

Bad News of the Gospel

By Dan Stepp
of Given, West Virginia



of all uncleanness."

I'm afraid the gospel has some bad news for all of you in this crowd that are depending on your outward good works to gain an entrance into Heaven. Romans

chapter 3:10,12 tells us: **"There is none righteous, no, not one... They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."** Romans 3:23 says: **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."**

Friend, if you are in this group, the bad news of the gospel for you is that you are headed full speed for Hell! It takes more than outward good works to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. We must have

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Normally, when we think of the Gospel we think of the literal meaning of the word which is "Good News." And, surely, the Gospel is good news, for without the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ all the sons of Adam would spend eternity in the pits of Hades. But the Gospel as presented by the inspired Word of God is nothing but bad news to certain classes of people.

The first group to whom the Gospel brings bad news is the crowd that says, "I'm not so bad, I pay my bills. I give to charity. I help my neighbor. I don't steal, I don't cuss or smoke." This is the same crowd Jesus Christ our Lord spoke of in Matthew 23:27: **"...for you are like unto whited sepulchers, (tombs), which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and**

Magnifying God's Word

Tom Ross
of South Point, Ohio



utmost respect.

Psalm 111:9 declares: **"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name."** If God's

"I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou has magnified thy word above all thy name" (Ps. 138:2).

This is one of the most profound statements found in all of the Word of God. The motivating force behind David's worship and praise of God Almighty was that God had magnified His own Word above His very own name. When we speak of the name of God we are referring to the sum of all of His attributes and perfections. When we begin to understand the magnitude and majesty of the holy name of Jehovah our hearts should be filled with reverential fear and awe. God is so great and powerful; so loving and gracious; so sovereign and exalted, His name is worthy of our

name is so holy, glorious, wonderful, and important then consider how much weight and emphasis God places upon His inspired Word! God has magnified His Word above His own name. If God has given His Word such an exalted and preeminent place, then those who claim to know and love God should give His Word an exalted and prominent place in their everyday lives. Yet I fear that such is not the case. A 1989 survey conducted by the Barna Research Group concluded

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"Thy Sins"

By Timothy Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

Matthew 9:1-8

Text: vs. 2 - **"... thy sins be forgiven thee."**

Sin is a subject which men seek to ignore. Sin is thought to be a concept or an idea that is out-of-date. Modern religion ignores the reality of sin. Sin is not mentioned in the classroom, on the newscast, in the courtroom, or even from the majority of pulpits. Nevertheless, sin is real. Sin ruins the lives of men, women, boys, and girls. Men go to hell because of their sins. There is only one answer to the sin problem, only one way to be free and forgiven of your sins, and that answer and that way is Jesus Christ and faith in Him.

In the incident of the healing of the paralytic or palsied man, Jesus made this pronouncement unto the man, **"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."** One of the things we find clearly and



emphatically taught in the scriptures is that the Lord knows all about sin, and He knows all about **"thy sins."** He knows your sins. He knows the sins that you have committed, He knows the sinful

thoughts of your heart, and He knows the sinful nature that you possess. The Bible says of Jesus while He was here upon this earth, **"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man"** (John 2:24, 25). Jesus knew what was in the palsied man. He knew all about that man's sins. He knew all about the sins of the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, which she attempted to conceal with her prevarication and sleight of mouth (John 4:15-18, 28, 29).

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What Is Our Rule of Faith and Practice?

By Todd Bryant
of Northport, Alabama



positions come and go. Baptists have held different positions on a number of things throughout the centuries. However, the Bible has remained the same. Today, I feel as though many believe

"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. 3:16-17).

Almost every Baptist statement of faith that you can find will have one common theme - the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice. Baptists have long proclaimed "Sola Scriptura," or, the Bible alone. God has supplied us with a perfect guidebook. It alone can be said to be **"a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"** (Psa. 119:105).

Several years ago, I committed myself to God's Word and it alone. I had spent a number of years concerned with pleasing the brethren. To my shame, I had to admit that error to myself. Doctrinal

our generation has somehow cleared up everything that our Baptist forefathers were wrong on. Is this arrogance or ignorance? The Bible warns us a number of times of the error of the last days. Don't misunderstand; I believe we, as Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptists, are the ones holding the truth of God's Word. I believe we are the Lord's churches. I believe we have the truth. But, let's not be so arrogant as to believe we have it all ironed out - that we are without fault.

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***"Just a pilgrim traveling through a weary land,
Striving hard to fulfill his Master's plan;
To work and serve and strive to be,
A servant whose wish is to please God indeed."***

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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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"Thy Sins"

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Sin is not hidden from the Lord. Your sins are not hidden from the Lord (Heb. 4:12, 13). Many people think that just because God does not stop them dead in their tracks that He does not know what they are doing. One day He may. One day He will, if you do not repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world and the Son of God. Other people think that God would not allow sin to take place if He were really a true, faithful, kind, and loving God. **"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"** (Rom. 9:20). God is not a party to your sins. God did not commit your sins. People complain that God ought to do something about sin. He has done something – He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for sinners upon the cross, and if you will come to Him in faith, He will say to you, **"Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."**

One of the reasons that men find the subject of sin displeasing and unpleasant is because it is a very personal subject. No one of us wants our individual and personal sins brought out into the light and into open view. You do not want your sins to be known, to be seen by others; you do not want anyone to know about **"thy sins."** You do not want to be held accountable for **"thy sins."** Jesus spoke to this palsied man in a very personal and individual manner – **"thy sins be forgiven thee."** Sin is the most personal thing in all the world. When Adam sinned in the garden, **"the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"** (Gen. 3:9). **"Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"** (Gen. 3:11). **"And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done?"** (Gen. 3:13). When David sinned in committing adultery with Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and had Uriah the Hittite killed, God's message unto David was, **"Thou art the man"** (II Sam. 12:7). **"Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight?"** (II Sam. 12:9) (Rom. 5:12). You need not be so concerned about the sins of others as you need to be concerned about **"thy sins."** People want to act as though their sins are somehow separate from themselves. They lie to themselves in their own hearts and minds and say, "Oh, I am not so bad. I am not really sinful." They call their sins by other names, a mistake, an error, a misunderstanding, a difference of opinion, a trifle. It does not matter what you call **"thy sins,"** they are still **"thy sins,"** and only the Son of man has power to forgive **"thy sins."**

"Thy sins" are what God says they are. They are exceeding sinful. They are an abomination to God. They are filthy,

and vile, and wretched. They are not worthy to be looked upon by Him. They are deserving of His anger, hatred, and vengeance. **"Sin is the transgression of the law"** (I John 3:4). Sin is disobedience to God and God's Word. Sin is dislike of God and God's Word. Sin is a preference and choice of self in the place of God and God's Word. Sin is enmity and animosity toward and against God. Sin is false belief, thought, and opinion. Sin is distrust and unbelief of God and God's Word. Sin is casting off of God's authority and rule. Sin is failing to meet and measure up to God's righteous demands, requirements, and claims. Sin is a leaving off and a going away from God and God's Word and from that which is right and true and good and holy. Sin is exactly what God says it is, and your sins are exactly what God says they are. It is not a question of whether your sins are worse or more than someone else's. **"Thy sins"** are exceeding sinful, and you must needs to rid of them by coming to Jesus Christ by faith. You must cease from the attempt to hide, to color, to gloss over your sins, to excuse yourself of them, and rather you must see them as what they truly are, and see yourself for what you truly are, a sinner (Rom. 7:13 Luke 18:13 Pro. 28:13).

You are under the wrath of God because of **"thy sins"** (John 3:18, 19; Eph. 5:3-6; Col. 3:5, 6). Why are sinners under the wrath of God? Why is God angry with unbelieving men, women, boys, and girls? Why, if they die without repenting and believing on Jesus Christ, will they go to a flaming, tormenting hell? The reason is because of their sins. You, if you be yet in your sins because you have not come to Jesus Christ and received full and free forgiveness through His blood, you are under the wrath of God. God's anger is against you. God's fury and vengeance hang over you, and you are only a step away from falling into the flames of hellfire forever. God's anger with you is not because of someone else, it is because of **"thy sins."** You do not need to be pointing at others and saying, "So-and-So did this. So-and-So did that." The sins that ought to be your first concern are your very own sins. Only **"thy sins"** will bring you to the pit of hell (John 8:24).

You need to be saved by Jesus Christ from **"thy sins."** The palsied man in our text needed his own sins forgiven, as well as his own disease and infirmity healed. He needed the Son of man to exercise His power to forgive sins. No doubt there were some other persons there who had various diseases, sicknesses, and infirmities. If some man there was blind, or some woman there had a deaf ear, or some child was sick with a fever, and Jesus had healed those persons, this palsied man would have remained bed-ridden. He would not have been helped at all. He did not need to be healed of those things, he needed to be healed of

his own infirmity. You do not need to be forgiven and saved from the sins of others, you need to be saved from **"thy sins."** You need Jesus to say unto you, **"Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."** You need Jesus Christ to use His power upon you, to free you from the guilt and penalty and power of your sins. There was no one else present who could have healed the man that was sick of the palsy, and there is no one else who may save you from your sins other than Jesus Christ. Oftentimes sinners want to say that, "Oh, I know someone worse off than me. They need the Lord." You need the saving mercies of Christ, beloved! You need Him to save you from your sins. **"There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12).

People are busy in this hour telling one another what they need. They tell sinners that they need to look at themselves differently. People will tell you, "Oh, you need a new image. You need to look at yourself differently." Others will say, "Oh, you need to blame your parents, or someone in your past for your problems." Others will say, "Oh, you need a change in your environment." These are all changes to something or someone else. No, beloved, you need to receive Jesus Christ and be saved from your sins. You – you – YOU are the one who needs Jesus Christ to save you. The Philippian jailor asked the correct question: **"What must I do to be saved?"** (Acts 16:30). Paul and Silas gave the correct answer: **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"** (Acts 16:31). If you hear the gospel, but you do not come to Christ, you do not call upon His name, you do not cry to God for salvation through His everlasting mercies, and you do not believe that Christ died for sinners and rose again, then you have missed everything. It matters not that someone else believes – you need to be saved from **"thy sins"** by Jesus Christ.

The only sins for which you may receive forgiveness are **"thy sins."** Jesus did not tell the man whom they brought to Him on a bed, "You are forgiven of the sins of the world;" or, "You are forgiven of your parents' sins." No, He said, **"Thy sins be forgiven thee."** It is your sins and yours alone that stand between you and God. It is your sins that condemn you. It is your sins that are ruining you and leading you to destruction. And it is your sins for which you may receive forgiveness (Matt. 1:21; I Pet. 2:24) What use is it to say that Christ died for sins if I do not know that He died for my sins? What use is it to talk about being forgiven if I do not know that I am forgiven? I do not need forgiveness for your sins. I need forgiveness for my sins. I need to have Christ say to me, **"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."** Sin is very personal. Salvation is very personal. You

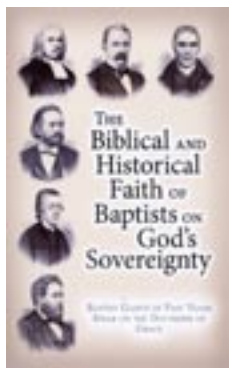
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"Thy Sins"

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are the person who needs to be saved, and you may be forgiven of your sins by Jesus Christ (Acts 13:38, 39). You will never come to Christ and say, "Oh Lord, I am here on behalf of So-and-So, and I want you to forgive them and save them." I do not say that you cannot pray for sinners to be saved. I do not say that at all. I am saying that you are not going to receive the forgiveness of someone else's sins, you may only receive the forgiveness of your sins, and it is because of your own sins that you need God's forgiveness. I am saying your prayers for someone else are going to be useless until you have received the forgiveness of your own sins and have been washed in Jesus' blood. This is the gospel declaration: "He that believeth is justified from all things."

There is only One who can speak your sins forgiven. There is only One who can say such comforting, healing, joy-giving, and soul-enlivening words to you as these, "**Son [or daughter], be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.**" That One is the Son of man. That One is the One who came down from heaven, who emptied Himself of His eternal glory being equal with God, and was found in fashion as a man. That One is the One who has power to forgive your sins. That One is the man Christ Jesus. That One is the Christ who died on Calvary. He alone can forgive you fully and freely of all "**thy sins.**"



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The Judgments of God

By E. G. Cook
 (1898 - 1986)

The seventieth, or last week of Daniel's prophecy is to be filled so full of judgments upon this earth that some Bible scholars call it "The Dispensation of Judgment." The title seems to fit perfectly in spite of the fact that modernists and liberals of our day have concocted them a god who is all love and mercy. Certainly the true God is love, and He is also merciful. If He were not a God of love and mercy it would be too bad for this poor sinful writer---and for the ones who may read this as well. But He is also a just God (Rom. 3:26), and justice demands judgment.

In discussing 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, C. H. Dodd, the great champion of modernists and liberals, on page 79 of his book, *The Apostolic Preaching*, says "There is nothing distinctively Christian either in its contents or in general tone."

That just shows how far these atheistic religionists will go to build up their god of love and mercy. But that will in no wise prevent the last seven years of Bible prophecy from being taken up with great and terrible judgments.

I

The first of these judgments which we wish to discuss is that of the saints. It is terrible in the sense that many of us will be sorely surprised when we learn that many of our great and wonderful works (in our eyes) will not stand the test of that great day.

In II Corinthians 5:10 we read, "**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.**"

There are those who use this Scripture to support their false belief in a general judgment, but Paul is talking to the same group of people in the first verse of this chapter. So if there are lost people included among the "**we**" in verse 10, there are also lost people who have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. That is absurd, is it not?

In II Corinthians 3:11-15 we read that if our (the believers) works stand the test, we shall receive a reward; but if our works are burned up we shall suffer loss, but we ourselves shall be saved so as by, or through, fire. The reward here in the Scripture is not salvation. We must have salvation in order to be eligible to be at this judgment. This judgment of the saints takes place after we have been caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (I Thess. 4:16-17).

II

The next judgment we shall consider



is that of the Jews. In Jeremiah 30:4-7 we read, "**And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands, on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble.**"

Then in Daniel 12:1, "**And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people (the Jews) and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.**"

And in Matthew 24:15-21 we find this to be the "**great tribulation.**" This judgment upon the Jews who have turned away from our Lord in unbelief will take place during the seven years of the last week of Daniel's prophecy, and especially during the last half of this time.

III

Next, let us think for a moment about the judgment of the Gentiles' world powers. This may be called the smiting of the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image in Daniel 2. In this judgment our Lord is bringing to an end the times of the Gentiles (see Luke 21:34). In order to do this our Lord brings all these great Gentile armies together in one place. In Revelation 9:16 we see there are to be two hundred million men brought together, and in Ezekiel 39:4 we learn they are to fall upon the mountains of Israel, that is, upon the hills of Megiddo. The battle of Armageddon could not be fought any where else in the world. The battle of Atlanta had to be fought in and around Atlanta. Had it been fought in Memphis, it would not have been the battle of Atlanta.

It is indeed interesting to note how a 200,000,000 men army is brought into the mountains of Israel. In Ezekiel 38:10 we read, "**It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought.**" If we read the following verses we will see that their evil thought is to go to the land of Israel and take spoil! If we turn to Revelation 16:13-14 we will see the three frog-like spirits which come from the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. These spirits go forth unto the kings (or rulers) of the earth to gather them to the battle of that

great day of God Almighty. We read in I Kings 22:20-22 how these spirits do their work. When these armies are come together against the land of Israel, we hear God saying in Ezekiel 38:18-19 "**My fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken.**" This is not the god of the modernists and liberals, but it is the God of the Bible.

In Revelation 14: 20 see the blood of the great host of men running down the plain of Esdraelon up to the horse's bridle for the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs (about 176 miles). In Ezekiel 38:22 God says He will rain upon them great hailstones, fire and brimstones. And Revelation 16:21 we see these great hailstones which weigh about a talent each. A talent, as used here, is about one hundred pounds. Just think of one hundred pound blocks of ice falling out of the heavens upon these men! No wonder their blood runs to the horse's bridle for 176 miles! God's fury has come up in His face, and He is pouring out His wrath upon His enemies.

In Revelation 19:17 John says, "**And I saw an angel standing in the sun: and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God.**" This should read "the great supper of God." And truly it is a great supper.

In Ezekiel 39:19 God tells the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field to eat fat until they are full, and drink blood till they are drunken, of His sacrifice which He has sacrificed for them. On Calvary's cross our Lord sacrificed His own blood for us, but here we see Him sacrificing the blood of His enemies for the fowls of the air and beasts of the field. In Ezekiel 39:12 we find that it takes the children of Israel seven months to bury what is left of this great supper in order that they may cleanse the land.

In Ezekiel 38:14 God says, "**In that day when My people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?**" In other words He is saying don't you know when to let My people alone?" And in Ezekiel 39:8 we hear Him as He says, "**Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD: this is the day whereof I have spoken.**"

In other words He is saying I've been telling you this was coming, but you would not believe it. He told the people before the flood, through His preacher Noah, that the flood was coming, but they only laughed at him. This writer once thought of the battle of Armageddon as being fought by two, not the case. God is here delivering His people from their enemies just as He delivered them from Pharaoh in the long ago, that is, by His mighty arm.

IV

The next judgment in line seems to be
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Judgments of God

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that of the beast and the false prophet. In Revelation 19:20 we find that they are taken and cast into hell alive. In the Old Testament we learn that two men, Enoch and Elijah, were taken up into heaven alive. Here we see two men cast into hell alive.

V

Then, finally, we come to the judgment of old Satan himself. In Revelation 20:1-3 we see him as he is chained and cast into the bottomless pit for one thousand years. Bible-doubting modernists like Edward A. McDowell tell us that this means Satan's power will be limited for an indeterminate period of time, but the Bible says he will not be able to deceive the nations any more for a thousand years, and I believe it.

VI

This brings us to the time when our Lord takes His place on the throne of His father David, so one more judgment now comes into view. This is the judgment of the nations found in Matthew 25:31-46. Here we find that the nations of the earth that have been good to our Lord's brethren (the Jews) will enjoy the thousand year reign of our Lord here on earth, but those nations that have persecuted His brethren will be destroyed.

Dear reader what will your status be when the One Who is the ancient of days shall sit upon His throne that is like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire?



Our Rule of Faith

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I am confident in my theology. I am not, however, dogmatic about it. Let me clarify my definition of "dogmatic." *Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) defines "dogmatic" as "Positive; magisterial; asserting or disposed to assert with authority or with overbearing and arrogance; applied to persons; as a dogmatic schoolman or philosopher." I believe the church I pastor is standing for the truth once delivered to the saints. I believe our goals and desires are to exalt Christ and His Word. If I didn't believe that, I'd be somewhere else. However, I do not want to be arrogant about it.

I have heard preachers loudly proclaim, "I have not changed one position in 40 years" as they pound the pulpit. If this is true, I do not want these men as my pastor. The Christian life ought to be one of improvement. We need to change for the better. We need to become conformed to Christ's image more and more from the day we are born again until the day we leave this life. I'll be the first to admit that

my position on several things has changed since I was saved. They've changed since I was called to preach. Those positions needed to be changed. I was wrong. I was following the teaching of men rather than God's Word. I needed to be cleansed and God used His Word to cleanse me. I want it to be my foundation for all faith and practice.

I recently read an article in a Baptist newspaper that began by stating the Biblical position on a certain subject. Then, the rest of the article was spent informing the reader how there was a better position than the Biblical position. This writer went on to suggest that one was actually sinning if he followed the Biblical precedent rather than his position on this subject. I shutter to think that most of the readers of this article would agree with this man if I shared the subject. But, I will not. The subject doesn't matter. The principle is what matters. The Bible is right and it is enough to "thoroughly furnish unto all good works." We don't need more. We fail daily at the commands of the Bible. Why in the world do we want to add to it? Does the warning against adding to God's Word mean anything to us today? Do we feel that our ideas about morality and doctrine are better than God's? Sometimes, I fear that we wouldn't recognize the Messiah if He came today any more than the Pharisees did because we have a preconceived idea of what He would be. Jesus was, in fact, exactly opposite of what the religious "conservatives" of His day thought the Messiah would be like. Would we expect Christ to follow the Father or our mold of what we believe a Christian ought to be?

I am a firm believer that God will judge me by His Word. This is the reason I don't spend a lot of time trying to please the brethren. Paul said, **"But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self"** (I Cor. 4:3). Paul didn't seem to spend any time worrying about pleasing the brethren. His concern was pleasing God. He went on to say, **"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ"** (Gal. 1:10). When some opposed Peter and John for teaching about Jesus, they answered, **"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye"** (Acts 4:19). Who were these brethren serving? I don't think there is any question.

All Scripture is inspired. Let me be the first to say that this article is not. None of my writings have been inspired the same way that the original autographs were inspired. Yet, I believe the Spirit bears witness of God's Truth when I read His Word. I pray I am able to relate these truths. I pray that I challenge those I come in contact with daily to look into God's Word for truth because it cannot

be found any other place for certain. The brethren may be wrong. Surely, we can look back to centuries where the majority of brethren were wrong on certain subjects. Yet, they believed as confidently as we are that they were right. They believed they had a Biblical foundation. Is it not concerning, however, that so many have been in error on various subjects? Is it not concerning that during any certain century, there was a consensus among most on any certain subject? Is it possible that we, as a generation, may be wrong on a few things? Maybe. The only way we can know is to use the Bible as our rule of truth. Let me reiterate, I believe Sovereign Grace Baptists are God's people. I believe we alone have the authority to carry the Commission. I believe we have the truth. Yet, I am cautious enough to realize we may need fixing on a few things. God's Word is to be used to correct us. If we continue to blindly follow the brethren, we will never find the truth. God's Word is to be our guide.

I am concerned. I am concerned that we live in a day that we take our "theology" into our personal Bible study. I'm fearful that we oftentimes conform the Bible to our "theology" rather than conforming our theology to the Bible. I'm even more fearful that we judge our brethren by our "theology" rather than by God's Word. This was the attitude of those that condemned Christ. That fact alone should be enough to cause us to pause and meditate. Though we would condemn the Catholics (and rightly so) for following tradition rather than Scripture, I fear we sometimes do the same thing.

I have been disappointed more than once in my ministry when the Bible has been presented as proof for any certain subject and the hearer seemed more concerned about what he or she had been taught. Is it not possible that we have been misled on something? If so, is our desire the same as the Psalmist? Do we desire for God's Word to guide us or are we content following a man? The Bible should never be set aside. The Bible should never be replaced for man's opinions. We are to follow God's Word.

I don't want to be misunderstood. No doubt, some will scoff at such a bold article. But, my purpose is not to expose any particular error. I am not finger pointing. I don't necessarily have any doctrine or practice in mind. My goal is to remind us all that we are Baptists. And, as Baptists, the Bible is to be our *only* rule of faith and practice. Is it? Is it yours? Are you more concerned with pleasing the brethren than you are with pleasing God? I fear that we all can be there if we are not careful. Let us all take a step back and examine ourselves.

May God lead us into all truth through His marvelous Word!



Bad News of the

(Continued from page 281) ♦

the inward work of the Holy Spirit as Christ taught Nicodemus: **"Ye must be born again."**

The second group for whom the gospel has bad news is the "God is love and not wrath" crowd that says God loves men too much to send anyone to Hell. Ezekiel 18:4 says: **"the soul that sinneth, it shall die."** John 3:36 says: **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."**

The Gospel of the Bible teaches that God hates sin and that He will pour out His wrath upon the ungodly. Those of you who are depending on God being too full of love to send anyone to Hell are going to end up crying out with the rich man of Luke 16:24: **"I am tormented in this flame."**

The third group to whom the gospel brings bad news is those who say. "I'll turn over a new leaf and be saved when I am ready," or "You can pick and choose the time of making your decision for Christ."

To those in this group Jonah 2:9 says: **"Salvation is of the Lord."** Ephesians 2:8 says: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."** Psalm 110:3 says: **"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."** The Gospel teaches us that God is a sovereign in all things; that He does according to His will in the army of Heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth. This teaches us that God is the one that chooses the time and place to call men unto Himself. Our only hope as a sinner deserving of Hell is to cry out with the publican: **"God be merciful to me a sinner."**

The fourth group that is in for bad news from the gospel is the crowd that teaches salvation by baptism or church membership. Acts 8:36-37 teaches us that saving faith must come before baptism. Acts 2:47 teaches us that only those who are already saved are added to the church.

As much as I love the Church that our Lord Jesus Christ established while here upon the earth, and though I believe that it is very important to have Scriptural baptism, I must insist by the Word of God, that neither baptism nor church membership has ever saved a soul from Hell. If you are depending on these for your salvation, then I must say to you as Peter said to Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8:21: **"Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."**

Friend, if you find yourself in any of the groups that we have mentioned and find that you are depending on some

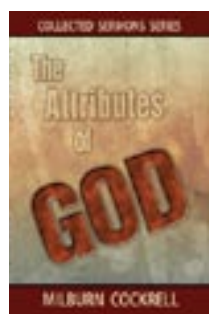
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Bad News of the

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man's way or plan of salvation, we ask that you would hear Peter as he speaks in Acts 4:12: **"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."**

May God bless His Word is our prayer.



Retail \$8.00

This book contains fifteen chapters. Chapters cover the following attributes: Omniscience, Foreknowledge, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Eternity, Holiness, Love, Goodness, Veracity, Spirituality, Mercy, Independency, Justice, Immutability and Long-Suffering.

Will the Circle Be Unbroken?

By Harold Brunson
(1926 - 2008)

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I come out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them. 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.

"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 lovest me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:1-12, 24).

First, I believe that God has a



great circle with reference to election. Second, I believe that God is progressively forming this circle. Third, I believe that it is impossible for this circle to be broken.

I. GOD HAS A GREAT CIRCLE

I believe that in this circle are all of God's people that He foreknew before the foundation of the world.

They are His, first of all, *by sovereign election.*

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:4-5).

"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48).

"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Tim. 2:10).

"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God" (I Thess. 1:4).

I believe that God's people are His by sovereign election. There is not a person in Christ that God ever chose on the basis of foreseen faith. That would make the actions of a sovereign God contingent upon the actions of depraved humanity, and that is contrary to the Word of God. Faith is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8).

I believe second, that they are not only His by sovereign election, but they are His *by divine protection.* I believe in election so strongly that I believe God will actually protect His elect, even before they are saved by the grace of God. I believe there is a grace that precedes even saving grace which reaches the hearts of men today.

"Are they not all ministering spirits,

sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Heb. 1:14).

Spurgeon referred to this grace as "prevenient grace."

I believe that God has the angels of Heaven watching over some unsaved people who are His elect that will be saved later than even this hour. Perhaps there may be one in this group reading this today.

They are His by sovereign election. They are His by divine protection. One day they will be His "by sudden collection."

"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:31).

There is coming a day when the Lord Jesus, in Almighty power through His angels, is going to suddenly collect His elect together, and for the first time all of them will be together. Talk about a hallelujah time on the hills of glory! God's people are going to have it when they are suddenly collected to the bosom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

II. GOD IS PROGRESSIVELY FORMING THIS CIRCLE

This circle is incomplete today, looking at it from the human standpoint. All of the elect have not yet been saved, but the circle is being progressively formed. Looking at it through our eyes, every time one of the elect is saved, more of God's circle which cannot be broken is being formed.

I believe that God forms this circle, first of all, "by the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ." There is nothing that will break a sinner's heart any quicker than the preaching of the gospel of the Son of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18).

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21).

"But we are bound to give thanks

always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:13-14).

I thank God for every true God-called gospel preacher in this world who is preaching the gospel of the Son of God which can still break the hearts of lost humanity today.

I believe He not only works through the preaching of the gospel, but through "the power of the Holy Spirit."

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me, Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:7-11).

Now here is what I believe the Holy Spirit does today: I believe the Holy Spirit, first of all, uses the Bible, which is the Sword of the Spirit, and convicts sinners of one particular sin, and that is the sin of unbelief. I believe the Holy Spirit convinces men of righteousness---not their own righteousness, because they don't have any---but the righteousness of the Son of God. The Holy Spirit shows the righteousness of Christ to lost humanity. This is what the Bible teaches today.

Then He also convinces men of judgment which is to come. We hear much about the love of God in our modernistic, liberalistic day. I want to tell you that the God Who tells us about Heaven in the Bible, has far more to say about Hell than He has to say about Heaven. The God Who is a God of love is a God of wrath, and there needs to be a return to Baptist pulpits of not only preaching the love of God, but the preaching of the wrath of God.

Not long ago one of these sophisticated female flappers walked out of the church

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Tune in to the Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	95.9.....	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	680.....	5,000 AM
WFAM, Augusta, GA.....	Sunday 4:00 - 4:30 p.m.....	1050.....	5,000 AM
WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	101.9.....	3,000 FM
WIJD, Mobile, AL.....	Sunday 8:00 - 8:30 p.m.....	1270.....	5,000 AM
KARI, Blaine, WA.....	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.....	550.....	5,000 AM
KXKS, Albuquerque, NM..	Saturday 2:15 - 2:45 p.m.....	1190.....	10,000 AM
DXUM, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 2:30 - 3:00 p.m.....	819 Khz.....	10,000 AM
DXDS, Digos City, Philippines...	Sunday 12:00 - 12:30 p.m.....	1161 Khz.....	1,000 AM

Will the Circle Be

(Continued from page 285) ♦

building, after hearing a strong message on the wrath of God, and said that she thought the preacher ought to preach more on love. The next Sunday morning he preached on **“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.”**

The next Sunday morning he preached on **“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”**

The next Sunday morning he preached on **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”**

Then she walked out of the church building and said, “Pastor, give us some more of that old-fashioned Hell-fire and damnation.”

I believe the God Who loves people is also angry with people, and is a God of wrath, and Baptist preachers ought to get away from sentimentalism and start preaching the wrath of God.

God forms this circle not only by the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Spirit of God, but I believe that “His providence” also enters into it. I am glad that I do not relegate the works of God to a cold, impersonal fate. I believe God’s providence works in this world, and I believe that God’s works are being carried out---not behind time or ahead of time, but on schedule.

I believe that men ought to recognize the providence of God in every move they make in this old sinful world today. Joseph’s brethren sold him into Egypt and he later revealed himself to them and they were afraid that Joseph would not forgive them. (Let me deviate long enough to say that Christian living is made up of two things: namely giving and forgiving, and we ought to remember that today)! They wondered if Joseph would forgive them. Joseph forgave them and looked them in the face and said, “Ye meant it for evil, but God meant it for good” (Gen. 50:20).

I am glad that God forms this circle by the preaching of the gospel, and the power of the Holy Spirit, and by His providence which works throughout the face of this earth today. I believe that God is forming this circle, and I am glad to be among a group of people this morning who make up a part of God’s elect. How wonderful it is to sit together with God’s people who think alike and who love the Word of God and, above all, love the Lord Jesus, and beyond that ascribe to Him all the credit and the glory for the salvation of their souls.

III. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THIS CIRCLE TO BE BROKEN

I do not believe that Jesus Christ died in vain. I believe it is impossible for the circle of God’s elect to be broken. I believe

it is impossible, first of all, because *His power cannot be penetrated.*

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (I Pet. 1:5).

God’s power is unlimited. There is no power as great as the power of God. The atomic bomb, the hydrogen bomb, and all the nuclear bombs put together cannot equal the power of God. Not one thing that man or the Devil does to us can penetrate the power of God to break the circle of God’s elect today. This is wonderful! It is an occasion of rejoicing in the heart of every person who has been born of the Spirit of God. You cannot break down the power of God.

The circle cannot be broken for a second reason---because His will and His compassion and His mercy are “sovereign,” and they cannot be nullified.

“For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth but of God that sheweth mercy. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth” (Rom. 9:15-16, 18).

“And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him” (John 6:65-66).

If you get around a group of Baptists who are about 98 percent Arminian and 2 percent television and preach to them the sovereignty of God and election, you scare the daylights out of them. They need it! I believe that God’s mercy, God’s compassion, and God’s will are sovereign and mankind cannot nullify them, therefore, this circle will not be broken.

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

I am so glad amidst all of our unfaithfulness and our shortcomings that there is a God Who will never turn His back on His children. He promised to keep us forever, and His election and His purposes must stand.

Not too long ago, I read about a little boy who picked up his granddaddy’s Bible, and in turning through it he noticed beside several verses of Scripture the letters “T” and “P.” He looked at his granddaddy, and said “Granddaddy, what do those letters ‘T’ and ‘P’ mean?”

The Christian granddaddy patted his little grandson on the head and the tears began to roll down his cheeks as he tried to instruct his little grandchild, and he said, “Listen to Granddaddy. Everywhere you see ‘T’ and ‘P,’ that is a promise of God, and it means that Granddaddy has ‘tried’ them and that God has ‘proven’ that He will not break any of these promises.”

God’s promises are tried and proven, and that is the reason the circle of His elect will never be broken.

There is a fourth reason: the circle cannot be broken because *His purpose*, being eternal, cannot be thwarted. Men may make plans, but God overrules their plans and their plans have to be changed. I do not believe that one purpose of God has ever had to be changed. I believe God’s purposes are eternal, and His purpose to save a people for His name was an eternal purpose. I am glad that the purpose of God in the election of His people cannot be thwarted by any power or people within this world.

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (II Tim. 1:9).

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29).

That word “predestinate” in the Greek carries with it the idea of **“mark them off”** or **“fence around them.”** Let me tell you something. God’s elect couldn’t go to Hell if they wanted to. God’s elect are surely going to walk the streets of Glory.

“Moreover 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). This is God’s eternal purpose.

I have always been told that a chain is just as strong as its weakest link. I believe election was in eternity by God, and I do not believe that you can break a link in that chain today. I believe that predestination is another link in the chain and cannot be broken. I believe that those whom He elected and predestinated, He called, and here is another link that cannot be broken: **“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”** (John 10:26-27).

I am glad God’s sheep are eternally secure because of election, predestination, calling, and justification.

I heard a preacher say one time that justification is like a pardon. Well, that is not so. I had my heart broken three years ago when a person in my church embezzled \$130,000.00 from one of our local banks. She got five years; she served fourteen months and she is out today.

You could walk up to her and say, “You are a bank embezzler,” and she would stick the pardon in your face and say, “No, I have a pardon.” I say to you, even though she might have a pardon from the penitentiary, she will always bear the marks that she was guilty of being an embezzler.

I am glad Jesus does more than pardon people when He saves them by the grace of God. A man may have pardon and still be guilty, but justification carries with it the idea that man is as though he had never sinned. In the eyes of God, a justified sinner stands perfect in Jesus Christ. Justification is wonderful. Our sins are cared for---past, present and future---under the blood!

God’s sovereignty is seen in “foreordination, predestination, calling, justification,” and then “glorification.” I am glad that one day all five links in this chain are coming together. One day every one of God’s elect is going to be together in that great circle because the One Who did foreknow, the One Who did predestinate, the One Who called, and the One Who justified, is going to glorify all of His people. It will be wonderful when God’s elect all get together for the first time in the glory world.

As I said, this circle cannot be broken because God’s power cannot be penetrated, God’s promises cannot be broken, God’s purposes cannot be nullified, and because God’s will and compassion cannot be done away with by all the power of mankind. The glorification of the elect of God is going to be the greatest thing that ever transpired in the history of this world. I believe we are living close to the end of time, and I long for the second coming of our Lord and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Not too long ago I buried one of the best friends I ever had---a Baptist deacon---one of God’s truly beloved. He was one of God’s elect, one of God’s great men, one of God’s noblemen. I thought of this man when I wrote about him in the last chapter of my book, *“TAPS FOR ETERNITY,”* in the sermon, “Gone, But Not Forgotten.” He believed the doctrine of election and would weep and rejoice while I preached it.

At first, I could not understand, humanly speaking, how a man forty-two years of age, who was at the zenith of his life, standing for God’s Word and serving God devotedly, was so suddenly snatched from this world. However, I accepted Romans 8:28 because I believe it applies in all things. I preached his funeral in a suit he gave me. We were deer hunting buddies, we were fishing buddies, and above all, we were buddies and brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I worried about his family very much because of their great loss. I waited until the marker was placed on his grave before I went back to the cemetery. I

♦ (Continued on page 287)

THE END IS NEAR! WILL YOU BE PREPARED?

Look at your mailing label on the front page of this month’s paper. If you see above your name “Expires 3/2010” then this will be your last issue. So don’t miss an issue! Renew now so you won’t miss all the articles in next month’s *Banner*.

Will the Circle Be

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prayed constantly that God would reveal to his wife the doctrine of glorification as related to the doctrine of election. One day she came to me and said, "Brother Harold, if you would like to see the marker that I placed for J.C., it is ready." So I went out to the cemetery and I stood by the grave of my best friend and I saw written on his tombstone these words:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

When I read this, I knew my prayers were answered.

Let me close by saying, "I ain't what I want to be; I ain't what I'm gonna be; but praise God, I ain't what I was."

God has a circle which is being progressively formed, and it cannot be broken. Will His circle ever be broken? No! No! Ten thousand times no!



Magnifying God's

(Continued from page 281) ♦

that only 18%, less than two of every ten, professing Christians read the Bible every day. Even worse, 23% of professing Christians, almost one in four, said they never read the Word of God!

In light of such alarming statistics I can think of nothing that is needed more than a greater emphasis upon the study and application of the Word of God. My motivation for engaging in this study is to challenge God's people to magnify the Word of the Living God in their everyday life. What if every professing Christian began to seriously read and study the Word of God on a daily basis, and then began to apply its precepts to the way in which they lived their lives? A revival of enormous proportion would sweep over our land like a holy flood, transforming our homes, churches, and communities in a most miraculous way. Christians must be brought to the place where they view the Word of God as essential to their very existence as Jesus declared: **"...It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"** (Matt. 4:4).

I agree with what Gardiner Spring wrote in 1847:

"The Sacred Writings deserve the most serious and patient study, and affectionate regard. It is the Great God who speaks to men in these writings. It is God your Maker, your Lawgiver, your Redeemer, your Judge. It is the voice of your Father who is in Heaven, uttering truths which no human intellect ever conceived; dictating them by His own Spirit, and subscribing them with His

own name and seal. He who inhabits eternity, and fills and occupies it as His own dwelling-place, here makes discoveries of the eternal world to the view of mortals, as momentous as the heaven where He dwells. Every other book is fiction and romance, compared with this." (*The Bible Not of Man*, p. 316-17).

Oh, that God would grace us with the ability to exalt and magnify His Word! I offer the following suggestions as ways in which God's people may magnify the Word of the Lord:

INSPIRATION

"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. 3:16-17).

1. If we are to magnify the Word of God then we must regard it in its entirety as being inspired by God. The Greek word for **"inspiration"** is *Theopneustos* which means breathed of God. The sixty-six books which make up the Holy Scriptures, divided into the Old and New Testaments, are literally a product of the breath of God as He moved upon men to write exactly what He willed to reveal. II Peter 1:21 states the method of inspiration in the following way: **"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."**

2. If the sacred Scriptures are inspired by God then they must be regarded as the infallible revelation of God without any admixture of error. It is impossible to magnify the Word of the Lord if we fail to acknowledge that it is a work of perfection and purity. Psalms 33:4 states: **"For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth."** Proverbs 30:5 declares: **"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."** Because the Bible is the product of a Holy God we can be assured that it is likewise pure and holy. What confidence we can have in the infallible Word of the Living God! We can search its holy contents and be assured that we will never be steered in the wrong direction, or deceived in any way. The Bible is the only book of purity and perfection that exists in all of the world. As such it should be valued and treasured above the writings and opinions of sinful men. I believe that God's Word is inspired, immaculate, holy, trustworthy, accurate and worthy of my deepest respect and admiration.

3. If we are to magnify the inspired Word of God then we must regard the Scriptures as our final authority for all faith and practice. If we really believe that the Bible is God's inspired and infallible revelation of His mind and will for our lives then we must govern our lives by the

The Backside of the Desert



Brief Devotional Thoughts from Scripture by Joseph Harris

Don't Quit!

Nehemiah 4:1-14

Nehemiah is probably the most outstanding example of perseverance in the Bible. He persevered in rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem in the face of great difficulties.

Another man in more recent history persevered 28 years before achieving greatness. First, he lost his job in 1832. One year later, he failed in a business venture. In 1835, his sweetheart died; and the next year, he suffered from a nervous breakdown. Seven years later, he entered a bid for Congress and was defeated. He was however, elected to Congress in 1846, but lost five years later. Six more years passed, he tried again and was defeated in a bid for the Senate. In 1856, he lost the nomination for vice-president. Two years later, he was defeated again for the Senate. Then, in 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States of America.

Though Nehemiah did not have to persevere 28 years to rebuild the wall, the setbacks he suffered were just as powerful as those of Lincoln. Actually, Nehemiah's problems may have been more severe, since he was fighting a spiritual battle for the glory of God.

Nehemiah was successful because he remained focused on his goal. When he and the people received word that their

enemies were about to attack, he rallied the people together and stationed them by family around the weakened and exposed areas of the wall. When the enemy heard their attack plan was known to the Israelites, they withdrew. **"It came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his own work"** (Neh. 4:15).

The people remained focused on the goal at hand. They did not stop to have a praise and thanksgiving service, though they were surely thankful in their hearts. They did not get sidetracked and build a stone memorial for this day to be remembered forever. Instead, they immediately went back to work to finish the job at hand.

The writer in Hebrews gives a word of encouragement in perseverance. **"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"** (Heb. 12:1-2).

When you feel that you are at the end of your rope, tie a knot in the end of the rope and hold on. Hang in there. Don't quit! Victory is coming, for **"we shall reap, if we faint not"** (Gal. 6:9). Stay with the job at hand!

unwavering standard of **"Thus saith the LORD."** In order to magnify God's Word we must be willing to place ourselves under its authority, be obedient to its commands, suffer its rebukes, and submit to its direction regardless of what it may cost us. We must maintain the attitude of the Psalmist who wrote: **"Thou has commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments"** (Psalm 119:4-6). Every doctrine, every practice, every ordinance, every conviction that we maintain and defend must have as its source the authoritative Word of God. Isaiah 8:20 forcefully declares: **"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."**

I agree with the powerful insight of A.W. Pink who wrote:

"Surrender the dogma of verbal inspiration and you are left like a

rudderless ship on a stormy sea, at the mercy of every wind that blows. Deny that the Bible is, without any qualification, the very Word of God, and you are left without any ultimate standard of measurement and without any supreme authority. It is useless to discuss any doctrine taught by the Bible until you are prepared to acknowledge, unreservedly, that the Bible is the final court of appeal. Grant that the Bible is a Divine revelation and communication of God's own mind and will to men, and you have a fixed starting point from which advance can be made into the domain of truth." (*The Best of A.W. Pink*, p. 11).

PRESERVATION

"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalms 12:6-7).

1. If we are to magnify the Word of

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Magnifying God's

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God we must believe that the power of God has providentially preserved the Scriptures for our instruction and profit today. The sacred Scriptures were originally written in Hebrew and Greek, with a few verses written in Aramaic. However, there is no authentic copy of the original autographs of the Scriptures to be found. Are we to suppose that God's Word no longer exists because an authentic copy of the original autographs cannot be produced? Not if we believe the truth stated in Psalms 119:89 which declares: **"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."** By faith I believe that God has powerfully preserved His Word throughout all generations through faithful and accurate translations of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in a variety of languages the world over.

2. Even though men, devils, and popes have attempted to destroy it, the Bible remains as a Book Divinely preserved. We can rest assured that God's Word will never pass away. David had supreme confidence in God's ability to preserve His Word as evidenced by what he wrote in Psalm 119:152: **"Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever."** Ecclesiastes 3:14 declares: **"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."** Certainly God's Word would qualify as something which God has done! Isaiah 40:8 states: **"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."** Jesus Christ, the very embodiment of Truth believed in the preservation of Holy Scripture by stating: **"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"** (Matt. 24:35). I care not what the liberals, self-proclaimed scholars, and higher critics may say to the contrary, I believe that the Word of the Living God is preserved and profitable for us today! I am in full agreement with what the apostle Peter wrote long ago: **"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever..."** (1 Pet. 1:24-25a).

3. Since we don't have the original Hebrew and Greek autographs, and since a majority of English speaking people would be unable to read them even if we did, what translation of the Scriptures are English speaking people to regard as the preserved Word of God? I say without reservation that I regard the King James Authorized Version as the most trustworthy and accurate translation for English speaking people the world over. In the early 1600's God

was pleased to raise up perhaps the most august company of linguistic scholars ever assembled to translate the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures into English. God has faithfully preserved His Word in the King James Authorized Version for English speaking people. You can open your King James Bible and believe that you are reading the preserved Word of God for English speaking people. How thankful we ought to be that we don't need priests, potentates, or mediators to interpret the Bible for us. God has faithfully preserved His Word in our language so that we can know His mind and will for ourselves!

4. Other translations, in various native tongues, translated faithfully and accurately from the Textus Receptus likewise are the preserved Word of God. I don't believe that the English speaking people who trust in the King James Authorized Version are the only people who have an authentic Bible. Translations in other languages, faithful to the Received Text must also be considered authentic and accurate. However, the modern translations beginning with the Revised Version of 1880, produced by Westcott and Hort (both of whom were worshippers of Mary and denied the literal Genesis account of creation) all have one thing in common: they all use corrupt manuscripts. They all refer to the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus as reliable manuscripts, when in fact they are polluted and corrupted. Furthermore, every modern day version has omitted several words and even entire verses that are found in the King James Authorized Version. The modern translations would have you believe that John chapter eight and a majority of Mark chapter sixteen should really not be in the Bible at all! A majority of the modern translations openly attack the Deity of Christ, His blood atonement, and His resurrection by omitting words that are necessary to establish these essential truths. I don't trust the new perversions of the Bible. I will stick with the translation that God has been pleased to bless, the same one that my English Baptist and early American Baptist forefathers used: The King James Authorized Version.

5. If we fail to believe that God has preserved His Word up until this present day for our instruction and edification we are in essence calling God a liar! I am not about to enter into the murky waters of confusion and doubt fostered by the modern versions. I believe that God has been pleased to preserve His Word, and we can say without reservation that the King James Authorized Version is God's Word translated from the Hebrew and Greek for the English speaking people. By the grace of God here is where I take my stand: I believe without any reservation whatsoever, that I can say before the congregation of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, you have the preserved Word

of God for the English speaking people if you have a King James Authorized Version.

DEDICATION

"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10).

1. If we really believe that the Scriptures are inspired and preserved by God, then in order to magnify His Word we must be dedicated to the study of the Word of God. Anything that is worthwhile requires discipline and dedication. Gaining a knowledge of God's Word is no exception. It saddens me when I see how dedicated professing Christians are to sports, hunting, pleasure, and entertainment while placing the study of God's Word on the back burner. Of all the pursuits we should most heartily be engaged in, it should be the consistent and disciplined study of the Word of God. How can we possibly be dedicated to the cause of God and Truth if we fail to consistently spend time in the Book of Truth God inspired and preserved?

I agree with the observation made by Donald Whitney who wrote:

"No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God's

Word. Nothing can substitute for it. There simply is no healthy Christian life apart from a diet of the milk and meat of Scripture...Therefore if we would know God and be godly, we must know the Word of God intimately." (*Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, p. 24).

2. Tape recorded readings of the Bible prove that you can read through the entire volume out loud in just seventy-one hours. For some people that is about as much time they spend in front of the television in two weeks time! If you daily discipline yourself to read just three chapters of the Bible each day and five on Sundays you can read the entire Bible through in one year. If you read three chapters of the Old Testament a day, and three chapters of the New Testament a day you will have read the entire Bible through once, and the New Testament through four times in one year. Reading through the Scriptures at least once a year should be the goal of every Christian. This of course requires dedication, determination, and discipline; words that I fear are gradually disappearing from our culture.

The following account is a true story illustrating one man's dedication to

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Faith In God

*I knew a widow very poor,
Who four small children had:
The oldest was but six years old,
A gentle, modest lad.*

*And very hard this widow toiled
To feed her children four;
A noble heart the mother had,
Though she was very poor.*

*To labor, she would leave her home,
For children must be fed;
And glad was she when she could buy
A shilling's worth of bread.*

*And this was all the children had
On any day to eat:
They drank their water, ate their bread,
But never tasted meat.*

*One day when snow was falling fast,
And piercing was the air,
I thought that I would go and see
How these poor children were.*

*Ere long I reached their cheerless home---
T'was searched by every breeze---
When, going in, the eldest child
I saw upon his knees.*

*I paused to listen to the boy:
He never raised his head,
But still went on, and said, "Give us
This day our daily bread."*

*I waited till the child was done,
Still listening as he prayed;
And when he rose, I asked him why
That prayer he then had said.*

*"Why, sir," said he, "this morning, when
My mother went away,
She wept, because she said she had
No bread for us today.*

*"She said we children now must starve,
Our father being dead;
And then I told her not to cry,
For I could get some bread.*

*"Our Father," sir, the prayer begins,
Which made me think that he,
As we have no kind father here,
Would our kind Father be.*

*"And then you know, sir, that the prayer
Asks God for bread each day;
So in the corner, sir, I went,
And that's what made me pray."*

*I quickly left that wretched room,
And went with fleeting feet,
And very soon was back again
With food enough to eat.*

*"I thought God heard me," said the boy.
I answered with a nod;
I could not speak, but much I thought
Of that boy's faith in God.*

---Dr. Hawks

"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up" (Ps. 5:3).

Magnifying God's

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reading the Word of God:

"...A man in Kansas City was severely injured in an explosion. His face was badly disfigured, and he lost his eyesight as well as both hands. He had just become a Christian when the accident happened, and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no longer read the Bible. Then he heard about a lady in England who read Braille with her lips. Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in Braille. But he discovered that the nerve endings in his lips had been too badly damaged to distinguish the characters. One day, as he brought one of the Braille pages to his lips, his tongue happened to touch a few of the raised characters and could feel them. Like a flash he thought, 'I can read the Bible using my tongue.' Over a period of time he had read the entire Bible through four times. If he can do that, can you discipline yourself to read the Bible?" (Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, p. 30-31).

3. The Scriptures provide us with examples of people who were committed to the consistent study of the Word of God. Acts 17:11 declares: **"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."** Imagine how many false doctrines and false prophets would be exposed today if every professing Christian searched the Word of God! May God be pleased to raise up some Berean-like Christians in our day! While Paul was in a prison cell, awaiting the day of his execution, he wrote to Timothy in his last inspired Epistle: **"The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments"** (II Tim. 4:13). The parchments were what the Word of God was written upon. Paul was committed to the disciplined study of the Word of God up until the day of his death! We need more Christians today with the holy resolve and dedication to the Word of God that Paul had.

4. The word dedication means to devote wholly and earnestly to some person or purpose. Dear Christian are you willing to prove your dedication to God and His Word by committing yourself to the disciplined study of the Holy Book? Will you by faith resolve to covenant with God to read through your Bible at least once this upcoming year, God-willing? Will you dedicate yourself to obey the admonition in I Timothy 2:15 which states: **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"?**

EDIFICATION

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (I Peter 2:2-3).

1. We magnify the inspired Word of God when we see it as the vital source for Christian growth in grace. God's Word is the milk which all children of God in the nursery school of grace must drink in order to be healthy, strong, and vigorous Christians. As we dedicate ourselves to the study of the Word we will soon find that we are being edified, built up in the most holy faith, and growing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. In order to grow and improve in the Christian life the Word of God must be viewed as the manna from Heaven that must daily be gathered for our spiritual nourishment. We need to maintain the same attitude that Job had towards the Word: **"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food"** (Job 23:12). As the Word becomes more and more precious to our souls we will find ourselves saying with the Psalmist: **"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb"** (Psa. 19:10). The Word of God is sweet to our spiritual palate when it becomes precious to our souls. The more we relish the Word and delight in feasting upon it the greater our level of growth and edification will be.

2. All genuine growth in grace and spiritual edification is directly linked to the progressive work of sanctification that is being carried on within the life of every believer. Sanctification is the inward working of the Spirit as He uses the Word to separate us from the world and conform us to the image of Jesus Christ. Sanctification is a transformation process whereby believers become less and less like the world that is under the dominion of sin and Satan, and more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Altogether Lovely. This cleansing, transformation process cannot take place apart from the Word of God daily operating within the heart of the child of God. Jesus declared: **"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you"** (John 15:3). John 17:17 states: **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."** One of the chief purposes of the Word of God in the Lord's New Testament Church is recorded in Ephesians 5:26: **"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."** In light of these verses believers cannot expect to have clean testimonies that honor the Lord unless they are being edified and sanctified by the Word!

3. Christian growth and edification is manifested through the bearing of spiritual fruit. You can tell when a fruit tree is strong, healthy, and growing by

the quantity and quality of the fruit it bears. Likewise, Christians can only bear fruit that pleases God through abiding in His Word. John 15:7-10 declares: **"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."** We magnify God's Word when our lives are filled with the kind of spiritual fruitfulness that God is pleased with as enumerated in Galatians 5:22-23 which states: **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."** In order to cultivate this kind of fruit in our lives we must be edified and sanctified by the truth's of sacred Scripture.

MEMORIZATION

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

1. Psalm 119:11 furnishes a powerful incentive to incorporate the discipline of memorizing Scripture into our daily lives. When we hide the Word in our hearts it helps us in our spiritual warfare against sin, the flesh, the world, and the devil. If I were to offer you something that would guard your house against intruders, against those who sought to do your harm, and provided twenty-four hour protection for you and your family, wouldn't you be interested? Verses committed to memory and hidden in the heart provide a vast artillery of ammunition to ward off the unwelcome intruders of sin and temptation. A prime example of this principle in operation is recorded in Matthew 4:1-11. Satan came fully armed with a variety of temptations aimed at defeating the Lord Jesus Christ. However, the Lord Jesus wielded the Sword of the Spirit in a powerful way by meeting each temptation with the phrase **"It is written"**, followed by a quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus conquered and routed the devil through the skillful use of Scripture that was hidden in His heart. As God's children we are commanded to **"follow his steps"** (I Pet. 2:21) and **"also so to walk, even as he walked"** (I John 2:6). If we are to follow in the steps of our Saviour we must be committed to the discipline of hiding God's Word in our hearts.

2. Not only does the Word hidden in our heart's act as a preservative against sin, it also furnishes us with spiritual food for meditation throughout the day. The story is told of two brothers who were walking on their father's extensive wooded acreage when they came upon a young tree heavy with fruit. Both

enjoyed as much of the delicious fruit as they wanted. When they started back one man gathered all the remaining fruit and took it home with him. His brother, however, took the tree itself and planted it on his own property. The tree flourished and regularly produced a bountiful crop so that the second brother often had fruit when the first had none. The Bible is like the fruit tree in this story. Many people only hear the Word of God in church and gather enough fruit to feed on for a few days like the first brother. In order to be able to feast on spiritual fruit daily we must plant the tree of the Word of God in our heart's by memorizing Scripture.

3. There are other benefits drawn from memorizing Scripture. First, the Word hidden in your heart will act as a guide and counsellor in making daily decisions: **"Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors"** (Psa. 119:24). Second, by memorizing Scripture you will be better prepared and able to answer questions about the Bible with the Bible itself rather than your opinions. You will be a much more effective and bold witness for the Lord if you have the Sword of the Spirit within your heart and upon your lips. Proverbs 22:17-19 declares: **"Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips. That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee."** Memorizing Scripture will go a long way in enabling you to obey the admonition of Colossians 4:6 which states: **"Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."** Third, when you memorize Scripture it acts as the fuel for meditation upon the things of God. Psalm 119:97 declares: **"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."** When you memorize Scripture faithfully your mind is more focused upon the spiritual things which will enable you to experience the reality of David's prayer in Psalm 19:14: **"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."** Fourth, for a preacher, memorizing Scripture is absolutely essential if you are to enjoy liberty and power while you are proclaiming the Word of God.

4. Many people think that there is no way they could ever start memorizing Scripture. They will use the old worn out phrase "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." Well, I'm here to inform you that you are not an old dog, but a new creature in Christ, a child of God, who possesses the power of the indwelling Spirit who has **"given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness"** (II Pet. 1:3). I encourage you to invest in a pack of three by five index cards. Each

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Please explain what is Spiritual adultery? --California

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Spiritual adultery, I suppose, I can best explain it by using Romans chapter seven, verse four. The saints being married to Christ are able to commit spiritual adultery by serving any other than Christ, just as Israel is exposed for the act of adultery in Hosea 3:1 by serving other gods and not the one true and living God.

MIKE DEWITT

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Adultery occurs when a husband or wife is guilty of joining themselves to another outside of the marriage covenant. The person who commits physical adultery is unfaithful to their wife or husband. Hebrews 13:4 declares: **"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."**

Likewise, spiritual adultery occurs when those who profess to know the Lord are unfaithful to the Lord in some way. I believe there are three specific forms of spiritual adultery revealed in Scripture:

1) Heart adultery where a man or woman looks at anyone other than their spouse with lustful longing in their heart. They may not be unfaithful physically, but they are being unfaithful in their thoughts and desires. Jesus said: **"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"** (Matt. 5:27-28).

2) The second form of spiritual adultery is a love of the world system that is opposed to God by adopting their ideals, philosophies, and practices. This is also referred to as worldliness. It is when God's people are unfaithful to the Lord in their affections by going after the things of the world rather than loving God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. We are commanded to separate ourselves

from the world in II Corinthians 6:14-18 in order to be faithful sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. I John 2:15-17 declares: **"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."** James 4:4 equates friendship with the world system as spiritual adultery: **"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."**

3. The third form of spiritual adultery occurs when a member of the Lord's church is unfaithful to the truth by joining in the false worship of Catholics, her Protestant daughters, charismatics, or cults. Baptists are responsible to **"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"** (Jude 3), not join in and agree with the errors of those who despise and deride the truth. Our Baptist forefathers were persecuted, tortured, and murdered because they would not deny the precious truths of the Word of God. How can a Baptist in good conscience go to a religious service that promotes baptismal regeneration, infant baptism, women preachers, the social gospel, etc.? Baptists have been intimidated by the ecumenical movement which calls for folks to forsake the truth and join in on a myriad of heresies all in the name of love and unity. There can be no real love apart from truth as **"charity...Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth"** (I Cor. 13:6). Amos posed an age old question that should penetrate our souls: **"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"** (Amos 3:3). I believe we should speak the truth in love and treat others with kindness and compassion even when they disagree and deride the truth. However, it is spiritual adultery when we give assent to error by joining with them. I Corinthians 6:15-17 may be applied to this sin of spiritual adultery: **"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."** TOM ROSS



Magnifying God's

(Continued from page 289) ♦

day write a verse of Scripture on the card and go over it at various times of the day. At the end of the day you will find that repeating the verse to yourself has enabled you to memorize it. Then, keep an accurate record of the verses you have memorized by writing them out in a notebook, which will also help you when you review. I have found one of the best ways to retain the verses I have memorized is to quote them silently when I go to bed at night. You can memorize Scripture if you really believe the truth of Philippians 4:13 which states: **"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."** In most cases the real reason why we don't memorize more Scripture is not because we lack the ability to do so, it is because we fail to make the Word of God a priority in our life. We don't memorize Scripture simply because we don't want too, because we spend too much time in front of the television, and because we lack the discipline that is necessary. If we are to really magnify God's Word in our lives, then we must be committed to the consistent discipline of memorizing Scripture.

MEDITATION

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:2-3).

1. A Christian's fruitfulness and spirituality depends upon and is directly related to what they think about. We magnify the Word of God when we think deeply upon its precepts, promises, doctrines, and commandments. Christian meditation involves filling your mind with God and His truth. Meditation may be defined as deep and concentrated thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture for the purpose of understanding, application, and prayer. Meditation goes beyond merely hearing, reading, and memorizing the Word of God. When we read the Word it is like eating. When we meditate upon the Word it is like digesting what we have taken in and absorbing all the nutrients into our system. Another analogy would be a cup of tea. You are the cup of hot water and the intake of Scripture is represented by the tea bag. When you hear God's Word in a sermon, it's like one dip of the tea bag in the water. When you meditate upon God's Word you actually soak the tea bag in the water, letting it steep until it develops a rich, full-bodied flavor and color. When we think deeply upon God's truth we are in essence immersing the Word in our mind's and absorbing its

power.

2. There are many benefits derived from meditating upon Scripture. First, it deepens our relationship to God and strengthens our affections for Him. Psalm 104:34 declares: **"My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD."** Second, meditation upon the Word deepens our understanding of spiritual truth and promotes godly obedience. Psalm 119:98-100 states: **"Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."** Third, meditation upon God's truth has the effect of producing peace and tranquility of mind as Romans 8:6 declares: **"...to be spiritually minded is life and peace"** (cf. Phil. 4:7-9). Fourth, meditation upon the Word of God is one of the keys to unlocking the treasures of a successful Christian life. Joshua 1:8 states: **"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."**

I agree with John Owen, the old Puritan theologian who wrote:

"If I have observed anything by experience, it is this: a man may take the measure of his growth and decay in grace according to his thoughts and meditations upon the person of Christ, and the glory of Christ's Kingdom, and of His love" (A Puritan Golden Treasury, p. 184).

3. It is sad, but true, but meditation is fast becoming a lost art among Christians in our day. It seems as though our days are so filled with hurry and busyness, we fail to exercise our minds by thinking deep thoughts about God. By way of practical application, when was the last time you spent just fifteen minutes focusing and meditating upon one of God's attributes, or a doctrine, or a command of Scripture? When was the last time you took time out of your busy day to concentrate all of your thought processes entirely upon the things of God? Meditation is hard work! It is much easier after a day of labor to sit in front of the television and let it do your thinking, than it is to use all your mental faculties to focus upon God for the purpose of growing spiritually. However, if we are to magnify the Word, we must discipline a portion of our time each day in solemn meditation upon the things of God.

Maurice Roberts made a cutting observation when he wrote:

"Our age has been sadly deficient in what may be termed spiritual greatness. At the root of this is the modern disease

♦ (Continued on page 291)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Is the Jewish nation of the Old and New Testament still the same nation today? If so, is God through dealing with them? --Kentucky

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in the not too distant future, TWR).
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God made an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his seed in Genesis 17:7-8: **"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."** The nation of Israel is clearly God's chosen nation and covenant people. They have sinned against God and even killed the Messiah, but there is coming a day when God will pour out His Spirit upon them (Zech. 12:9-10). Elect Israel will be regenerated by the Spirit, justified by faith in Christ, and restored to the land that God promised them for an everlasting possession. God will not cast off His people which He did foreknow (Rom. 11:1-2, 23-27).

No, God is not done with the nation of Israel. Their existence through the centuries proves that God is preserving them according to His own purpose and promises. Jeremiah 33:14-16 declares: **"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness"** (cf. Jer. 23:5-6; 31:31-37; 33:23-26).

Hosea 3:4-5 clearly spells out a definite future for Israel: **"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim** (this scenario has already been literally fulfilled, TWR). **Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days"** (this is going to literally be fulfilled

Yes, Israel is the same nation now as it always has been. It may act differently and appear different but Israel is Israel. God is not done with the nation of Israel. The Bible teaches the restoration of both Israel and Judah. **"Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand"** (Ezek 37:19). In fact the whole 37th chapter of Ezekiel foretells the eventual restoration of both kingdoms. The tribes were divided because of idolatrous worship, 1 Kings 12:25-33. The children of Israel will be reunited as one nation and converted to Christ as their Saviour in the latter days, Jeremiah 31:35-37.

"Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezek 37:26).

MIKE DEWITT



Magnifying God's

(Continued from page 290) ♦

of shallowness. We are all too impatient to meditate on the faith we profess...It is not the busy skimming over religious books or the careless hastening through religious duties which makes for a strong Christian faith. Rather, it is unhurried meditation on Gospel truths and the exposing of our minds to these truths that yields the fruit of sanctified character" (*Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, p. 51).

William Bridge, the old Puritan writer gave the following reasons why we find it hard to meditate:

"There are two things that make meditation hard. The one is, because men are used to it...and another is, because thy do not love God enough.

Everything is hard at the first: writing is hard at the first, painting hard at the first...meditation will be hard at the first. There is nothing not hard to those that are unwilling. There is nothing hard to those that love, love makes all things easy. Is it a hard thing for a lover to think or meditate on the person they love?" (*A Puritan Golden Treasury*, p. 186).

APPLICATION

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

1. It is not enough for us to merely acknowledge that God's Word is Divinely inspired and preserved. Nor is it sufficient to dedicate ourselves to read, memorize, and meditate upon Scripture. All of this will be done in vain unless we go a step further and apply the Word in our lives by actually putting into practice the truths and commands of Scripture. If God's Word is to be magnified we must apply its precepts in our individual lives, homes, and churches. The curse of modern day Christianity is a profession of faith apart from a practice of faith; talking about Scripture rather than walking in its ways; saying but not doing. This is nothing more than the religion of the Pharisees as Jesus said of them: **"All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not"** (Matt. 23:3). Titus 1:16 declares: **"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."**

2. As we read, memorize, and meditate upon the Word we need to respond specifically to the commands of Scripture by implementing the truth in every facet of life. At home, on the job, at church, in society, and during times of solitude we should be putting into practice the truth we have learned from Scripture. By putting the truth into practice we will build a Christian testimony that will stand the test of time and eternity as Jesus declared: **"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"** (Matt. 7:24-25). When we fail to implement the truths of Scripture through cheerful obedience we are deceiving ourselves and dishonoring God as James 1:22-25 states: **"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed**

in his deed."

3. Donald Whitney offered the following suggestions as guideline to specifically apply the Word of God to your life as you read it:

"Does this text reveal something I should believe about God?

***Does this text reveal something I should praise or thank or trust God for?**

***Does this text reveal something I should pray about for myself or others?**

***Does this text reveal something I should have a new attitude about?**

***Does this text reveal something I should make a decision about?**

***Does this text reveal something I should do for the sake of Christ, others, or myself?"** (*Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, p. 56).

CELEBRATION

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).

1. As we magnify the Word of God in our lives we will find it transforming us into the image of Christ which is cause for the celebration of worship. Since all true worship begins with exalted thoughts about God we must be familiar with the Book that reveals the glory and majesty of God if we are to worship Him aright (John 4:23-24).

2. The greater our knowledge of God and our practice of the truth, the sweeter and more delightful our expressions of worship will be. As we delight in magnifying the Word we will find ourselves enjoying the celebration of worship more and more. **"...Happy is that people, whose God is the LORD"** (Psalm 144:15).

CONCLUSION

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

If you have read the contents of these pages, especially all of the Scripture references, you know it is both your duty and responsibility to magnify the Word of God in your life. The question is "Will you do it?" Will you implement these principles in your life and home. My earnest prayer is that writer and reader alike will obey the command of Deuteronomy 11:18-19 which states: **"Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."**





From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Bible and Human Government

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" (1 Pet. 2:13-14).

The Biblical writers went to great length to teach that it was a Christian duty to respect and obey the laws of the Roman government. This was essential to saving the Christian religion from scandal in the minds of earthly rulers and to safe-guard the spread of the gospel. It was also necessary to counteract the false teaching being spread by heretics that people were to despise dominion and to speak evil of dignities (Jude 8).

In New Testament times the Jews were impatient of the Roman rule. The Zealots were a group of fanatical nationalists who advocated violence as a means of liberation from Rome. The crime of sedition was commonly charged upon the Jews and early Christians (Acts 5:37; 16:20-21). By strict obedience to the law of the land the early Christians were to **"silence the ignorance of foolish men"** (1 Pet. 2:15).

BAPTISTS AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We who are called Baptists, and in former times called Anabaptists, have often been misrepresented and misunderstood by Pedobaptist church historians. Because the extreme suffering at the hands of tyrannical rulers drove some of our fathers to deny the scripturalness of a Christian being a magistrate, some church historians assumed that all Anabaptists were against civil authority. This was not true.

While some of the mad men of Munster were nominal Anabaptists, the main body of these were Pedobaptists. The true Baptists of that day condemned the riots at Munster, Germany, as do all informed Baptists of our day.

The writings and confessions of the Old Baptists reveal that they were loyal subjects to the state, regardless of its form of government. Articles 16 of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith says: "We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the

only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth."

A NEW MOOD

The twentieth century has been marked by political and social unrest, open immorality, law-defying riots, and brutal crimes, surpassing any other period in American history. The present situation has shaken the foundations of our state and federal governments. Our courts are clogged and our penal institutions are bursting out at the seams. Everywhere there is rebellion, anarchy, disorder and confusion.

A good number of religious leaders are seen leading marches and demonstrations which break the law and defy police agencies. These religious lawbreakers have ignored their responsibility of preaching the gospel to Adam's fallen race. They feel their task is to fight for certain social and political ideals. It is shocking to see these line up with Communists, revolutionaries, hippies, and hoodlums in advocating a society in which there will be no laws of conduct.

THE ESSENTIALITY OF GOVERNMENT

We must have human government to restrain man who is a totally depraved sinner. During the days before the flood mankind displayed the results of a world with no lawmakers and no enforcement agencies. The antediluvians so degenerated that Divine judgment became mandatory (Gen. 6:5-12). God sent the flood upon all of these ungodly anarchists.

In our generation people want to be free from civil and religious laws to do their own thing. They want all civil authority abolished and the punishment of criminals abrogated.

Well, the world tried that in the period of the Judges in Israel. Of that time it is written: **"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes"** (Jud. 17:6). The result of such a society was gross immorality and all but extinction of true religion. This is what America is on the verge of today.

HUMAN GOVERNMENT ORDAINED OF GOD

From Adam to Noah the human race existed without a divinely constituted government to establish and enforce laws for the public welfare. These lived only in the light of conscience. In Genesis 9 God

established human government. The institution of the civil magistrate was for the purpose of protecting life. It was given to repress the violence and crime so common among the Antediluvian people.

Human authority and headship were first vested in Noah by God Himself. Therefore, human government is as truly a Divine institution as the home and the church. In Proverbs 8:15 Divine Wisdom says: **"By me kings reign, and princes decree justice"** (Prov. 8:15).

There are many illustrations in the Scriptures of the Divine institution of government. To Nebuchadnezzar it was said: **"Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And whosoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all"** (Dan. 2:37-38).

In Jeremiah 27:5 it is written: **"I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me."**

Of God it is said: **"He removeth kings, and setteth up kings"** (Dan. 2:21). No change in government comes to pass by chance, but according to the will and counsel of the King of the nations. The making and unmaking of kings is a flower of His crown Who is the King of all kings. This is why the Bible says that God raised up Pharaoh to be king of Egypt (Rom. 9:17). This is why the Bible says God raised up Cyrus to be king over Persia (Isa. 44:28).

In Romans 13:1-2 Paul said: **"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."**

The institution of magistracy is of God. The existing powers in every country, and in every age, are appointed of God. Every legislator, judge, or policeman is God's representative on earth. Rulers were called **"gods"** in Psalm 82:1, because they were His ministers on earth. Resistance to the government is resistance to God, because human government is His ordinance.

These verses do not teach that all rulers are Christians, but that government itself is a Divine establishment. The usurpation of power and the abuse of power are not of God, for He is not the author of sin. It is not that God approves of this or that form of government, or this or that particular ruler, but human government itself is of God. The most unjust and oppressive ruler in the world derives his power to govern from God.

Jesus Christ told Pilate: **"Thou**

couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11). Here Christ concedes the governor's official power to crucify Him, yet He reminds him that his office was providentially held. Pilate's power was not self-originated. It came from the source of all rightful authority. Only under the Divine Ruler was he a legitimate judge.

THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT

The primary responsibility of human government is that of regulating the relationships of man with others in his society. Man by nature is a depraved sinner. Being basically selfish, he is prone to steal from others and to murder his fellow man. Civil authority is responsible to curb, restrict, and restrain man's egocentric tendency.

The two great functions of government are to praise the law-abiders and to punish the law-breakers. Peter tells us that rulers are **"for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well"** (1 Pet. 2:14).

PRAISE OF LAW-ABIDING

Rulers are responsible to be kind to the hard-working, law-abiding citizen. In Romans 13:3-4 Paul wrote: **"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good."**

Some people cause no problems to the government. They are no threat to society as criminals and revolutionaries. In I Timothy 1:9 it is written: **"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient. . ."**

The worst government generally will not punish its best citizens. If a man abide by the law of the land, he has no reason to be afraid of civil power. **"For rulers are not a terror to good work"** (Rom. 13:3). By obedience to the law of the country where we live, we Christians commend the gospel to the world and remove the most powerful obstacle to its progress.

There have been times when earthly rulers persecuted Christians unto death. There was the bloody persecution of Christians under the emperors of Rome and the popes. Even this very day in Communist countries Christians are being tortured and murdered by the thousands. But these are an exception, not the general rule.

Even the worst government maintains a certain amount of law and order, though abounding in some injustices. Better a poor government than no government at all.

PUNISHMENT OF LAW-BREAKERS

Civil authority is responsible to punish those who violate laws which are

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The Bible and Human

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established for the welfare of its citizens. A prompt and just retribution of each crime is to be administered to evildoers. This is the most effective means of checking evildoers. The vilest of men will generally refrain from doing wrong when they know it will bring a severe penalty.

Peter tells us the civil magistrate is **“for the punishment of evildoers”** (I Pet. 2:14). In Romans 13 Paul says that rulers are to be **“a terror. . .to the evil.”** In verse 4 he declares: **“But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”**

A violation of the law of the land is a sin against God, for the state is **“the minister of God.”** Whosoever resists the executor of the laws of the state is guilty of resisting **“the ordinance of God.”** Modern criminologists would do well to consider this fact. Crime is a sin against God as well as an injustice to the state.

Vengeance belongs to God, but He has delegated this right in human affairs to the civil magistrate. He has put the sword in his hand to punish evildoers, and he must not bear the sword in vain. For him to suffer crime to go unpunished is to fail to be a revenger of God. It constitutes a horrible sin against God.

God is not at all pleased with modern America. In many courts the idea of guilt and punishment is ignored. Every conceivable excuse is made for the criminal on trial. The liberal press makes the general public believe that the deed committed was not evil. Criminals are told that they need psychological help. This all results in a complete loss of all consciousness of guilt before God and the state. Rehabilitation has replaced retribution. A man can attempt to murder the president, play crazy, and escape punishment. Babies are murdered by the millions and almost no one screams “bloody murder.”

Unless there is a speedy return to law and order in our country, history will soon write our epitaph. If there is not a restoration of just retribution for crimes committed against God and the state, we might as well write the word “Ichabod” on the doors of the Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C.

PUNISHMENT TO FIT THE CRIME

It is safer for society when unscrupulous and violent people are put behind bars or executed. The state has the responsibility of apprehending and penalizing criminals. This must be done in accordance with the standards laid down in God’s Word. The Bible teaches that the punishment of a crime must be commensurate with the offense. Exodus 21:24-25 says: **“Eye for eye,**

tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” Hebrews 2:3 reveals that every transgression is to receive a just recompense of reward.

If a person is treated too severely for an offense, he will become bitter and resentful. His animosity toward others will increase. On the other hand, if he is given an honest trial and just sentence, he is more apt to accept his penalty in good conscience. He may even later return to society as a good law-abiding citizen. The dying thief said: **“And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds”** (Luke 23:41).

EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Punishment should be administered impartially to all. Leviticus 19:15 declares: **“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.”** Colossians 3:25 reads: **“But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.”**

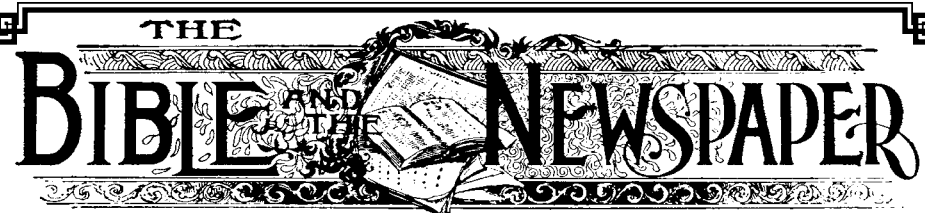
Rich or poor, man or woman, black or white, red or brown, should stand upon level ground at the tribunal. But very often today this principle is violated. Some times poor people are severely sentenced for stealing food to feed their family. Members of minority groups have been beaten and imprisoned for minor offenses. The wealthy and famous often escape any sentence for even serious crimes. He who has enough money can buy his way out of punishment.

The condemnation of Amos is well applied to some of the corrupt civil magistrates of our time: **“For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from the right. . . it is an evil time”** (Amos 5:12-13).



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

TEXAS SCHOOL BOARD VOTES FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

(EP News)--The Texas State Board of Education voted on Jan. 14 to keep references to Christmas in social studies textbooks. Jonathan Saenz, director of legislative affairs at Liberty Institute, said the truth about the founding of our country will also remain in the textbooks. “There’s been efforts by people to censor and ban students from knowing that our country has a rich religious heritage, and not only that, but also about the faith of our Founding Fathers,” he said. Publishers take their cues from Texas school books, which means Texas standards could impact what is taught in schools across the nation. The board will vote to finalize the standards in March, which will last for 10 years.

HOME-SCHOOLERS GET A VICTORY IN THE GRANITE STATE

(EP News)--Members of the New Hampshire State House voted to kill a bill earlier in January that would have put restrictions on home schooling. The bill contained an amendment that would have granted the state’s education department new regulatory powers, including annual standardized testing for every home-schooled student. Mike Donnelly, staff attorney with the Home School Legal Defense Association, said the bill would have also required a portfolio evaluation of each home-schooled student. “We hope that this will be the end of what has been a battle for freedom and for home schooling in New Hampshire,” he said. “Although, we will be ready to respond to any additional attempts by legislators to impose regulations on home-schoolers.”

FREE SPEECH FACES SETBACK IN TEXAS

(EP News)--The U.S. Supreme Court will not hear a case concerning a Texas school district policy that bans students from wearing clothes that declare a political position. The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the school dress code. The high court rejected a Dallas high school student’s appeal. The district wouldn’t allow a student to wear a T-shirt supporting then-presidential candidate John Edwards. Kelly Shackelford, chief counsel for Liberty Legal Institute, said the rulings are a “punch in the gut to freedom.” “If you don’t have a right to free speech, if you’re a student that means you don’t have a right to share your faith, to share a Bible, to share the Gospel,” he said.

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF CALIFORNIA MARRIAGE AMENDMENT TO BE DECIDED

(EP News)--The legal battle to determine the constitutionality of one-man, one-woman marriage began in a San Francisco federal courthouse in mid-January. The challenge is to Proposition 8, which California voters approved in November 2008. There already has been an unusual twist, according to Jordan Lorence, an attorney defending the amendment. “What is significant, and somewhat unusual, is that the judge asked a lot of questions,” Lorence said. “You don’t have judges interrupting the opening arguments.” The Supreme Court of California created same-sex “marriage” in 2008, even though the justices knew the issue was about to go to a vote. California voters approved the amendment, which defined marriage as between one man and one woman, in November 2008.

KENTUCKY GOVERNOR WANTS TO GAMBLE WITH STATE’S FUTURE

(EP News)--Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear hopes to raise \$780 million from video-lottery terminals at state racetracks, according to a Courier-Journal.com report. Beshear made the proposal in his annual budget. The state is facing a \$1.5 billion budget deficit. The governor said without gambling, the state would have to make significant cuts. Martin Cothran, senior policy analyst for The Family Foundation in Kentucky, said the proposal has almost no chance of passing the House or the Senate. “The governor is passing the buck,” he said, “and passing the buck is not a good governing strategy.”

NEW HAMPSHIRE STRUGGLES WITH MARRIAGE LEGISLATION

(EP News)--New Hampshire has two proposed laws dealing with same-sex marriage. “One (bill) would repeal the same-sex marriage law enacted last year,” said Kevin Smith, executive director of Cornerstone Action. “The other would put the question of a constitutional amendment to give the people of New Hampshire a chance to finally have their say on the issue.” There’s also a grassroots movement of people petitioning their local town governments to put the question on the ballot, according to Smith. Smith doesn’t expect the same Legislature that legalized gay marriage to repeal it or put it on the ballot. Committee hearings on both bills are expected within a few months.

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Bible & The Newspaper

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PEOPLE IN NATION'S CAPITAL MAY NOT HAVE SAY ON GAY MARRIAGE

(EP News)--Thirty-seven members of the House and two U.S.senators signed on to a friend-of-the-court brief filed with the D.C. Superior Court in January in an effort to let the people have the final say on same-sex marriage. Congress might not have the votes to overturn the District of Columbia Board of Elections and Ethics (BOEE) decision, but some members refuse to stay silent. John Fleming, R-La., signed on to the cause. "Myself and a number of other congressmen have signed on the amicus brief to allow the electorate – the registered voters – to vote on this issue," Fleming said. Bishop Harry Jackson of Hope Christian Church has filed a lawsuit to force a public vote on gay marriage in the District. The BOEE has already denied two requests to allow voters to have a say in D.C.'s marriage debate.

STUDIES SUGGEST MILLENNIALS ARE MORE PRO-LIFE

(EP News)--New York Magazine, known for its liberal bent, has acknowledged the millennial generation is the most pro-life since the "Silent Generation" of the 1930s and '40s. In an article published Nov. 29, Jennifer Senior asks, "Just how pro-choice is America, really?" The answer, according to Senior is "not much." Senior points out that pregnancy resource centers now outnumber abortion clinics, and voters between the ages of 18 and 29 have "come of age during the partial-birth debate" and were "the first to grow up with pictures of sonograms on their refrigerators." Esther Fleece, assistant to the president for millennial relations at Focus on the Family, agrees. "Abortion is something that we have misled people in thinking that it is for the woman's best interest," she said, "and I think what we are seeing now is a shift that life is in everybody's best interest."

LIBERAL RADIO SHOW CALLS IT QUILTS

(EPNews)--Air America, the counterpoint to conservative talk radio, is calling it quits. The network lasted just six years. The board announced it will soon file for bankruptcy under Chapter 7. Network representatives said the financial downfall had to do with declining revenue across the radio dial. Cliff Kincaid, editor of the Accuracy in Media Report, explained that the problem had more to do with content. "I just don't think there is a market for liberal, left-wing talk radio," he said.

CIVIL MARRIAGE BILL INTRODUCED IN CALIFORNIA

(EP News)--Openly gay California Sen. Mark Leno has introduced Senate Bill 906 that protects pastors from having to perform same-sex marriages. Ron Prentice, executive director of the California Family Council, said, on the surface, the bill looks good, but

it could open doors to redefine marriage. "Senate Bill 906 introduces a new term into California law, namely 'civil marriage,'" he said. "It alters the term for marriage, and it actually may alter the definition of marriage." He said there are likely enough votes in the California Legislature to pass the bill.

FAMILY GROUP LOOKS TO PROTECT MARRIAGE IN WEST VIRGINIA

(EP News)--The Family Policy Council of West Virginia has released its second online video on the importance of one-man, one-woman marriage. The group will be releasing a total of four videos on the issue. Jeremy Dys, president of the group, said the project is a response to homosexual activists getting ready to attempt to legalize same-sex marriage in the state. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is leading the fight. "In this video, the ACLU of West Virginia calls the more than 80 percent of West Virginians, who support marriage as one man and one woman, 'intolerant,'" he said. "The ACLU would do well to remember that the Constitution belongs to its people - not to judges, not even legislators, and certainly not the ACLU. It's the job of every legislator to protect every West Virginian's right to self-governance."

SUPREME COURT RULES ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW

(EP News)--The U.S. Supreme Court ruled Jan. 21 that corporations may use money from general funds for campaign ads. For the past two decades under federal laws like the McCain-Feingold campaign finance bill, right-to-life organizations, pro-marriage groups and even unions and corporations were prohibited from airing political ads mentioning candidates within 60 days of an election. James Bopp, an attorney with Bopp, Coleson and Bostrom, said the ruling is a First Amendment victory. "(People) are not going to be discriminated against when they come together in a group to advocate their issues," he said. "Rather than having to form shadowy groups in order to do this sort of activity, they can just forthrightly do it themselves." The justices voted 5-4 to overturn some of the restrictions.

GROUP WANTS PRIZE MONEY TO PROMOTE PRO-GAY CURRICULUM

(EP News)--The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) is competing for \$1 million it intends to use to push its agenda in public schools. Chase Community Giving will give \$1 million to the charity that gets the most votes from Facebook users. GLSEN said it would use the money to send a Safe Space Kit to every middle school and high school in the country. Minnesota parent Jill Rose has battled the inclusion of pro-gay material at her child's elementary school. "I don't think that having specific or graphic information is productive or useful," she said, "and I don't agree with taking school time to do that."

HIGH COURT TO DETERMINE PETITION-SIGNERS' PROTECTION

(EP News)--The U.S. Supreme Court will determine whether the names of people who signed a petition to protect marriage in Washington State will be released by the Secretary of State. James Bopp Jr., lead counsel for Protect Marriage Washington, said if names and information are released, it likely will discourage people from becoming involved in social policy. "I just think the court's going to take a serious look at whether disclosure of political activity isn't a way to inhibit and chill it, rather than to encourage it," he said. Gay activists claim that access to names and personal information is needed to verify voting registration.

STATES RACING FOR EDUCATION MONEY

(EP News)--States willing to adopt new guidelines for education reform stand to benefit from an Obama administration program – especially if they eliminate obstacles to forming charter schools. The program is called Race to the Top. States had until Jan. 19 to turn in applications and have laws in place to take advantage of the \$4.35 billion. Karla Dial, managing editor of the School Reform News, said the program, while good, does not paint the whole picture. "That's the big form of school choice the Obama administration actually supports," she said. "They've been pretty egregious in their track record on other forms like opportunity scholarships that can be used for private schools." Gov. Rick Perry announced that Texas will not compete for the funds, citing reasons such as pressure to adopt national testing standards and curriculum guidelines.

DELEGATE TRIES TO PROTECT MARRIAGE IN MARYLAND

(EP News)--A Maryland delegate is attempting to close a loophole in state law that would allow the recognition of same-sex marriages. Emmet Burns, delegate for the state's 10th legislative district, said current law does not cover all the bases on the marriage issue. "The state of Maryland's law does not permit marriage between two males or two females," he said, "but is silent on the issue of other states' recognitions (of same-sex unions) in Maryland." He introduced House Bill 90 to protect one-man, one-woman marriage. The matter is urgent, according to Burns. Washington, D.C., recently passed a same-sex marriage bill.

FEDERAL BILL WOULD IMPOSE GAY AGENDA ON LOCAL SCHOOLS

(EP News)--U.S. Rep. Jared Polis has introduced legislation that would give gay activists yet another tool for promoting homosexuality and gay marriage in the classroom. The Colorado Democrat's would make it a federal crime for schools to discriminate against "sexual orientation" and "gender identity." Tim Tracey, legal counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, said bullying is wrong and should be stopped, but the real issue is the behavior, and not the characteristics,

of the particular student. "What we're seeing," he said, "is the Left promoting the homosexual agenda using vague, deceptive language in 'nondiscrimination policies' to impose their ideology on our culture."

TEEN BIRTHS ON THE RISE AFTER A DECADE OF DROPS

(EP News)--The teen pregnancy rate in the U.S. rose three percent in 2006, the first increase in more than a decade. A report from the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute claims abstinence education is to blame. However, Scott Phelps, executive director of the Abstinence and Marriage Education Partnership, said the assertion makes no sense. "This slight increase follows a 14-year decline of 34 percent," he said. "In other words, teen birth rates have dropped substantially in the past 14 years." Dr. Jennifer Shuford, director of applied science at the Medical Institute for Sexual Health, said abstinence has a proven track record. "The only 100-percent effective means of avoiding pregnancy and avoiding sexually transmitted infections," she said, "is through avoiding sexual activity until you are in a lifelong, monogamous marriage."

PERSONHOOD BILL INTRODUCED IN THREE NEW STATES

(EP News)--Personhood has expanded into three new states, including Iowa, Virginia, and Kansas. On Jan. 13, Virginia introduced HB 112, a bill to guarantee the constitutional rights of preborn children. Shortly after, Iowa introduced HJR 2003 proposing a joint resolution for an amendment including a right to life for all men and women, irrespective of age. The same day, Kansas introduced a personhood amendment to the revisor's office. All three call for a recognition of rights for preborn babies from the moment of their biological beginning. "Personhood is a revolution of the pro-life movement," stated Keith Mason, co-founder of Personhood USA. "It challenges what's been done in the past, stimulates the movement's present, and eradicates the need for pro-life efforts in the future. Personhood is the best hope to end abortion in America."

CALIFORNIANS WAIT TO HEAR MARRIAGE DECISION

(EP News)—Now that the arguments for and against protecting marriage in California have been made, the judge has called a recess to examine everything that was presented. Closing arguments in the two-week trial California marriage amendment trial, *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, are expected to take place in March or April. In 2008, Californians voted in favor of Proposition 8, which defined marriage as between one man and one woman in the California Constitution. Austin Nimocks, senior legal counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund, said the defense feels comfortable and confident with the proceedings. "We're not required to prove anything," he said. "It's the plaintiffs' burden to prove that the voices of over 7 million Californians that voted for Proposition 8

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are somehow unconstitutional.” Many legal experts expect the trial could make its way to the U.S. Supreme Court. A decision is expected in the spring.

MAJORITY OF AMERICANS VIEW ABORTION AS WRONG

(EP News)--America is trending pro-life. A Knights of Columbus-Marist survey finds 58 percent of those in the “Millennial” group (18-29 years old) agreed with the statement that abortion is “morally wrong.” Fifty-one percent of Baby Boomers (those 45-64) and 60 percent of Gen X’ers (30-44) feel the same. The survey is the latest in a series of polls conducted by the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization that encourages civic involvement, volunteering and aid for those in need. Numbers from previous polls in October 2008 and July 2009 underscore the pro-life trend.

PRESIDENT’S BUDGET WOULD DISMANTLE SOME ABORTION RESTRICTIONS

(EP News)--One includes a request to continue public funding of abortions in Washington, D.C. Another stipulation may include money going to the United Nations Population Fund for activities that could include overseas abortions. There is some good news. The budget does retain the Hyde Amendment that prohibits the use of federal funds to pay for abortions through the Health and Human Services annual appropriations bill. Richard Doerflinger, associate director of the Secretariat of Pro-life Activities at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said numerous polls show Americans don’t want public funding of abortion. “This administration wants public funding of abortion of various kinds,” he said. “Some inroads have already been made against longstanding funding provisions.” Congress still must approve the president’s proposal.

ALOHA STATE SAYS GOODBYE TO CIVIL UNIONS

(EP News)--A bill that would have granted state recognition to civil unions of same-sex partners in Hawaii has died in committee. The Hawaii House passed a similar version of the bill last year. Legislators had second thoughts this time around, according to the Executive Director of the Hawaii Family Forum Dennis Arakaki. “They did have a majority vote,” he said, “but the leadership felt that it was not the right time to do this. This being an election year, I’m sure they had that thought in mind.” Arakaki said Christians had a lot to do with the decision to table the bill. “The churches rose up,” he said. “They responded and were making phone calls, sending e-mails and also visiting their representatives, which was highly effective.”

PRESIDENT’S BUDGET PROPOSAL MAY BE COSTLY FOR FAMILIES

(EP News)--The Obama administration has said many of the Bush tax cuts will be left in place – unless you make more than \$250,000 a year. However, budget analysts said the spending in the budget is so massive that wealthy taxpayers won’t be able to cover the increase. Curtis Dubay, senior policy analyst at The Heritage Foundation, said the president will have no choice, but to raise taxes. “If Congress and the president refuse to cut spending, they will absolutely have to go for more revenue in some way,” he said. “We firmly expect them to go after a national sales tax called a ‘value-added tax,’ which would hit all families and all businesses in the economy.”

ABORTION GROUP WANTS TO TEACH KIDS ABOUT SEX

(EP News)--The International Planned Parenthood Federation is advocating that sex education should be taught to children as young as 10, according to a report. The report, “Stand and Deliver,” includes teaching awareness of sex’s pleasures. It also demands that governments, aid organizations and other groups be responsible for the comprehensive sexuality education.

It went on to say that young people should be seen as “sexual beings.” Ed Mechmann, spokesman for New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan, told Fox News that Planned Parenthood was “trying to teach children sex without values and that sex is a matter of pleasure and done without consequences.”

STUDY: ABSTINENCE EDUCATION WORKS

(EP News)--Abstinence education is effective in reducing sexual activity among youth, according to a study published in the February 2010 Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine conducted by University of Pennsylvania researchers. The students in the abstinence class initiated less sex, had fewer sexual partners and had more pronounced risk reductions compared to those receiving safe-sex and comprehensive sex education. Dr. David Stevens, CEO of the 16,000 member Christian Medical Association, said science has finally caught up with logic. “Parents have known for centuries,” he said, “by empirically demonstrating that equipping teens to abstain from sexual activity is an effective way to prevent teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.”

GEORGIA GROUP: BLACK CHILDREN ARE AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

(EP News)--Georgia Right to Life and the Radiance Foundation on Feb. 4 announced the launch of the Endangered Species Project, an initiative to increase awareness of the impact of abortion on Georgia’s minority communities and women. The campaign began with the placement of billboards in Dekalb and Fulton counties where the majority of abortions occur. According to Catherine Davis, Director of Minority Outreach, over 67 percent of the abortions in Georgia occur in those two counties. Georgia

leads the country in the number of reported abortions performed on black women, 18,901 in 2008 alone. Davis maintains the impact of abortion is so great that black children are an endangered species.

IOWA LAWMAKERS SHOOT DOWN MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

(EP News)--A constitutional amendment that defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman failed in the Iowa House by a vote of 45-54. Rep. Dolores Mertz was the only Democrat in favor of the amendment. The Iowa Supreme Court overturned the state Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) last year. DOMA defines marriage as between one man and one woman. Chuck Hurley, president of the Iowa Family Policy Center, explained that lawmakers said they did not want a marriage amendment in 2005 because the state’s high court would not overturn DOMA.

“What remains now is for Iowans to speak,” he said, “and say forcefully, ‘We the people want the right to vote.’” He said Iowans would likely have to wait until 2014 before they have a chance to vote on the controversial issue.

FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION IN JEOPARDY

(EP News)--The California Court of Appeal is considering a free-speech case in which a man was arrested for sharing his faith at a Sacramento-area mall. In 2007, youth pastor Matthew Snatchko was arrested for striking up a conversation with two other people about his faith. The Roseville Galleria Mall has a rule against people talking to other shoppers about faith and politics. A Placer County Superior Court judge upheld the mall’s rules in 2008. The Pacific Justice Institute (PJI) has appealed the case.

NEW HAMPSHIRE BILL COULD BRING HOMOSEXUALITY LESSONS INTO THE CLASSROOM

(EP News)--Activists and legislators in New Hampshire have introduced a pro-gay bullying bill. Kevin Smith, executive director of Cornerstone Action, said House Bill 1523 mandates that all school districts insert the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity and expression” into policies. It also calls for schools to integrate those policies into curriculum. “We just think it’s dishonest,” he said. “It’s using the very tragic situation of bullying and politicizing it.”

DEFENSE CONTRACTOR TO REMOVE BIBLE REFERENCES

(NBC) WASHINGTON - A Michigan company that manufactures combat rifle sights for the U.S. military that carry Bible verse citations said Thursday it would send kits to remove the inscriptions, NBC reported.

Trijicon Inc. also said it would take off Biblical references from all U.S. military products that are still in the company’s factory and ensure future items do not have any inscriptions on them.

The rifle sights, in use by U.S. forces in

Iraq and Afghanistan, raised concern that the inscriptions break government rules barring proselytizing by American troops.

Trijicon, of Wixom, Mich., sold more than 750,000 optical sights to the U.S. military with the tiny Bible references burned into the steel.

The company said it would send 100 modification kits to the U.S. military that will allow removal of the inscriptions.

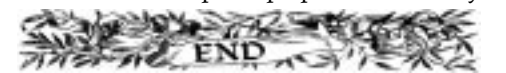
One senior defense official told NBC News that the late founder of Trijicon was a devout Christian, and that the company had long imprinted its equipment with references to Biblical passages.

Many of the references look like a serial number or identification number, and most troops didn’t even realize the inscription was there, the official said.

Along with the sight’s stock number, there are coded Bible passages from the New Testament engraved on the sights. One reads JN8:12, an apparent reference to John 8:12, which says, “**Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**”

The defense official conceded that sights were problematic because the U.S. could turn them over to Iraqi or Afghan partners. Sights with Biblical references, the official said, are “definitely not appropriate.”

Military officials earlier said the citations did not break government rules and they wouldn’t stop using the telescoping sights, which allow troops to pinpoint the enemy



“YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD”

The story is told of a poor blind woman in Paris who put twenty-seven francs into the plate at a missionary meeting. A friend remonstrated, “You cannot afford so much out of your small earnings.” “Oh, yes, I can,” she answered “I’ve figured it out and know just what I can afford to give.” When asked to explain, she said: “I am blind, and I said to my fellow straw workers, ‘How much money do you spend a year for oil in your lamps when it is too dark to work at night?’ They replied, ‘Twenty-seven francs.’ So,” said the poor woman, “I found that I saved so much a year because I am blind and do not need a lamp; and I can give it to send light to the dark and heathen lands.” (News & Truths, 1930).



The Agreement of Salvation by Grace with Walking in Good Works

C. H. Spurgeon
(1834 - 1892)



believer; but babes in grace have weak eyes, and cannot at once perceive.

Before, in the gracious providence of God, Luther was raised up to preach the doctrine of

justification by faith, the common notion among religious persons was, that men must be saved by works; and the result was that, knowing nothing of the root from which virtue springs, very few persons had any good works at all. Religion so declined that it became a mere matter of empty ceremony, or of useless seclusion; and, in addition, superstition overlaid the original truth of the gospel, so that one could hardly find it out at all. The reign of self-justification and priestcraft led to no good result upon the masses of religious people. Indulgences and forgivenesses of sins were hawked through the streets, and publicly sold. So much was charged for the pardon of one sin, and so much for another, and the exchequer of "his holiness" at Rome—who might better have been called "his unholiness"—was filled by payments for abating penalties in a purgatory of Rome's inventing Luther learned from the sacred Volume, by the Spirit of the Lord, that we are saved by grace alone through faith; and, having found it out, he was so possessed by that one truth that he preached it with a voice of thunder. His witness on one point was so concentrated that it would be too much to expect equal clearness upon all other truths. I sometimes compare him to a bull who shuts his eyes, and goes straight on at the one object which he means to overthrow. With a mighty crash, he broke down the gates of Papal superstition. He saw nothing—he did not want to see anything—except this, "By grace are ye saved through faith." He made very clear and good work upon that point, faulty as he was upon certain others. The echoes of his manly voice rang down the centuries. I note that nearly all the sermons of Protestant divines, for long after Luther, were upon justification by faith; and, whatever the text might be, they somehow or other brought in that article of a standing or falling church. They seldom finished a sermon without declaring that salvation is not by works, but that it is by faith in Jesus Christ. I do not censure them for a moment; far rather do I commend them—better too much than too little upon the central doctrine of the gospel. The times needed that point to be made clear to all comers; and the Reforming preachers made it clear. Justification

by faith was the nail that had to be driven home, and clinched; and all their hammers went at that nail. They were nothing like so specific and clear upon many other doctrines as they were upon this; but then it was a foundation-stone, and they were occupied in laying it, and they did lay it, and laid it thoroughly, and laid it for ever.

Still, they would have more fully completed the circle of revealed truth if sanctification had been as fully apprehended and as clearly explained as justification. It had been as well if the legs of the gospel of the Reformation had been equal, for one was a little longer and a little stronger than the other, and therefore there was a limp—a halting like that of victorious Israel, as he came from Jabbok—but still a limp, which it would be well to cure. We have passed beyond the stage of dwelling too much on the cardinal doctrine, and I greatly fear that in these times we do not have enough preaching of justification by faith. I could wish the Lutheran times back again, and that the old thunders of Wittenberg could be heard once more; and yet I shall be glad if everything that is practical in the gospel shall also have its full sphere allotted to it. Imputed righteousness, by all means; but let us hear of imparted righteousness also; for both are precious boons of grace. The duties—let me rather say, the high and holy privileges—which come to us as children and servants of God—these should be maintained and fully preached, side by side with the blessed truth embodied in those lines—*"There is life in a look at the Crucified One: There is life at this moment for thee."*

I shall dwell, first of all, upon the first point of the text, which is this, **"Not of works,"** or *the way of salvation*. **"Not of works"** is negative description, but within the negative there lies very clearly the positive. The way of salvation is by something other than our own works. Secondly, I shall speak about *the walk of salvation*. We who are saved walk in holiness; for we are **"created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."** It is a decree of the sovereign Lord that his chosen should be led to walk in holiness.

I. First, then, THE WAY OF SALVATION is negatively described as **"Not of works."** To this many take exception; but that we cannot help; the Scripture is plain enough. We are told that we ought not, on any occasion, to allow persons to sing—

*"Sinner, nothing do,
Either great or small,
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago."*

Great exception has been taken to that expression; but I believe that, if the same truth had been expressed in any other words, the same objection would have been raised, for it is the truth that

is objected to, rather than the words in which it is set forth. My text itself would be, to such persons, very objectionable—**"Not of works."** They are ready to rail at Paul for speaking thus evangelically. They hate the doctrine of salvation all of gift, and not in the least of merit—a doctrine which we love. We preach salvation **"not of works;"** we repeat the teaching again and again, and mean to repeat it continually, till we die. Salvation is of the Lord's mercy, and not by works of the law.

If we were to preach that salvation is of works, we should please many fine folk; but as we do not know that it would be at all to their benefit that they should be pleased, we shall not brush one hair of our head in a different way from that in which it grows, to please them; much less shall we keep back, or explain away, the fundamental truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ; and that for several reasons.

If we were to preach to sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, that salvation would be by their own works, *we should be setting aside the way of salvation by grace*. There cannot be two ways of salvation for the same people. If we take to the one, we practically deny the other. It cannot be questioned that a guilty man, if saved at all, must be saved through the mercy of God. It cannot be denied, also, that our Savior and his apostles taught that we are saved by faith. A man must shut his eyes if he does not see this to be their teaching. If, then, I teach men that they can be saved by works, I have practically told them that salvation by grace is a myth, a mistake, a mischievous error. I have set it aside; for, as I have said before, there cannot be two ways to heaven: there cannot be more than one. If I set up the way of works, I shut up the way of grace. If salvation be of merit, it is not of mercy. But if there be no salvation of men by the pure mercy of God, what an unhappy case are we in! To deny grace is really to deny hope. Where, then, would there be any gospel, or glad tidings, or good news? The way of salvation by works is not *"news."* It is the old way of man's devising, which is the general and well-known error of all the ages. Moreover, it is not *"good news,"* or glad news; for there is nothing good or glad in it. That we shall be rewarded for our works, is nothing more than the heathens taught. Justification by religious performances, and meritorious deeds, is nothing better than the old Pharisaism with a Christian name stuck upon it. It is not worth revealing by the Spirit of God, for it is to be seen by the light of man's own candle. That doctrine makes the Lord Jesus Christ to be practically a nobody; for if salvation be of works, then the way of salvation through faith in a Savior is superfluous, and even mischievous.

Next, to preach *the way of salvation by works is to propose to men a way in which they have already failed*. If you are to be saved

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Walking in Good

(Continued from page 296) ♦

by works, you must begin very early: you must begin before you sin, since one sin decides the matter. But already you have commenced to break the law of God. I am not addressing persons who have yet to start upon the way, for they have started already. You are a good way on the road, one way or other; and since you began in the way of works, what a failure you have made of it already! Is there anyone here who can claim that he is already saved by works, as far as he has gone? Has anyone among you been without sin? Look at your lives; examine your consciences; observe your words, your thoughts, your imaginations, your motives; for all these come into the account. Is there a man here that doeth good, and sinneth not? Scripture declares that **“there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.”** The way of salvation cannot, therefore, be by following a road from which we have already so sinfully and steadily departed. If you were perfect as Adam was before he sinned, you might follow the way of works, and be safe; but you are not in that condition. If I could be sent to an Adam and an Eve altogether unfallen, I might propose to them the way of salvation by obedience to the law; but you have fallen, and your nature is inclined to forsake the right way. The very garments that you wear show that you have discovered your shame. The daily labors which weary you prove that you are not in paradise. The very preaching of the gospel implies that you are in a sinful world. You are not possessed of a will unbiassed, or inclined to that which is good: you have chosen the evil, and still continue to choose it; and therefore I should only be proposing to you a road in which you have already stumbled, and I should be setting you a task in which you have already broken down.

And, next, I think it will be admitted by all, that *the way of salvation by good works would be self-evidently unsuitable to a considerable number.* I will take a case. I am sent for on an emergency, and it is the dead of night. A man is dying, smitten suddenly by the death-blast. I go to his bedside, as requested. Consciousness remains; but he is evidently in mortal agony. He has lived an ungodly life, and he is about to die. I am asked by his wife and friends to speak to him a word that may bless him. Shall I tell him that he can only be saved by good works? Where is the time for works? Where is the possibility of them? Almost while I am speaking, his life is struggling to escape him. He looks at me in the agony of his soul, and he stammers out, “What must I do to be saved?” Shall I read to him the moral law? Shall I expound to

him the Ten Commandments, and tell him that he must keep all these? He would shake his head, and say, “I have broken them all; I am condemned by them all.” If salvation be of works, what more have I to say? I am of no use here. What can I say? The man is utterly lost. There is no remedy for him. How can I tell him the cruel dogma of “modern thought” that his own personal character is everything? How can I tell him that there is no value in belief, no help for the soul in looking to another—even to Jesus, the Substitute? There is no whisper of hope for a dying man in the hard and stony doctrine of salvation by works.

If salvation had been by works, our Lord could not have said to the thief, dying at his side, **“To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”** That man could do no works. His hands and feet were fastened to the cross, and he was in the agonies of death. No, it must be of grace, all-conquering grace; and the *modus operandi* must be by faith, or else for dying men the gospel is a mockery. The man must look, and live. The expiring sinner must trust the expiring Savior. As life ebbs out, the penitent must find life in Jesus’ death. Is it not clear that the gospel of works is unsuitable in such a case as that? Now, a gospel which is unsuitable to anybody is not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, I put it plainly. A gospel that does not suit everybody does not suit anybody; and if it suits any class and condition really and truly, it must suit all classes. I think I have told you that, on one occasion, I had a letter which was intended to be very irritating to me, from some rather eminent, aristocratic gentleman, who said that he had read some of my sermons when he was out on the coast of Africa, and he found that certain black fellows out there—certain “negroes”[edited CRC]—delighted in them very much. He wrote to inform me that I was a very competent preacher for “negroes.” I accepted the assurance at once as a very high compliment. I felt that, if I could preach to “negroes,” I could preach to anybody; and that, if the gospel that I preached was suitable to the natives on the coast of Africa it would certainly suit the people in London; if those who are afar off could understand it, you, who are near, could also understand it. The gospel was not sent into the world to be a patent medicine that could only be purchased by the wealthy, or a spell that could only be uttered by Latin scholars. It is a gospel for all ranks and conditions of men; and if I prove that what you call the gospel is unsuitable for the dying, or is unsuitable for the ignorant, it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel of salvation by grace, through faith, is suitable for every class of persons that we have to deal with. Sinful habit has bound in iron fetters many of our fellow-citizens, and the gospel can free them. Be the habit drunkenness, or profanity, or what it

may, the habit holds them fast; and the prophet says, concerning habit, **“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”** To what purpose, then, do I cry to the leopard, “Change your spots,” or to the Ethiopian, “Change your skin”? I must bring a superior force to bear upon the leopard or the Ethiopian, before this can be accomplished; and there is no force in mere exhortation. You may exhort a blind man to see as long as you like; but he will not see. You may exhort a dead man to live as long as you like; but he will not live through your exhortation alone. Something more is wanted. The forces of natural depravity, and the acquired habits of sin in many cases—I think you will grant it—put the doctrine of salvation by works out of court; and if out of court as to one, it is gone as to all; for there can be but one gospel. Go through your convict settlements; go through your jails; and just see what you can do with a doctrine of salvation by good works. You will come home disappointed, however earnest may be your address. But go there, and tell of free grace and dying love, and pardon bought with blood, and eyes that stream with tears, confessions of sin, and cries for pardon, will tell you that you have not spoken in vain.

Further, dear friends, if we go and preach to men salvation by works, we are preaching to them *a way of salvation impossible to all because of the perfection of the law.* What are the good works that can merit heaven? What are the good works that can ensure eternal life? These are not the easy things which some seem to imagine. They must be perfectly pure, continuous, and unspotted. **“The law of the Lord is perfect.”** It condemns a thought, and even the glance of an eye, as an act of criminality. **“Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”** The law of God in ten commands means much more than the bare words would imply: it deals with the whole range of moral condition, motive, and thought. Dream not that its sweep includes only external acts: it does include externals, but, in very deed, the ten commands are spiritual, they go right through the heart, and search the inward parts of the spirit. The more a man understands the law, the more he feels condemned by it, and the less does he indulge the dream that he, as he is, shall ever be able to keep it intact. With such foul hands as ours, how can we do clean work? With hearts so polluted, how can we be “undefiled in the way”? Nature rises no higher than its source, and that which comes out of the heart will be no better than the heart, and that is **“deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”**

The law of God is one; and if you break it in any one point, you break it

altogether. If, in a chain of one hundred links, ninety-nine should be perfect; yet if a single link, anywhere in the chain, should be too weak for the weight placed upon it, the load will fall to the ground quite as surely as if twenty links were snapped. One breakage of the perfect law of God involves transgression against the whole of it. In order to be saved by works, there must be absolutely perfect, continuously perfect obedience to it, in thought, and word, and deed; and that obedience must be rendered cheerfully, and from the heart, for this is the pith of the first table—**“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”** Can you keep that? Vain-glorious man, have you measured your moral strength against requirements so great, and yet so just? Have you hitherto proved yourself equal to the task? Here is the pith of the second table—**“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”** Have you ever tried to do that—to love your neighbor “as yourself”? You have been a little kind, and sometimes generous; but the standard of loving your neighbor “as yourself”—have you ever reached to that? Has your charity been equal to your self-love? I do not believe that it has ever gone even half the way. Now, **“What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law;”** and if it saith all this to you, and you cannot answer to its demands, how can you hope that you shall live by it? When a man fails to keep the law, it condemns him; and its penalty—in other words, its curse—falls on him as justly his due. He that is under the law is under the curse. All that the law has to say to you is—**“Thou hast broken me; and thou must die for it.”** Read the curses written in the Book of Deuteronomy, and remember that all these are pronounced over your head.

“Look to the flames that Moses saw, And shrink, and tremble, and despair.”

And again, dear friends, *if we preach salvation by works, we shall take the minds of men away from a sense of their great need.* Here is a person who has a terrible disease. He can be cured. The knife must be used; but if, instead thereof, I lay down for him rules of cleanliness, and of general hygiene, I may do him some sort of good; but meanwhile he will neglect the chief evil, his disease will spread, and will become fatal. What am I to do, if I am a surgeon? Must I not impress him, first, with the conviction that a serious operation is required, and that it must be submitted to? All the rest will be proper enough, and even necessary, in due time; but I must do nothing to take his mind away from the great master-evil that is destroying his life. The sinner must be told that he must be born again, that his nature is corrupt, that this corrupt nature must be destroyed, that a new

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Walking in Good

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nature must be created in him: to this his mind must be turned. He must be made **“a new creature”** in Christ Jesus; and if I stir him up to eternal action, with a view to his salvation by it, I shall be taking his thoughts away from the inward evil of sin, which is the very essence of the matter. O sirs, if you had committed an offense against the government of your country, and you were found guilty, and condemned to die, my first business with you would be to entreat you to ask pardon of your queen. I might come into your cell, and say that I would have you dressed more respectably; would have you read such a book, or learn such a science; and this might be all very well; but the first thing you need is to have the sentence of death repealed. I will exhort you, my dear hearers, to do everything that is honest, and right, and good; but there is something needed even more than this. You need to be cleansed from sin by the precious blood of Christ. You need to be renewed in heart by the Holy Spirit, and you must turn your thoughts to these things. You first and most of all need the Lord Jesus. Look to him, I pray you. I dare not exhort you to this work, or to that, lest I distract your mind from Christ.

The preaching of legal justification has no power over men. Congregations thus instructed are usually careless, worldly, and devoted to carnal amusements. Those who hear about works feel as if they had now done enough, and did not need to practice them. There is nothing in such doctrine to arouse anxiety, or move desire, or stir the depths of the soul. It has nothing divine about it, nothing supernatural, nothing which can really raise the fallen, cheer the faint, or inspire the gracious. Without unction, life, or fire, a legal ministry is mere fiddling a tune to lame men, or setting forth a course of living action for a vault full of corpses. This point we know to be fact, and therefore we shall not repeat the experiment.

I am afraid that, *if we began to preach salvation by works, we should encourage pride in some, and create despair in others.* Many would think that they had done pretty well, as compared with other people; they would, therefore, right speedily wrap themselves up in a false hope. But others, knowing that they had not done well, as compared with other people, would think that there was no hope for them, and so would sit down in despair. What practical purpose could this serve—to be making some more proud, and others more wicked, through the influence of despair upon them?

But the very worst matter is, that *it would be taking them off from Jesus.* Our business, my brethren, is to hold up Jesus

Christ. To what end did he die, if men could be saved by their own works? It was a superfluity that he should hang upon the cross if our own merits can open a way of salvation. How could the great God permit and even ordain such a death if we could be saved by our own merits? Why that bloody sweat? Why that nailing of the hands and feet? Why that, **“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”** if of yourselves you can be saved? But it is not so. You cannot save yourselves by efforts of your own, and hence we have to come to you, shutting you up to this one thing only—that you must be saved by faith in him whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for sin. You need the love of God; you need the power of the Holy Ghost; you need to be quickened into newness of life; you need to be helped to run in the ways of righteousness: in a word, you need everything until you come to Christ, and everything that you want you will find in him, and in him alone. Within yourselves there is nothing that you want. You may search, and look, and turn the dunghill of your nature over and over again, but you will never find the jewel of salvation there. That pearl of great price is in the Lord who assumed human nature, and lived, and loved, and died, and rose again, that he might redeem men from the fall, and all the sin consequent thereon. Oh, that you would look away from self once for all! God forbid that the preacher should ever hold up anything else before you except the crucified Savior, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, bidding men look and live.

To talk to unbelieving men about the possibility of salvation by their own works *would keep them from eternal life.* All that the life of nature can do will never suffice to produce a higher nature. Let the natural exert itself as it may, it will never rise to the spiritual. The best-working horse does not thereby become a man: the best-living unregenerate man cannot thereby become regenerate. There must be a new birth; and that comes by faith, and not by works. To believe in Jesus is the entrance gate of the new life, and there is no other door. If we, in any way, set you hunting about for another way, we shall cause you to miss the one only entrance, and that will be to your soul's eternal loss. As we dread this, we more and more resolve to hold up the cross, and the cross alone, and again and again we cry, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”** God forbid that, by our essays upon virtue, or “the enthusiasm of humanity,” we should distract you from hastening to the Lord Jesus, that he may give you rest, life, and holiness! We want you to let your thoughts run, all of them, to Calvary, and to that wondrous Person, whose wounds upon the tree bleed healing for the wounds of sin, and whose death is for believers the death of the great evil power

which once held them in bondage.

Thus much upon a topic which we shall never wear threadbare, and which we shall always continue to insist upon while life or breath remains, because it will always be needed while sinners remain on earth needing salvation.

II. But now we come to this second most important part of the subject, namely, THE WALK OF SALVATION. Those who have believed in Christ, and have been the subjects of the Spirit's work, are now **“created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them.”** God desires that his people should abound in good works. It is his great object to produce a people fit to commune with himself: a holy people, with whom he can have fellowship in time and in eternity. He wishes us not only to produce good works, but to abound in them; and to abound in the highest order of them. He would have us become imitators of himself as dear children, possessing the same moral attributes as the Father in heaven possesses. Is it not written, **“Be ye perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect?”** Oh, that we came within measurable distance of this blissful consummation!

Note in the text, first, that *there is a new creation.* One of the poets said of old that “an honest man is the noblest work of God.” That is not true, unless we put upon the word “honest” an emphatic spiritual sense. A Christian man, however, is the noblest work of God. He is the product of the second creation. At first man fell, and marred his Creator's work; but, in the new creation, he that makes all things makes us anew. Now, the object of the new creation of our race is holiness unto the glory of God. You are not new-made in the image of the fallen Adam, but in the likeness of the second Adam. You are not new-created to sin—this cannot be imagined. The new creature sinneth not, for it is born of God. The new life is a living and incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever. The old nature sins, and always will sin; but the now life is of God, and it strives daily against the sin of the old nature, and perseveres, and pushes forward towards everything that is holy, upright, and perfect. Its instincts all run towards perfect holiness. The old nature does not care to pray; but the new nature prays as readily as we breathe. The old nature murmurs, but the new nature sings and praises God from an impulse within. The old nature goes after the flesh, for it is fleshly; but the new nature seeks the things of the Spirit, for it is spiritual. If you have been born again at all, you have been born unto holiness. If you have been new-created, you have been created unto good works. If this be not so with us, our religion is a mere pretence.

This new creation in connection with Christ, for we read in the text, “Created in Christ Jesus.” We are the branches; he

is the Vine out of which we grow. Your life, and all your fruit-producing power lie in your union to Christ. You are not merely new-created, but you are created in Christ Jesus. It is not merely a change from a lower nature to a higher, but from separation from Christ to union with him. What a wonderful thing that is—that you and I should not only be creatures in the world, but new creatures in Christ Jesus! Creatures we were in the first Adam; but our new-creatureship is in the second Adam. Beloved, if you are what you profess to be, you are one with Jesus by that vital union which cannot be dissolved; and good works follow upon that union. Joined to Jesus by faith in him, love to him, and imitation of him, you walk in good works. Your creation to holiness is your creation in Christ Jesus. As you become one with the anointed Savior, his anointing ordains you to service, and his salvation leads you into obedience. There cannot but be fruit on that branch which is vitally joined to that fruitful stem, Christ Jesus, who did always those things which pleased the Father.

Our good works must flow from our union with Christ by virtue of our faith in him. We depend upon him to make us holy. We depend upon him to keep us holy. We overcome sin by the blood of the Lamb. We reach after holiness by the constraining love of Jesus. Love to Christ is the impelling cause of putting away, first one evil, and then another; and the energy enabling us to follow after one virtue, and then another. Love to Christ burns like a fire in the breast that has conceived it; and, as it burns, it makes the heart to glow, and to become transformed to its own nature. You have seen a piece of iron put into the fire, all black or rusty, and in the fire it has gradually become red with heat; and, as it has reddened, it has thrown off the scales of rust, until at last it has looked to be itself a mass of fire. The effect of the love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is to burn off the rust and scales of sin and depravity, and we become pure love to God through the force of the love of God, which takes possession of our being.

Moreover, that love moves us to patient imitation of Christ. Do you know what that means? “The Imitation of Christ” is a wonderful book upon the subject, which every Christian should read. It has its faults, but its excellences are many. May we not only read the book, but write it out anew in our own life and character by seeking in everything to be like to Jesus! It is a good thing to put up in your house the question, “What would Jesus do?” It answers nine out of ten of the difficulties of moral casuistry. When you do not know what to do, and the law does not seem very explicit upon it, put it so—“What would Jesus do?” Here, then, stands the case: by your creation in

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Walking in Good

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Christ you come to exhibit faith in him, love to him, and imitation of him; and all these are the means by which good works are produced in you. You are **“created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”**

Notice, that *creation unto these good works is the subject of a divine decree: “Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* This is God’s decree. Am I ordained to eternal life? Answer the other question: “Am I ordained to walk in good works?” If I am ordained to good works, then I do walk in them, and the decree of God is manifestly carried out in me. But if I make a profession of being a Christian, attend a place of worship, and compliment myself upon my safety, while I am living in sin, then evidently there is no decree that I shall walk in good works, for I am living otherwise than that decree would have caused me to live. O beloved, it is the eternal purpose of God to make his people holy! Agree with that purpose, with the freedom of your renewed will, and with the delight of your regenerated heart! Concur in the will of God. Yea, vehemently desire, heartily pant after, perfect holiness in the fear of God. Then may you, in the midst of severe struggles against temptation from without and from within, fall back upon the decree of predestination. Since it is God’s decree, that, as being new-created in Christ, I should be full of good works, I shall be so despite my old nature, and despite my spiritual weakness. The decree, in the new creature of God, will be carried out despite my surroundings, despite the temptations of my circumstances, despite the opposition of the devil. God has before ordained that we should walk in good works; and walk in them we shall, sustained by his holy Spirit.

So, then, dear friends, these good works must be in the Christian. They are not the root, but the fruit of his salvation. They are not the way of the believer’s salvation; they are his walk in the way of salvation. Where there is healthy life in a tree, the tree will bear fruit according to its kind; so, if God has made our nature good, the fruit will be good. But if the fruit be evil, it is because the tree is what it always was—an evil tree. The desire of men created anew in Christ is to be rid of every sin. We do sin, but we do not love sin. Sin gets power over us sometimes to our sorrow, but it is a kind of death to us to feel that we have gone into sin; yet it shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the law, but under grace; and therefore we shall conquer it, and get the victory.

The outcome of our union with Christ must be holiness. “What concord hath Christ with Belial?” What union can he have with men that love sin? How can

they that are of the world, who love the world, be said to be members of the Head who is in heaven, in the perfection of his glory? Brothers, we must, in the power of the text, and especially in the power of our union to Christ, seek to make daily advances in good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them; for walking means not only *persevering* but *advancing*. We should go from strength to strength in holiness: we should do more, and do better. What are you doing for Jesus? Do twice as much. If you are spreading abroad the knowledge of his name, work with both hands. If you are living uprightly, seek to put away any relics of sin that abide in your character; that you may glorify the name of God to the utmost.

And, lastly, *this should be our daily exercise:—“That we should walk in them.”* Good works are not to be an amusement, but a vocation. We are not to indulge in them occasionally: they are to be the tenor and bent of our lives. “Oh,” says one, “that is a hard saying.” Do you say so? Well, then, this displays, and sets in clear light, the first part of my subject. You see how impossible it is that you should be saved by these good works; do you not? But if you are saved—if you have obtained a present salvation, if you are now a child of God, if you are now assured of your safety, I charge you, by the love you bear to God, by the gratitude you have to his Christ, give yourself wholly to everything that is right, and good, and pure, and just. Help everything that has to do with temperance, and righteousness, and truth, and godliness; and **“let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”**

May the Spirit of God seal this sermon upon the hearts of his people, for Christ’s sake! Amen.



TEACH US TO PRAY

*Lord, teach us how to pray,
And give us hearts to ask,
Or all we seek, or think, or say,
Will prove a tiresome task.*

*Teach us for what to pray,
For thou alone art wise;
And often what we blindly urge,
Thy mercy, Lord, denies.*

*Lord, teach us so to pray,
That murmuring be unknown;
That whatsoever thy grace decrees,
Thy will may be our own.*

*Thy Holy Spirit send,
Our bosoms to inspire;
Then shall our praise to thee ascend,
With pure and warm desire.*

“Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1).

GLEANINGS



Tips on How to Distribute Literature

We all know the printed page is a tremendous way to spread the Good News of the Gospel. And we are all looking for ways to become personally involved in using the printed page to the fullest advantage.

Most of us must become involved through the avenue of our daily experiences and, therefore, different opportunities. We offer a few suggestions to help you to share the Christian Message through literature.

Eat out often? Leave a tract with you tip.

Take cabs? Give the driver a booklet or tract and ask him to read it.

Pay your bills by mail? Enclose Gospel literature with a note of thanks for good service.

Answer your doorbell more often? Do it with a smile and give the deliveryman or salesman a personal word and a piece of literature.

Go shopping? You might be surprised how easily a clerk will accept something to read. After all, you are the customer.

Use the services of repairmen for your appliances? A question and a Scripture or two can easily lead to the acceptance of literature for further thought.

Buy gas for your car? The station attendant might be very happy to accept something brief to read – especially if you are a regular customer.

Like to talk? If you do, you cannot help but get into conversations where your opinion will express your Christian philosophy. When you find someone who responds, and you will, here is your opportunity to follow up with literature.



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

1-1-2010 to 1-31-2010

Beginning Balance \$11,874.22

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN 50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 100.00
Anonymous 1,000.00
..... 1,475.00
TOTAL 13,349.22

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time 2,210.00
Tape Production 195.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 2,405.00
..... \$10,944.22
Interest + .86
..... 10,945.08
Less Corbin, KY des. -1,606.12
ENDING BALANCE \$9,338.96

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance \$966.12

RECEIPTS:

Anonymous 1,000.00
TOTAL 1,766.12

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time (WCTT) 160.00
ENDING BALANCE \$1,606.12

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

1-1-2010 to 1-31-2010

Beginning Balance \$4,965.34

RECEIPTS:

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX 25.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL 42.51
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 200.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL 60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN 150.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID 100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV 300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 150.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV 50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL 25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR 25.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Grace M. 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 25.00
Landmark M. B. C., Monck Corner, SC 100.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM 100.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH 100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN 50.00
New Testament B. C., Leivasy, WV 125.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL 100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR 50.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA 25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS 50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Indianapolis, IN 85.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL 100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX 30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC 100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH 75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA 25.00
Subscriptions 418.00
Dividing checks 150.00
Sub Total \$3,270.51
TOTAL \$8,235.85

EXPENDITURES:

Printing 581.71
Postage 850.53
Supplies 704.96
Wages 2,300.00
Wages* 217.00
FICA 187.30
Dividing checks 150.00
Total Expenditures 4,991.50
..... \$3,244.35
Check order -39.72
ENDING BALANCE \$3,204.63

*Extra wages were for extra help on several projects we are working on. These funds reimbursed by Berea Baptist Church.

For His Name's Sake

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

FROM BEGINNING TO END GOD
SAVES HIS PEOPLE FOR HIS OWN
NAME

"Do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me" (Psa. 109:21).

The name of God is more than some vocal sound or written letters. If it were merely a certain sound, we would have no way of knowing how to pronounce it; and if it were merely certain written or printed letters, it could never be translated into different languages. But in fact God in the Bible calls Himself by many different "names," if by names we mean mere words. Yet there is only one true God, whether we call Him God, Lord, Jehovah, Almighty, Father, Son, Spirit, Judge, King, Jesus, Emmanuel, or any of the other names or titles by which He is called in our English Bibles.

Really, of course, in the original Scriptures He is called by Hebrew and Greek names, of which our English names are mere translations. We cannot call Him by His real scriptural names without learning Hebrew and Greek – and even so we cannot be sure of the correct and original pronunciation of any of these names.

My apology for pointing out these self-evident facts is that there are some foolish people in the world whose entire religion is built upon a worship of some one of the many "names" of God, instead of God Himself.

The Psalmist quoted above was not so ignorant. We might translate, "Do thou for me, Jehovah Lord, because of thy name," but it is still just a translation, and the essential meaning is the same.

When the Bible speaks of the "name" of God, the usual reference is to Himself, to His essential being or person, or, in connection with some particular word used as a "name," to some attribute of His deity which this word especially befits. God is one, and, by whatever name He is called, He is the same God.

So when God does something for His name's sake, He does it for Himself, for His own glory, and because of His own holy attributes. It will be interesting to note some of the things God does for His people for His name's sake.

LIFE FROM ABOVE

"Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake" (Ps. 143:11). "Lord" here would better be translated "Yahweh" or "Jehovah," calling attention to the fact that God is eternally self-existent. Thus we are reminded of the words of Jesus:

"As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). This statement



of Jesus followed His declaration in verse 21: **"As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."**

God makes alive, keeps alive, and enlarges the life of His people for His name's sake.

SINS FORGIVEN

"Your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (I John 2:12). **"For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity"** (Ps. 25:11). **"God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"** (Eph. 4:32).

God does not forgive sins because of any merit, reformation, prayer, or promises on our part; but through the merits of Jesus Christ and for His own name's sake He freely forgives every sinner who **"believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly"** (Rom. 4:5).

ETERNAL SECURITY

"The LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people" (I Sam. 12:22). Surely this Scripture truth is simple enough for anyone to understand: if God loved us and blessed us with His salvation when we were dead sinners, much more, now that we are His own dear children, He will keep us and stand by us for His own name's sake.

"If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10).

ANGER DEFERRED

"For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off" (Isa. 48:9). So spoke Jehovah to His people Israel of old, and the same God still chastens whom He loves and reserves His hot anger for His enemies.

"When we are judged, we are

chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Cor. 11:32).

"DO NOT ABHOR US"

"Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us" (Jer. 14:21). So Jeremiah prayed for Judah. The nation as a whole had so sinned, and true children of God were so few, that it was too late to pray for deliverance for the nation.

Yet in the midst of warnings of judgment upon the nation, God assured His prophet of His continued love and care for His true children: **"Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of affliction"** (Jer. 15:11).

Actually, if we are truly God's children, He will chasten us to the point of physical death if necessary to keep us from going too far in sin. See Isa. 22:14, I Cor. 11:30, I John 5:16, etc. But for His own name's sake, He will never abhor us; He will never cast us out (John 6:37).

PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Far happier is the testimony of David, expressing the normal experience of the true people of God:

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (Ps. 23:3).

So for His name's sake He has given us His Word to be a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path (Ps. 119:105); His Spirit to guide us into all truth (John 16:13); His church and its ministry for the perfecting of the saints, that we may be no more children but may grow up into Him in all things (Eph. 4:11-16).

CLEANSING FROM SIN

"Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake" (Ps. 79:9). Here is a prayer in behalf of God's people, who are already experiencing His salvation but have still a temporal burden of sins.

"Purge away" here would better be rendered "cover," as sins could not really be taken away until Christ died for them (Heb. 10:4). But now God tell us, **"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"** (I John 1:7).

Not only are we forever justified from sin when we first believe in Christ, but now, as God's children, **"if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteous"** (I John 1:9).

COMPLETE SALVATION

To sum up, our full salvation, from its origin in the purpose of God in eternity past to its consummation in His glory in eternity future, is for His name's sake.

In an endless eternity, the testimony of the Psalmist will be the testimony of all the redeemed: **"He saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known"** (Ps. 106:8).

For the purpose that this shall indeed be our testimony, God highly exalted His son, and gave Him a name which is above every name:

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

We now have an additional four discs of the Berea Hymnal Piano music CD's.

These are Disc #9 (songs 201-225), Disc #10 (songs 226-250), Disc #11 (songs 251-275), and Disc #12 (songs 276-300).

We are three-fourths of the way through the hymnal and are looking at completing all of the songs early this year.

The Grace Baptist Church in Fredericktown, OH is currently seeking a pastor, and also guest speakers.

Our current services: Sunday school at 10:00 am, Worship service at 11:00 followed by lunch and an afternoon service at 1:00 pm. Wednesdays at 7:00 pm.

Any brethren that may be interested in filling in to help our ministry can contact Bro. Tory Smith at (614) 205-0729 or by email toremup@columbus.rr.com.

The Bethel Bible Baptist Church, PO Box 85, Mansfield, LA is in need of a pastor.

Any interested Elder should call Connie McMellon at 318-872-1647.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor.

Any interested Elders may call (618) 288-4236 for more information.



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