beheld **“the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”** (II Cor. 4:6) and that **“we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image**

from glory to glory” (II Cor. 3:18).

Paul did not sit down after he was saved and say, **“I am assured of going to Heaven and can sit down; everything's alright.”** Paul's Christianity meant a vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ and growing to know him more and more. To him, to be in Christ meant to be pressing **“toward the mark.”**

It is certainly evident from Romans chapter seven that *Paul never got past his past sins or the weakness and sinfulness of his flesh.* He wrote to Timothy, **“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief”** (I Tim. 1:15). He did not say, **“Of whom I was chief,”** but rather **“of whom I am chief.”** The word here for ‘chief’ signifies ‘first.’ Paul said he was the first, the chief sinner. That is how he viewed his past sins. He wrote of himself, **“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me”** (I Cor. 15:9-10). Paul said he was the least of the apostles but by the grace of God, **“I am what I am.”**

Although he did not get over his sins, Paul maintained a right perspective of his sins. A child of God can become consumed with his own unworthiness and sit down in depression and despondency saying, **“Woe is me! I am so undone and unclean.”** This type of action tends to make one self-absorbed and is really a form of pride. Someone that is always talking about how unworthy they are and how unable they are is really feigning humility and seeking sympathy from others. They may also be trying to convince themselves that they cannot do anything for God, a convenient excuse for not working.

Paul did not have this type of attitude. He wrote to the Philippians, **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”** (Phil. 4:13). Paul readily acknowledged his sinfulness but he also declared his all-sufficiency in Christ. If all we do is focus upon our limitations, weaknesses, sins, and failures, then we are never going to accomplish anything for God. On the other hand, if we begin to think too lightly of our sinfulness and think that we are a little better than what we really are; this will lead us down the road to self-righteousness. Then we will be no better than the Pharisees in Jesus' day because we will feel as if we do not have any sin. We will feel as if maybe we have a couple of little sins but that they are not as bad as that other fellow's sins.

In all things, we must have a proper view and understanding of our sinfulness before God. Paul had that right under-

standing. He could say that he was the chief of sinners and still yet he could say the grace of God worked in him to **“will and to do of his good pleasure”** (Phil. 2:13). The proper view of his sinfulness motivated him to the service of God. He felt he had wasted too much time already in the service of sin and he wanted to devote his life to the service of God.

Paul also endured great trials of his faith. He wrote to the church at Philippi, **“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need”** (Phil. 4:11-12). Paul learned to be content though he endured a great number of trials of afflictions. Paul was hated by the Jews. He preached the gospel of Jesus Christ and they hated Jesus Christ; they had crucified Him. They hated him for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles and telling them that they could be saved, that they did not need circumcision, and that they could go to Heaven as well as the Jews. They hated Paul for preaching that message.

The Gentiles hated and rejected Paul because he preached another God to them and another religion to them. This did away with all their gods and their religion, this type of preaching hurt their pocketbooks, and especially in Ephesus. He was hated by all types of men. Nevertheless, he said, **“I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some”** (I Cor. 9:22). He continued to labor and endured those trials patiently.

‘Tempt’, as it is used in the Bible, has a sense that means ‘to test.’ This is how the Lord Jesus Christ was tempted. The Bible says that God cannot be tempted with sin. God cannot be tempted internally the way we are because of sin, but Jesus Christ was tempted, or rather tested, of God. The Scriptures testify, **“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered”** (Heb 5:8).

Paul passed through this testing. His faith and grace increased as he endured the trials. Paul endured the trials and they strengthened him until he came to the place where he could make the bold statement he made in our text.

II. Next, I wish to give three reasons for Paul's bold assurance. He stated in our text, **“For the which cause I also suffer these things.”** Paul referred to the trials of afflictions he had endured and the cause for which he suffered these things. He had been given a work to do and he suffered because of that work. He spoke of the gospel of Christ and said, **“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles”** (II Tim. 1:11). He said, **“A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me”** (I Cor. 9:17). Paul also said, **“Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel”** (I Cor.

9:16). He would not shrink from his calling, despite his cruel trials.

Paul declared, **“Nevertheless I am not ashamed.”** The first reason for his bold assurance was this; *he was not ashamed of his life and service to God.* He wrote to Timothy, **“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God”** (II Tim. 1:8). He was telling Timothy to be ready to suffer for the Lord and not to be ashamed of suffering. Apparently, others forsook Paul and were ashamed of his bonds.

Paul was not ashamed, even of his bonds, for he knew he was doing right. In our lives sometimes, we are faced with moral and ethical decisions, and sometimes they are not easy, but when we stand on what is right, we can go to bed and rest easy at night knowing we have done the right thing. A Christian that is not serving God as they ought to be has no reason to have bold assurance, but Paul said he was willing to **“spend and be spent for you”** (II Cor. 12:15). He laid himself out in the service of Christ and was assured of Whom it was that he believed in and followed.

Notice that Paul remarked, **“For I know whom I have believed.”** Another reason for Paul's assurance was *his increase in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.* We cannot believe in someone we have not heard of. There has to be a knowledge of Jesus Christ in order for us to believe. The more that we know about Him, once we have believed, then the greater does our faith in Him become. The more we know Him; the more we love Him.

Paul told the Philippians of his desire, **“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection”** (Phil. 3:10). The more he knew of Christ, the more sure he was. The more that he knew about Jesus, the more that he came to trust Him. If you have been saved for any length of time at all, you should believe and trust in Him more today than what you did the day you were saved. Your faith and dependence upon God should have grown as you have heeded the words of Proverbs to **“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths”** (Pro. 3:5-6).

Paul come to trust and know him more as his life continued. He had seen Him with his eyes on the road to Damascus. He had not had time, like the other disciples, to spend the three years with him during this earthly ministry. Nevertheless, he could say, **“I know Him.”**

Paul went on to declare, **“And am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”** The word in the original here that has been translated ‘com-

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A Sure and Mighty

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mitted, signifies 'deposited'. The word conveys the thought of committing something valuable to the care of a bank or other institution. The third reason for assurance was that *Paul had deposited his soul with the Lord Jesus Christ*. Christ said in Matthew, **"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal"** (Matt. 6:19). Paul said he had committed his soul to the keeping of the Lord in Heaven, at the right hand of the Father. Where have you committed your soul? Have you trusted in your baptism? Have you trusted in your profession? Have you trusted in your church membership? Have you trusted in your church attendance? Have you trusted in anything that you have done, or have you fully committed your soul to the keeping of Jesus Christ? Paul said he had committed his soul to Jesus and did not worry about it anymore.

Peter wrote to the saints, **"Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator"** (I Pet. 4:19). Every one of us is born into this life with an immortal soul. Where we commit our soul for keeping is of the utmost importance in the reflection of eternity.

Paul had committed his soul with the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul believed **"he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."** What day was he talking about? He was talking about the Day of Judgment that is coming. There is coming a time when there is going to be a separation. The wheat and the tares are going to be separated. The sheep and the goats are going to be separated. Many are going to cry out, "Lord we have done all these mighty works in thy name surely we are going to Heaven!" The Lord will respond, **"I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"** (Matt. 7:23). Where have you committed your soul?

Paul had come to a place of great assurance in his life, even in the face of distress. He testified, **"We were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears"** (II Cor. 7:5). There were times when he said he was cast down. Times when he was almost perplexed. Times when things got so rough, that he almost despaired. Nevertheless, Paul knew and could say, "It is well with my soul." Why? Because,

*Though Satan should buffet, tho' trials
should come,*

Let this blest assurance control,

That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,

And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

III. In the last place, we must know that higher degrees of grace and faith are possible. The writer of Hebrews, in the fifth chapter, complained that there had been sufficient time for those Christians that they ought to be teachers of others, be well established, and showing forth all good works. However, he said that they needed to be taught the elementary things again. He did not want them to tarry at their present state but wanted them to go on to perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ and grow in grace and in knowledge.

There is no reason to rest satisfied with our current level of knowledge, grace, and faith. These can be greater and can increase. *Let us go on unto perfection.* Paul had done that. Over his life, he had developed a great faith and grace as he was in pursuit of being conformed to the image of the Christ. Because of that growth, he had a great boldness. If we have a low degree of grace and of faith, we will not have the kind of assurance that Paul and Job had. We will doubt and wonder. Fears will beset us all the time. Paul had problems, but he had assurance. He yet knew it was well with his soul and was completely convinced of it.

The Psalmist wrote of the Lord, **"Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant"** (Ps. 35:27). The Lord has pleasure in the prosperity of his servant. He takes pleasure in our progress. James testified, **"He giveth more grace"** (Jas. 4:6). Again, **"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you"** (Jas. 4:8).

The Lord wants us to grow. He will give us the means and grace necessary to grow, but we have to lay hold of those things by faith. We have to exercise ourselves. Why do you think Peter said, **"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure?"** He went on to say that if you do, **"an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"** (II Pet. 1:10). Paul said, **"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"** (Phil. 2:12). He wrote of laying hold of the greater riches we have in Christ Jesus through faith. Exercise yourselves unto that pursuit. You can gain that kind of assurance. It is possible. The Lord has pleasure in your progress.

Additionally, realize that *He has made available to us a great feast.* In Solomon's Song we read the Shepherd say, **"I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved"** (SoS. 5:1).

He is bidding His beloved and His friends to eat and drink **"abundantly"**

There is a vast supply available to His children. God's mercies are **"new every morning"** (Lam. 3:23). There is a supply of riches and abundance in the Lord Jesus Christ in glory that we have access to by faith that we have not yet touched. Do not come and take a little sip; **"drink abundantly."** If you have not, it may be that **"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full"** (John 16:24). Christ said that at least in some measure, He has not been sought. He exhorted, **"Ask... that your joy may be full."**

Paul instructed the Philippian believers to **"Rejoice in the Lord alway"** (Phil. 4:4). A Christian that is rejoicing in the Lord always, is a Christian that has a sure and mighty faith. They have drunk abundantly. They have asked. They have received and their joy is full.

The old prophet preached, **"And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined"** (Is. 25:6). God has prepared, in His mercy and grace, an abundant feast of fat things that we could be feasting on at this very hour, but we are not because of our lack of faith and grace. Therefore, our joy is not full and we do not have that assurance that Paul had. We have doubts and fears because we have not sought the Lord by faith.

In the parable of the prodigal son, when the son returned and the father went out to meet him, hugged him, kissed him, clothed him with a robe, put shoes on his feet and a ring on his finger, what did he say? He told the servants to go and kill the fatted calf and make it ready. He was saying, "We are going to feast and have joy." They certainly enjoyed that feast.

However, there was a feast in I Samuel 28 that was prepared, the calf was killed and made ready, but those that ate it did not have any enjoyment in it. We read of Saul, **"But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof; And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night"** (I Sam. 28:23-25). That was a solemn, somber dinner. They did not enjoy it. They ate it but they just got up and went their way with no enjoyment in the feast.

Not all are enjoying the feast that is available. What makes the difference? *Our enjoyment of the things of God increases with our faith and grace.* As a child of God, if you do not enjoy church very much, it

is because you are a carnal and worldly Christian. If your faith and grace are increased, then you will begin to enjoy the things of God more. If you do not enjoy the things of God the way you ought to, then that is a sure sign that your grace and faith need to be increased. You need to be seeking that assurance and your enjoyment will come. I enjoy the things of God much more today than I used to. I am pressing on hoping to enjoy them even more as life goes on until the Lord comes back. Through this process, we are being conformed to the image of Christ.

Conclusion – The Bible teaches us of the tenderness of our Savior in Isaiah, **"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench"** (Isa. 42:3). The smoking flax is just smoldering. It is not ablaze, it is not full of fire, it is just smoldering. The reed is bruised, not full and beautiful. The gentleness is seen here because He will not break or quench. He will not despise your small faith. He will receive your little faith, but it can be increased. There is no reason to continue that way. There is no reason to smolder when you could flame.

One thing that comes out in the above passage is that *assurance is possible.* I want that kind of assurance Paul had. Paul wrote to Timothy, **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting"** (I Tim. 1:15-16). Jesus Christ is obviously the greatest example and pattern we can have for our life. The Apostle Paul is also a human pattern for our life of service to God. He is not the perfect example, but is certainly worthy of imitation. Paul was faithful, yet he was just a man. The Lord Jesus Christ was perfect. He was God and man. He did not sin and could not sin. Paul had a sinful flesh, yet he is a pattern of sorts. If Paul, though yet a man, had achieved this kind of assurance, then it is possible for all children of God to achieve this. He has laid down a great example for us.

However, *not all Christians have this kind of assurance.* I am not telling you that to have a doubt or fear means that you are not saved. I am saying that we can have doubts and fears, and if our faith is small, we will almost be overcome except the Lord Jesus Christ should make a way of escape. Not all have a great assurance. However, we can have the assurance that Paul had.

Last of all, we should *strive with all diligence for assurance.* There is no reason for us to live in doubt and fear. There is really no excuse for it either. There is grace to grow in Christ, if you want to. If you do not want to, I fear for your soul.

Consider the words of Peter speaking

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GLEANINGS

PROVIDENTIAL CHARACTER OF THE STANDARD OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

By Alexander Carson

In giving a standard for the guidance of all ages in the doctrines, precepts, and ordinances of Christ, we would have naturally expected that all would have been drawn up in a formal, full, and precise system by the apostles. No such thing is found in the New Testament. All things are brought forward and circumstances called for; and they are taught in words, not in a regulated system. The epistles of the apostles contain the doctrines, precepts, and ordinances of the Christian religion as occasion demanded at the time; and all ages are left to find the truth by tracing their steps. Everything is brought forward in a way of Providence. This is admirable wisdom; this is the wisdom of God. It leaves a standard, while it apparently neglects a standard. While there is no formal symbol of divine truth, there is not a truth, nor duty, nor ordinance of Christ, which, in the words and scattered hints of Scripture, is not taught with sufficient evidence. Can there be a stronger demonstration of the divine origin of the Scriptures? Surely this book cannot be a human production, when no man, learned or unlearned, would have followed the same plan.

The wisdom of God further appears in this providential manner of revelation by hiding God from the wisdom of the wise, while he is seen by babes and sucklings, who renounce their own wisdom, and implicitly follow Christ. Is it not notorious that many learned men can find no standard in scripture for many things that must be practiced one way or other? Because there is no system or regulated symbol of worship, they think that they are, in many things, left to their own discretion. The epistles of the apostles were occasioned by the state and circumstances of the churches or individuals to which they are written. They are, therefore, as some think, mere *letters of business*, which are, indeed, in some measure, to guide us, but only by a *discriminating* application. Hence the never-ending variety in the ceremonial forms of worship under the Christian name, according to the different views of an enlightened and discriminating imitation of the first churches. Hence, in the wisdom of God, occasion was given for the rise and progress of the Man of Sin. That monster was predicted by the Spirit of inspiration, and will ultimately serve, with every thing else, to contribute to the exhibition of the divine glory. The Spirit of

truth hath given a perfect standard; but, by the divine wisdom, the character of that standard is of such a nature, as to afford occasion of evasion to disaffection and human wisdom.

For the occasion of the full, and clear, and strong exhibitions of the doctrine of justification, for instance, we are indebted to the Jewish opposition. With immediate and especial reference to the Jews, Paul discusses this subject at large in his Epistle to the Romans. From this treasure the children of God enrich themselves with a never-ending increase of wealth. But, from the character of revelation to which I have referred, the enemies of justification, solely by faith in Jesus Christ, take occasion to invent evasions. Socinians, Arians, Arminians, with all the enemies of the pure gospel, tell us that Paul, as addressing Jewish error, must not be understood to mean the moral law, but the ceremonial law, or the judicial law; or that he meant no good works as condition of justification on our part, but works of law as meritorious of pardon. In like manner, upon every other subject, enemies will find something to allege from the peculiar manner of revelation. Now, men would think this a defect in revelation; but in the Divine discovery of the will of God, it is a perfection. It manifests the disaffection of the heart of man to the things of God. It would really be a defect in human law; for human law is not to detect the state of the heart, but to regulate conduct only. The divine law is to regulate the conduct in such a way as to discover the state of the heart. Such, then, is the wisdom of God in the providential way in which the standard of the Christian religion is regulated.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES TO CHRIST

By A. M. Hodgkin

Looking forward into the future from the earliest ages, God's servants saw One who was to come, and as the time approached this vision grew so clear that it would be almost possible for us to describe Christ's life on earth from the Old Testament Scriptures, of which He Himself said, **"They testify of me."**

There was one central figure in Israel's hope. The work of the world's redemption was to be accomplished by one Man, the promised Messiah. It is He who was to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15); He was to be descended from Abraham (Gen. 22:18), and from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 44:10).

Isaiah looked forward and saw first a great Light shining upon the people that walked in darkness (Isa. 9:2). And as he gazed he saw that a child was to be born, a Son was to be given (v. 6), and with growing amazement there dawned upon him these names, as describing the nature

of the child. **"Wonderful."** Wonderful, indeed, in His birth, for the advent of no other child had ever been heralded by the hosts of heaven. His birth of a virgin (Isa. 7:14), and the appearance of the star (Num. 24:17), were alike wonderful. Increasingly wonderful was He in His manhood, and most wonderful of all in His perfect sinlessness. **"Counsellor."** **"Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"** (Col. 2:3). **"The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father."** There dawned upon Isaiah the consciousness that this promised One was none other than God manifest in the flesh, **"Immanuel, God with us"** (Isa. 7:14). As Jesus Himself said, **"I and my Father are One"** (John 10:30). The next name, **"The Prince of Peace,"** specially belongs to Jesus, for **"He is our Peace."** His birth brought Peace on earth, and leaving it He bequeathed Peace to His disciples, **"having made peace through the blood of his cross."** Then the prophet sees the child that was to be born seated on the throne of His father David, and he sees the glorious spread of His kingdom. Though born of a royal house, it was to be in the time of its humiliation. **"There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit"** (Isa. 11:1, R.V.). We have in this a glimpse of His lowliness and poverty.

And now the prophets, one by one, fill in the picture, each adding a fresh, vivid touch. The prophet Micah sees the little town where Jesus was to be born, and tells us it is Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:6); Isaiah sees the adoration of the Magi (Isa. 60:3; Matt. 2:11); Jeremiah pictures the death of the innocents (Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:17-18); and Hosea foreshadows the flight into Egypt (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15); Isaiah portrays His meekness and gentleness (Isa. 42:2; Matt. 11:29), and the wisdom and knowledge which Jesus manifested all through His life from the time of His talking with the doctors in the Temple. Again, when He cleansed the Temple, the words of the Psalmist came at once to the memory of the disciples,

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of the supply with God, **"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue"** (II Peter 1:3). These things are already given. It is incumbent on us to give all diligence to **"add to your faith... virtue... knowledge... temperance... patience... godliness... brotherly kindness... and... charity"** (II Peter 1:5-7). We must not shun responsibility. Let us strive with Paul to say, **"I know.....and am persuaded."**

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 1-1-2004 to 1-31-2004

Beginning Balance	\$2,662.81
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Berea B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary B. C., Everson, WA	200.00
Dividing check	200.00
TOTAL	850.00
TOTAL	3,512.81
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	890.00
Postage	56.05
Dividing check	200.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,146.05
.....	\$2,366.76
Mistake on Bankstatement	+ .04
BALANCE	\$2,662.81

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$2,011.52
RECEIPTS:	
Total	2,011.52
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	200.00
Total Expenditures	200.00
.....	
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,811.52



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 1-1-2004 to 1-31-2004

Beginning Balance	\$4,425.70
RECEIPTS:	
Arthur D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	26.25
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	2,060.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN	150.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL	50.00
Central Ave. B. C., Tampa, FL	25.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	20.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Clarksville, TN	100.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Gerald Price, John City, TN	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace M. B. M., Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	45.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Joseph Jurzec, Lake-in-the-Hills, IL	25.00
L. H. Farrell, Kenner, LA	175.00
Landmark M.B.C., Moncks Corner, SC	25.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	300.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Aztec, NM	25.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	75.00
South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH	150.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Raleigh, NC	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	200.00
Wendel Beall, Cedarville, WV	80.00
Subscriptions	102.00
Dividing checks	250.00
Anon.	198.00
Sub Total	\$5,861.25
TOTAL	\$10,286.95
EXPENDITURES:	
Wages	3,920.00
Printing	518.40
Postage	894.21
Supplies	267.72
FICA taxes	263.11
Dividing checks	250.00
Total Expenditures	6,113.44
.....	4,173.51
Bank charge	-20.58
Mistake on Check 2393	+21.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$4,173.93

Gleanings

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"The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" (Ps. 69:9; John 2:17). Isaiah pictured Him preaching good tidings to the meek, binding up the broken-hearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives, and giving the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (Isa. 61:1-3; Luke 6:16-21). Mourning was turned into joy when Jesus came into the presence of death. The poor woman whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, was loosed at His word. His gospel was indeed the message of good tidings. Isaiah pictured even the sweetest scene of all, the Good Shepherd blessing the little children, for **"he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom"** (Isa. 40:11; Mark 10:16). Then Zechariah sings, **"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion,"** for he sees her lowly King entering Jerusalem, riding on an ass's colt; another Psalm adds the hosannas of the children, **"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger"** (Zech. 9:9; Ps. 8:2; Matt. 21:4).

The prophets foresaw something of the character and extent of the Saviour's work. The light that was to shine forth from Zion was to be for all the world, Jew and Gentile alike were to be blessed. The Spirit of God was to be poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28). **"All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God"** (Isa. 52:10). The picture of a victorious, triumphant Messiah was a familiar one to the Jews of our Saviour's time. So engrossed were they with this side of the picture that they did not recognize Him when He came, and John the Baptist said, **"There standeth One among you, whom ye know not." "Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."** But they ought to have known it, for the prophets who foretold His glory had spoken in no less certain tones of His lowliness, His rejection, and His sufferings. **"Behold,"** says Isaiah, **"my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, and extolled and be very high"** (chap. 52:13)—when suddenly, what does he see in the next verse? **"As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men."** And how shall we picture the astonishment of the prophet as the vision of the fifty-third chapter dawns upon him with all the majesty of the suffering Messiah? From the root of Jesse was to spring up a tender plant who was to be rejected by Israel. **"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"** (Isa. 53:3).

As the prophet's steadfast gaze is fixed upon the future, he sees this Holy One led **"as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a**

sheep dumb before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not his mouth (ver. 7; see Matt. 27:12, 14). He sees Him dying a death by violence, for **"he was cut off out of the land of the living"** (ver. 8). Daniel takes up the same thought and tells us, **"Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself"** (Dan. 9:26). And now once more a chorus of the prophets unite their voices to tell us the manner of His death. The Psalmist sees that He is to be betrayed by one of His own disciples, — **"Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me"** (Ps. 41:9). Zechariah tells us of the thirty pieces of silver that were weighed for His price, and adds that the money was cast to the potter (Zech. 11:12-13, and Matt. 27:3-10). Zechariah also sees the sheep scattered when the Shepherd was smitten (Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:31, 56). Isaiah sees Him taken from one tribunal to another (chap. 53:8); John 18:24, 28). The Psalmist foretells the false witnesses called in to bear witness against Him (Ps. 27:12; Matt. 26:59-60). Isaiah sees Him scourged and spit upon (chap. 1:6; Matt. 26:67, and 27:26-30). The Psalmist sees the actual manner of His death, that it was by crucifixion, **"They pierced my hands and my feet"** (Ps. 22:16). His being reckoned with criminals and making intercession for His murderers were alike foretold (Isa. 53:12; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:34). So clear did the vision of the Psalmist become that he sees Him mocked by the passers-by (Ps. 22:6-8; Matt. 27:39-44). He sees the soldiers parting His garments among them, and casting lots for His vesture (Ps. 22:18; John 19:23-24), and giving Him vinegar to drink in his thirst (Ps. 69:21; John 19:28-29). With quickened ear he hears His cry in the hour of His anguish, **"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"** (Ps. 22:1; Matt. 27:46), and His dying words, **"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"** (Ps. 31:5; Luke 23:46). And, taught by the Holy Ghost, the Psalmist writes the words, **"Reproach hath broken my heart"** (Ps. 69:20). John tells us that though the soldiers brake the legs of the two thieves to hasten their death, "when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers pierced his side, and forthwith came there out

blood and water. . . for these things were done, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again, they shall look on Him whom they pierced" (John 19:32-37; Ex. 12:46; Ps. 34:20; Zech. 12:10). Isaiah tells us that "though they had made his grave with the wicked" — that is, intended to bury Him in the place where they buried malefactors—yet it was ordered otherwise, and He was actually buried **"with the rich in his death."** For **"there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph. . . and begged the body of Jesus. . . and laid it in his own new tomb"** (Isa. 53:9; Matt. 27:57-60).

But the vision of the prophets stretched beyond the cross and the tomb, and embraced the resurrection and ascension and final triumph of the Saviour. David sings: **"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore"** (Ps. 16:10-11). And Isaiah, after he has prophesied the humiliation and death of the Messiah, closes the same prophecy with these remarkable words: **"When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied"** (Isa. 53:10-11).

From the remotest past the saints looked forward to events, which still lie before us in the future. **"Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all"** (Jude 14). The patriarch Job said: **"I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. . . Whom I shall see for myself"** (Job 19:25-27). Zechariah had a vision of the Mount of Olives with the Lord standing there, King over all the earth, and all the saints with Him (Zech. 14:4-9).

And as the prophecies of the past have been fulfilled, so certainly shall also the prophecies of the future. **"Now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus. . . crowned with glory and honour"** (Heb. 2:8-9). And He says, **"Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so,**

come, Lord Jesus."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Berea Baptist Church, Mantachie, MS and Pastor Jeff Short will have special services March 25th & 26th at 7:00 p.m. The guest speaker will be Elder Mark Minney, Perkins, WV.

The Annual Area Fellowship Meeting will be held March 27th, 2004 at the Berea Baptist Church, Mantachie, MS. Services begin at 10:00 a.m. A noon meal will be served at the church. Brother Mark Minney and Brother Doyal Thomas are the scheduled speakers.

The West Griffin Baptist Church of Griffin, GA, and Pastor Jim Walters will have a Bible Conference March 5th thru the 7th.

Speakers scheduled are Elders Sam Wilson, Paul Jackson, Doug Newell III, Doug Newell IV, John Pruitt, Randy Rosbrook, Gordon Buchanan, Walter McCoy, Troy Shepperd, Alan Chance, James Crace, Eldon Joslin, Jeff Short and Todd Bryant.

For more information contact Pastor Walters at 770-412-1575 (home) or 770-228-7545 (church).

The Indore Baptist Church of Indore, WV and Pastor Paul Stepp will be having a Spring Fellowship Meeting. The meeting will take place on Wednesday April 21st thru Saturday April 24th. Service times are 6:30 p.m. Wednesday thru Friday, and at 10 a.m. on Saturday

The Scheduled speakers are Dan Stepp, Carl Barnette, Tom Ross, Tom Hysell, Benjamin Stepp, Billy Holbrook, Mark Minney, and Hank Bailess.

Also the church has a new website: www.indorebaptistchurch.org

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH and Pastor Matt James will be hosting a Bible conference on May 7th and 8th. Services will begin on Friday evening at 6:00 p.m. and 9:30 a.m. on Saturday. The preachers will include Elders Bill Titus, Jerry Asbury, Mark Clark Sr., and Wayne Adams along with some to be announced. For more information contact Pastor Matt James at 614-409-2583 or via email at mattbrandy@sgbaptist.com.

The Landmark Missionary Baptist Church of Granite Bay, CA and Pastor Rick Perdue will be having revival services April 12th through the 18th with Bro. Jeff Short preaching. For more information contact Bro. Perdue at 916-791-7046 or by email at rperdue@jps.net.

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