

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

A Call to Remembrance

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

My text verses are found in II Peter 1:12-13: **"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them; and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."**

It seems that it was Peter's goal, to remind the readers of the Word of God, and of the teachings that are taught in the Word of God. And, if at all possible, Peter would have his readers to always remember and meditate and think upon the Word of God.

These things should be true today. Every pastor and teacher ought to have as one of his primary goals, a desire to remind others about the Word of God; and from time to time some particular teaching found in the Word of God. On the other hand, every child of God; and especially every member of one of the churches of Jesus Christ, ought to have as one of his primary goals a desire to remember the Word of God and what is taught within the bounds of the Word of God.

What I want us to do is to think about what Peter has to say here and to this, especially, about how that remembrance and reminding are inseparable from those that would be obedient to the holy Word of God.

THE WORD OF GOD IS LEARNED GRADUALLY THROUGH REMEMBRANCE AND REMINDING

Though it is not logical, practical, or feasible (nor is it Scriptural), to imagine

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"Be Ye Followers of Me" -or- Following the Pastor

By Timothy J. Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

"I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you, For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (I Cor. 4:14-16).

The Apostle Paul was here writing to the church at Corinth, a church which was started through his missionary labors as he was sent out from the church at Antioch under the Holy Spirit's leadership to go and preach the gospel. Many of the members of the church at Corinth had been saved under the preaching of Paul, which is why he stated unto them, **"For though ye have ten thousand**



instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." In one spiritual sense, they were like children to the apostle

because they had been born again unto a living hope through the labor and travail of the ministry that God had given him. As such, they were near and dear to the apostle's heart. Paul had a God-given love for the saints at Corinth. Every godly pastor has a God-given love for the flock of God over which the Holy Spirit has made him the overseer. His desire is that the Lord's people would grow in

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Meditation, The Forgotten Command

By Nathaniel R. Hille
of Caldwell, Kansas

In the Scriptures the English word 'meditate' is used 14 times, 'meditation' 6 times, & 'muse' is used twice. Although it is mentioned only 22 times in the Bible, it is still of great importance if we are to live as the Lord would have us to. In Joshua's day it was an absolute necessity. The Lord had commanded the Israelites to **"do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest"** (Josh. 1:7). In order to do this they would have to meditate upon the Word of the Lord.

So many Christians are so busy in the world today with things in their lives that they have left off what God has told His people to do. We have cumbered ourselves with so many carnal responsibilities that we have forgotten the commands of the Lord. But be not



deceived, although we are neglectful of the command to meditate, we can be sure that the Lord has not forgotten what He has told us to do.

God told His people to do these things for what purpose? To hurt them, to keep them from having a good time? No, but that by doing them they might **"make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success"** (Josh. 1:8). Satan tells us God's trying to keep us from having fun, but if we listen to the Word of God we shall be happy for we shall be prosperous since we are following the Lord.

God tells His saints to do certain things:

- a) Membership in a New Testament Church

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Can A Member of A Church Dismiss Himself

By Curtis Pugh
of Bocsa, Romania



Lately some preachers and other persons have taken it upon themselves to promote a new doctrine called the Self-Constitution View. This view states that no authority from

a previously existing Baptist Church is required for a new Church to be started. In taking up this position, they have either wittingly or unwittingly necessarily adopted the position that members of a Baptist Church can dismiss themselves and form themselves into a new Church. They must adopt this position because they claim that nothing more than baptism qualifies persons to form themselves into a new Church. They claim that such persons, as long as baptized, have direct authority from Christ in their forming of a new Church simply because they do it.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating – or so goes the saying and we think the principle applies. The result of such a view is anarchy rather than godly order according to the Scriptures. In order to maintain their view, they must say that Church members have the authority to dismiss themselves from the membership of their Church. They are forced to this position and this very thing proves them wrong in their new doctrine.

That these men have the right to adopt such a view is their right, for we cry "soul liberty" even for those whom we believe err and oppose the truth. But these men have delved into Baptist history in an effort to prove their views consistent with historic Baptist practice. Some of them even call their view "historic

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The blessed man is he who is under education in God's school, where he endures chastisement, and by chastisement is instructed. Richard Cecil (1748-1810)

*"For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Prov. 3:12).
"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Heb. 12:7).*

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

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grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; to that end, they are to follow him.

The church at Corinth was a church with many problems. Many were carnal--their thinking was more fleshly than it was spiritual. They judged things based on worldly wisdom rather than using spiritual judgment. Many of the church members at Corinth were babes in Christ--they had not grown up very much spiritually--and as such they lived spiritually weak lives. The church at Corinth had strife and divisions in their midst, rather than spiritual unity, all having the same love one for another, the same desire to serve the Lord, and the same concern for the work of God. One of the ways in which the Corinthians could overcome their problems and be a more spiritually minded people was to follow, or spiritually imitate, the Apostle Paul. He was himself set up as an example or pattern unto them to follow in their walk as children of God.

To many people, the pastor is just a person whom the church hired to get up so many times a week and spout out a sermon. To some, he has been hired to "get the church going". If either of these is the case, then the church has an hireling and not a pastor. Pastors are given by Christ to His churches for their spiritual edification and nourishment. The closer we are to the Lord and the more we know of Him, the more fit we will be to serve Him and bring honor and glory to His name. To that end, Christ "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-12). You who make up the body of Christ known as the Pleasant Plains Baptist Church are to be drawing closer to the Lord every day and seeking to do His will. One aspect of His will is for you to follow your God-given pastor.

The words of Paul, "be ye followers of me," have the meaning of imitating the life of another. Paul was urging the members of the church at Corinth to look at himself as a pattern for their own lives, and to follow that pattern. What right did he have to do this? He had the spiritual right of being like a father to them in Christ. Pastors have the spiritual responsibility of being examples to the members of the churches to whom they minister as stewards of the mysteries of God. (Read I Pet. 5:1-4 and I Tim. 4:12.) The pastor's age, worldly attainments, or gift of oratory matter not at all; what matters is that he conducts himself as an example of holiness, godliness, honesty, and spirituality unto men, women, boys, and girls. As he has this responsibility,

that of being an example, the members of the church have the responsibility of following him, being spiritually imitative of his faith and his life.

Many people watch the pastor, but they do not follow him. They watch for signs of weakness, for personal faults, and for public failings. They announce his wrongdoings with proud rejoicing, but never follow his pattern of life humbly and submissively. The loss is theirs, for they have rejected that which God has given for their good. One of the reasons churches do not prosper spiritually is because they never learn to follow the pastor. They do not think of him as someone they should seek to imitate, as one whose behavior is an example unto them, whom they are to follow (or imitate) as he follows (or imitates) Christ. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). With regard to following the pastor, let us note the manner in which he is to be followed, and then two things specifically that should be followed, his faith and his conversation, or lifestyle.

I. The Manner in Which the Pastor Is to Be Followed.

Paul was warning the Corinthians as a father would his children. A warning was necessary because they were facing grave danger. Whenever a church is not following the right example, they are facing serious danger. The manner in which the church is to follow the pastor is that of being imitative of his example. The Christ-like qualities that he manifests are to be followed. Children are imitators of their parents. They walk, talk, and act much like their parents. By imitating they learn a way of life. (This should prompt parents to a careful examination of the pattern which they are setting for their children.) Children often learn to value what their parents valued, good or bad. They learn to set the same priorities as their parents, use the same language as their parents, and adopt the same way of thinking and rationalizing as their parents. It should be no wonder that many children place so little value on spiritual things in this day in which we are living--they are simply imitating that which they have seen in their parents. The church members at Corinth needed to exercise this child-like behavior in a spiritual sense with regard to the Apostle Paul, and follow him. They needed to follow his pattern of living, his pattern of talking, his pattern of obedience to the will and the Word of God.

(Read Judges 7:15-18.) The pattern for victory that Gideon placed before the army God had given him was thus, "Look on me, and do likewise." This is the manner in which churches are to follow their pastors. The Billy Sundays of the world who preach, "Do as I say, not as I do," aren't worth a dime a dozen! God's people, you follow God's man! What godliness do you see in the man

whom the Lord has placed over you in His work? What virtue and honorable deportment are exemplified in him? Hast thou seen courage in him to obey God amidst opposition, patience in trials, gentleness in dealing with the weak, and love for the brethren? Whatsoever you have seen in him that is Christ-like, that follow.

For many today there is a double standard of Christian living. Certain things are expected or are all right for the pastor, but they would never live in the same way themselves. They do not share the same priorities as the pastor. They do not think they should be expected to live like the pastor lives. Many today see no problem in going to the movie theatre or in bringing the movie theatre into their homes. They see no problem with going to restaurants that serve alcoholic beverages. They see nothing wrong with a woman wearing clothes that pertain to a man, or in either a man or woman dressing immodestly in shorts or revealing clothing. They see nothing wrong with taking their pleasure as the world takes its pleasure. If the pastor lived and talked as they do, it would surely be a scandal; but for them it is all right. These same are those who cannot find time for the services of God, or for reading the Bible, for meeting to have prayer with their fellow church members, or to go across the street and tell someone about the Lord Jesus Christ. "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you."

To what measure is the church to follow the pastor? Just as Paul stated to the church at Corinth, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." To the measure that the pastor follows Christ, he is to be followed. Many churches follow their pastors to the measure that it is convenient. Godly pastors will follow Christ even when it is not convenient, and so church members ought to imitate their behavior. One way to follow the pastor is to be faithful to the house of God, which is His kind of church. Be faithful in attending the services, be faithful in supporting the Lord's work with your tithes and offerings, be faithful in participating in the services, and be faithful in submitting to the Holy Spirit's leadership.

II. Following the Pastor's Faith.

Churches ought to follow their pastors' faith (Heb. 13:7). How many people imitate the pastor's faith? The pastor, if he is a very spiritually minded man and close to the Lord, will have a God-honoring faith. He will believe certain things, have certain convictions, and will evidence a personal dependence upon the true and the living God for all things. Many have no idea what the pastor's faith is because they don't have too much to do with their pastor. They aren't faithfully attentive to his ministry and don't seek

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to fellowship with him. This is a shame, because the pastor's whole life is given to them by God for their spiritual benefit. **“For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's”** (I Cor. 3:21-23). The pastor doesn't have a life that is his; his life has been sacrificed for the sake of Christ and the flock for whom Christ shed His blood.

(Read Acts 20:17-27.) Have you a pastor who believes and declares all the counsel of God? Follow his faith. Have you a pastor whose convictions are Bible-based and who lives not for the things of this world but for the joy and reward of the world to come? Imitate his faith. Be attentive to his teaching, and consider the outcome of his life, which if it be spent for Christ is well spent. If his faith is not worth following, then get a new pastor; but if it is, then follow it and him as he faithfully follows the Lord.

III. Following the Pastor's Conversation.

The godly pastor ought also to be imitated with regard to his manner of life. Church members ought to observe and follow the pattern of living set forth by the pastor in his daily Christian walk. (Read Phil. 3:17-20.) The reason many church members do not live on earth like they are citizens of heaven is because they do not follow the example of those whom God has set before them as spiritual leaders. How does the pastor walk? What does he live for? What type of behavior does he manifest while living in this world? Do you talk as he talks? Do you walk as he walks?

(Read II Thess. 3:4-9.) How did the Apostle Paul live? He had the right to be supported by the churches to whom he ministered, but he worked with his own hands to provide for his needs and the needs of those who were with him. He did not make his own life easy at the expense of others. The pastor isn't responsible for taking care of the carnal needs of the church---mowing the lawn, cleaning the church building, paying the bills, visiting the sick, etc. Yet, he often does these things because he cares about the work of the Lord and because he is setting an example of how church members ought to behave.

(Read Neh. 5:14-16.) Nehemiah made himself an example to the people as their spiritual leader. He did not concern himself with the many worldly affairs of this life, buying land, building an house for himself, obtaining wealth, or living fashionably and in pleasure; rather, he concerned himself with the work to which God had called him. What kind of church would we have if the pastor

had great zeal for the Lord, and the church members followed him in living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world? What would you think if the pastor lived like you live, behaved like you behave, and set the same priorities that you set? **“Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.”**

(Read Matt. 4:18-22.) The greatest privilege that anyone has in life is to follow Christ. You won't follow Him unless He calls you. Is Jesus saying to you today, “Follow me?” There was a day when I heard Jesus saying unto me, “Follow me.” **“When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek”** (Ps. 27:8). If you are saved, will you follow Christ in scriptural baptism and church membership? If you are a church member, will you imitate the pattern of those whom God has set before you as examples of Christ-likeness (Heb. 13:17)?



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that a person can have the whole counsel of God imparted to him in a moment, still, this is exactly what some folks believe. What I am saying is that some folks actually believe that they learned all that they need to know about Jesus Christ, God the Father, and the Word of God, when they were first saved or when some revelation was imparted to them.

However, this is not the method of imparting knowledge that is revealed to us in the Holy Bible. In fact, the Bible makes it plain that instantaneous and complete knowledge of God and His Holy Word is not something that any human being can expect. Actually, the Word of God teaches us that all men must learn and grow in the Word of God in a gradual fashion---primarily through the repetition that is to be found in remembrance and reminding.

We read the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16, **“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the**

perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” These verses make it plain, that a child of God---a Christian---is meant and encouraged to grow and learn in the most holy faith. In fact, a chief ministry of the church (the evangelists, pastors, and teachers), is to perfect (or grow) the understanding of the saints of God. And this is always accomplished in a gradual and ongoing fashion.

Previously, in the first epistle of Peter, Peter had said to his readers, **“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”** (I Pet. 2:2). Here Peter makes a comparison between the newly saved, and the newly born. And according to Peter, just as the newly born in the flesh desire and require the nourishment of milk; even so, the newly saved and newly born again ought to desire---and they certainly require---the sincere milk of the Word of God. And the more we partake of this nourishment---just as an earthly child partaking of his mother's milk---the more we will grow and mature and develop in the spirit. Oftentimes, it is not possible to detect the growth of a baby overnight. But, if a person were to observe that baby one day; and then again a year later; don't you imagine that the growth would be visible and evident? In the same way, the spiritual growth of a child of God ought to be evident---maybe that growth is not evident overnight, but over a period of time there should be very visible and very evident progress and growth in the life of every Christian.

And to make this absolutely plain, consider the words the Apostle Peter uses to close out his second epistle: **“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen”** (II Pet. 3:18). Growth is necessary in the spiritual life of the Christian. And the only way that the growth can be accomplished is through a remembrance and constant reminding in the Word of God.

**THE WORD OF GOD IS KEPT
THROUGH REMEMBRANCE AND
REMINDING**

Some folks imagine that once they have tasted the Word of God, and once they have (supposedly) partaken of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; there is not much else to do. These folks believe that once they know about Jesus Christ, and once they learn some few basic teachings of the Scripture, they can be faithful servants to God, and they don't have to study anymore, and they don't have to be reminded anymore. In fact, a lot of so-called Christians today falsely believe that they don't even have to come to church services or Bible studies in order to remember the Word of God, or to be reminded of the Word of God. It is a sad thing to witness all of those that pretend to be saved, live their lives supposing that they can faithfully serve God without ever remembering His Word, and without ever showing up somewhere so they can be reminded of the Word of God!

In the second epistle to Timothy, we read the familiar words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy: **“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”** (II Tim. 3:14-17). When Paul wrote to his son in the faith, Timothy, who was also a pastor of a church, he made sure to remind him of the need of the Word of God in the realm of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. It is imperative that every child of God should have the Word of God always before him. The Word of God is the means by which we can obey God, and fulfill our duties and responsibilities to Him. After all, where else would we turn to find out these things? I mean, where else can we turn, or what other book can we open, wherein we might find such good and godly knowledge and teachings and instructions, than in the very Word of God? And where else can we hear and see the Word of God being taught in the most beneficial way, than in the church of Jesus Christ?

Do you want to keep the precepts and the will of God that are displayed in the Word of God? Do you want to constantly contend for the beautiful and lovely words of God that are recorded for us in the Bible? Well, let me briefly give you two methods which you must adhere to, if you have this desire in your heart to keep and to fulfill the Word of God.

Study the Word of God in Private. It is
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our duty as the children of God, to seek to grow in the most holy faith, and to seek to grow in the knowledge of the Holy Word of God. A prescribed means of fulfilling this duty is to spend much time studying the Word of God. This study of God's Word ought to be something that consumes some portion of our daily lives. I know that many of us---me included---will often fall far short of this charge. But, this should be our goal. And I believe that if we will submit to the will of God and to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we will be successful in sustaining a continued commitment to this duty.

Again, consider what the Apostle Paul had to say to Timothy: **"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee"** (I Tim. 4:13-16). Of course, in the next epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul would tell Timothy, **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Tim. 2:15). When we examine these Scriptures which we have just read, we can draw some very obvious conclusions.

First, it is necessary, for even ministers of God, to **"give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."** This tells me that all of the children of God, even those that seem to be the most understanding in the things of God, need to continually study and grow in the Word of God.

Second, it seems apparent that all of the children of God, even (especially?) the ministers of God, need to **"meditate upon these things"** (the Word of God and the doctrine of God). If we want to be faithful in our service to the Lord, then we need to meditate upon God's Word, and constantly have it before us and in our minds, and upon our hearts. When we do so, our **"profiting"** in the service of God will **"appear to all."**

Third, we are even told here that a good foundation in the Word of God, and a proper dedication to its study and meditation upon it, and if we will **"continue in"** the Word of God, will work a miracle in us, and in those that hear us. In fact, the Apostle Paul told Timothy, that if he did these things, **". . . thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."** I believe that the Word of God is the power of God unto salvation. And, a soul cannot be saved apart from a knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ---that, of course, is given to him through the Word

of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit. However, I believe that when we study the Word of God, and remember it, and are reminded of it, it is also true that we will be saved from the sin and temptations which so many others are sometimes caught up in. As we preach, teach, and live out the Word of God, others will behold us, and hear us, and follow us, and we will be the tools by which they, too, are saved.

Worship in the Church in Public. The second method which must be utilized is not so familiar to the world, and is hardly ever adhered to by even many of the truly saved saints of God. What I am speaking of is a rigid and devoted desire to faithfully attend the services of God, as they are conducted in the public worship services of the churches of Jesus Christ. So many folks today believe that they can serve the Lord just as well on their own, in private, or assembled someplace together without proper authority. However, I believe the Word of God is plain, in directing the children of God into the church of God, so that they can properly serve the Lord---and so that they can properly grow in the Word of God. You see, the church serves as the best reminder that the child of God can have, of what things are contained in the Holy Scriptures. It is in the church that we are encouraged, edified, and motivated in the Word of God. Then, after these things have taken place, we are better fitted to consider these things, and study these things on our own time and in our own places.

In fact, one of the major benefits of being in the church of God is so that we can gather together with the saints of God, and be reminded about the things that are taught in the Word of God. We read in Hebrews 10:23-25, **"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."** When we gather together as churches of Jesus Christ, we have opportunity to **"provoke unto love and to good works"** and we have opportunity to exhort **"one another."** How do we provoke and exhort one another? I believe we do so through the use of God's Word. We study it at home, and then we gather together to hear it preached and taught. As we fellowship with one another we have opportunity to exhort one another and provoke one another **"unto love and to good works."**

So many so-called Christians today, have utterly (or nearly completely) and completely forsaken the house of God. However, in the church of Jesus Christ, we are reminded of the Word of God, and it is there that the Word of God is called to remembrance. Perhaps sometimes the preacher or the teacher might think that

he is being repetitious; or, perhaps the preacher or the teacher might think that his subject, or his material, or his verses of Scripture which he is dwelling on are things that are already too familiar to his listeners. But, as one who has sat in the audience, and as one that has delivered the "all-too familiar" message, let me tell you that repetition and reminders and remembrance are all a part of growing in the Word of God. In fact, a weekly, and a daily call to remembrance is necessary, if we are to be adequately familiar with the Word of God, and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of God.

NOT ALL HAVE THE WORD OF GOD, SO WE OUGHT TO REMEMBER IT AND VALUE IT

In the world today, the Word of God is not esteemed very highly. In fact, much of the societies of man, and the intellectuals of mankind, put forth a lot of effort to tear down the Word of God, and in seeking to disprove the things that are taught in the Word of God. This attitude of the world has even crept into the world of Christianity. This attitude has become so very prevalent that many aspects of Christianity will go so far as to teach that the Word of God is not perfect; or that there are other revelations which must also be included in the Word of God; or that the teachings and traditions of men (or of some church or denomination) are just as important (or more important) than the Word of God.

Sometimes even in our own experiences with so-called Christianity, when we speak to other folks about the Lord and about the Word of God, we will meet people that claim to be saved, but who really have very little or no knowledge of the Word of God. They cannot call to mind even some of the most familiar passages. When we mention to them some very common Bible Scriptures, they seem to not even recognize them---and they certainly do not have any deeper understanding of these famous and familiar Scriptures. I think the Apostle Peter would find fault with such "Christians." I believe that every one of the Apostles, and all of the other men that penned the New Testament, expected that the Scriptures, including the Old Testament, were very important, and deserved the utmost scrutiny at the hands (and in the hearts and minds) of those that followed Christ. When the Lord made Joshua the leader and the ruler of the people of Israel, He told him, **"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success"** (Josh. 1:8). And in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ said to those that believed on Him, **". . . If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth**

shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). It is incumbent upon us that we would not just begin in the Word of God, but that we would **"continue in"** the Word of God. When we read about the Bereans that heard the Word of God preached at the mouth of the Apostle Paul, we read this: **"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"** (Acts 17:11).

So, when we remember the Word of God, and when we remind others about the it, then we are proving to ourselves and to the world that the Word of God is important, and that we place a high value on the it. Remember, the Word of God was worthy enough that men and women in the past have lived and died for it. I mean to say, that men and women in the past have lived to contend for the Word of God and they have died in order to preserve that precious Word.

I believe it is right and proper that you and I today should always have the Word of God present in our minds and "on the tip of our tongues" (so to speak). Peter, in his first epistle, had told his readers, **"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"** (I Pet. 3:15). How can we, as the children of God, and as the witnesses of Jesus Christ, be **"ready always to give an answer to every man"** if, first of all, the preachers and teachers don't bring these things to our remembrance by reminding us; and second of all, if we ourselves do not dwell on these things, and meditate on these things, so that they are etched into our memories?

CONCLUSION

Learning the Word of God; keeping the Word of God; and valuing the Word of God; are all very important and integral parts of serving the Lord Jesus Christ. And if nothing else, I hope that at least this article will bring all of these things to our remembrance. And that is what this article has been about---A Call to Remembrance---especially when it comes to the Word of God.

Let me close by noting a fourth appearance of this very thought, as it is presented to us by Peter in his second epistle: **"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour"** (II Pet. 3:1-2). If you want your "minds" to be "pure" then remember the Word of God. If you want to be profitable in your service to God, then **"be mindful"** of the words of the Holy Scriptures.



Can A Church Member

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Landmarkism." We think this a travesty of the truth.

I wish to submit quotes from three Baptists of the past that I believe prove conclusively that it is not within the power of a Church member to dismiss himself or herself from the membership of his or her Church. These are the words of respected Baptists who wrote long ago and without knowledge of the present departure from the truth. These quotes will prove that our position is the historic Landmark one, not those who oppose us on this matter. These quotes will prove that the action (vote) of a Church is necessary in order to dismiss members for whatever reason and was viewed so by mainline, historic Baptists of years gone by.

J.E. Cobb in his "BAPTIST CHURCH MANUAL" states on pages 43 and following that there are ONLY 3 ways for a person to cease being a member of a Baptist Church. They are: "By Death," "By Exclusion or Erasure," or "By Letter." Simply stated and to the point, Cobb does not allow for self-dismissal!

While we do not necessarily agree in every point with Hiscox we call your attention to the following quotes, especially those emphasized by underlining. Edward T. Hiscox in his "The New Directory for Baptist Churches," originally published in 1859, Chapter 3, writes as follows: "It is sometimes said that a Church is a voluntary society. This is true in a sense, and only with an explanation. It is true in that no external force or authority can compel the relation of membership to be forced, or dissolved. The Church can compel no one to unite with it, nor can the individual oblige the body to receive him. But it is not true that it is a matter merely optional and indifferent whether or not a believer identifies himself with the House-hold of Faith. He is under moral obligation to do that. It is for his own spiritual good to do it; it is one of the appointed means of grace; the Church needs his presence and influence, and the cause of Truth is furthered by a combination of Christian influence and effort. All are under law to Christ, and are bound by sacred obligations to obey and please Him. He has ordained that His followers should associate themselves together in these brotherhood of faith and affection. A Church, therefore, is more than a voluntary society: it is a society under law to Christ. Church membership, therefore, becomes a question of grave moment, and should be carefully studied and well understood." (Emphasis added.)

Further, Hiscox states in his section: "III. MODES OF DISMISSION" these words: "Church membership is held

to be of perpetual obligation. What has been elsewhere said as to its voluntary character will apply to the dissolving as well as to the forming of this relation. No human authority can hold one in the Church, who resolves to go out of it. The Church is more than a mere confederation of men and women; it is "the body of Christ," where each one, "is a member in particular." Each one who unites with it does so, presumably, not as a mere matter of convenience, or personal caprice, but from a sense of religious obligation. Voluntarily and of choice indeed, yet still doing it, "as unto the Lord." When he becomes a member therefore, it is for life, unless some providential interposition should break the bonds. Baptists hold that Christians should not live outside the fold of the Good Shepherd, but within the shelter of its fellowship; unless, indeed, they become unworthy the position, and have to be "put away."

Provision is, however, made for a transference of membership from one Church to another. There are three ways, by either of which the relation of members to the body may be dissolved:

1. **By Letter** – A member may, on application, receive a letter of commendation and dismissal from his Church, with which to unite with another of the same faith, and thus, not pass out of Church relations, but be transferred from one fellowship to another.

2. **By Exclusion** – When the Church, in the exercise of its lawful authority and discipline, withdraws fellowship from one proven to be an unworthy member, his connection with the body is dissolved and thenceforth ceases.

3. **By Death** – The death of members of course dissolves the relation, and transfers them from the Church on earth, to that above.

No other modes of dismissal or disconnection are recognized among our churches.

Note 1.– It is customary for the validity of letters to be limited to some specified time – usually six months – after the expiration of which time they are worthless; but may be renewed, if satisfactory reason be given the Church for their non-use.

Note 2. – The one receiving a letter is still a member and subject to the authority and discipline of the Church granting it, until he has used it by actually connecting himself with another Church.

Note 3. – Letters thus given can be revoked, for cause, by the Church at its discretion, any time previous to their being used.

Note 4. – Any member in good standing has the right at any time to ask for, and receive from the Church a certificate of his membership and standing; but subjects himself to

discipline if he use it for any improper purpose.

Note 5.– Letters cannot properly be given to be used in uniting with a Church of another denomination. It would be manifestly inconsistent for a Church to commend and dismiss its members to unite with those with whom it did not hold Church fellowship.

Note 6.– When a member unites with a Church of another denomination, the hand of fellowship is withdrawn from him, though otherwise of good Christian character, and though he may have acted conscientiously in what he had done. This act implies no censure; but since his Church is not in fellowship with that to which he has gone, they cannot consistently continue fellowship with him in that Church.

Note 7. – No member can withdraw from the Church. He must be regularly dismissed by the action of the body. Nor can one have his name dropped, or be excluded at his own request. Such action, if taken at all, must be taken by due process of discipline on the part of the Church.

Note 8.– Nor can the Church compel a member to take a letter and withdraw, without his consent. This would be a virtual exclusion from its fellowship; in order to which, due course of discipline must be pursued, on charges made, and for sufficient reasons.

Note 9.– When members remove their residence so far as to render worship with their Church impracticable, they should take letters, and unite where they go. Their churches should require this of them, if at all practicable. The too common practice of holding membership in one Church, and worshipping in another deserves severe reproof.

Note 10. – In voting on the reception, dismissal, discipline or exclusion of members, several cases should not be included in the same vote, but each one be acted on separately, and decided on its own merits.

Note 11.– *The dropping of members is merely placing on a separate list the names of those of whom the Church has lost all knowledge. They are neither dismissed, nor reported as members; and whenever found, their names are restored to the record. No one can be dropped as an act of discipline, nor when his residence is known, nor simply to get rid of a disturbing element.*

Norm 12.– Persons excluded from one Church should not be received to the fellowship of another, except after careful investigation, and when most manifest injustice has been done such members; and also when the excluding Church refuses to correct the wrong done. Yet cases may, and do occur, where it is the duty of one Church to bear this testimony against the wrong done by another, and receive the unjustly excluded member to its fellowship.

Note 13.– Sometimes a letter of

simple commendation, or occasional communion, is given to a member who is to be temporarily absent from home, for the purpose of affording him Christian introduction where he may visit, or worship during his absence. This may be given by the pastor, or clerk, or by the action of the Church, and should be limited to the time of his probable absence.

Note 14.– The conception of a perfect Christian brotherhood is not to be realized on earth. Many defects and faults may be expected, both in the individual, and in the body. The member may think the Church little better than the world; and the Church may regard the member as a burden rather than a blessing, and wish to be rid of him. But those who are truly Christ's, "have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts," and must "bear one another's burdens," and take no unlawful or unkindly means to break the bonds of their fellowship, and sever their connection." (Emphasis added.)

It is more than obvious that Hiscox, whose New Directory was and continues to be used by many Baptist Churches as a guide, left no room for members to dismiss themselves from the membership of a Church for any reason! Church action is necessary. Historic Baptists have never believed that baptized persons can dismiss themselves from a Church! Whatever the Self-Constitution or Direct Authority advocates may write and say, they cannot prove from history that Baptists ever believed it right and proper for a member to dismiss himself from a Church!

One more quote, even more ancient, is cited to show the historic Baptist view. This one from Balthasar Hubmaier, (c. 1480 – March 10, 1528), who wrote: "Where baptism in water does not exist, there is no Church, no brother, no sister, no fraternal discipline, exclusion or restoration... By receiving baptism the candidate testifies publicly that... he has submitted himself to his brothers and sisters... that is, to the Church" (Estep, William, *The Anabaptist Story*, Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1986), p. 60. (Emphasis added.)

Thus, by becoming members of a Baptist Church, persons have submitted themselves to the Church. The consistent historical view is that they cannot dismiss themselves from membership in a Baptist Church. Even though those with new light on how Churches are started (Self-Constitution or Direct Authority) may espouse their doctrine, it has a fatal flaw. It demands that no Church action be taken and that members may dismiss themselves from membership in a Church and then they may form themselves into a new Church. This cannot happen according to historic, mainline Baptists.

The fruit of the new "Self-
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Constitution view” sometimes called the “Direct Authority view” is anarchy! It says that any baptized persons can form themselves into a Church apart from letter(s) of commendation/dismission. Baptists of the past would not have allowed this view a moment’s notice and today’s Baptists ought not to do so either.



Meditation

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- a. Attend her worship services
- b. Faithfully support the Work of God
- b) Study the Bible & Pray
- c) Live Holy lives & witness to others

Satan begins to chip away at one. He starts with one and then moves on to the next. The Devil says, “It’s ok not to meditate, pray, study your Bible.” So we put it off and soon we put off another one and then we show others and our children that it is okay not to do what God says. No wonder the next generation is worse than the one before it. They are not being taught the commands of the Lord.

I know that we have many responsibilities in our lives today, but we must not leave off this spiritual necessity of meditation to accomplish fleshly desires and not seek the Kingdom of God. Matthew Henry stated, “That to be full of business all day will excuse no man from secret devotion.”

Some say that they do not know enough Scriptures to meditate; therefore they cannot do it. My friend, it is you who need to muse the most. Thinking upon God’s Word will give you greater knowledge of it, greater love of it. Why, you’ll be a master of this spiritual weapon of God when you meditate.

I am told that in the Orient, those who trained to be samurais studied for years before they were considered to be master of their trade. So, too, must we go into deep thought and study concerning our spiritual weapons for we must be prepared to fight the Spiritual warfare with a weapon that is not carnal (II Cor. 10:4). I read of one who stated “I must have three hours of prayer today at least, or else I cannot get through my business.” Why, to some of us that seems excessive, but to me it shows how far short I have come of fulfilling the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ. No wonder the saints of God have not prospered in our day as they have in times past. There is a lack of preparation in meditation and prayer. As a soldier of the Lord we must study, focus, and always prepare to use the

Sword of the Spirit skillfully (I Pet. 3:15; Prov. 15:28).

REMARKS ON MUSING:

“The world has put a little letter before the word “musing,” and these are the days, not for musing, but for a-musing. People will go anywhere for amusement; but to muse is a strange thing to them, and they think it dull and wearisome” C.H. Spurgeon. And when they bid us to go with them and we refuse, they think it strange that we follow them not (I Pet. 4:4). God gives us time for musing and we drag it off to execution in a moment, seeking the help and advice of men as how we may kill it. All those who say they do not have time to meditate would be surprised to find that they do meditate. The only problem is they think upon things of a low nature and of sinful desires instead of the grandest, highest, noblest of subjects—The Word of God.

Meditation is the fetching of the nutrient out of the truth. When food is placed on our table it does us no good till we eat it. And when it is eaten, it will not do the greatest good to our body except it be digested. So, too, is it with the Word of the Lord. That the hearing of it will do us no good except we believe it (this is the eating of the Word of the Lord (John 6:40, 47, 51, 53-58). And the believing of the Word of the Lord will not benefit us as much if we do not meditate upon it and get the spiritual vitamins and nutrients we stand in need of. As the cattle do chew the cud, so ought we to ruminate upon the Word of the Lord, if we are to grow in grace and knowledge of the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ (II Pet. 3:18).

Meditation fixes truth upon our memories. We say that our memories are bad, but the real reason we know not the Scriptures is lack of meditation upon them. It would be better if we would acknowledge ourselves as the problem and not our memory. When an angler goes out to fish and sees a great fish in the stream he does cast forth his fly toward the fish. The fly soon finds itself hooked in the jaws of the fish, but what now? The angler must work the fish till he grows tired, lest the line breaks and the fish gets away. The angler does not consider the fish caught till he gets the fish into the landing net. And so it is hearing the sermon, which puts the fly into the “fish’s mouth”; but it is meditation that is the landing net; it is meditation that gets the fish to shore, and it is meditation that fixes the truth upon our hearts so that we will not lose it.

The Word of God is as a bird that does fly away at the shooing of Satan and is scared away by the clapping of the world’s hands. But it is meditation that doth clip the wings of God’s Word so that we may keep it surrounded in a net that it might not escape.

Meditation is the hammer that knocks down the massive wall that

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stands between your perspicacity of a teaching of Christ and the mystery of which you seek. Though there be a truth of which you do not know, yet it is by prayer, supplication, and meditation that thou shalt be able to claim it as your own. Musing comes and strikes the wall one blow at a time until at last our diligence is rewarded, and we see the whole mass of masonry (which is nothing but false doctrines and traditions of men) come tumbling down and we are able to behold the truth of which we sought.

This leads us to another wonderful blessing of meditation...the joy of meditation. Who is not thrilled, full of joy when they come upon a treasure of which they have been seeking? So to be the saint of God who looks into some deep mystery of God’s Word and upon finding the treasure and opening the chest he or she is able to exclaim with great thanksgiving unto the Lord, “I have it.” What joy there is when one does find that which they have labored to find for so long! The joy shall be worth the time spent in deep thought upon the subject you stand in need of knowing. For the time spent in private musing in close fellowship with God is never time wasted. The world believes us to be idle during times of meditation, but sometimes to be idle is to be very busy. It is the world that is idle, though they are cumbered about with many works; for all that the world does is vain (Eccl. 1:14).

The Scriptures speak of the wicked who roll wickedness under their tongue as a sweet morsel (Job 20:12, 13). The saints of God are to do this with each doctrinal teaching of Christ we take in. As a morsel of chocolate is sweet in our mouths so is the Word of God. Only by keeping the morsel of chocolate in our mouth for a long time are we able to taste its sweetness. So, too, can we continue to taste the sweetness of God’s Word, by keeping it in our mouths, drawing out all the wonderful tastes through meditation.

Though meditation be hard at first, for meditation on the Holy Scriptures goes against our old man it, will become easier each time. It is the same with lighting a fire. The first time it may prove to be difficult, but once the fire is raging you can throw on more coals and the fire will burn. So, too, will our hearts once we

have begun to meditate. Each Sunday we will be supplied with a new coal to throw on the fire. If our fire is still lit from the previous sermon then meditation shall be easy, but if we have let it go out, oh how the fires of musing shall be hard to start again. Let the flames of musing rage forth within thy heart; for the heart will be set on fire by the Word of God and then we shall burn within our hearts and souls. Such a child of God as this will never have a heart that grows cold towards the things of God.

SOME FUEL FOR THE FIRE OF MEDITATION

Many declare that they have nothing to think upon. They be fools, for Jehovah has given us ample supply of which we are to render our thoughts unto. Shame be cast upon the Christians’ head who thinks that he or she has nothing to think upon for a plethora of topics are found in His Word. For the Heavenly Father has supplied an ocean to swim in, a well that will never run dry, when we seek to meditate upon His Word.

First off, let it be known that this fuel will be of no use to our musing unless it is applied; as kerosene in a canister cannot help a fire, save it be poured on the dying embers.

God’s Eternal Love—(Jeremiah 31:3) It is love without beginning and one that never, never ceases. When there was not day, but the Ancient of Days, thou O child of God, thou were loved. When the earth has been burnt up in fervent heat, even then you will be loved of God.

Doctrine of Election—What thoughts can come forth from thinking upon the salvation we received at the hand of God’s own choosing! Though we deserved it not, were without merit, were unworthy of His great love wherewith He loved us; He was still willing to elect us unto salvation in His dear Son (I Pet. 1:2; I Thes. 1:4).

Muse upon all the blessings that flow from the doctrine of election unto us and you will be full of topics.

Dying Love—The Savior dying for thee on the tree of the Cross. Think upon all that He gave for thee, that thou might be saved (Phil. 2:5-8). Give this the first place, chief place, the preeminent place in your meditation. “**I have set the Lord always before me**” (Ps. 16:8) would be a

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good motto for the believer.

Death—Yes, we should meditate upon death. If we do, then perhaps we will fly more swiftly to the tasks our Master has bid us to do. If we thought more of the nearness of eternity, when all work shall cease, then we would dig up our talents from the ground and seek to earn more for Jesus our Savior and Lord (Matt. 25:14-30).

Heaven—Think of that eternal abode that all who are under the blood of Jesus shall have a mansion in. Think of whether or not you shall hear **“Well done, thou good and faithful servant”** (Matt. 25:21) upon your arrival. Muse upon the songs and worship of the Lamb that was slain, which shall take place in Heaven (Rev. 5:11-14).

Hell—Think upon the Hell that you have escaped through the blood of Jesus. Meditate upon it with gratitude for you have surely escaped the fire of it (Heb. 3:2). Think of that place of doom into which multitudes are going everyday and if this does not move you to speak to them of their doom then I know not what will. It is of a truth that if God has chosen a person unto salvation then they shall be saved. But know also how that He does send us forward into battle to preach the gospel that others might be translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light by faith. Believe ye in Hell and eternal wrath and yet weep not for sinners; no wonder few be saved today.

Oh, Christian, I have given you ample topics to meditate upon. But know that there are more than I have listed here. But these be written that they might get you going and if you should ever stall or the fire begin to die out, then look to Jesus for more or add these kindly to the fire once more, for you shall never burn them up completely. I pray that all of God's people would give themselves wholly unto meditation (I Tim. 4:15) so that His churches would not be cold hearted. Pastors, or under shepherds whom God has made overseers of His flock would not have to stir those up not liberal in giving, in earnestness, or in service if they would but muse much, for in meditation the fire will burn within and they will be made willing.

AN ADDRESS TO THE UNSAVED

My dear reader, if you be numbered among the ranks of the lost, it would behoove you to take up the art of musing and put off the “a-musement” of this world. Meditate upon your present condition: “...dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). For as you are now, the wrath of God abides on you. Do not make light of the wrath of God nor the fiery torments of Hell, for one has gone before you and we have his words of warning

given unto us (Luke 16:19-31). The rich man sought for comfort, but he found none. He sought for one to be sent to his brothers. You are in the condition the rich man was, but you have now been warned to “flee from the wrath to come” (Luke 3:7). He found it no blessing to be in Hell, but rather a place of torment. He sought not for his brothers to join him and so, too, does he warn you for you are a brother of his by sorts; you are both brothers in sin just as the saints are brothers in Christ. **“Son Remember”** will be said to you. The wasted years to repent, the mercy you shunned, the God you rejected, all the invitations to Christ and messages preached shall come before you in Hell and you shall say, “Why did I not believe?”

Perhaps he, she, or I who has given you this exhortation has thought more of your own soul than you have. We plead with you to examine yourself and see what you state may be (II Cor. 13:5). And when you have thought over who you are, think of what your end will be if you continue upon this course. Count the cost of your unbelief. Think ye able to abide in the flames and everlasting burnings? I know that thou canst. For it is God that cometh to tare you into pieces. What will you do when Christ Jesus comes forth donned as the Man of War to take vengeance upon your iniquities? It is upon these things that thou should meditate. For by doing so thy heart may melt, tears of repentance may flow as rivers out of thine eyes as you call upon Jesus, **“Oh LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul”** (Psa. 116:4).

To those who falsely believe that Christ Jesus died for all...how more wrongly you could not be. For Jesus did not die for everyone. Some of you will have no lot or part in His blood and thou cannot be saved any other way. If you die without faith in Him, then that cleansing blood cannot cleanse you; cannot make atonement for your sins. But do not stumble at this thought. Sit thyself down at the foot of the cross and hear what He saith unto you, **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”** (John 6:37). If you will but come to Him repenting of thy sins, putting your faith in the work of Christ upon Calvary, asking for forgiveness because of His mercy, then thou shalt surely have it.

“But I do not know how to obtain faith:” one proclaims. Faith is the gift of God! It usually comes by meditating much upon Christ Jesus. **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”** (Rom. 10:17). Hearing begets meditation; and while we are meditating upon the great and marvelous story of the Savior the Holy Spirit miraculously performs His work and wrings faith within our hearts.

Muse upon these things for the ways of the world are not as fair and pleasant

as thou thinkest. For they leave an aching void and there is much emptiness, but Jesus is the Satisfying Savior who will leave no void in your heart or life.

EXPOSITION ON “MEDITATION” IN THE SCRIPTURES:

The Hebrew and Greek word for “Meditate” is used 14 times, “meditation” 6 times, and “muse” is used twice in the Holy Scriptures.

1) Genesis 24:62, 63—Isaac leaves the well of Lahai-roi (the well of him that liveth and seeth me) and went into the field to muse. It is God Who lives and sees us as He did Isaac. Let us meditate upon this thought that all we do is known unto the God of Heaven and earth and this may cause us to act righteously in all things (Heb. 4:13).

2) Joshua 1:8—Meditating upon the Word of the Lord will help us to live by it. It is then that our way will be made prosperous. Though you think your way is prosperous, how much more could it be if you would follow the advice and commands of the Lord?

3) Psalm 1:1-3—Speaks of one who meditates in God's law day and night (Ps. 63:6; 119:97). This speaks of constant meditation. As he was a child of a high calling, yea the highest calling, he would not lower his thoughts, but set them upon the highest, the Word of God. The Bible is our ONLY AUTHORITATIVE revelation of the mind and will of God. Therein we have the only guide through life to immortality. While other books may inform the mind, the Bible still retains its supremacy as the book we are to use to regulate the life.

He is “in” the law with all his affection and with unceasing thought. The law solicits, commands, and absorbs him and rules the world of thought, affection and imagination.

“But his delight is in the Law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” Therefore:

Whatsoever a man meditates upon,

Is what he delights in.

Whatsoever a man delights in,

He doth meditate upon.

Andrew Fuller stated upon the topic of meditation: “...and as to my own thoughts (that God gives me), though they may not be superior nor equal to those of others, in themselves considered; yet if they be just, their having been the results of pleasing toil, renders them of superior value to me.”

4) Psalm 5:1—The psalmist desires the Lord to accompany him in meditation. For while one muses they need the Lord to direct their thoughts on His Word so that they are without error. He requests the attention of Jehovah to consider his earnest meditation. That it is righteous and not as the musing of the wicked. This is well pleasing unto the Lord (Phil. 4:8).

5) Psalm 19:14—God does not always accept or approve of the

meditation of many. Beloved, musing is done in the heart. Musing will help us keep the heart pure (for out of the heart are the issues of life [Prov. 4:23]). And only a pure heart is acceptable to the Lord.

6) Psalm 49:3—He will set his heart to understand through meditation. How else can one learn but by studying? There is no greater subject to study than that, which is given to us by God.

7) Psalm 63:5, 6—Joy comes in our hearts, we are greatly satisfied and praise is rendered to God when one meditates upon the Lord. Many are not satisfied or praising God for lack of meditation.

8) Psalm 77:12—1st comes meditation. 2nd comes testifying. Few tell others of Christ because they have not thought upon all He is and has done for them. Therefore they know not Christ as their Savior or they have not trained themselves for the good fight of faith.

9) Psalm 104:34—Meditation upon the Lord causes one to be glad because of what He has done for the believer. It is sweet, not bittersweet, but pure sweetness to muse upon the Savior.

10) Psalm 119:9, 15—Verse 15 is part of the answer to the question posed in verse 9. Musing upon His precepts leads us to have respect unto His ways. For without meditation we will not respect the ways of God, and we will substitute our own ways, which will in turn defile and not cleanse our ways. Meditation will examine ourselves and upon finding an idol or fault we can cast it out and be made white as snow (Ps. 51:7).

11) Psalm 119:23—Give no heed to the slander of princes or others, but be busy about thy Master's business.

12) Psalm 119:48—In times of reproach we are to meditate upon the statutes of the Lord so that we do not foolishly turn away from the Lord because of oppression.

13) Psalm 119:78—We are not to deal with our enemies as they deal with us, but we are to pray for them that despitefully use us (Matt. 5:44). We will be able to do what God would have us to do no matter how dire the situation, if we muse upon His precepts.

14) Psalm 119:97—That which we love, should we give ourselves wholly unto. Verily are the saints to love the written Word of the Lord.

15) Psalm 119:99—Pursuit of earthly knowledge is good, but limited in profitableness. Knowledge of God's Word is profitable in all things (I Tim. 4:8). The student shall become greater than his teacher if he will meditate on a purer, higher, nobler truth.

16) Psalm 119:148—The psalmist would anticipate and look forward to the times of meditation. He would arise in the night to meditate upon the Lord. Surely his sleep was much sweeter due to

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Meditation

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godly musing, for he made greater use of his time by meditating than sleeping. The psalmist preferred study to slumber. Are we not commanded to watch and pray (Matt. 26:40, 41) as well as meditate?

17) Psalm 143:5—To meditate on the works of God and to muse on the works of His hand will always remind us of how we are and that without God we would not have salvation.

18) Isaiah 33:18—When we are delivered we shall look back or meditate upon the terror of the enemy that behold us and obliged us to call upon the Lord. It was at the coming of the Lord to deliver us that the enemy did flee. Hallelujahs be unto the Lord for His saving power.

19) Luke 3:15—The people thought of the prophecy of the Christ and wondered if John was Him or not. Oh that people today would muse upon the prophecies of old so that they might flee from their idolatrous beliefs and come to the Anointed One, Christ Jesus.

20) Luke 21:12-15—Cf. Matt. 10:19, 20—Many ministers take this verse out of context believing that they do not have to study for a sermon, saying that God shall fill their mouths on Sunday morning. And so He shall, but with dead air, for he has not prepared himself to preach the Word of God. This verse is for martyrs and those who are persecuted; not preachers.

21) I Timothy 4:15—In meditation we are studying God's thoughts. Thus meditation requires time and insight on our part. Let us who are ministers and pastors lead the people of the Lord in the practice of meditation.

"Meditate upon these things;"—Do not meditate upon wickedness or sins you have committed for there is no edification in this; but muse on the Word of God so that you may be exhorted, given to reading and the doctrinal teachings of

Christ.

"Meditate upon these things;"—"things" is written in plural form. We will never run out of something to meditate upon. The Lord always gives a sufficient supply for meditation.

This is the fault of our age—it does not meditate upon the thoughts of God. As soon as we come upon some mental difficulty we are apt to fly off to some tangent. We are so impatient with the door key that we injure the lock by our tenacity. We are so concerned about getting to our destination that we do not bother to see, that by hurrying by we pass the point we seek. Many of the sins we have committed could and should have been avoided if we would have simply meditated upon the will of the Lord.

CONCLUSION

We have been called by the Lord to meditate, but not just to meditate on anything. It was a specific command to meditate upon His Word, His law (Josh. 1:7, 8). Oh, how far we have gone from the way of the Lord. Some will say that it is not a big deal to leave off meditating. But the Scriptures say, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Musing is a command of the Lord and if we love the Lord we will keep His commandments (John 14:15). Remember also, that meditation is merely thoughts that ought to be put into action the next day.

Meditation is simply the thinking upon the acts and words of the Lord. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

Let us attain unto the mind of Christ by meditation (Phil. 2:5).



new nature, and the perseverance of the saints. They do not try to understand these truths nor teach them to their people. They set them aside for their own ideas and suppositions.

Arminian theologians are a product of the limited teachings which are presented in their schools from generation to generation. The deeper realities of the Word of God are unknown to them. Never have they come to see how God saves a man by pure grace without any human merit whatsoever. To truly know the doctrines of grace is to embrace them. Apostasy teaches fight salvation by free grace because they are strangers to the God of all grace.

The Arminian denies original sin. He believes that all men by virtue of common grace can act without supernatural help in obtaining his own salvation. Over against this deification of man the Scriptures teach that man is totally depraved. Romans 3:10 reads: "There is none righteous, no, not one." The Scripture declares God to be man's Savior: "I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour" (Isa. 43:11). Jonah 2:9 says: "Salvation is of the LORD." Of Christ it is said in Matthew 1:21: "He shall save his people from their sins."

The apostasy teacher believes salvation is a matter of God foreknowing that man would believe and do good works. The Scriptures teach that certain men believe and do good works because they are elected by God (Eph. 1-2). The Arminian cannot comprehend the Divine plan by which, apart from all features of human merit, sinners are elected in past ages without respect of future worthiness, saved at the present time by faith alone, and kept to eternal ages to come through the power of God on a basis which sustains no relation to human conduct.

Those who believe a saved person can be lost contend that the will of the creature may defeat the will of the Creator. This is dishonoring to God and a deification of man. It perverts and distorts the doctrine of Divine grace and displays unbelief toward the revelation God has given. In the time remaining I want to show the doctrinal implications of the Arminian scheme. I want to expose the many ridiculous absurdities of their system.

1. The teaching of falling from grace makes the Bible a bundle of contradictions. Christ said of His sheep in John 10:28: "They shall never perish." The apostasy teacher says, "Oh, yes, but some do perish." I John 5:4 declares: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." The Arminian says some who are born of God are overcome by the world. The Bible says the believer "shall not come into condemnation" (John 5:24), yet the Arminian says some will come into condemnation.

2. Apostasy makes God a liar. Jesus said in John 6:47: "He that believeth on

me hath everlasting life." The Arminian says that no one has everlasting life as a present possession. He disputes the Divine record. The Bible accuses those who do not believe that God has given eternal life to a believer of making God a liar. I John 5:10-11 reads: "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life."

3. Falling from grace makes God a foolish builder. I Corinthians 3:9 says: "Ye are God's building." These words are addressed to saved people. Jesus taught that a man is unwise who does not count the cost before he starts to build. "Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish" (Luke 14:28-30).

Since each person saved by grace is God's building, did He not see His work in us finished before He started to build? If not, then God is a laughing stock of the devil. What a blundering ignoramus Arminians make out of God! How can they possibly believe God is unable to finish His work of salvation? Especially, since the Bible says, "That he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

4. A person can only lose his salvation if he can somehow obtain it by his works. This teaching makes man his own saviour--a doctrine which is the life and soul of popery. It is to contend one's spiritual safety depends upon what he does or fails to do. This belief is in open contradiction to the plain teaching of the Bible.

The Bible teaches that a man is saved by grace: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). If a man is saved by grace, he cannot be saved by his works, for grace excludes works. Romans 11:6 declares: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace."

An Arminian believes salvation is by grace and works, or completely by human merit. He believes that all men are on probation, that they are not saved in a real sense. That is why he prays, "And save us in Heaven at last." The Arminian's future is clouded with doubts and fears. One wonders how people can hold to such an uncomfortable doctrine and assume it came from the Divine Comforter, the Holy Spirit.

5. It sets God's children to work with the wrong motive. Those who hold to falling from grace seek to drive their followers to obedience by fear. Those who hold the doctrine of apostasy are serving

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From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Absurdity of Apostasy

Can a child of God by acts of disobedience become a child of the devil? Can a Christian fall away from God, lose his salvation and be forever lost? These questions have puzzled professed Christians for centuries. Many who name the name of Christ believe that a saved person can fall from grace and burn in Hell. They are honest and sincere in their belief. But are they correct according to the teachings of the Bible?

Many believe in falling from grace because they do not understand God's plan of salvation by grace. They believe they can lose their own salvation because they look upon themselves as their own saviors. Those who teach the doctrine of apostasy tend to ignore such doctrines as God's election, the substitutionary death of Christ, the intercessory work of Christ, the believer's

Absurdity of Apostasy

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the Lord because they are afraid they are going to Hell. There is a great difference between being Hell-scared and having the fear of God in your heart.

God's children are not slaves to be driven to obedience by the whiplash of fear. Believers are free born. Romans 8:15 says: **"Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."** Luke 1:74 tells us we were delivered out of the hand of our enemies that we might **"serve him without fear."** What a contrast between a son and a slave! A slave driver and heavenly Father! Our motive for service is stated in II Corinthians 5:14: **"The love of Christ constraineth us."**

Arminians are sometimes heard to say, "If I believed in once in grace always in grace, I would have my fill of sin." But I ask how much sin does it take to fill a person who possesses the Divine nature of God? The true Christian has already had his fill of sin (I Pet. 4:1-3). But does not such a statement as the Arminian makes reveal an evil desire to sin against God in the heart? Does it not show his passions are restrained by the fear of Hell and not love for Christ? Such a person does not know the grace of God which lifts a person above living a sinful life. Such a person discloses his own sinful, unregenerate heart and his ignorance of spiritual things.

6. If a person can lose his own salvation, then a person is not justified as the Bible teaches. Acts 13:39 says: **"And by him all that believe are justified from all things."** The believer is **"free from sin"** (Rom. 6:18) and there is **"no condemnation"** (Rom. 8:1). Romans 8:33 says that no creature in the universe can **"lay any thing to the charge of God's elect."** If no sin can be charged to the believer (Rom. 4:8), how can he go to Hell when in Christ he is perfectly just in God's sight? That would be impossible! How can a man go to Hell without sin being charged to Him? Falling from grace contradicts the Bible doctrine of justification by grace through faith.

7. The doctrine of apostasy gives the devil more power than God, for it teaches that after God saves a soul He does not have power to keep it. Satan can snatch it out of His hands. The individual can wrest his own soul from God. How can such a teaching be reconciled with God being almighty? How can God have all power if Satan can over power Him and take away one of His children.

8. The apostasy dogma makes us depend upon the mercy of the devil for salvation. If the devil can get us out of God's hands and does not, it is through his mercy that we get to Heaven and not the mercy of God. Since Satan is a murderer, I am sure he would murder all

the souls of the elect. The very fact that he does not take all souls down to Hell is positive proof he does not have power to take God's children. Men are not at the mercy of Satan; they are at the mercy of God.

9. Apostasy denies that the believer has salvation at the present time. But, if as some say, no one is saved now and will not be until the judgment when one's good deeds out weigh the bad, what does he fall from if he falls? He does not fall from grace, for if he does not have salvation, he does not have grace. If he does not have salvation, he cannot lose it. So in falling what does he lose?

10. The doctrine of apostasy demands a perfect life in the flesh. The Bible says if a man offend in one point of the law he is guilty of all (Jas. 2:10). But no man living has ever kept the law of God perfectly except Jesus Christ. Perfection in the flesh is contrary to every Christian experience. Just how many sins does a child of God have to commit before he falls? Will just one sin damn his soul? If just one, would it not be a good idea for a preacher to carry a revolver and murder all who are saved, lest they die after committing a sin without an opportunity to ask forgiveness?

Is it not true that those who believe in falling from grace live just as careless as those who do not believe in the security of the believer in Christ? Some of the biggest blasphemers, the most rude people, the worst liars I have ever known, were and are members of churches which teach falling from grace. For every hypocrite apostasy teachers can find in a Baptist church, I can show them an equal number, if not more, in their own assemblies.

11. Falling from grace teaches that Christ may be crucified again. It admits one can be lost after he is saved, and then saved again after being lost. But if this is so then Christ would have to die a second time. Hebrews 6:4-6 says it is impossible for those who fall away to renew themselves again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame. If Hebrews 6:4-6 teaches a man may fall from grace, then it teaches he can never repent and get back into grace. It affirms that for him to do so would necessitate the return of Christ to earth and a second death at Calvary. Jesus Christ died on Calvary once for all time (Heb. 9:28; Rom. 6:10). He will never die again for His atonement was sufficient for all the sins of the elect of God.

12. Falling from grace teaches what is contrary to nature, that a child born may be unborn. It teaches that incorruptible can die. The child of God is born of incorruptible seed (I Peter 1:23), and any person should know that an incorruptible seed never dies but always lives.

13. It denies the blood of Christ is sufficient to cleanse from all sin. I John 1:7 says: **"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son**

cleanseth us from all sin." Not just our past sins, but it says all sins. **"All"** means past, present, and future. If it does not, then it cannot be truly said that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sins. If the blood of Christ does not cleanse from all sin, then Christ is not a complete Saviour and His blood has lost its power.

14. It makes God's children wait until they get to Heaven to see whether they are going to be saved or not. The Bible teaches the believer is already saved. Paul told the Philippian jailor: **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"** (Acts 16:31). I John 3:2 says: **"Beloved, NOW are we the sons of God"** (emphasis MRC). Romans 8:1 declares: **"There is therefore NOW NO CONDEMNATION to them which are in Christ Jesus"** (emph. MRC). Romans 5:1 tells us: **"Therefore being justified by faith, WE HAVE peace with God"** (emph. MRC).

15. The doctrine of apostasy makes God erase the names of His children out of the book of life. But Christ says in Revelation 3:5: **"He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I WILL NOT BLOT OUT his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels"** (emph. MRC).

16. It ignores the doctrine of chastisement taught in the Bible. Hebrews 12:5-11 shows how God chastens His disobedient child to make him live godly in Christ Jesus. The apostasy teachers pay no attention to this work of God, for he says the Lord sends all disobedient sons to Hell. Such a false teacher has neither a need nor place for God chastening His children, yet the Bible teaches that God corrects His own offspring to make them partakers of His holiness.

17. The doctrine of apostasy admits that it is good for a child of God to go to Hell, for the Bible teaches that all things work together for the good of those who love God (Rom. 8:28). According to their theory, one who loves God can fall away and be lost, and in view of Romans 8:28 they are forced to admit that this awful tragedy is for good!

18. Apostasy teaches the devil can be saved. Colossians 3:3 says: **"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."** If the devil can get the believer who is in Christ, then Satan will be in Christ and to be in Christ is to be saved!

19. Falling from grace teaches that the Holy Spirit can go to Hell. In John 14:16 Jesus told His disciples that they would be given the Comforter forever. If the Holy Spirit is to abide with the children of God forever, and the child of God goes to Hell, then the Holy Spirit must go to Hell, too. Can any doctrine be of God which teaches the Holy Spirit can go to Hell?

20. Falling from grace teaches that Jesus Christ can go to Hell. Christ promised His people, **"I will never leave thee, nor**

forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). If one of God's elect goes to Hell by sinning too much, then Christ must go down there with him, for He will never leave nor forsake one of His own. Is there any doctrine so blasphemous to the worthy name of our Saviour?

21. The doctrine of apostasy leaves the world without hope. It presents a defeated God, a defenseless Christ, and a dejected Holy Spirit. Think about telling poor lost souls that God is unable to save and that the sinner cannot save himself. This leaves poor lost souls in a world of wickedness without a Saviour.

This might very well cause a man to be like the old Arminian I once read about. On board a sinking ship he prayed: "Good Lord, Good Devil, please save me." Some person who heard him pray said to him, "Don't you know that God will not hear such a prayer as that?" He replied, "I am one of those apostasy believing Arminians and do not know that I will hold out faithful to the end, and I pray this way so as to stand in with both the Lord and the devil, for I don't know into whose hands I am going to fall when I die."

22. The belief in falling from grace discourages many from seeking the Lord. They say they are afraid they can't hold out to the end faithfully. Why should they bother about a thing they cannot keep and even Christ cannot keep for them. If Christ cannot save unto the uttermost like the Bible says, He is not the kind of Saviour the sinner needs.

Thank God that once in grace is to be always in grace. Once a child of God, always a child of God. Once given eternal life the believer has an endless life. Jesus Christ died for our sins and removed the condemnation our sins deserved. He rose to be our intercessor when we sin against God and to be a pledge of our acquittal at the judgment. He is coming again to make us as sinless as Himself. Truly, all believers **"are complete in him"** (Col. 2:10).

Dear friend, I do not come today to tell about some religious order you ought to join. I come not to tell you about a weak saviour who cannot keep a soul he is trying to save. I come to tell you about my wonderful Christ Who saves and keeps saved all who come to Him in repentance and simple faith.

Forget all the lies of men who know not Christ, nor His power to save a soul. Jesus Christ said: **"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life"** (John 5:24). The question is: Do you acknowledge you are a sinner before God? Do you desire eternal life and freedom from condemnation? Then by God's gift of faith believe with all your heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and be assured you are eternally saved by the death of Christ.



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What parts of the Old Testament (if any) did Christ change while on Earth? - Kentucky

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seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matt. 16:4). On the other hand, as yet unfulfilled prophecies are made to be figurative, denying among other things a future of Israel and God's judgment upon those who persecute Israel, therefore deceiving some and worrying others, in the manner of II Timothy 2:18: "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."

RAY BENNETT

IN A WORD, NONE! "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17-18).

Unfortunately there are many, even in Baptist circles, who construe much of the New Testament, even the very words of Christ, in such a fashion that they "un-canonize" whole sections of the Old Testament. It would be an exercise in futility trying to delineate all the various ways and doctrines either utilized to do so, or practices which have become to firmly rooted in our "religious practices" because of this error.

Usually these practices, once we have seen them in the light of the whole tenor of Scripture, can be seen as attempts to vindicate their own legalistic practices and doctrines, or vindicate the other extreme, their permissive practices and doctrines. In a wide generalization, there are two main areas where this is done.

One is to take the frequent words of Jesus in the fifth chapter of Matthew, "You have heard it said, but I say unto you," to contradict the words of Moses. Doing so, they try to justify their own restrictive legalism as the Pharisees attempted to justify all their additions to the Law of Moses, or try to justify their own excuses for violating the Law of Moses, which the Pharisees (and I suggest a lot of Baptists) were also noted for doing.

Passages are taken out of context, neglecting the surrounding circumstances and to whom the words of Jesus are addressed. The average Baptist's treatment of divorce, as handled in Matthew 19:3-12, is an excellent example, on one hand denying, or at least nullifying Deuteronomy 24, and on the other hand finding excuse for divorce "for every cause," which the Pharisees were trying to do.

Another area is in prophecy. On one hand we are made to use the Old Testament prophecies as "signs" for which we must look before the coming of the Lord, which is in gross contradiction to "A wicked and adulterous generation

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"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord swear and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable

priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:11-27).

I may be ignorant of anything else but I think this is the only thing that Christ changed. Christ came to fulfill not to destroy. Christ came to fulfill not to destroy. Even the priest hood was not "changed" but was fulfilled, for all things concerning the Old Testament was a shadow of good things to come (Hebrews 10:1).

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Christ did not come to change any part of the Old Testament. Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17). Rather, the Lord Jesus was on an appointed mission from His Father that included the fulfillment of the law and its penalty on behalf of His elect. This was the crowning achievement of the perfect life of Jesus Christ. In His person and work He fulfilled the prophecies regarding His first advent along with the types and shadows of the Old Covenant that pointed to His saving work.

The core principles revealed in the Old Testament have always remained intact. For example, the Old Testament revealed the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man through the moral law. The Old Testament revealed that sinful man could not approach a holy God except by way of an acceptable, qualified sacrifice. The civil laws, ceremonies, and sacrifices all provided types and shadows that pointed men to the finished work of Jesus Christ. At best, the Old Testament sacrifices were repeatedly offered by sinful priests and could only cover the sin of those on whose behalf they were offered.

Jesus Christ was the Word Who clearly communicated that God's way of salvation was through Him as the appointed Messiah (John 1:14; 14:6). When John the Baptist saw the Lord Jesus Christ he exclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), thus signifying that Christ was the fulfillment of the types in the Old Testament

sacrificial system. Jesus is revealed as the perfect Lamb whose sacrifice would literally take away or put away the sin of elect believers among Jews as well as Gentiles. When Jesus died on the cross the veil of the Temple was rent in two from top to bottom signifying that the sacrificial system of the Old Testament was no longer needed as a means of atonement for guilty sinners. The way to God had been opened up and revealed through the finished work and final sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ's perfect life, sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection brought in a better hope (Heb. 7:19) and a better covenant established on better promises through a perfect mediator (Heb. 8:6).

When Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament types there was no longer any need for the blood of bulls and goats to cover sin. There was no longer a need for the priests to repeatedly offer animal sacrifices. Hebrews 10:9-14 declares: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

The coming of Christ in the First Advent did not alter the truth or veracity of the Old Testament. Rather, Christ brought in a new and living way that revealed God's grace with sparkling clarity. A sampling of new things that Jesus established in the New Testament are as follows: Jesus established His church during His earthly ministry and commissioned it to spread the Gospel. The resurrection of Jesus Christ on the first day of the week (Sunday) ushered in the celebration of the Lord's Day to be observed by believers through public worship. The civil laws, ordinances, and penalties that governed Old Testament Israel were nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14), thus removing the middle wall of partition (Eph. 2:14-16). Love, obedience, inward devotion, and spiritual fruitfulness are all emphasized over the outward forms that were offered by Old Testament religious practitioners.

TOM ROSS



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. How do we help Christians repair broken fellowship with other Christians or should we concern ourselves with the problem? - Mississippi

Tom Ross
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South Point, OH 45680

Pastor
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I am not sure if the question has to do with restoration to church fellowship or one on one Christian fellowship. The principles pertaining to both are pretty much the same. First, all fellowship must revolve around the truth of the Word of God as the standard of authority. There can be no genuine fellowship around error or sin as I Corinthians 13:6 declares: **“Charity... Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.”**

Second, there must be repentance on the part of the person who has broken fellowship through sin, and forgiveness on the part of the person who has been offended. Luke 17:3-4 states: **“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”**

Third, the rebuke, the repentance, and the forgiveness must come from a sanctified heart that is focused on the glory of God. Thus, the repairing of broken fellowship is not a complicated system if we adhere to the Word of God. The sinful pride of man, the stubbornness of his hard heart, and the failure to admit to wrongdoing are the very things that complicate the process.

To answer the second part of the question: Yes, it is worth it to pursue restoration to fellowship. This is clearly set forth in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Great rejoicing in Heaven and on Earth is the result of repairing broken fellowship.

TOM ROSS

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Broken fellowship between other Christians should be a concern to us and we should pray that the fellowship be restored. Our desire as children in the

family of God is to **“Let brotherly love continue”** (Heb. 13:1).

I am not sure if the question is in regard to Christians who are members of the same Church or not, if they are then, they need to follow the commands of Christ to His Church in Matthew chapter 18:15-17. If this is concerning Christians not members of the same Church then prayer is needed. Meddling in others business that we are not a party to needs to be handled in a way that is of prudent understanding.

When or if one of the parties brings others into the broken fellowship it is usually for support. Those who are brought in should not take sides but show love and be ready with Biblical support to mend the broken fellowship of the brethren in Christ.

MIKE DEWITT

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“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (I Cor. 1:10).

“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord” (Phil. 4:2).

Broken fellowship between Christians is a serious matter, but a very difficult one to address. Someone recently asked “how do we expect to get along with the lost when we can’t get along with each other?” Abraham Lincoln is alleged to have said that he would not attempt to settle an issue between two friends lest he lose a friend, but he would attempt to settle an issue between two enemies because he would gain a friend. There are many facets to be considered.

How close a relationship does the one “attempting to help” have with the affected parties? The one “attempting to help” may very well and very justly be resented if they are a stranger, or otherwise too far outside of the affected circle. Only “interfere” if both parties have discussed the issue with you, or if the dispute has spilled over so that it affects others, i.e.: the church, the family, or the community. As a C.I.S.M. counselor we

are well aware that unsolicited counsel, no matter how good it is, is really no counsel at all.

Does the one “attempting to help” have the authority or sufficiently close relationship to help? Or would their offered help be seen as interfering in what was none of their business? In addition to what has just been said, the one “attempting to help” must be recognized as one with sufficient knowledge, training, and mutual love to adequately address the issues.

How well does the one “attempting to help” know the problem? Or does the one “attempting to help” only know one side of the issue? The one “attempting to help” cannot help if he: a) does not know all the facts (which demands open honesty on the part of the disputing parties), or b) takes sides in the issue apart from clear factual solutions.

Is the fellowship broken over a sin that one will not confess and repent for? This question calls for a willingness to admit sin and a readiness to forgive. Both need to be emphasized! **“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us”** (I John 1:10). **“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” “Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven”** (Matt. 18:21-22).

Is the fellowship broken over a clear doctrinal issue? Or is it broken over a doctrinal question that cannot be clearly settled with our finite knowledge of Scripture? This point is perhaps the most difficult. We are commanded to separate from those who do not and will not believe and obey clear scriptural doctrine. There is no fellowship with darkness and light. But that broken fellowship must be over clear doctrine, not denominational taboos or personal opinions.

Yet, even in cases of sin and false doctrine, that broken fellowship must be confined to that which is necessary to maintain the purity of the local church and/or the Christian believer. It is the responsibility of the spiritual party to keep some contact with the sinning party in as much as is possible---again keeping in mind the necessity of maintain purity in message and testimony. For instance, this missionary will not sit in a barroom in an attempt to witness. We were once soundly rebuked by a professing Christian party because we would not present our mission work in a barroom setting. Our being “at ease” in a bar (which we would not be) would destroy our work among the Iroquois Indians. **“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world”** (I Cor. 5:9-10). **“Brethren,**

if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1). **“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men”** (Rom. 12:18).

RAY BENNETT

A Note from Bro. Bennett:

Over the last few months several letters from this mission to prison inmates have been returned because of an invalid address.

One was returned by the prison. I heard from the individual later with the same return address I had been using to mail his letters, but the postal service still returned the letters marked “no forwarding address.”

One had given me a forwarding address but the party at that address returned them marked “no such person lives here.”

Another, asking for money ☹, gave me a new address but that one came back marked “no such address.”

These names have been removed from my mailing list. If you move and still want to receive the weekly devotions, please be sure to give me a valid new address ASAP, including an effective date. Ray



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Wright Is Right!

It is pretty obvious from the spoutings of Jeremiah Wright, that he believes racism is alive and well and a major force in America. Well, Wright is right! This is now confirmed by the recent election and installation of Barack Hussein Obama as President of the United States of America. His character, philosophy and associations were totally overlooked, ignored and explained away as millions of people were bent on electing the "first African American" president, or "First Black" president as others have stated, which in itself is a sham, since he is White and Black or Black and White. Take your pick. Either way, he is both.

A definition of racism is in order. Racism is not just mistreatment, abuse or discrimination against a race or ethnic group of people. It could involve preferential treatment and promotion. Racism is choosing to believe something about someone or choosing to treat someone a certain way based completely on their race. Now that's a flat out, plain and simple definition of racism. It was necessary for some who voted for him to not only hold their nose when voting, but cover their eyes and stop up their ears as well. On the issue of abortion alone, professing Christians should have ditched him. His absolute pro-gay stand flies in the face of Bible truth concerning homosexuality, and professing Christians should have abandoned him on this issue. More could be said, but it is old news, so you get the picture. By the way, some reading this are already gearing up to call me a racist, but the same is true of John McCain. A lot of nose holding and ear stopping was necessary to vote for him so I voted for neither. I voted for character.

With the election of Obama, now any Black person can achieve anything in America, since the glass ceiling of racism has been shattered. At least, that's what some are saying. Now that Obama has been elected, I expect a dismantling of the NAACP and similar groups, since now there will no longer be a need for a National Association to work for the Advancement of Colored People. But the fact is, for any who watched the inauguration, Obama's election changes nothing. According to the words of one preacher in his prayer, there has not been an ounce of growth in the advancement of minorities. In the words of Joseph Lowery as he ended his prayer: "Lord, in the memory of all the saints who from their labors rest, and in the joy of a new beginning, we ask you to help us work for that day when black will not be asked to get

back, when brown can stick around – when yellow will be mellow – when the red man can get ahead, man – and when white will embrace what is right."

Hey, I have a news flash. A man who is considered to be Black has just been inaugurated. Has anybody noticed? Thank you Joseph Lowery, for your divisive words, which spring from the bitter plant of victimhood. Spoken like a true victim. Please tell me what Whites will have to embrace in order to be right? I just need to know. Will it take five Black presidents in a row? I would like to know what reparations are necessary to right the wrong of slavery. Slavery was wrong and plans were in the making to right this wrong, in its day. States were beginning to discuss the matter and Christian ideals were shining the light on the immorality of slavery. I do not personally know one individual today who believes slavery was right. I do not know anyone who would disagree that Blacks have had a struggle and endured abuses after the end of slavery and into our lifetime. The sore spot with many is when some Blacks and Whites insist that no progress or at the most, little progress has been made in this area. This philosophy demeans the many Black people who have struggled, fought, worked, advanced in and contributed to their America to make it what it is and are themselves proud to be Americans.

Apparently, liberals of every color refuse to be satisfied and will continue on the path of the destruction of this country by playing the race card, crying victimhood and discouraging self responsibility, while encouraging dependence on government and protecting their voting bloc.

How ironic that on the day after the holiday of Martin Luther King, who said that he looked for the day when his children would "not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," that the man who was inaugurated was elected because of the color of his skin.



The End of Capitalism?

by Michael Miller

Who would have imagined 20 years ago -- when the Berlin Wall fell and we celebrated the death of socialism -- that capitalism would begin 2009 under heavy fire. The Cardinal of Westminster, Cormack Murphy O'Connor, reportedly went so far as to say that, as 1989 marked the end of communism, 2008 was the year when "capitalism had died."

What are we to make of capitalism in light of all the crises, fraud, and government intervention, when even some traditional supporters of markets are supporting bailouts and seem to have lost faith in the market order? Is capitalism no longer

credible? Is capitalism really to blame for the financial woes we now face?

Before we try to answer this question, it is important to point out that the word "capitalism" is actually a Marxist term, and while we use it interchangeably with "market economy," the Marxist view of capitalism surprisingly still shapes the way we tend to understand economics. The term capitalism gives the impression that the market is something out there: a nebulous force which can create great wealth but can also turn and harm us. This impersonal understanding can lead us to blame markets when things go wrong instead of looking for reasons that are harder to diagnose and often reveal deeper cultural and spiritual issues.

Pope John Paul II specifically rejected the term capitalism and its mechanistic, amoral, and impersonal image, preferring instead "market economy," "business economy," or "free economy." He did so not to be pedantic, but to illustrate the important truth that markets are fundamentally networks of human relationships. Understanding markets this way sheds light not only on many economic problems, but also on the underlying moral nature of markets. If markets are intrinsically connected to human action then they necessarily have a moral dimension. Capitalism as seen by Marxists, or even within neo-classical mathematical models, separates markets from morality—and thus from reality. This, as we have seen, can have disastrous consequences.

Markets are the combined activities of millions of individuals and families. They are not composed merely of some guys on Wall Street; they are made up by us. Like anything else run by humans, markets are not perfect and can fail. If we become overly speculative and convinced that prices can go nowhere but up so that we violate all norms of prudence and keep buying at outlandish prices—as happened in the Tulip Bubble in 1637 the dot.com bubble in 2000 and the housing bubble last year—sooner or later reality will set in.

Despite their failures however, free markets have lifted more people out of poverty and helped create prosperity and peace better than any system ever devised. So much so that even in today's financial downturn, as hard as it may be, very few people who live in mature market economies are completely without resources or on the brink of starvation. Notice that markets are often blamed for the downturns, yet we tend to forget the cause of the upturn.

In these days of financial turmoil, we often hear critics speaking about de-regulation or "unbridled capitalism." Both of these are straw men. Unbridled capitalism is a myth. Try to think of one country where there are no regulations on the economy or business. For free markets to succeed and be sustainable, they require a framework built of rule of law, contracts,

and secure property rights.

The real question is what kind of regulation and what level of intervention we should choose. It is important to remember that many of the contributing causes of this crisis were precisely an overly invasive government. Federal regulators required banks to provide mortgages to customers who could not pay back the loans; the Federal Reserve manipulated the money supply, exacerbating the housing boom; and politicians of all stripes promised bailouts that incentivized irresponsible behavior. These are prime examples of what Friedrich Hayek labeled "the fatal conceit": the notion that bureaucrats and politicians have enough knowledge to plan an economy better than individuals and businesses.

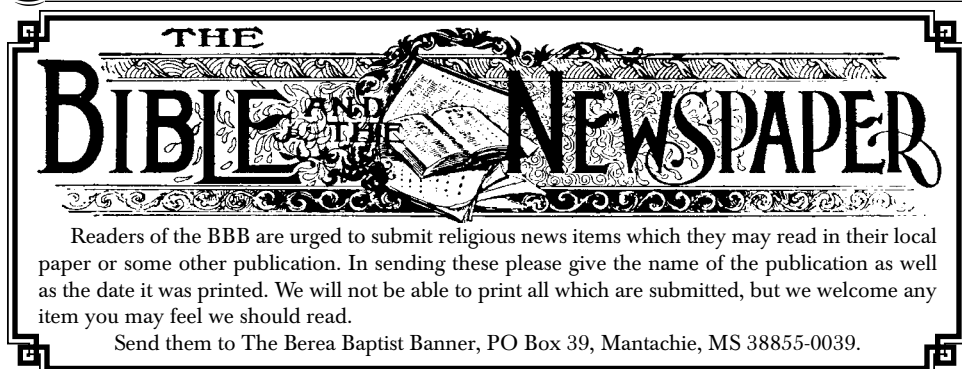
At least on equal par with a juridical framework as a factor in sustaining market systems is a specific moral culture. This includes trust, diligence, collaboration, honesty, perseverance, and prudence. If this crisis has taught us anything, it is the importance of morality for a market economy. The list of the seven deadly sins comprises an outline of the crisis's causes. How many of us out of greed, gluttony, or pride used credit cards to buy things we did not need or could not afford, just so we could have the latest gadget or keep up with the Joneses? What about Wall Street bankers who couldn't resist the chance to make even more and took imprudent risks with clients' money, or out of pride bought financial instruments they hardly understood. Markets cannot succeed without a strong moral fabric among the citizenry.

Yet instead of learning the lessons of the past, we again hear calls for increased regulation and government involvement. Some regulation is necessary, but we must not look to regulation to solve our moral problems. Here is where the realization that markets are networks of human relationships is important.

If we regulate too much, we concentrate the power of markets in fewer and fewer hands. This has led to all sorts of evil and corruption. Socialist economies, cartels, oligarchies, and union-controlled industries where the price mechanism cannot function produce stagnation and create incentives for corruption. It is a false hope to believe that regulation will make everything right. This is a utopian dream that ignores human failing and is the same promise that has been peddled by the socialists.

It is likewise delusional to believe that markets alone are enough. Markets require more than just efficiency; they require virtue. Our Founders taught us that without virtue political liberty could not long be sustained. The same holds true for economic liberty. And yet without economic liberty there can be no political liberty. Like liberty, the market must be moral, or it cannot exist at all.





MARYLAND MAY FORCE DOCTORS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON SUICIDE

(EP News)--Legislation sitting in the Maryland House would require doctors to provide terminally ill patients who wish to die with information from groups that advocate physician-assisted suicide. Wesley J. Smith, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute and an attorney for the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, said the bill de-professionalizes end-of-life care. "When you have referrals required to groups that may not have any expertise or training, you are de-professionalizing medicine," he said. "This death culture is not only a threat to vulnerable patients, it's a threat to medical professionalism itself."

GAINESVILLE, FLA., TO VOTE ON STATUTE THAT CATERS TO 'TRANSGENDERED' INDIVIDUALS

(EP News)--Voters in Gainesville, Fla., soon will have the opportunity to repeal an outrageous city law that allows "transgendered" individuals to use the restroom with which they are most comfortable. The city commission approved the ordinance last year by a 4-3 vote. "The statute says if they have an inner sense of being of a specific gender, then they can be that gender," said John Stemberger, president of the Florida Family Policy Council. "That's crazy because pedophiles would love to use bathrooms where little girls are located in parks."

JUDGE RULES AGAINST MOMENT OF SILENCE IN ILLINOIS SCHOOLS

(EP News)--A federal judge has ruled public school students should not be given a moment of silence during the day in which to voluntarily pray or quietly reflect. U.S. District Judge Robert W. Gettleman claimed: "The statute is a subtle effort to force students at impressionable ages to contemplate religion." David Smith, executive director of the Illinois Family Institute, said: "This law did not force anyone into prayer whatsoever. It was a moment of silence or prayer, whatever the student chose. The teacher was not to lead it, but just to recognize that we're taking a moment of silence for prayer or silent reflection." Smith said he is optimistic the law will be upheld on appeal. A Texas law that survived a court challenge last year allows children to "reflect, pray, meditate or engage in any other silent activities" for one minute at the beginning of each school day.

ADF DEFENDS ARKANSAS POLICY THAT RESERVES ADOPTION FOR MARRIED COUPLES

(EP News)--The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is up in arms after voters in Arkansas approved Act 1 in November, to allow adoption only by married couples. The Alliance Defense Fund filed a motion to intervene Friday on behalf of the Family Council Action Committee to join the state of Arkansas in defending against a lawsuit filed by the ACLU. The ACLU claims Act 1 is unconstitutional. "Arkansas voters spoke loudly and clearly in last November's election, and the court should not allow the ACLU to nullify their voice at the ballot box," said Byron Babione, senior legal counsel for ADF.

ROE V. WADE COSTS 45 MILLION BABIES THEIR LIVES

(EP News)--At this year's commemoration of the 36th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade U.S. Supreme Court, a grim milestone was remembered. Since the Roe v. Wade decision, more than 45 million preborn babies have been aborted. But in the past few years, significant restrictions on abortion have led to a slow decline in the number performed each year. However, pro-life activists who turned out for pro-life events on Jan. 22 expressed concern that an Obama administration might roll back these restrictions. "Public funding of abortion is a hot issue," said Carrie Gordon Earll, senior bioethics analyst at Focus on the Family Action. She said mandatory waiting periods and parental consent for minors are also important. "These incremental laws are key components to reduce abortions and save lives," Earll said. For pro-life advocates, the only bright side to the current state of affairs is the fact that the pro-life movement seems energized in a way that it hasn't been in years. Five-hundred people were turned away from the "Pro-Life Summit to End Abortion" held by Dr. Monica M. Miller in Ann Arbor, Mich., on Jan. 16. Most of the 500 who did have tickets made it to St. Francis of Assisi Church in spite of the ten inches of snow that started falling Saturday morning. According to Deal Hudson, former editor of the Catholic Crisis Magazine, "Ovation after ovation greeted speakers who called for all-out resistance to President-elect Barack Obama's stated plan to provide federal funding for domestic and international abortions while reducing all restrictions on the procedure."

REPUBLICAN LAWMAKERS DEFEND LIFE ON HOUSE FLOOR

(EP News)--While the new occupant of

the Oval Office and his team already have began working to exercise monumental "change" throughout America, pro-life lawmakers are standing up in support of the most vulnerable. "We are on the side of justice, we are on the side of the innocent and the defenseless, and we are on the side of equal dignity for every human life," Rep. Virginia Foxx, R-N.C., said on the House floor Jan. 21. Rep. Mike Pence, R-Ind., has reintroduced the Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act, which would deny federal funding to Planned Parenthood. "Many Americans fail to recognize the largest abortion provider in America is also the largest recipient of federal taxpayer dollars through Title X," he said. "This should not be." Pence said he is optimistic. "It is accurate to say that life is losing in Washington, D.C., but I believe life is winning in America," he said. "I believe there is a moral reawakening in America."

CALIFORNIA COURT SIDES WITH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

(EPNews)--The California Court of Appeal ruled Jan. 27 that a Christian high school has the right to forbid a lesbian relationship between its students. The parents of two students had sued California Lutheran High School because it suspended two teenage girls for having an inappropriate relationship. The court agreed with a lower court that religious schools are not subject to California laws that provide special protections based on sexual orientation. "Christian schools should be able to make admission and discipline decisions consistent with their religious beliefs," said Timothy J. Tracey, litigation counsel with the CLS Center for Law & Religious Freedom. The court ruled that "the whole purpose of sending one's child to a religious school is to ensure that he or she learns even secular subjects within a religious framework."

NBC REFUSES TO AIR PRO-LIFE AD DURING SUPER BOWL

(EP News)--NBC will not air a pro-life ad during the Super Bowl, even though it considered a sexually perverse ad from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and ran a number of ads from other advertisers that were sexually provocative in nature. The pro-life ad, created by CatholicVote.org, portrays President Barack Obama as a preborn baby. It features images of a child in utero set to music and reads: "The child's future is a broken home. He will be abandoned by his father. His single mother will struggle to raise him. "Despite the hardships he will endure, this child will become the first African-American president." Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, said: "In reality, these 41 seconds do more to inspire than the hundreds of other Super Bowl ads that use sex and alcohol to wow viewers. It's ironic that producers pull out the rule book when they want to police traditional values."

FAMILIES OUTRAGED BY OFFENSIVE SUPER BOWL ADS

(EP News)--When millions of Americans tuned in to NBC to watch the Super Bowl

on Sunday, they saw not only a close football game, but also a lot of sexually explicit commercials. Advertisers like GoDaddy.com and Doritos gave families an eyeful of scantily clad women. Melissa Henson, spokeswoman for the Parents Television Council, said parents should take action. "I don't think we need to silently sit back and accept the direction television is going," Henson said. "There is an opportunity to let our voices be heard, and to help set the network that's broadcasting the Super Bowl and the NFL straight."

ALLIANCE DEFENSE FUND SUES SCHOOL AFTER BIBLE CLUB IS EXCLUDED

(EP News)--The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) filed suit in federal court Feb. 5 after New York's Lindenhurst Union Free School District refused to grant official recognition to a student-run Bible club. "Christian student groups shouldn't be discriminated against for their beliefs," said David Cortman, senior legal counsel for ADF. "The First Amendment and federal law both prohibit such actions on the basis of religion, and this has been established by years of court precedent." For more than four months, Lindenhurst High School officials have repeatedly refused to grant official recognition to the club because of its religious nature. A number of other student-led clubs -- including the Gay-Straight Alliance, Key Club and Chess Club -- have received official recognition and receive benefits and privileges.

DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE BECOMING LOCAL ISSUE

(EP News)--On Monday, Feb. 2, the City Council of Sioux City, Iowa, passed a resolution defining marriage. The purpose of the resolution is to clarify the City Council's position on marriage, respond to efforts to redefine marriage and urge the state Legislature to allow the people of Iowa to vote on a constitutional marriage-protection amendment. The resolution states: "The City Council of Sioux City supports the legal definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman, consistent with federal and state laws, and respectfully disagrees with efforts to redefine marriage, to anything other than between one man and one woman. The City Council of Sioux City also believes this issue should be decided by the voters of the State of Iowa, consistent with our ideals of democratic participation. We respectfully urge the State Legislature to act promptly on a Constitutional Amendment, as a majority of states have done, and allow the people of the State of Iowa to vote on the Amendment. We also urge other cities to lobby the State Legislature to act on the Amendment, and to empower the people of Iowa to decide on the proper definition of marriage."

CALIFORNIA USES TAXPAYER MONEY TO PUSH GAY ADOPTION

(EP News)--A dozen billboards in West Hollywood are encouraging same-sex couples

◇ (Continued on page 54)

Bible & Newspaper

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to adopt. They feature a picture of two men and a boy and the message, "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Family." The billboards are being paid for by groups that receive taxpayer money, according to California pro-family groups. Ron Prentice, executive director of the California Family Council, said, "We know the homosexual lobby in California is especially tuned to influencing society to believe that their lifestyle is as normal as any other. The truth is that children are best served by a home that provides both father-love and mother-love. And research shows that married heterosexual couples offer far greater odds for family stability."

WYOMING HOUSE DEFEATS MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

(EP News)--More than 73 percent of registered voters in Wyoming support a ballot initiative defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman, according to a statewide poll. However, state legislators have refused to listen to the people they represent. On Feb. 6, the Wyoming House defeated the marriage-protection amendment, 35-25. The Senate version was killed in committee. The Legislature recesses for the year in March. "Wyoming's citizens already had good reason to seek a ballot initiative to define marriage," said Jenny Tyree, marriage analyst at Focus on the Family Action. "It's the best family structure for children and a great stabilizing force for society. "They will need to use their votes to make sure their legislators get the message about marriage."

FLORIDA DOCTOR LOSES LICENSE AFTER BABY SURVIVES ABORTION

(EP News)--Sycloria Williams, 18, went into a Florida abortion clinic to abort her 23-week-old preborn baby, but instead she gave birth to a living, breathing girl. A staffer placed the baby in a trash bag to die, according to news reports. Police recovered the decomposing body a week later. The Florida Board of Medicine today found Dr. Pierre Jean-Jacque Renelique guilty of medical malpractice and revoked his medical license. Renelique was scheduled to perform the abortion but didn't arrive in time. One health expert called it a "horrific outcome" -- which causes one to wonder what a "good outcome" might have been. A baby born dead? "Abortion has desensitized people to the killing of preborn babies," said Dawn Vargo, bioethics analyst at Focus on the Family Action. "This horrific story is just further evidence that we are willing to -- literally -- throw away human life."

MOST AMERICANS SAY RELIGION IS IMPORTANT PART OF DAILY LIVES

(EP News)--An analysis of more than 350,000 interviews conducted by Gallup in 2008 finds Mississippi, Alabama, South

Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Arkansas to be the most religious states in the nation. Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts are the least religious states. Gallup used the responses to a straightforward question that asks: "Is religion an important part of your daily life?" The rankings are based on the percentage of each state's adult (18 and older) population that answers in the affirmative. The United States is generally a religious nation, although the degree of this religiosity varies across states and regions of the country. A robust 65 percent of all Americans (across the entire U.S. population) reported in 2008 that religion was important in their daily lives. At least half of the residents of all but four states (Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts) say religion is important in their daily lives.

ILLINOIS LAWMAKERS WORK TO CHANGE THE DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

(EP News)--Illinois Rep. Gregg Harris has introduced legislation in the state House that would sidestep voters and change the definition of marriage to include homosexual couples. Harris, who is openly gay, will handle the legislation as chairman of the brand-new Youth and Family Committee. Meanwhile, a bill to define marriage in the state's constitution as the union between one man and one woman remains stuck, six years after it was first introduced. "We've got 30 states that have had the opportunity to give the voters a voice on this issue," said David E. Smith, executive director of the Illinois Family Institute. "And 30 states have decided to protect marriage as God defined it."

JUDGE RULES IN FAVOR OF CHRISTIAN CLUB

(EP News)--A federal judge in Minnesota has issued a preliminary injunction against a school district's policy that prohibited a Christian club from distributing literature and promoting its events. Liberty Counsel had sued Elk River Area School District #728 on behalf of Child Evangelism Fellowship of Minnesota. "We are very pleased the Good News Clubs will now be treated equal to the secular clubs," said Mathew D. Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel. "I am always amazed at how school officials try to invent new ways to discriminate against Christian viewpoints. "Equal access is the law, and equal access means equal treatment in every respect."

AFRICAN AMERICANS MORE RELIGIOUS THAN OVERALL U.S. POPULATION

(EP News)--As a part of Black History Month, the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life released a new analysis that paints a detailed religious portrait of African-Americans. The analysis finds that African-Americans are markedly more religious than the U.S. population as a whole on a variety of measures, including

reporting a religious affiliation, attendance at religious services, frequency of prayer and the importance of religion in people's lives. Compared with other racial and ethnic groups, African-Americans are among the most likely to report a formal religious affiliation, with fully 87 percent of African-Americans describing themselves as belonging to one religious group or another. The analysis also finds that nearly eight-in-ten African-Americans (79 percent) say religion is very important in their lives, compared with 56 percent among all U.S. adults.

GLOBAL-WARMING ACTIVIST ADVOCATES ABORTION

(EP News)--The British government's "green adviser" says couples who have more than two children are being "irresponsible" by creating an unbearable burden on the environment, The (London) Times reported. Jonathon Porritt, who chairs the government's Sustainable Development Commission, says curbing population growth through contraception and abortion must be at the heart of policies to fight global warming. "I am unapologetic about asking people to connect up their own responsibility for their total environmental footprint and how they decide to procreate and how many children they think are appropriate," Porritt told The Times. "I think we will work our way towards a position that says that having more than two children is irresponsible. It is the ghost at the table." A report by the commission, to be published in March, follows a similar one out of Australia that claimed babies harm the economy. Steven Mosher, president of the Population Research Institute, called the British report an "economic death warrant." "The British are already not replacing themselves," he said. "They'd better decide who they want to give their country to, because they obviously don't want it themselves."

SEVERAL STATES TAKE UP PRO-LIFE LEGISLATION

(EP News)--Across the nation, state legislatures are considering pro-life legislation. The North Dakota Senate soon will take up a bill that would require abortion clinics to offer women an ultrasound of their preborn baby. The House passed the pro-life measure, 77-9, on Feb. 1. In South Carolina, a bill to require a 24-hour waiting period before an abortion has received initial approval from a House subcommittee. And in Nebraska, two pro-life bills have been introduced in committee. One would require abortion clinics to give the mother the option of seeing an ultrasound image of her preborn baby. The other bill requires clinics to make ultrasounds available or refer a woman to a place where she can get a free one. Texas and Wyoming also are considering legislation to require an ultrasound before an abortion.



Sowing The Spring Time Of Life

By Sylvanus Stall

My dear young friends: This is the most pleasant season of the year; the snow has melted, the cold weather has passed away, and now the warm pleasant days of spring have come. The trees are all in blossom, the fields look beautiful, and the air is full of sweetness. If you go into the country you will find the farmers plowing their fields, and some are already sowing grain. The spring wheat has already been sown, the oat fields will soon begin to look green, and in the course of a couple of weeks the farmers will be planting their corn.

It must have been at a corresponding period of the year in the East, when Jesus spoke those beautiful words which are found in the 13th chapter of Matthew, contained in the parable of the sower who went out to sow. A great multitude of people had gathered to hear the words which fell from the lips of Jesus. They could no longer gain admission into the house, and so Jesus went down by the sea, or the large lake, and getting into a boat he pushed out just a little from the shore, so all the people standing along the shore could see and hear Him, and then He began to preach to them. Just back of them on the plain was a farmer who was more intent upon sowing his field than upon listening to the words of the Saviour. As Jesus saw him pacing to and fro across the field, scattering his grain in the furrows, Jesus very likely pointed to him, calling the attention of the multitude to what he was doing, and said to the people, "**Behold, a sower went forth to sow,**" and then called the attention of the people to the character of the soil in the different places where the seed fell.

I have here a sack, something like the farmers use in the country, although many farmers now sow their grain with a machine called a drill. With this sack suspended about the neck, in this way, the farmer reaches in and takes out a small handful of seed, and then swinging his hand, throws the seed over a considerable portion of the ground. Thus he walks from one end of the field to the other, sowing the seed, until he has the entire field sown and ready for the men who follow with the harrow, which covers up the grain.

Well, boys and girls, this is the spring-time of life with you. These are the pleasant days and years of your life. You have very little care. Yet it is, nevertheless, the spring-time. You are now making the preparations which will tell what is to

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Sowing

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be the harvest in the later years of your lives. As the farmer goes out and plows the field, so by discipline and by counsel, and by instruction are your parents preparing your minds and hearts, that in after years you may enjoy a harvest of great blessing.

In the spring-time of life, when young persons are to do the sowing, they need much careful counsel and instruction. I suppose that there are many here who, if they were to go into the country, could not tell the difference between wheat and barley, or oats and rye. Some might not even be able to distinguish between oats and buckwheat. If the farmer were to send you out to sow, you would, most likely sow the wrong kind of grain. In the same manner, it is important that you should be directed by your parents, because they can distinguish between right and wrong. They know what you should do, and what you should not do. Therefore it is important that they should direct you in the spring-time, lest you should sow the wrong kind of grain. And you know the Bible says: **"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."**

It is not only difficult for those who have never seen something of life in the country, to distinguish between the different kinds of grain which the farmer sows, but even after the grain begins to grow, it is sometimes difficult, even for those who are familiar with country life, to distinguish between the true and the false. In that same thirteenth chapter of the gospel of Matthew, to which I refer in the beginning, Jesus tells of a farmer who sowed his field with wheat, and while he slept an enemy came and sowed tares. Of course he could not discover this until the grain began to grow. When it began to get ripe, then for the first time could he distinguish between the stalks of the wheat and the stalks of the tares. By doing this wicked thing the enemy gave the farmer a great deal of trouble. Just so it is with you when you have tried to do right, Satan comes and puts evil thoughts and wicked purposes into your minds, and then if you permit these to grow up, you will find that they will give you a great deal of trouble. It is important that only the good seed should be sown in the field of your heart, and in the field of your mind, so that you may have a fruitage that shall be wholly good.

Sometimes you see boys and girls who are doing things which you would like to do, but your mother and father tell you that you should not. You may not be pleased because you are restrained from doing what you would like.

I well remember how my father, when I was a boy, oftentimes used to restrain me from doing what I saw other boys doing. I used to think, at that time, What

he was not considerate, and possibly not kind to me. But now that I have grown older, and have seen the results which have come to these boys, some of whom have gone astray, and others who have turned out badly in life, I see how wise my father was. And when I visit his grave, I feel like bowing my head and thanking God that He gave me a father who was so wise, and so kind, and so considerate. Although I did not feel at the time that he was doing that which was for my good; but now I see it all very plainly.

In closing let me say to you, do as Isaiah suggested, "Sow by the side of all waters." That is, be very diligent, that day by day you may do some kind act, which will hereafter spring up into a fruitage of very great good. The Bible enjoins upon both young and old to be very diligent in this work, for it says, **"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good"** (Eccl. 11:6).



The Security of the Saved

By John R. Gilpin
(1905-1974)

When I was seventeen years old, I was called into the ministry. For the past ten years, I have been trying to preach the Gospel. All of these 27 years have been spent in school: grammar, high, college, seminary, and the school of practical experience. During these years of schooling, I have only learned three lessons that are really worth-while.

I was born a totally depraved, vicious sinner; but I did not know it. My parents say that evidences of that sinful disposition began to manifest themselves before I was three days old. The first day I went to school I rebelled at the authority of the school. I had numerous disputes with other students, some of these disputes ended in blows. I did not know why it was that I preferred to lie rather than to tell the truth; nor why it was that I rebelled at all authority, and defied anyone that opposed me. I went to church, but I was not interested. I was never able to understand myself until I read: **"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies"** (Ps. 58:3). Then I read Psalm 51:5, which says: **"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."** Later, as



a beloved brother of the cross read: **"For we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23), I saw myself as I was---depraved from birth, with vicious desires and unholy passions; condemned before God. Thus I learned my first lesson.

Just how to rid myself of the sin I possessed, I did not know. I had attended a church of another denomination and had heard men speculate about the plan of salvation. I had heard them say with emphasis: "No man can know that he is saved until he gets to heaven." I had heard them read:

*"Tis a point I long to know,
Of it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I His, or am I not?"*

That type of religion made no appeal to me. If I had possessed that kind of religion, I would have been no better off than I was; I was already in a state of indecision. Then, one night I sat in a Baptist church and heard the Scripture: **"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"** (I John 1:7). Like a drowning man grasping at a straw, I laid hold of this; and sang that night with others that trusted in the same Savior:

*Happy night, happy night, when Jesus
washed my black heart white;
He taught me how to sing and shout, and be
a Christian out and out,
"Happy night, happy night, when Jesus
washed my black heart white."*

Then I could say with Paul: **"I know whom I have believed"** (II Tim. 1:12). There was no guess-work about this. I could say with Naaman: **"Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel"** (II Kings 5:15). As my second great lesson, I had learned that I was a sinner saved by grace.

I was so happy in the Lord that I felt this experience just could not last. I concluded that it must end some time. But, lo, it has not ended; but has grown sweeter with each passing day. Thus I learned my third great lesson,---that I was saved eternally, and could never be lost. This was the greatest lesson of all. Now with Paul, I say: **"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"** (Phil. 1:6); or with Peter: **"Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"** (I Pet. 1:5); or still again with my blessed Lord: **"No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand"** (John 10:29).

It is this third lesson I set myself to the task of plowing.

The problem of the oldest book in the Bible---the book of Job---is the eternal security of the believer. The devil was the first preacher of apostasy when he lied to God, saying that Job would apostatize under his difficulties. God gave the devil more advantage with Job than the devil

has ever had with a believer since. Job had no one to intercede on his behalf---no Christ to pray for him that his faith fail not, yet we hear him declare: **"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the LORD gave and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD"** (Job 1:21).

If the devil couldn't cause Job to "fall from grace" under adverse circumstances, without a high priest to intercede on his behalf, how can the devil cause a believer to "fall from grace" today, when each child of God has an intercessor pleading for him in glory?

God proved through Job that the devil lied when he preached apostasy. Some day God will prove through each saved believer that every preacher of apostasy is a liar.

In a sermon a short time before his death, W. H. Griffith-Thomas said:

"(1) Physical life is a union of body with spirit.

"(2) Spiritual life is the union of spirit with God.

"(3) Eternal life is the union of the spirit with God forever."

It is the last of these that I am interested in just now. And at the outset, let me say that I do not mean to say that a Christian will never fall into sin. To say that one never sins is to brand one's self as a liar:

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8).

A child of God may, through Satan's subtlety, fall often into sin, but a fall does not always kill. Many have fallen from great heights and lived to tell the story. Many also have fallen into sin and lived to tell of their redemption through grace alone.

"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness" (Micah 7:8-9).

David committed adultery and then murdered a man to cover it. Surely no one puts a premium on these two black sins. Yet, by and by, we hear him say: **"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand"** (Ps. 37:23-24).

Peter likewise fell when he denied the Lord and punctuated his denial with profanity. Still the fall didn't kill him, and presently we hear him speak: **"You who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"** (I Pet. 1:5).

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I grew up on a farm where we used to raise cattle, sheep and hogs. In preparing the hogs for the show ring at the fairs, I used to wash them weekly, trim their nails and polish their bristles. When I had finished, I used to say, "Now, Mr. Hog, stay clean." Did he mind? Immediately he would make his way to the first convenient mud-hole and lay down on one side. Then, as if not content with the damage done, he would roll over to completely ruin my hour's work. Why was the hog content in the mud? It was his nature and he was only acting accordingly.

I saw a pet lamb fall into the same mud-slough one day. Strangely, the sheep did not wallow therein, but got out at once, acting very much ashamed of himself. Why didn't the sheep wallow there as the hogs did daily? He was a sheep and it was contrary to his nature.

Whenever one falls in sin and wallows there, it proves he has never been saved--the old hog nature is just manifesting itself, in spite of church membership, baptism, and reformation. God's dear sheep may fall in sin, but he won't remain there long, but ashamed of himself, will seek out the Lord, confess his wrongs, and repent of his sins. Accordingly I say that a saved sinner can never lose his salvation, since:

1. HE IS KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD.

Jude 24: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." I Peter 1:5: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." II Timothy 1:12: "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." These texts teach us that the power to keep lies outside the sphere of personal ability, and that God keeps us from the power of external, internal, and infernal agencies. When the jewel of my soul is surrendered to God's keeping, He is responsible for my eternal security.

*"Firm as His throne the promise stands,
And He can well secure,
What I've committed to His hands,
Till the decisive hour."*

I would be unsafe to attempt to walk the streets of any town with \$1,000.00 in my pocket. I hand it through the bank window to the cashier and he keeps it since he has the ability to do so. I haven't the power to keep my salvation, since the devil is stronger than I, but I can commit

myself unto God Who is "able to keep." Then do I realize: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).

2. THE DEVIL CANNOT TAKE ONE OUT OF GOD'S HAND.

The devil exerts a powerful influence. He has had 6000 years of experience. Yet he can go no farther than God permits him. God permitted Satan to touch Job's property but he could not harm a single hair of Job's head (cf. Job 1:12). Later God permitted him to touch Job's body, but he could not take his life (cf. Job 2:6). Since Satan can go no farther than he is permitted of God, a believer can never be lost, for God will not permit the devil to pass the sacred precincts of God's saving grace. "But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (I John 5:18).

If Satan can overcome one of God's children, he can overcome all. If he has the power to get all and yet allows one to go to Heaven, would not that one be saved by the grace of Satan? Yet the Bible plan of salvation is by the Grace of God through faith. Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

3. EACH OF THE REDEEMED IS A NEW CREATION.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation)" (II Cor. 5:17). The world and all that is herein is God's creation. Can man uncreate that which God has created? Perish the thought! Each of the redeemed is created of God. Since that which has been created can not be uncreated, then each believer is eternally secure.

4. EACH BELIEVER IS BORN OF GOD.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (I John 5:1). When a child is born into this world it can never be unborn. Since that which is born cannot be unborn, then everyone who has been "born again" is forever saved.

The Bible speaks of the natural birth as the first birth; it speaks of the spiritual birth as the second birth; there is none other birth spoken of. If one might be lost, after being saved, he would be lost eternally as the Bible does not mention the third or fourth, or any birth after we are once born of God.

John R. Gilpin, Jr., is my son since he was born such. Regardless of what he does he will always be my son. I am a child of God, by the new birth (John 3:7). I shall always be a son of God (I John 3:2), irrespective of what the devil may do in my life.

5. THE SAVED ARE BORN OF INCORRUPTIBLE SEED.

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word

of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23). The first chapter of Genesis ten times declares that everything produces "after his kind." According to this law of Genesis, the new nature which is born of God is incorruptible. Since one is born of incorruptible seed, either the theory of evolution that like begets unlike is true (God forbid), or else our salvation is eternal.

6. BY THE NEW BIRTH EACH CHILD OF GOD PARTAKES OF THE DIVINE NATURE.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4). When one is saved the nature of God is placed within. Would it be possible for God to die and for Divinity to have an end? We shrink at the thought. Until God might die, the believer will not die, as each believer has a nature like the nature of God. If the child of God has something of the nature of God then would not something of the nature of God be lost if the child of God is lost?

7. IF THE DEATH WE INHERIT FROM ADAM IS ETERNAL THEN THE LIFE WE INHERIT FROM CHRIST IS ETERNAL.

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). Surely no one will deny that we are eternally dead in Adam (cf. Eph. 2:1). "Even so" we are eternally alive and secure in Christ.

8. EACH OF THE SAVED IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD.

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). We shall let a piece of paper one inch square represent my soul. The backs of my Bible represent God and the pages thereof represent Christ. I put the paper inside of my Bible and close it. I open it and turn the pages of the Book. The piece of paper is so small in comparison with the backs and pages that I can not find it. I am thus hid "with Christ in God." How, then, can Satan rob me of my salvation?

9. BELIEVERS ARE SEALED UNTIL THE DAY OF REDEMPTION.

"Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Cor. 1:22). "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). The Holy Spirit Himself is the seal. We are securely kept by Him until "the day of redemption." The day of redemption is the time of Christ's second coming (cf. Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:23). We are therefore eternally secure in Christ for no one can reverse the sealing sealed by the king. "And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel" (Dan.

6:17). "Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring may no man reverse" (Esther 8:8).

10. THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND CHRIST SECURES THE RIGHTEOUS.

"Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him forevermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips" (Ps. 89:19, 27-34). This covenant was made with Christ before the foundation of the world. When His children go astray, He promises chastisement and yet declares He will not withdraw His loving-kindness nor suffer His faithfulness to fail.

11. THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND THE RIGHTEOUS SECURES THEM.

"And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" (Jer. 32:40). In this covenant two ideas are noteworthy: God will not turn away from the righteous. The righteous shall not depart from God. Certainly this can mean nothing but the eternal and final security of the believer.

12. CHRIST'S STATEMENT AT THE JUDGMENT.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:21-23). Christ will say to the lost, "I never knew you." Yet the Scriptures emphatically declare that He intimately knows each believer: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth

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them that are his" (II Tim. 2:19). Since the believer is known of Christ, if one should be lost, Christ would be proven a liar (I speak reverently) at the judgment, as there He will say to the damned, "I never knew you." Either we have eternal life when saved, or else Christ will tell a falsehood at the judgment!

13. THE PROMISES OF CHRIST SECURE EACH BELIEVER.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28-29). "Who shall also confirm you unto the end that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:8). "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). All these are promises concerning the believer's security. If a believer, through sinning, could perish, then God's promises would be valueless. If the promises are valueless, then the whole Bible is valueless and Christ, God, the Holy Spirit, and Christianity are valueless. If one fails, all must fail. However, we prefer to "let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4) for---

"He has never broken any promise spoken, And will keep His promise to me."

14. HE PROMISES ETERNAL LIFE TO HIS SHEEP.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:27-29). Every saved believer is one of God's sheep. Christ Himself is the Shepherd. No sheep can ever stray so far; but that the Good Shepherd will not bring him home again. Luke 15:5-6: "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." God's dear sheep may fall into the mouth of the roaring lion, even Satan (I Pet. 5:8), but the Shepherd will deliver there from (I Sam. 17:34-35).

15. WHEN A BELIEVER IS SAVED, HE POSSESSES ETERNAL LIFE.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26). "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:11, 13). The life Christ gives us is eternal---never ending. Forty-three times in the New Testament "everlasting" qualifies the life we receive when we receive Christ. Then it is a 43-0 hope that the believer is eternally secure. In Matthew 25:46 "everlasting" describes the punishment of the wicked. In Romans 16:26 "everlasting" describes the character of God's existence. In II Timothy 2:10, "everlasting" describes the duration of Christ's kingdom. Then as long as the wicked are punished, as long as God exists, and as long as Christ's glory exists, and as long as Christ's kingdom continues, just that long the believer has eternal life. If the punishment of the wicked can have an end, if God can have an end, and if Christ's glory and kingdom have an end, then the believer can perish. In view of this shall we not write in letters of gold across the Heavens, that all may read: ETERNAL SALVATION!

16. ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF THE BELIEVER.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28). The truth of this comforting statement demands that our salvation be eternal, for this could never be true if a believer could lose his salvation.

17. CHRIST BECOMES THE BELIEVER'S SURETY.

"By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:22, 25). "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:1-2). Christ's work in Heaven today is that of intercession. He is the lawyer who

represents each believer at the bar of God's supreme court. I have a dear friend, who is a lawyer. Suppose I violate some traffic ordinance. I ask him to appear in my behalf in the court. He does not plead the mercy of the court, nor does he ask leniency that I am a preacher. He simply pleads "guilty" to the charge and pays the fine that I may go free. In the court of Heaven, I am charged with innumerable offenses by Satan (Rev. 12:10). The Son of God is my lawyer (Heb. 9:24). He does not ask the Father to be merciful, nor does He plead the weakness of my flesh. He is there to plead "guilty" on my behalf, and to pay for my sin with His blood: "He is the propitiation (sacrifice) for our sins" (I John 2:2). Hallelujah! For such a Saviour!

18. GOD PROMISES NEVER TO FORSAKE HIS SAINTS.

"Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Ps. 12:7). "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for ever more. For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved forever; but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off" (Ps. 37:23-28). "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked" (Ps. 97:10). "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (I Thess. 5:23-24). "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" (II Tim. 4:18).

The saints are God's believing children. These He promises never to forsake. Since God is continually present with the believer, the believer is eternally secure with God.

19. CHRIST'S BLOOD CLEANSSES FROM ALL SIN.

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, even for forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14). "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14). Christ died as a substitute for every believer. His death paid for all their sin. His blood cleanses from ALL sin (past, present, and future).

By His death Christ suffered for every sin of each believer. If a believer through sinning could perish, then the believer would suffer for the same sins, which Christ has already suffered for. Both the believer and Christ would be paying for the same sins, and God, to punish two persons for the sins of one, would be the most unjust tyrant of the universe. Perish the thought! Our God is just; yea, above all, He is merciful!

20. THE RIGHTEOUS ARE SECURE, BECAUSE OF CHRIST'S PRAYER.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:9, 11-12, 15, 20, 24). This prayer, breathed by Christ, nearly 2,000 years before all present believers were born, secures us eternally with God.

21. THE MEANING OF REDEMPTION.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sins." The Greek word for redeem used in Galatians 4:4-5 "ex-agerazo," means to "buy out of the market," so that the redeemed are never again to be exposed to sale. Thank Heaven when Jesus has bought a slave of Satan, the devil will never again be permitted to even bid for that one, for the redeemed of God is never again to be put up for sale. Hallelujah!

22. CHRIST PROMISES THAT THE BELIEVER SHALL NEVER THIRST.

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (John 4:14). Yet in Hell, one of the pangs of the damned is thirst. "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:24). If a believer is lost and goes to Hell, Christ is proven a liar, since He promises the believer shall never thirst. Again we say,

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Security of the Saved

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either eternal life, or Christ is a falsifier.

23. THE LORD WILL NOT CHARGE THE BELIEVER WITH SIN.

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying: Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (charge sin)” (Rom. 4:5-8). When Christ died on the cross, God treated Christ just like the sinner ought to have been treated. When a believer is saved, God treats him like Christ ought to have been treated. Thus, our sins are imputed to Christ and Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us. Because of this, no sin will be charged against the believer.

24. LINKS OF THE GOLDEN CHAIN OF GOD’S PURPOSE GUARANTEES THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER.

“Moverover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30). These are four indestructible links in this golden chain. Both ends of the chain are eternally fastened to the throne of God. As certainly as the believer is chosen in Christ before the world began, step by step the believer will advance to the stage of final perfection. Since it is true that whom He predestinates, he will eventually glorify, can one of His elect ever be lost?

25. REWARDS MAY BE LOST, BUT THE SOUL REMAINS SECURE.

“If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (I Cor. 3:14-15). The objector asks, “If one did sin and die in impenitence, would he be saved?” It is impossible to suppose any condition that will cause or permit a child of God to be lost in Hell. The passage read tells us what will become of the erring child. His rewards will be lost, yet he will not be lost! His rewards will perish, but he shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

26. THE SURE FOUNDATION INSURES SAFETY.

“Therefore, thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28:16). **“For other foundation can**

no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 3:11). A substantial foundation insures the safety of all concerned. No man can afford to build for eternity upon a defective foundation.

The Lord Jesus is the only foundation one can build upon with assurance.

*“My hope is built on nothing less,
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”*

In His sermon on the Mount, Christ refers to this foundation. **“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it”** (Matt. 7:24-27).

When God reaches down and lifts a poor sinner from the pit, He places him upon a sure foundation, so that in the time of testing, he who is anchored to the Rock of Ages can say, “In Jesus I’m safe evermore.” Yea, all the combined forces of Hell and earth can not remove him. With sweet assurance, we triumphantly sing:

*“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word;
What more can he say than to you he hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?”*

*“In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty’s vale, or abounding in wealth,
At home or abroad, on the land, on the sea;
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.*

*“Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed!
I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.”*

*“When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The river of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.”*

*“When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee, I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.”*

*“E’en down to old age, all My people shall prove,
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.”*

*“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, tho’ all Hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!”*

27. IT A BELIEVER COULD PERISH, THEN THE JOY OF HEAVEN IS IN VAIN.

“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10).

Here on this earth a poor sinner turns from his sins to Christ as a Saviour. Heaven above sees this transaction and is set rejoicing. Emotion stirs all the heavenly spectators. But this believer later sins enough (who could ever tell when he has crossed that line) to lose his salvation. Then Heaven has been mistaken, their joy has been premature. Can the omniscient God rejoice, if He foreknew that the repentant sinner would eventually perish in sin? How utterly inconceivable!

28. NOTHING CAN SEPARATE A BELIEVER FROM CHRIST.

Twenty centuries ago Paul asked, **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”** (Rom. 8:35). Shall Satan? **“But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not”** (I John 5:18). Shall temptation? **“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”** (I Cor. 10:13). Shall sin? **“For sin shall not have dominion over you”** (Rom. 6:14). Shall the law? **“For ye are not under the law, but under grace”** (Rom. 6:14). Shall the world? **“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”** (I John 5:4). Shall the believer? **“They shall not depart from me”** (Jer. 32:40). As it was impossible for Noah to leave the ark after God had shut him in, so it is impossible for the believer to leave Christ. Someone asks, “Cannot a believer crawl off the Rock of Ages?” Beloved, where is the child of God who wants to crawl off the rock of Ages? But listen, Paul mentions ten agencies and agents, including the powers of Heaven, earth and Hell, which he declares are unable to separate the believer from God. **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord”** (Rom. 8:35-39).

Years ago, at Leceister, England, there

was a strike. Property was demolished and homes were ruined in the riot. In one home a lad was playing on the first floor, while his big brother was mending shoes upstairs. Fearing the rioters would break the door down, he stepped to the ladder and called: “Tom, Tom, they are going to smash the door open; make haste and come down.” The big brother, a strong, well-built man, put his burly back to the door, while the younger boy went on about his play. Sometimes the devil comes to this house of mine, and when I fear, lest he take me by force, I rush to the foot of the ascension ladder and cry: “Christ, Christ, make haste and come down: the devil is about to get me.” Like lightning He places Himself at the door of my heart, and there are not enough devils in all Hell to break the door open, when my “elder brother” has His back to the door.



The Chief End of Man

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (I Cor. 10:31).

Questions of conscience and difficulty had arisen in the Corinthian Church respecting the eating of meats which had been offered to idols. It was the common practice of the heathens to offer meat in their pagan worship on the altar to their gods and afterward to sell it in the public markets. This was the usual practice in the city of Corinth, and it was this practice which created no small problems to the Christians in that city.

Thus the Apostle Paul fully enters into this subject and states the duty of Christians with respect to these matters. He lays down the standard for all Christian action. Nothing is to be done against the glory of God. This is the fundamental principle of practical godliness. There are no branches of conduct exempt from this authority. A neglect of this rule is rebellion against the principles of revelation and true religion.

These words were not merely intended for direction to this single church in a particular instance, but for the government of all Christians throughout all generations in the general and habitual conduct of their lives. The words, **“whatsoever ye do,”** can scarcely be confined to the eating of idol-sacrifices. The Divine maxim is here laid down for all ages and dispensations. The ground of all human action is to be the glory of God. Nothing can be good or virtuous which does not originate from

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this source. When the heart is destitute of this principle and not governed by it, all is wrong, vicious, and sinful. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.

THE HONOR DUE GOD

In Isaiah 42:8 it is written: **"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."** Here Jehovah declares His essential glory and excellency. He is jealous of His glory, and He refuses to give the honor and worship which belongs to Him to any other creature or thing. God claims that all appropriate honor and glory should be rendered to Him and not to men or idols. The children of men should cherish no opinions, maintain no doctrines, nor indulge in any feelings that would be derogatory to the glory of God. Whatever we do which does not honor the name of God is sinful and disorderly.

The Lord God made the earth for man, but He made man for His glory. We are told in Isaiah 43:7 that God said of Israel: **"...for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him."** The original design of God for man is seen in this verse. God intended that all the schemes, desires, and actions of men would be to His honor and glory. But, due to the fall in Adam and human depravity because of this fall, the natural man is incapable of answering his original purpose. The Bible tells us: **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23). Yet I hasten to point out that man's inability in no way excuses his responsibility to do all to the glory of God.

QUALIFYING CONSIDERATIONS

It would not be humanly possible to always have this object in view, or immediately to contemplate it previous to the performance of every action. We are often so overwhelmed in the business of the day that we scarcely have time to think about God's honor as we should. Nevertheless, we can be doing all to the glory of the Lord. When we pause for a few moments we can recall the reason why we are engaged in our business. The reason being that we may do God's will in that sphere, place, and province in which His providence has placed us. We can be diligent in business and serve the Lord's Christ at the same time. Romans 12:11 says: **"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."**

When it is affirmed in my text that whatever we do should to be done for God's glory, we are not to take these words as excluding a proper and rational regard to ourselves and our families. We ought to love ourselves, for this is the standard of love to our neighbor. God surely does expect us to regard ourselves,

our own interests, and the happiness of our families and near connections. But let Divine revelation and true religion fix every thing in its proper place and order.

The great question is, whether self-interest, or the glory of God, should hold the supreme influence in our lives. The text settles the matter for all who truly fear God. In all our actions and plans let all be done to the glory of God. When this order is reversed nothing but confusion, disorder, and unhappiness can follow. If any circumstances could alter this supreme right, this would reduce Heaven to earth.

LAYS THE AXE TO SELFISHNESS

The Scriptures teach that Christians must not live unto themselves. Even in small things like eating and drinking, and all we do, we ought to aim at the glory of God, at pleasing and honoring Him. Our own individual interest and personal advantage ought not to be the chief end of our life. The apostle wrote: **"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's"** (Rom. 14:7-8).

The Christian finds himself in a world of selfish people. All the thoughts, plans, and purposes of the worldly man and woman tend only to self-advancement. The Christian cannot allow selfishness to be the ruling principle of his life. The Master taught: **"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"** (Matt. 16:24). We are not to please and serve ourselves. We are not to follow our own corrupt propensities and inclinations. We must live with a view to the glory of God.

The Scriptures teach that the glory of God is the highest end of all human action: **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever"** (I Peter 4:11). In all our gifts, ministrations, and services God must be glorified. God is glorified by any thing we do, if we do it through the mediation and merits of Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 6:20 says: **"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."** We are not our own; we are the purchased possession of our Savior. We belong to Him by creation and redemption. No member of our body, or faculty of our mind, is to be used according to our carnal pleasure. As the stewards of the manifold grace of God all our members and faculties must be consecrated to God.

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

Jesus Christ as the Mediator did not seek His own glory: **"And I seek not**

mine own glory" (John 8:50). Again it is written of Him in Hebrews 5:5: **"So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee"** (Heb. 5:5). The Lord from Heaven was not ambitious. He did not enter the high priest's office and begin to perform its duties without being called of God. Jesus said in John 7:18: **"He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."**

Jesus Christ is the greatest example of self-denial in the history of the world. He never sought His own praise or honor. This was true of His teaching and miracles. He never sought to vindicate Himself or exalt Himself. He was willing to suffer reproach and to be despised for the glory of God. In His life and death Jesus Christ glorified God the Father.

Every action, every word, every thought of Jesus Christ glorified His righteous Father. He summed up His whole life and ministry by saying: **"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"** (John 17:4). He in substance said: **"According to My covenant engagements, I have performed all You did require of Me for the accomplishment of the salvation of Your people given to Me. I have magnified Your law and made it honorable. I am about to display Your justice and righteousness by redeeming the elect. I have and will continue to vindicate the dishonor done to Your name. All I have done has been for Your glory."**

WAYS TO GLORIFY GOD

We glorify God by being careful to maintain good works: **"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ"** (II Thess. 1:11-12). By the performance of good works we can even cause others to glorify God. Jesus Christ taught: **"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"** (Matt. 5:16). Simon Peter taught the same truth: **"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation"** (I Pet. 2:12).

When we show mercy to our fellow creatures we glorify God. When we are honest and fair in our dealings we honor the God of Heaven. When we pray unto Him and pay our tithes to His church He is praised. When we witness of His saving

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BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 12-1-2008 to 12-31-2008

Beginning Balance	\$6,954.98
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX.....	25.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	17.61
Berea B. C., Mansfield, OH.....	600.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....	60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX.....	100.00
Betty J. Brooks, Kansas City, MO.....	25.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	300.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR.....	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....	100.00
Grace B. C., Marion, IL.....	50.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV.....	200.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL	50.00
Landmark M.B.C., Moncks Corner, SC.....	50.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM.....	100.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH.....	100.00
New Testamnet B. C., Bristol, TN.....	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
New Testament B. C., Leivasy, WV.....	100.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA.....	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL.....	100.00
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., Northport, AL.....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC.....	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Walnut Creek B. C., Centerburg, OH.....	50.00
Subscriptions	310.00
Anon.....	265.00
Dividing Checks	300.00
Sub Total	\$4,232.61
TOTAL.....	\$11,187.59
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing.....	581.71
Postage	771.59
Wages	2,000.00
FICA	152.95
Dividing Checks	300.00
Total Expenditures	3,806.25
.....	7,381.34
Rounding State Tax	-.50
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,380.84

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 1-1-2009 to 1-31-2009

Beginning Balance	\$13,017.72
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....	100.00
.....	575.00
TOTAL	13,592.72
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	200.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	200.00
.....	\$13,392.72
Interest	+2.10
.....	13,394.82
Less Corbin, KY des.	-1,690.92
ENDING BALANCE	\$11,703.90
CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT	
Beginning Balance	\$1,690.92
RECEIPTS:	
.....	1,690.92
EXPENDITURES:	
.....	1,690.92
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,690.92

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will host a Spring Fellowship Meeting on Saturday April 4th. Service time is 10:00 a.m.

All are invited to attend. The church will be providing a meal after the services.

Chief End of Man

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grace and worship Him in the beauty of holiness we promote His glory. Even in such small things as eating and drinking in His name we answer our chief end.

God is glorified when we suffer reproach for His name's sake: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (I Pet. 4:14). By patience and fortitude in suffering, by dependence upon the promises of God, and by adhering to His Word which the Spirit of glory has revealed, God is on our part glorified. In imprisonments, scourgings, or even an ignominious death (John 21:19), we ought to praise and glorify God for being counted worthy to suffer shame for His sake.

OUR GREAT CONCERN

The rule of my text is designed to be one of the chief directors of our lives. It is to guide all our conduct and to constitute a test by which to try our ways. God's glory must be the chief end of all our actions and words. Those which are otherwise cannot be true virtue or contain real goodness in them. Actions which dishonor God are the highest instances of pride and contempt. A supreme respect to God is the essential nature of virtue. All actions destitute of this are not merely destitute of virtue, but they are wicked and sinful, being such as God does not require.

Whatever can be done to advance the honor of God and the good of His people is right. Whatever cannot be done with this chief end in mind is wrong. What plans and programs we can form that will have this end are good and proper. Whatever cannot be made to have this tendency, and that cannot be commenced, continued, and consummated with this distinct and definite design, must be abandoned and aborted.

Often people ask me as a minister of the gospel such questions as the following: Is it all right to smoke? to play cards? to go to the dance and drink? to read true story books? to watch TV? to tell jokes? to engage in mixed bathing? to dress in modern apparel? My text answers all these questions. It lays down a general rule to resolve all these questions. Whatever we can do to the glory of God and our spiritual edification is okay. What is not for our good and God's glory is wrong and sinful.

THE SIN OF NOT GLORIFYING GOD

The unregenerate man has no concern for God's glory. His depraved nature constantly leads him to seek too much honey: "It is not good to eat much honey; so for men to search their own glory is not glory" (Prov. 25:27). To covet popularity and public applause is not a man's glory

but his shame. It is not true honor to him.

Christians, of all people on earth, should not be given over to seeking vain glory. Philippians 2:3 says: "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Galatians 5:26 also declares: "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." It is our duty to seek "the honor that cometh from God only" (John 5:44) and never be found among those who "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43).

The unsaved, and some who profess to know Christ, eat and drink and live entirely for themselves. They act as if they were independent of God and that no one was lord over them. They are possessed by the spirit of the king of Babylon to whom Daniel said: "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified" (Dan. 5:22-23). Does your life glorify God? Is your every action for the honor and praise of the God of Heaven? Or, could it be you have the spirit of Belshazzar?

Let us examine the leading motives of our lives that we may be humbled for our declensions and aroused from our slumbers to a closer walk with God. See that you live not to yourself but unto the God which redeemed you and called you by His grace. Let us all often be reminded of this rule of conduct. May each time that we eat and drink be a time when we will remember to do all to the glory of God. Colossians 3:17 admonishes us: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

CONCLUSION

Let us be encouraged in our efforts to glorify God. It shall not be long until our Savior and King shall return in all His glory to establish His glorious kingdom.

Then in our resurrection bodies we can fully and completely glorify God in every action and word. Oh, happy day! when "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD" (Num. 14:21; cf. Ps. 72:19). May our sovereign God hasten the day of Psalms 86:9: "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name." I long to see the day when every tongue shall "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11).

In Heaven above all the departed saints and the holy angels do all to the glory of God. John recorded this scene in Heaven: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:11-12). Let us on earth join with them in doing all to the glory of God.

My unsaved friend, you have sinned and come short of God's glory. You have failed in performing the chief end of man. You have lost the ability to glorify God. All men come short of glorifying God, for to glorify God is to keep the whole law. You have come short of rendering to God the glory due unto Him. The Lord killed Herod and took him to Hell because "he gave not God the glory" (Acts 12:23). What do you think He is going to do with you for having not glorified Him? Will you fare better than Herod?

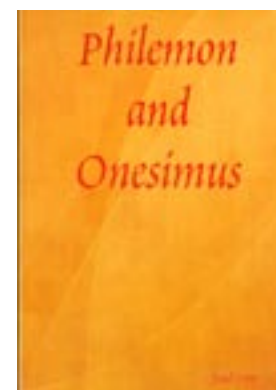
The Bible makes it plain that God is glorified only through Christ (Eph. 3:21). Only those who have repented of their sins and trusted Christ can "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). Have you repented of your sins? Have you committed the keeping of your soul to the blessed Savior? If you have not I plead with you to flee from the wrath to come. Flee to the Rock of Ages for refuge and redemption. Then you can say with the psalmist: "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore" (Ps. 86:12).



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