

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

What Meanest Thou, O Sleeper?

By Timothy J. Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

Jonah 1:1-17

"What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not" (Jonah 1:6).

No doubt most of you are familiar, at least in passing, with the Bible record of the prophet Jonah. He was called of God to go and preach to the city of Nineveh,



but he fled from the presence of JEHOVAH, the living God, in disobedience and sought to flee from his God-given responsibility. He thought evil of God's command, and he did not appreciate God's program of preaching to the heathen and granting them repentance. He

◊ (Continued on page 46)

What Are They Among So Many?

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many" (John 6:9)?

In the beginning of this chapter, we have an account of the time when the Lord Jesus Christ fed a host of 5,000 men with the meager store of **"five barley loaves and two small fishes."** This is a momentous and memorable occasion, being recorded in each of the gospels (See Matt. 14, Mark



6, Luke 9, John 6). Though our text describes the number of men as 5,000 men, we find that in a parallel account we are told that the total number of the persons was somewhat more: **"And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children"** (Matt. 14:21). The crowd of people could have exceeded ten or fifteen thou-

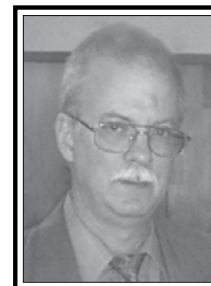
◊ (Continued on page 50)

Born of the Flesh and Born of the Spirit

By Lucien J. Le Sage Jr.
of Pride, Louisiana

Jesus said, **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"** (John 3:6).

So exactly what does that mean? What does it mean to be born of the flesh? What does it mean to be born of the Spirit? Who are the ones born of the flesh? Who are the ones born of the Spirit? How is one born of the flesh? And



finally, how is one born of the Spirit?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BORN OF THE FLESH?

It should be apparent

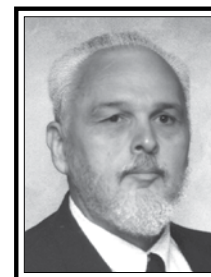
that Jesus is speaking of two births here. One that is natural and one that is spiritual. To be born of the flesh means to be born

◊ (Continued on page 66)

God Is Not Helping Us

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

A long-time friend recently said to me, "God is not helping us. We go to church and try to do right by everybody. My husband applies for jobs, but cannot get work. We just aren't getting by. We can't pay our bills. People tell us that God is just testing us, but what is the use of trying to serve God and do right?" This lady has attended Baptist churches from her youth.



She went on to say that her husband does not any longer want to attend church services. Several thoughts and

feelings immediately surfaced in this preacher's mind at hearing these words. Some of us have been sharing food with this couple and others have helped

◊ (Continued on page 55)

He that is full of himself is very empty.

**"A man's pride shall bring him low:
but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit"**

(Proverbs 29:23).

March 5, 2014

Volume XXXIV, Number 3

Whole Number 416

Editor: Christopher Cockrell

Staff: Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Kiser, Virginia Cockrell

THE BEREA BAPTIST BANNER (UPS 546470) is published monthly for \$6.00 per year by the authority of the Berea Baptist Church, 3881 Highway 363, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855. Periodical Publication postage paid at Mantachie, Mississippi.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEREA BAPTIST BANNER, P. O. Box 39, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855-0039.

PUBLICATION POLICIES: All matter for publication should be sent to the editor. All manuscripts are to be typed and double spaced. All such material becomes the property of BBB and will not be returned unless requested by the writer. We reserve the right to edit and condense all materials sent to us for publication.

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY with paid circulation in most states in the U.S.A. and some foreign countries.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - U.S.

One year.....	\$6.00
Two years.....	\$10.00
Five years.....	\$24.00

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - FOREIGN One Year \$45

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BUNDLES TO ONE ADDRESS: These are sent for \$4 per paper for a year. An example: 10 papers for one year at \$40 or 20 papers for one year at \$80.00.

LOCATION OF PUBLISHING CHURCH: Our church is located on state highway 363 about one mile south of Mantachie, Mississippi. Readers are always welcome to visit our services.

CHURCH PHONE: 1-662-282-7794.

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strength-en His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellow-ship 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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What Meanest Thou

(Continued from page 45) ◊

was a self-centered person, in and of himself; and he did not view things as God viewed them, except when he was chastened and scourged by God's rebuke and stern correcting rod. He even had to ride in a whale's belly for three days and three nights. Even though he was, apart from God's mercy and grace, very rebellious; yet he was used of God so that his very life experience was a testimony of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was buried in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights (Matt. 12:39-41; Luke 11:29-32).

Beloved, you who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and who call upon the name of the living God are, as Jonah was in his day, a sign and a witness and a testimony to this generation. You are chosen and called of God to be a sign unto the people about you and to whom God sends you by His Holy Spirit's leading and guiding, and His providential ruling over your life. As Jonah's life and preaching were to be a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the centerpiece and sum of all true Bible prophecy and preaching; so, too, you are to be living testimonies, living epistles known and read of all men, lamps shining and giving light in the midst of a dark, crooked,

perverse generation. Your lives are to testify of the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men through the shed blood and mediatory office work of His Son Jesus Christ.

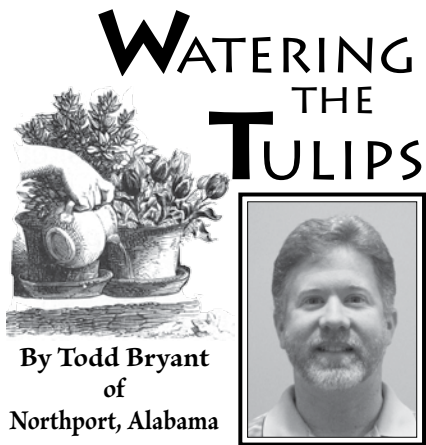
Sadly, many Baptists are like Jonah. They are rebellious to the call of God. They had rather go the opposite direction than that which God has commanded. They had rather engage in another program, follow another plan, and work toward a different result, than that which God has decreed, ordained, and chosen. Because of their spiritual indifference to the Word and will of God, they have fallen into a spiritual state of slumber. While those about them perish for want of the gospel and the truth of God, they sleep! While the devil rages, they recline in drowsiness and unconcern! While their friends, family, acquaintance, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, and children go swiftly down the broad way which leads to destruction, they do nothing but take their ease, unalarmed, undisturbed, uncaring, and seemingly unconscious of the woe and doom that shall soon come!

In our text, we see the shipmaster running to and fro through the ship. He is making every possible effort to try and save the ship and those aboard. He sees no hope but to call upon God; but yet in truth he does not even know God. He is a heathen, Gentile, infidel, and worshipper of idols. Yet, he finds one in the hold of the ship, a passenger, who, though every other person on the ship is about to perish because of the fierce and raging storm that has come upon them, and while all others are calling in desperation upon their false gods seeking deliverance, sleeps away and knows not even what is taking

place. He is astonished at the man's complacency, indifference, and seeming ignorance. Does he not know that all shall soon die, and that most miserably? Does he not know that they shall all be lost, except there be some urgent and miraculous deliverance? Does he not know that they are all in the worst extremity that could be imagined, and without hope? What kind of a man is this, who can sleep while he and all about him are about to die most violent and awful deaths? He exclaims, while arousing this dull and apathetic person, "**What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.**"

Is it not strange how people can perform the very same outward action, and yet the character, meaning, purpose, and outcome of that action be entirely different? The hypocrite can pray as well as the just man; but the hypocrite receives the reward of his praying from men, while the just man is heard in secret of God and answered by God. The hypocrite can give alms and perform beneficent acts of righteousness and goodness toward others, which he does to be seen of men, and from men he receives applause and honor; whereas the just man, by his alms and acts of righteousness, which he performs in secret – the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing – for God's honor and glory, receives in due time the praise of God, and is blessed of God. We see the prophet Jonah asleep on a ship in the midst of a great storm which, if unabated, would surely destroy the ship and those aboard. If we look in the New Testament, we may see Him whom Jonah prefigured, the Lord

◊ (Continued on page 47)



By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama

The Old, Old Story

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me” (Job 19:25-27).

It is often thought that Old Testament saints knew nothing of Jesus. This simply is not true. Job is considered to be the oldest book in the Bible by most scholars. And yet, our text is a clear declaration of the coming Redeemer. Let us consider a few things that Job affirms here centuries before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

First of all, Job unhesitatingly admits his own sinfulness. Job undoubtedly saw himself as a sinner and guilty before God. There would be no need to be redeemed if this were not true. Job's confidence in eternal life was not wrapped up in his own works, but in the work of the coming Redeemer.

Secondly, Job understood that the Son (the 2nd person in the Trinity) was very much alive during his own lifetime. There is much confusion about the incarnation today. Many suppose that Jesus did not exist until He

was born to Mary and laid in a manger in Bethlehem. But, this is not so. The first few verses of the Gospel of John plainly declare, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made”** (John 1:1-3). And later, **“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth”** (John 1:14). The Son is as eternal as the Father.

Thirdly, Job knew that his redeemer, Jesus, would one day reign on this earth. Job's declaration that Jesus would one day “stand at last on the earth” pointed forth to Christ's coming as King. Yes, that very one that would bruise the head of Satan (Gen. 3:15) will one day reign over this earth as the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 20).

Fourthly, Job fully understood the resurrection from the dead. He anticipated a time that “after [his] skin is destroyed, this [he knew], that in [his] flesh [he] shall see God.” Though the Sadducees doubted the resurrection from the dead during the ministry of Jesus, Job looked forward to such a grand event. Job's confidence was similar to Paul's, **“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality”** (I Cor. 15:53).

Lastly, my friends, Job longed for such a time. He said, “How my heart yearns within me!” Is this the attitude that we have today or are we far too attached to this sinful world? Can we say with John, **“even so, come, Lord Jesus”** (Rev. 22:20)? Be encouraged, child of God. The

same One that you trust in today is the One that was promised long ago to take the place of His sheep and purchase them back from the fall.



What Meanest Thou

(Continued from page 46) ♦

Jesus Christ, asleep in a boat on the sea of Galilee in the midst of a terrible storm, while the disciples fight in fear for their lives as the wind beats the waves into the boat ensuring their doom if deliverance cannot be found from another quarter. Yet, while Jesus slept in perfect peace, secure in the faith which He had in His heavenly Father's care and will; Jonah slept in complete indifference and rebellious exhaustion from fleeing and defying the will of God. I ask you, beloved: when you lay you down to sleep, do you sleep as Jesus, or as Jonah? Do you sleep in faith, or in disobedience? Do you sleep in the peace of God which passeth all understanding; or do you sleep in the willful indifference and ignorance of an uncaring and unconcerned heart which has wearied itself with the pursuit of earthly cares and comforts, and has crowded out the call of the Master to go to the unconverted and testify of the grace of God unto them, lest they perish?

Many today attend church services, put money into offering plates and tithe boxes, sing spiritual songs and hymns, and listen to Bible teaching and preaching. Yet, some do so for one reason, and some another. Some do so because they love the Lord Jesus Christ, and they are seeking to let their lights so shine before men that men may see their good works and glorify their Father who is in heaven. Others

are doing so to be seen of men for sure, mostly by themselves and their own self-righteous, willful conceits; to receive the applause and honor that comes from men rather than that which comes from God only; to “get their religion in;” and to seek their own temporal benefit and earthly gain by way of religion. Jonah was asleep, but not because he had grown weary from doing God's will and needed a respite. God had not said to him as Christ did to the disciples when they were so busy that they had no time even to take a meal, **“Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while”** (Mark 6:31). No, Jonah had wearied himself in running from God and from God's will. He had not been bearing the burden of the Word of the Lord, nor taking upon him the yoke of Christian service and Christ-like cross-bearing. He was not weary from bearing his brother's burden, and so fulfilling the law of Christ. No, he was asleep for a shameful reason. He slept the sleep of the drunkard, who is unconscious and knows not what befalls himself and those around him. He slept the sleep of the slothful, taking his rest while vital work and opportunity were left undone and ignored. He slept the sleep of the fool, who knows not that it is day, and the night cometh when no man can work.

What business have you here today? Are you here today because you love the Lord Jesus Christ, He has called you out of the darkness of your sin into His marvelous light by the truth of the gospel, and you have set your lamp upon the lampstand of His kind of New Testament church in support of the gospel being preached among all nations and the name of Christ magnified in the hearts and lives of men? Or

♦ (Continued on page 48)

What Meanest Thou

(Continued from page 47) ♦

are you here because of some other reason? Are you like Jonah, in a ship heading in a direction of your own devising and not God's? Are you, like Jonah, fraught with cares and worries and fears of earthly and carnal things, and not concerned about the souls of men lost, and dying, and on the road to hell? Are you, like Jonah, asleep when you ought to be aroused to the plight of the perishing souls of men about you, who are about to be plunged into the abyss, into outer darkness where their portion forever shall be unending weeping and gnashing of teeth, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched? Are you, like Jonah, senseless to what is going on about you, heedless to God's Word and will, and in reality bringing trouble and sorrow to those about you by your feckless, foolish, and fleshly living?

Beloved, I think the majority of Baptist church members are sleeping spiritually today. To them could be said as Paul said to the Ephesians, **"Awake thou that sleepest"** (Eph. 5:14), (Eph. 5:8-17). It is not a time for engaging in worldly pursuits and pleasures, a time for spiritual slumber and drowsiness, a time for lackadaisical and slothful religion (Rom. 13:11-14). It has been said many times by many Baptists, particularly in recent years and days, that it is not wrong to engage in the pleasures and enjoyments of this world and this temporal life. I say that it is wrong if the time is not a time that is appropriate and fit and seeming for such things. When what is needed is prayer, devotion, mourning over sins and backslidings, zeal and earnestness, steadfastness and faithfulness, and someone to stand in the gap,

then it is certainly not a time for spiritual things to take a backseat to other things. It is a time to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. It is a time for whole-hearted devotion and service to the God of our salvation, and not a time for laying back and taking our ease and finding our own pleasure. People today behave as though they have no spiritual concerns, no spiritual priorities, and no spiritual responsibilities. They behave as though things are well in all quarters and no problems exist. Was that not Jonah's condition? He was behaving as though the seas were calm, the wind and weather fair, and his companions aboard ship were not in jeopardy of losing their lives and souls in a mighty tempest. Are you behaving as though your kindred and acquaintance are not on the road to hell at this very moment? Are you living as though the churches of God are in a condition of great spiritual prosperity and peace, when they are in reality in a great decline? Are you conducting yourself as though the true gospel of God was everywhere being preached with liberty and unction from on high, when in reality there is little truth being heard and most of the so-called "gospel" that is being proclaimed in pulpits, on the radio, on the television, and on the Internet is in reality no gospel, but a false, man-made, devil-influenced doctrine that makes

men two-fold more the children of hell? Are you behaving as though men were stepping forward and standing in the gap, taking up the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, and bravely trumpeting out the gospel of His pure and precious blood and eternal and endless love; when in reality, we see and hear of few who will bear the Master's yoke and stand fast in the faith once and for all delivered unto the saints?

What will it take to arouse and alarm you who are sleeping today? What will cause you to be stirred from your slumber so that you become sensible to the tempestuous state of things about you, and you become concerned that those about you are on the brink of eternal woe and ruin? What will cause you to fall upon your face to your God and Father in heaven, beseeching on the grounds of His tender and everlasting covenant mercies that He would grant revival to His churches, send forth laborers into His harvest, and save our children, grand-children, great-grand-children, neighbors, civil leaders, and heathen in the regions beyond? How can you sleep when all is about to be lost?

I think the rebuke that was given to Jonah is quite instructive for us. Many have, when emotionally stirred but not spiritually instructed, set out upon courses of action that were scripturally untenable and

spiritually unprofitable. Many will spasmodically be stirred up from time to time, and set forward on a course of conduct for a little while, only to soon settle back into their condition of indifference and indolence. Beloved, when a child of God becomes spiritually aroused and revived, what will that person do? **"Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."** The first act of a regenerated heart is to call upon God. The life of a born-again believer is a praying life, because it is a believing life, and prayer is the action of believing. The first thing you need to do if you have been asleep and not fulfilling God's will in your life is return to living by prayer. And you need to pray about specific things in the Spirit according to God's will. If you have no heart for praying for the things that God tells you to pray for in His Word, then your heart has a serious problem, and you need to repent of your great wickedness and obstinacy toward God. First of all, you need to pray that God would forgive you and others like you of your spiritual sleeping and indifference. Then, you need to pray that God would heal you and restore you and revive your and others' concern and zeal for the things of God. Then you need to pray that God would save your lost kindred, acquaintance, neighbors, community and civil leaders, and those who in other parts of the world are hearing the gospel from faithful servants of God. Then you need to pray that God would call men into the ministry, true, sound, faithful men, who will receive the divine deposit of truth and be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God; and that God would send them

♦ (Continued on page 49)

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
WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	101.9.....	3,000 FM
KARI, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m....	550.....	5,000 AM
KPRV, Heavener, OK	Sunday 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.....	92.5	6,000 FM

What Meanest Thou

(Continued from page 48) ♦

forth as laborers in His field and vineyard. You need to pray for your pastor and his ministry, that God would supply him with mercy and grace to prove faithful, and that God would help him fulfill his ministry which God has given him. You need to pray likewise for other ministers of the gospel, that God would help them to have a good conscience and to handle faithfully the Word of life, not making shipwreck of the faith, but contending faithfully for the faith. You need to pray for one another daily, that God would grant grace and wisdom to your brothers and sisters in Christ, that each one might show forth the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light by a holy and righteous deportment and walk; and that each one might, as pilgrims and strangers upon the earth, show by their living that they look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and that they seek a better country, that is an heavenly.

Oh, can you – or rather, will you – pray for those who are perishing? Will you, like Christ, take compassion on the ignorant and out-of-the-way, the half-dead, the brand that must be swiftly plucked from the fire before it is consumed? You may be saying within yourself, “They would not listen to me.” They do not need to listen to you, they need to listen to God; and He is able to rouse them from the deadness of their sins and give them life. You did not listen to many people who told you of God’s saving grace and power in His Son Jesus Christ; but when God called you, you heard and you came. Your first responsibility is to pray for them,

and make intercession for them, according to the will of God and the Word of God (I Tim. 2:1-6). God who rouses the backslider is also the One who rouses the lost sinner and awakens him or her from the slumber and unconcern of their lost, sinful, and perishing state, to lay hold upon Christ

and Him crucified for salvation and eternal life. Will you obey Him in praying for sinners, and in seeking their salvation by way of witnessing to them of the grace of God and the preaching of the Word of God?



When Crowds Get In the Way

By Richard H. Heatherly
of Wingo, Kentucky

It has always been relatively easy to draw curious crowds to religious gatherings by appealing to their intellect or emotions, but extremely difficult, actually impossible apart from the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration to get men to come to Christ in true salvation.

In Mark 5:24-33 we have the incident where the woman with the problem of profuse bleeding is seeking Jesus for healing, and being hindered by the crowds around Him. In Luke 11:52 Jesus tells the lawyers (those who were experts in the knowledge of the Mosaic law, but who despised and rejected Christ;) that they not only refuse Christ, but get in the way of those who would come to Him. In Mark 2:4 men trying to get a sick man to Jesus had to tear up the roof because of the crowd of spectators, some of whom accused Jesus of blasphemy and denied His deity. Luke 8:19-21 tells us the mother of Jesus and His brothers were not able to get to Him for the crowd who did not have any real interest in knowing His Word. Luke 19:1-7 tells of the sinner Zacchaeus’s difficulty getting to Christ because of crowds of people who saw themselves as the only ones righteous and deserving salvation.



All who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ long to see people come to Christ in salvation. And those who know Him would rather have the church house filled than to see empty seats. The Scriptures do make it clear that there will be multitudes in Heaven. However, when crowds become more important than glorifying Christ and holding faithful to His Word they can become a great hindrance to the work of God.

It is not only not a help, but a hindrance when a church through compromise and desire to please everyone sets out to gain crowds of people by using worldly methods. Those who are brought into the church this way may be religiously zealous but they are unsaved. Because they have usually been “led” by some person to make a “profession of faith” or “give their heart to Jesus” and not by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore they can not love and obey Jesus Christ and His Word (I Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:7). That kind of crowd, no matter how rich, cultured, or educated, is a hindrance to the work of God, not a blessing.

All of God’s preachers who

are honest will tell you that there are many people in the churches which are not only no help in glorifying Jesus Christ and getting out the gospel, but who are actually a hindrance and the church would be better off without them.

Those who would use Proverbs 11:30 as proof to defend the false doctrine of man-centered evangelism and promote the title of “soul winner” to men are making an exegetical mistake. There is no such doctrine in the Word of God teaching that men can win souls. Listen to that verse in Proverbs: **“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”** The context of the verse shows that it is the fruit of the righteous (the saved) which is the source of the object (winneth souls) and not the effort of the person. Galatians 5:22 and Ephesians 5:9 clearly show this, that the fruit of the born again believer is solely the work of the Holy Spirit and not any effort of the person. Listen to those verses, **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith”** **“(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth).”** In Galatians 2:20 Paul makes it distinctly clear that the work in us is “Christ in us.” **“. Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase”** (I Cor. 3:4-6).

This seems to make it clear that for any person to claim to have won any soul to Christ would be to claim credit for a work which only the Holy Spirit is capable and worthy of.

Some men who claim to believe

♦ (Continued on page 50)

When Crowds Get

(Continued from page 49) ♦

the doctrines of grace make statements such as "I believe the doctrines of grace, but you cannot build a church preaching them." There are several problems with such reasoning. First, Jesus Christ said He would build His church. He never even intimated that we were to build it. Then second, if these doctrines are taught in the Word of God as they say they believe, it is at least foolish and at the most blasphemy to say that they cannot be used to build a church. Then thirdly, if a preacher cannot build his church on the Scripture, then what is he building it on? This might shed light on why so many churches today seem to pay so little attention to the preaching of the Word in practical living. If you cannot build a church on the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, then what you are building is crowds and not a church; and it matters not how large you build it, those crowds are a hindrance and not a blessing.



What Are They

(Continued from page 45) ♦

sand persons. Yet, how ever many persons were present, the Lord did something that was not humanly possible: He took five barley loaves and two small fishes; He distributed this small amount of food to His disciples; and His disciples did dispense this food to a multitude. And then, after they had all eaten and been filled, they took up twelve baskets that were full of the fragments (See John 6:13). What a manifestation of the power, grace, and mercy of God Almighty!

For the purposes of our study,

I want us to concentrate on the question that Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, asked of the Lord Jesus concerning the small amount of food, and the large multitude to be fed, "**What are they among so many?**"

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Many commentators see a picture of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, represented for us in our text, in the form of the "**five barley loaves**" and the "**two small fishes**." Is it not amazing that something so small can feed so many? Is it not likewise amazing that something so (apparently) ordinary as the gospel of Jesus Christ – which gospel comes from such humble beginnings – can grow in power and effect until that gospel is effective unto the salvation of souls in all corners of the earth? These five barley loaves, were probably of a baser sort of bread. In other words, this was not a bread made from some fine wheat flour. Rather, this was a sort of bread that might be eaten by the poorer folks. And yet, in many ways, this "common" bread is a good picture of the way in which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is something that is "common" to all of those that are saved; and, it is, for the most part, the blind, the poor, the sick, the weak, and the sinners that were called out and saved in the time of Jesus Christ, and for most of the times that have passed since then.

I suppose that these first disciples might have wondered, "What is this message that we preach? What is the hope of us few, and this gospel that we proclaim? What is this Word of God among so many?" There were just a few of the disciples gathered together here – especially when compared to the throng of thousands that were assembled here today. In fact, at the end of the day, there

were probably not many more than just the twelve that were loyal to Jesus Christ (See John 6:66-67). And yet, just these few could (and would) proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ with great success.

Later on, the Apostle Paul would take up the cause of Christ, and he would say this about the power and effectiveness of the gospel of Jesus Christ: "**So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek**" (Rom. 1:15-16). The gospel of Jesus Christ – which some may count as a common, or small, or insignificant thing – is, in fact, the "**power of God unto salvation.**" If souls will be saved, it will be through the preaching and belief of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His

death, burial, and resurrection must be proclaimed and believed if souls will be saved.

The world (and we, too) may doubt the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The world may think that this message is puny or insignificant – just as many may have doubted that five barley loaves and two small fishes could feed 5,000 men. And yet, this gospel is mighty! The power of the grace of this gospel is invincible! "**For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 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. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men**" (I Cor. 1:18-25).

THE BREAD OF LIFE

In much of the rest of John chapter 6, the Lord Jesus Christ preaches and teaches in such a way, as to reveal Himself as the all-important "Bread of Life." The world may consider this "Bread of Life" to be insignificant. The wisdom and the religion of this world may consider the "Bread of

♦ (Continued on page 51)

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What Are They

(Continued from page 50) ♦

Life” to be something fabricated by men, or something to be clung to by the weak, the poor, and the foolish. Others may say, “What is this Bread among so many? How can such a man and such a doctrine be the salvation of so many?” They may ridicule us, but we have at our disposal – we have the glory and honor to proclaim – the glorious “Bread of Life” which came down from Heaven! This “Bread of Life” – our Lord Jesus Christ – is capable of filling all the earth, and filling all the desires of the sons of God. He is the sustaining “Grace of God,” and the inexhaustible “Life of Men.” **“I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”** (John 6:48-51). Wherever men call upon the name of God, the Lord Jesus Christ is the “Bread of Life.” The world would have no life, without the presence and the power of the Son of God. There would be no life in mankind, were it not for the “Bread of Life” who is Jesus Christ.

Of course, these were hard things, and hard teachings for the Jews to understand. At the end of the chapter we read these words: **“Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man**

ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 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 6:60-66). The average person – yea, the unquickened and unregenerate person, cannot and will not understand the need to partake of Jesus Christ. He is our salvation! He is the source of our eternal life! He is the bread of which we must partake, if we are to partake of spiritual and everlasting Life!

Upon the heels of these events, the Lord Jesus Christ turned to the disciples that remained, and He wondered aloud if they would remain with Him. Of course, the response of Peter and the others is very famous indeed! **“Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God”** (John 6:67-69). The “Christ, the Son of the living God,” is our “Bread of Life.” The “Christ, the Son of the living God,” is vital to our salvation, and to partake of Him is not only indispensable; but, to partake of Him is also all that we need. We do not need the doctrines of men – we only need Jesus Christ! We do not need the approval or the guidance of earthly religions – we only need Jesus Christ! We do not

need the standing or the prestige of earthly wisdom – we only need Jesus Christ, the “Bread of Life”!

The manna that the children of Israel partook of in the wilderness of Sinai, was a wonderful food. **“Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels’ food: he sent them meat to the full”** (Ps. 78:23-25). Yet, even this “angels’ food” was but coarse fare, when compared to the Bread of Life! **“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst”** (John 6:32-35).

THE PEOPLE OF GOD

It seems that the world is full of wickedness and wicked men. It seems that the race of mankind is doomed to grovel and wallow in iniquity and shame. The dominions and places and powers of men are only poor and sinful. In each of the Synoptic Gospels, as they give an account of this miracle of the “feeding of the five thousand,” we are told that the disciples and the crowd that thronged them were in a “desert place.” **“And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a**

desert place” (Luke 9:12), (See also Matt. 14:15, Mark 6:35). And yet, in the place where Christ is, there is “much grass,” and there is sustenance from God. **“And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand”** (John 6:10). The Psalmist once said, **“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters”** (Ps. 23:2).

I know that the phrase “desert place” as it is used in the accounts of this miracle, probably mostly refers to the fact that there were no fields and no source of food immediately at hand. But, I think that we ought to also understand that we, the people of God, do wander this earth as it were a “desert place,” and a place of the dead and the dying. And yet, when we are near Jesus, everything is better. When Jesus Christ is nigh, then there is “much grass,” and there is sustenance.

However, it seems that there are only a few that are called out by God. There are some few who are saved by God’s grace. And, these few are ordained to something better – a better occupation, and a better vocation in this life; and a better and more glorious future in the realms of Heaven in the eternity to come. This life is not our home, but we belong to a better fate, and our hearts and souls are desirous of better and higher things. Though we are few among many, still we are reaching out for something that is more glorious than these pleasures and attractions of this mortal realm.

And yet, while we are here on this earth, we might ask, “What are we among so many? What effect, and what influence can we hope to have, amongst such a wicked place and iniquitous race?”

♦ (Continued on page 52)

What Are They

(Continued from page 51) ♦

Well, we, the people of God, are the elect of God, the ones who are called unto His purpose. And, we, the people of God, are the “salt of the Earth.” We read the words of the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, **“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”** (Matt. 5:13-16).

As the saved of God – as citizens of the kingdom of Heaven – ours is a wondrous and blessed place. We are the representatives of God in the world of men! And yet, in these verses that we have just read in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus also provides a warning: **“...but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”** I suppose that it seems that in these last days there are fewer and fewer of us that will boldly proclaim the Word of God. It seems that the numbers of the chosen have diminished, while the ranks of the followers of Satan have multiplied. And, we spend our times commiserating with ourselves, and we say to ourselves, “This is how it is supposed to be.” We refer to such Scriptures as I Timothy 4:1, II Timothy 3:1-5, and II Timothy 4:1-5, and we

complain that, “The time is upon us! Men will no longer tolerate the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the Bread of Life that we proclaim! What are we among so many?”

Well, I want you to know that the (seeming) demise of true Christianity, is not the fault of the world; rather, the fault can be laid at the feet of those that have failed to properly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ! Notice that our Lord warned that the “salt” may lose its “savour.” This, I fear, is the problem today. Surely, every generation of God’s people has lamented the fact that many will reject Jesus Christ. And, every generation of God’s people has lamented the fact that many will even violently oppose the propagation of the Word of God. But, in many of the generations of our forefathers, the people of God – though few in number – have still striven to preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And yet, the people of God in our generation – and perhaps in the last few generations – have largely laid down the task given to us, and we have taken up lives of ease. We are largely bereft of the “savour” that is needed to not only differentiate ourselves from the world of men, but the “savour” that is needed to provide a pleasing odor unto God, and the “savour” that is needed to preserve the lives of men on the face of this earth. Oh, how seldom is the Gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed with truth and vigor! Oh, how rare are the times in which the people of the world are properly warned of the need to repent and demonstrate faith in Jesus Christ! Perhaps, this is what the Lord spoke of when He said, **“... Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth”** (Luke 18:8)? The lack of faith amongst men ought not be laid at the feet of the wick-

ed, so much as it ought to be laid at the feet of the Christians who have not shared the gospel and the bread of life with others. Satan is not now more powerful than he was – thought it seems that his influence in this world is greater than it was. Rather, it may be argued that the salt of the earth is not now as effective as it once was.

However, I do not want to leave you in a depressed or hopeless state of mind. Yes, we that are saved are few among many. Yes, it seems that much of the conviction that once possessed our people has been lost. Yet, the world has only progressed in wickedness, while we have languished and failed in our own courage and resolve. But, we still serve an awesome God! We are still the servants and the ministers of the invincible Word of God! We need only turn to Him, and rely on Him, and He will give us success as He sees fit!

The world may laugh, and they may say, “What are they among so many?” We may doubt, and we may cry out, “What are we among so many?” But, the Lord has a purpose, and the Lord will work out His will amongst the sons of men. And, amazing as it may seem, the Lord will use us – the poor and miserable saints of God – as the tools and the instruments by which He will accomplish His will and His purpose.

Do not throw up your hands in despair! Neither should you resign yourself to defeat! God will still yet save souls; and, God will still yet have His Word proclaimed in this world. **“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God”** (II Cor. 5:20).



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



Behold the Lamb of God

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” John 1:29)!

Our text is the notable words of the greatest preacher born among women to his hearers. There was a time when John did not know Jesus Christ as the glorious Messiah. But from the moment he witnessed the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus after His baptism, John ceased not to cry: **“Behold the Lamb of God!”** The next day he repeated this same phrase: **“Behold the Lamb of God!”** (John 1:36). The Baptist

ever rejoiced in the coming of Christ and continually preached about Him.

John the Baptist was an ideal preacher. He was not given to extreme emotionalism. No angry rebuke is uttered here to sinners. John just makes a simple declaration of God’s truth. What better work can any minister engage in today? Is it not our supreme duty to set forth the gospel of God’s grace? Yes, it is our great duty to set forth the Person and work of Christ to a lost world.

♦ (Continued on page 53)

Behold the Lamb

(Continued from page 52) ♡

This is the truth of God, light from Heaven, power from on High. God is pleased to use this simple truth to rouse sinners.

The most expressive and common figure used of Christ in the Bible is that of a lamb. In this message I want us to behold the Lamb as He is presented in the Holy Scriptures. First, let us behold Him as

PREFIGURED IN OLD TESTAMENT TYPES.

In Revelation 13:8 the Apostle John writes of Christ as **“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”** This does not mean He was actually put to death from the foundation of the world, but that it was the Father’s plan and purpose to give Christ as a sacrifice from eternity past. It was an event so certain that it might be spoken of as actually then occurring. The truth of Christ dying for the sins of His people was constantly represented by bloody sacrifices from the earliest ages that it might be said that He was slain from the foundation of the world.

In Genesis 4:4 we see righteous Abel offering **“the firstlings of his flock”** to the Lord to show his faith in a coming Redeemer. This act of Abel foreshadowed the firstborn Son of God, the spotless Lamb which would take the sins of men away from the justice of God.

Some years later another lamb-type of Christ appears. When Abraham and Isaac were going to Mount Moriah this conversation is recorded: **“And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham**

said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering; so they went both of them together” (Gen. 22:7-8). Abraham’s answer had respect to the coming Messiah, God’s appointed and approved Sin-Bearer (John 8:56).

In Exodus 12 God instituted the Passover for the nation of Israel. The head of each household “was to take to them every man a lamb” (Ex. 12:3) and slaughter it on the evening of the 14th of Nisan. This lamb was to be a male without blemish and spot (Ex. 12:5). The shedding of the blood of the paschal lamb pointed to the shedding of the blood of God’s Lamb, Jesus Christ. This whole affair was designed to direct their faith to a far greater deliverance by Christ (Heb. 11:28). I Corinthians 5:7 says: **“For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.”** Peter tells us how we are redeemed **“with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”** (I Pet. 1:19).

Many things about the paschal lamb was typical of Christ our Passover. First, it was to be a lamb which was slaughtered. Christ is called the Lamb of God by John the Baptist. Second, it was to be a male in the prime of life. Christ was a male Who offered Himself in the midst of His days. Third, it was to be without blemish. Christ was **“without spot.”** Fourth, it was to be set apart four days before slaughter. Jesus entered Jerusalem four days before His crucifixion. Fifth, it was to be slain and roasted with fire. This denoted the extreme sufferings of Jesus Christ. Sixth, it was to be killed by the whole congregation in the evening. Christ suffered in the **“end of the world”** (Heb. 9:26) at the hands of the leaders of the Jewish nation (Luke 23:18).

Seventh, not a bone was to be broken of the lamb. According to John 19:33, 36, not a bone of Christ was broken.

In the tabernacle, and later in the temple, two lambs were offered as a daily sacrifice to the Lord. Exodus 29:39-41 relates: **“The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”**

At about 9 o’clock in the morning the priest would slay the first lamb in the northwest corner of the altar. At about 9 o’clock in the afternoon he would slay the second lamb in the northeast corner of the altar. This pointed to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. He was crucified at the third hour, or about 9 o’clock in the morning. He died the ninth hour, or 3 o’clock in the afternoon (Mark 15:25, 33-34). The continual offering of the lambs signified the ever-abiding efficacy of Christ’s blood. As the Lamb of God He continues to take away the sins of His people (I John 1:7).

What were the Old Testament saints expected to do? They were expected to behold the Lamb of God in types and shadows. They were to see Christ coming to give His blood as the Lamb of God for the remission of the sins under the first testament. In the tabernacle and temple worship and in the Passover, they were to behold God’s coming Lamb.

The Prophet Isaiah beheld the

Lamb in his day, hundreds of years before John the Baptist did. He penned these words of Christ: **“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth”** (Isa. 53:7).

Now let us behold Him

IN NEW TESTAMENT ANTITYPES.

The subject of the book of Revelation might be said to be: **“Behold the Lamb of God.”** Twenty-eight times John speaks in this book of Christ as a lamb. In picturing Christ in prophetic symbol in Heaven John speaks of Him as **“a Lamb as it had been slain”** (Rev. 5:6). Then he tells us that the **“four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb”** (Rev. 5:8). The saints in Heaven are seen beholding the Lamb in worship, saying: **“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing”** (Rev. 5:12-13).

In Revelation chapter 6:1 the Lamb is seen opening the book with seven seals. This chapter closes with ungodly men trying to escape **“from the wrath of the Lamb”** (Rev. 6:16). In chapter 7 a great multitude is seen in Heaven, saying: **“Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb”** (Rev. 7:10). This great company of Gentile nations **“Have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”** (Rev. 7:14). The Lamb is said to feed them, to lead them, and to wipe away their tears (Rev. 7:17).

In the 12th chapter the saints are said to overcome the devil **“by the blood of the Lamb”**

♡ (Continued on page 54)

Behold the Lamb

(Continued from page 53) ♦

(Rev. 12:11). Antichrist is said to imitate Christ by taking to himself **“two horns like a lamb”** (Rev. 13:11). In chapter 14:1 Christ is seen as a **“a Lamb”** on Mount Zion. The 144,000 who are with Him **“are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth”** (Rev. 14:4). In chapter 14:10 the beast worshippers are said to be tormented **“in the presence of the Lamb.”**

In chapter 15 the victors over the beast are said to sing **“the song of the Lamb”** (Rev. 15:3). In chapter 17:14 the ten kings of the revived Roman Empire are said to **“make war with the Lamb.”** Chapter 19:7 mentions **“the marriage of the Lamb,”** while verse 9 discloses **“the marriage supper of the Lamb.”** In chapter 21:14 the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem have **“the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”** The Lamb is said to be the temple in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22) and the light of it (Rev. 21:23). Those who enter the city are those **“which are written in the Lamb’s book of life”** (Rev. 21:27). John informs us that in the city is **“a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb”** (Rev. 22:1, 3).

If one begins to read the first book of the Bible, Genesis, in the Old Testament, he will behold Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. On the other hand, if he reads the last book in the New Testament, Revelation, he will behold the Lamb of God. The whole Bible centers in, points to, and revolves around Christ as the lamb of God!

It behooves us to behold
**THE WORK OF THE LAMB
OF GOD.**

The work of God’s appointed

Lamb is stated by John the Baptist: it was to take away sin. Each word in John’s profound statement is worthy of our consideration and intense study. Let us with great reverence and hearty pleasure examine each word.

First, John said: **“BEHOLD. . .”*** John is saying, “Listen to me. Here stands the One typified by all the Old Testament lambs in the tabernacle and temple. Here is the One foreshadowed by the paschal lamb. He is not “a” lamb, but “the” Lamb of God. People of Israel, before you stands God’s appointed Sin-Bearer promised by the patriarchs, priests, and prophets on centuries past. Look upon the Redeemer Who will give Himself a ransom for many.”

Second, John said: **“Behold THE LAMB. . .”*** Like the little inferior creature that is so valuable to man, Jesus Christ is meek and humble as a lamb. Christ is patient and useful as a lamb. He is the servant of Jehovah Who came as **“a lamb to the slaughter”** (Isa. 53:7). To the Jewish mind this suggested the idea of the paschal lamb and the lambs offered in the tabernacle and temple so familiar to them.

Third, John said: **“Behold the Lamb OF GOD*. . .”** Christ was the Lamb which God the Father appointed and approved for the redemption of the elect in the Covenant of Grace. Speaking of Christ, Paul said: **“Whom God foreordained to be a propitiation through faith in his blood”** (Rom. 3:25 margin). The Father foreordained Him to suffer and die **“before the foundation of the world”** (I Pet. 1:18-20). The prophet declared: **“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him”** (Isa. 53:10). The slaughter of God’s Lamb at Calvary was nothing more than what the Father by His **“counsel determined before to**

be done” (Acts 4:28; 2:23).

Fourth, John said: **“Behold the Lamb of God WHICH TAKETH AWAY. . .”*** To take away means that Christ voluntarily took upon Himself our sins and bore them away from us as the scape-goat in Israel (Lev. 16:21). Christ was actually charged with the guilt of our sins (Ex. 28:38; Lev. 5:1; II Cor. 5:21). Our guilt was transferred to Him, and He bore our sins away as far as the east from the west. He took them away by the merit of His death: **“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed”** (I Pet. 2:24).

Oh, what a wonderful thought for the believer. His sins are clean gone forever. They are under the blood of Christ. The Saviour has **“put away sin by the sacrifice of himself!”** (Heb. 9:26). The Lord from Heaven bore our sins away which were offensive to the holiness of God and destructive to the happiness of man. By the Lamb of God we are both justified and sanctified.

“Taketh” denotes a continual act. This points to Christ’s constant office and work. He is always taking away sin from our guilty conscience upon our confession (I John 1:7, 9) by His continual intercession in Heaven. **“And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”** (I John 2:1). Christ now “appears in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24). We are saved by His death (Rom. 5:9), and we are kept saved by His interceding life (Rom. 5:10).

Fifth, John said: **“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away THE SIN. . .”*** What is meant by the use of the word “sin?” It

is used in the singular meaning to denote the principle of sin. It suggests the collective burden and all-embracing efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read in the plural--“the sins.” But either rendering is true. Christ takes away sin as a principle and actual sins committed by individuals. In the ages to come Christ will completely take away all sin and lost sinners from this planet.

Sixth, John said: **“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin OF THE WORLD.”*** This does not mean every individual person in the world has his sins taken away by Christ, for some die in their sins and suffer in hell for them. Only those justified by Christ have their sins removed. By use of the word “world” John means the elect world of Jew and Gentile. Christ is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world of His people (I John 2:2). The legal sacrifice had respect only to the sins of Israel, but the death of Christ is not confined to one part of the world or to one race of people. The Lamb of God purchased pardon for all who repent and believe the gospel, regardless of their color, race, nation, or language. Wherever there shall live a sinner throughout the wide world sinking under the weight of sin and desiring a Saviour, he shall find in **“the Lamb of God”** a shoulder equal to the weight.

OUR GREAT DUTY

It is the chief business of those saved from sin to tell men to behold the Lamb. This is what John the Baptist did. Those who heard John speak turned to Jesus Christ and followed Him. Some preachers are very good at making their own followers, but utterly fail to make their hearers followers of Christ. John led his

♦ (Continued on page 55)

Behold the Lamb

(Continued from page 54) ♦

followers to leave him that they might behold the Lamb. The Baptist said: **“He must increase, but I must decrease”** (John 3:30). This was the glory of John the Baptist.

The early Christians sought to get men to behold God’s Lamb. The apostles said: **“We preach Christ crucified”** (I Cor. 1:23). Again they said: **“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord”** (II Cor. 4:5). Paul told the Corinthians: **“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”** (I Cor. 2:2).

The great responsibility of those saved by the Lamb is to call upon men to behold the Lamb. Since Christ took away our sins (Rev. 1:5), we must not complain about what He takes away from us. When service to Him requires that we give up farms, friends, and family, we must gladly and willingly give it up for Him. We must lose our life for His sake and the gospel. Suffering and tribulations must not deter us in this important work.

CONCLUSION

The more I live in this world of sin and sorrow, the more I behold of the Lamb of God. The more I go to church and read the Bible, the more I behold of God’s appointed Sin-Bearer. I wonder in admiration at the love and grace of Christ in taking up my sins and bearing them away from the justice of God. When I see Him taking away my sins, it makes my hatred for sin increase. I will ever go on looking to Him by faith for everlasting peace and pardon. When I move higher up, I will still go on beholding the Lamb in a much better light.

Sinner friend, Christ will either take away your sin, or He will take you away for your sins. Christ must become your sinless and all-sufficient Sin-Bearer, or you must bear your own sins in the fires of hell for an eternity. To have the knowledge of your sins taken away, you must look to the Lamb of God. If from sin you are longing to be free, then look to the Lamb of God. This is so simple and easy. It was beholding the forbidden fruit the race became lost, and it is by beholding God’s Lamb that men are saved. May it please the Spirit to cause you to cry out: “All glory to the dying Lamb. . . I now believe in Jesus.”

* (Emphases by MRC)



God Is Not Helping

(Continued from page 45) ♦

them financially. We feel their pain. But sympathy was only one of the feelings that arose in this preacher’s heart and mind: something else – a more serious concern – came to mind. That concern is that these two friends just do not know the Lord. Not that God is not prospering them – no, that is not the concern: rather my concern is that they are trying to live right because of what they think they can get from God. They are of the mistaken notion that they have something to trade with God in order to get things they desire.

One of the predominant ideas that fill the minds of natural, unregenerate men and women is this: if I serve God I will prosper. At least I will not suffer serious financial problems. Churches and other religious organizations are built upon this very idea. TV preachers fund themselves quite well off this idea, scamming money from credulous people.

Credulous people – people ready to believe something without good evidence – believe this false idea probably because they want to serve God motivated by a desire for the things they can get in this life plus heaven in the next life. The question is this: is this desire for things and prosperity a proper motive for living right? By that we mean is this a motive that God accepts? Is God pleased with religious actions based upon this motive? Or, is this nothing more than a false religion based upon selfishness? Is it devotion to God, really? Or is it just bartering with God? Does God operate such a flea market as some people seem to think? This fleshly idea sometimes results in exactly the feelings expressed by my friends words: We are not getting along well in our lives, so what is the use in serving God? Actually such people have not served God at all: they have served their own bellies for selfish reasons. They are like some who attend church as long as the church gives them food, pays their bills, etc., but when the church stops doing those things, they stop attending and look for another generous benefactor. They do not want God: they want a sugar daddy and would settle for a fairy godmother if such creatures existed.

It seems that the devil may be the originator of this idea. At least he is the propagator of it. For this reason, God initiated a confrontation with the devil that involved a man named Job. God held Job up to the devil as an example of a righteous man – not a sinless man, but a just one. **“And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth**

God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face” (Job 1:8-11). It is a fact: God had blessed Job in every way. He was prosperous – so much so that he was styled **“the greatest of all the men of the east”** (Job 1:3). Satan’s reasoning was that of the natural (unsaved) man. He thought that Job was serving God for what he could get from Him. He raised the question we wish to deal with in this article, namely: will a man serve God for nothing? That is another way of asking what Satan asked: **“Doth Job fear God for nought?”** Will a man serve God whether God prospers him or not? Will a man serve God because it is right and proper to do so? Will a man worship and serve God because God is worthy of our worship and service? Do you serve God for nothing? It is important to understand that this confrontation with the devil was started by God. We think God had several things in mind to accomplish by this confrontation with the devil. He accomplished some things in Job’s life and no doubt in the lives of his wife and perhaps others who observed Job’s experience. One thing God did: He proved to the devil and his demons as well as angels and men for all time that there are some people who really do serve God for the right reason.

Living before the law was given and thus before there was a Levitical priesthood, Job was

♦ (Continued on page 59)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. According to I Corinthians 5:9, Paul wrote an earlier letter to the church at Corinth (earlier than I Corinthians). Was that first letter inspired? What happened to it? - Oklahoma

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Paul came to Corinth during his second missionary journey as set forth in Acts 16:11-18:11. As was his custom he began preaching in the synagogue every Sabbath. He met with fierce opposition but many Corinthians were converted (Acts 18:7-11). Verse 11 indicates that he stayed in Corinth for another 18 months teaching the Word of God. Paul departed from Corinth. Apollos, with a letter of recommendation from the church at Ephesus, began to minister to the saints at Corinth (Acts 18:24-19:1).

Sometime after Paul left the church at Corinth and prior to sending what is today recognized as First Corinthians, Paul penned an epistle that urged the Corinthians to be separate from fornicators (I Cor. 5:9). As far as I know this is the only reference to the previous letter. I am sure that Paul wrote many letters that are not included in the inspired record and II Corinthians 10:9-11 lends support to this assertion. However, the principle of not keeping company with fornicators was chosen by God to be preserved in the inspired record of I Corinthians.

I do not know what happened to the letter in question. Some

commentators refer to it as the lost letter. Rest assured that if God had willed that it be included in the inspired record we would have it preserved as part of the sacred Canon.

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"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16).

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:21).

"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29).

By reading the Scriptures given above we can see three things; 1) ALL Scripture is given to us and they are by the inspiration of God, 2) and only holy men of God spake by the leadership (as they were moved or lead) by the Holy Spirit, 3) Only the things God wants us to know will be revealed to us. We should never question God's motives, take them for what they are and obey them.

With that said, (and it is not good to speculate here, or say what if) the part about fornicators **"not to company with fornicators"** was inspired and God did want us to know, is apparent that Paul was moved to write it down in a letter and send it again to the church at Corinth.

The reason, (in my opinion) that we do not have that first epistle is 1) the first letter, not I Corinthians, was lost and/or never made it to the church (records have gotten lost over the years), 2) Paul could have put his own thoughts in (maybe he was upset with them), therefore if that was the case it was not inspired, 3) that letter is not in our Bible, therefore God chose not to have it recorded. But for whatever the reason, again the emphasis is on **"not to company with fornicators,"** not whether an epistle that Paul wrote or what happen to it. We might add, this is a very good question, not too many would have caught it.

Not trying to be sarcastic at all here, but the question was asked, "What do you think of them finding the Lost Dead Sea Scrolls? The answer was given, they were never lost, God knew where they were all along." (Think about that). That is why we try never to question God's motives (though we do at times anyway) because He knows what He is doing, not us. God Bless!

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I am sure that the Apostle Paul was a prolific letter writer, as were many of our forefathers

before the advent of such modern conveniences, such as cars, phones, emails and texts! We probably only have a small percentage of his writings preserved. Even as late as the 19th century, writing letters was the ONLY realistic form of communication available as the writings of George Washington, John Adams, James Madison, etc are clear evidence. You could not just ring up the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Corinth and give him a piece of your mind- you had to write a letter, or show up! Both of which the Apostle Paul did...! Selah! Think about it!

It is an interesting question to me about the possible inspiration of that (lost) first letter. Inspiration, as a Bible doctrine, means that it is God-breathed (II Tim. 3:16). Peter writes that **"...prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"** (II Peter 1:21). Certainly we do not have every word that every prophet spoke **"as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"** throughout history. In other words, every inspired word (of God) that has ever been spoken or written is NOT in the Bible. On the other hand, these core Scripture passages DO teach that every word found in the Holy Writ, WAS inspired of God. The King James Bible is the preserved English version of the inspired Holy Scriptures! God's explicit words to every generation! **"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"** (Ps. 12:6-7).

Having made that distinction, I have no problem if that first letter to Corinth was inspired

◊ (Continued on page 58)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. On more than one occasion, I have heard preachers use I Timothy 5:1 as a basis for others not to be able to rebuke them if they are in error. If this is so, should they not also believe in women preachers since the verse following is part of the same sentence that states "elder women?" I thought these two verses were speaking more about respect. Am I wrong? - Tennessee

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"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. 7:18-19). There is no person outside of our Lord that ever walked this earth without need of rebuke for their errors! No title of elder or preacher will exclude any from these sinful ranks! Selah! Think about it!

Elders/Preachers/Pastors need rebuke as much as any other mortal human! From the Scripture we see this: **"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I (Paul) withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.**

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews" (Gal. 2:11-14)? Even OPEN rebuke might be necessary in some cases, that all might be edified. This is carried out in the further passage of our text.

Rightly so, an elder of the church is held to a high standard (I Tim. 3:1-8), and ought to be respected (double honour!) on that high standard, but as we get to our text, so should also elders EVERYWHERE (mature men/women) be venerated and esteemed! **"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. ...Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (I Tim. 5:17, 19-21).** Partiality is showing preference for a favored one (an elder?), or turning a blind eye toward the misdemeanors of a select few (elders plural?). Beloved, God is no respecter of persons, as Scripture tells us so often! He is

only a respecter of good works; primarily the good works of His precious Son! Even "elders" that labor in the Word and doctrine are to be held as accountable as every single child of God. Selah! Think about it!

My question is: What truly holy person would not DESIRE rebuke? We would never know the HALF of our faults, if not for caring folk and the discerning words of Scripture! **"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:7).** My wife does this for me many times! **"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Ps. 119:9) "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Ps. 19:11).** We all need exhortation!

The context of our study is to **"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father"** with an attitude of respect! Carry that on thru the text. Rebuke not a young man, but intreat him as a brother! Rebuke not an elder (woman) but intreat her as a mother! Rebuke not a young lady, but intreat her as a sister! Respect is a good word for understanding this passage correctly, because the Scriptures are here commanding us to have the right attitude when we find a mote in our brothers' eyes!

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves" (II Tim.

2:24-25). Respect, meekness, purity, holiness! and, yeah, sometimes rebuke. The LORD bless us all! Selah! Think about it!

P.S. I hope the beloved reader sees that the question about women preachers is a moot point. Neither this passage nor any portion of Scripture can validate women preaching in any New Testament Baptist Church!

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In my opinion, no you are not wrong that I Timothy 5:1-2 is speaking of respect for elder men and women. But, to be very clear, let me explain myself so I do not receive a bunch of letters chewing me out for agreeing with the questioner.

There are two keys to verses 1 and 2, **"but entreat him as a father"; "The elder women as mothers."** This is not true today as much as it was in the days I lived at home with my parents. But if I ever even thought about rebuking (or telling somebody off; to criticize or reprimand somebody, usually sharply; a reprimand or expression of criticism or disapproval) someone that was an elder or an adult, I would have spent a lot more time at the dentist than I did, and it would not have been to get my teeth cleaned. It just was not done!

Also, we have to realize who is doing the talking here, Paul; and who he is talking to, Timothy, who is a young preacher at the Church in Ephesus. The elder here is not an officer, or preacher,

◊ (Continued on page 58)

Forum #1

(Continued from page 30) ♦

(breathed) by the Holy Spirit into His instrument of grace called the Apostle Paul. Whether all or in part, we will not know until we get to glory. I am confident that even today the Holy Ghost uses men of God to preach the truth! **“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe”** (I Thess. 2:13). The apostle to the Gentiles was referring in this passage to “words” that the Baptists there in Thessalonica had “heard”! This might be as a result of the two “epistles” to their church being read audibly in their presence, but it could just as easily be the fact that they had heard the beloved apostle preach sermons to them that God inspired!

A valuable bit of advice for modern preachers that desire that same inspiration? Use the Scriptures! Use LOTS of Scriptures! We know for SURE, that at least THOSE portions of our sermons will be inspired! Selah! Think about it!

Every WORD of the Holy Bible is present and accounted for in our English King James Version. If God had desired and foreordained that there be three Corinthian epistles in the Bible, then that first letter would have been preserved by the Almighty. It was not- so it is not Bible, even if the genuine article were uncovered today by some archaeologist... That is not chain-link preservation- that is not the order of Scripture! Selah! Think about it!

What happened to that first letter, is what happened to all the

other letters Paul wrote, including the epistle to the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16). It was written on parchment or some material that has disintegrated over time. If it was copied a few (or many) times, it still only lasted as long as God wanted it to- and no more. It was not intended to be held to the level of Scripture. The power of God is just as sure in His canonization and preservation of His Word as it is in His inspiration of His Word!

“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” (Eccl. 3:14). **“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away”** (Luke 21:33). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum #2

(Continued from page 57) ♦

but men and women older than Timothy. So Paul is exhorting young Timothy who has older folks in the congregation how to treat them, basically to treat them as he would his father and mother. A little study will bear this out.

So it is about respect, as the questioner has stated to believe. We will say there is not much respect shown to parents today and hardly any, (mostly none) to preachers today.

This brings me to another point. Preachers, who think that this Scripture teaches that they should not be questioned (rebuked) and that they have arrived and have the final authority do not gain my respect at all. We are the servants of the Lord and I will be the first to tell you, and you can ask anyone that I have had

in the congregation, I tell them not to take my word for it, and to check me out. I might not like to be questioned (because it goes against the flesh) but I can and have made mistakes. If a preacher can not answer a question because the congregation may think he is in error, then that preacher has a serious problem. But again, I believe these verses are not talking about rebuking a pastor.

Also, something in the question that always hits a sore spot with us is, “should they not also believe in women preachers since the verse following is part of the same sentence that states ‘elder women?’” I know what the questioner is asking, and it is a good question because one may think that, but let us be clear on something, there is not ONE Scripture, NOT ONE that can in anyway lead a person, no matter how hard they try, to prove that there ever was or can be women preachers. And I have heard some of my Baptist preacher brethren say a woman could probably do a better job than some preachers they have heard, and they may be right, but a woman has no business speaking, let alone preaching in the pulpit (I Cor. 14:34; I Tim. 2:11). Enough said.

Lastly, the Lord’s churches should have the most passionate respect for their pastors, and when they do not, there undoubtably will be problems. And if this were a Scripture that was talking about rebuking a pastor (elder), great care should be taken (prayer and love) before anyone would approach their pastor with an error issue. We live in a society that is too eager to find fault and jump to conclusions instead of pursuing peace and love for one another, **“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:**

but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:13).

May we all learn respect, not just for the elderly, but to all. That is what I Timothy 5:1-2 is really about. God Bless!

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No one, including preachers, are above being rebuked for error. In Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy he makes it clear that one of the reasons we have the inspired record is for reproof and correction (II Tim. 3:16-17). I think Paul is referring to the manner in which rebukes are to be delivered. The error must first be substantiated by two or three witnesses (II Tim. 5:19). Then the rebuke should be delivered with respect and love as evidenced by the phrase **“but intreat him as a father.”**

John Gill, the learned Baptist expositor, did not believe the verse in question even applied to the office of the elder, but rather to elderly members of the church:

“By whom is meant, not an elder in office, but in age; for elders by office are afterwards spoken of, and particular rules concerning them are given, ver. 17, 19. Besides, an elder is here opposed, not to a private member of a church, but to young men in age; and the apostle is here giving rules to be observed in rebuking members of churches according to their different age

♦ (Continued on page 59)

Forum #2

(Continued from page 34) ♦

and sex, not according to their office and station; and this sense is confirmed by a parallel text in Titus 2:2-6. Now an ancient man, a member of a church, is not to be rebuked in a sharp and severe way..." (Gill's Expositor, Vol. 9, p. 99).

TOM ROSS



God Is Not Helping

(Continued from page 55) ♦

faithful in continually sacrificing on behalf of his children as a father-priest. He **"...was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil"** (Job 1:1). By this description of him, we know that Job was a true child of God for nothing like this can be ascribed to a natural or unregenerate man. We can be assured that Job knew God. More importantly, God knew Job and described him as **"my servant Job"** (Job 1:1). His outward righteous life was an outworking of what God had done within him. We know that God regarded Job equally as righteous as Noah and Daniel. In speaking of the sinfulness of Israel, God said, **"Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness"** (Ezek. 14:20). Now then, we are expressly told that **"...Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD"** (Gen. 6:8). Of the servants of the Lord we read, **"...their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD"** (Isa. 54:17). God is righteous. Righteousness is what He demands and righteousness is what He provides for His children by imputation.

But imputed righteousness can never be divorced from actual righteousness. By that we mean that while God imputes righteousness to all who believe, He also begins the work of sanctification in them. He declares His children righteous and sets about the process that will eventually conform them to the image of His dear Son. So it was that God justified Noah, Daniel and Job and continued His work in bringing them into a holy walk before him. Job said, **"The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger"** (Job 17:9). God's children are preserved, and because they are preserved, they persevere in holiness. God does not begin a work in a person without completing it (see Philippians 1:6). So we conclude that Job found grace in the eyes of the LORD. In other words, God had saved him and was in him.

And so it was that Job served God for the right reason. His old stony heart had been replaced by a new heart - a tender one that sought to please his Savior. We too, by grace, are enabled to serve God for the right and acceptable reason. Hebrews 12:28-29 makes this clear. There we read, **"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."** It does matter why you do what you do! It does matter why you serve God! In spite of the fact that the religious world is filled with people who have no concern as to the proper motive for worship and service to God, there are some people who do have such a concern. And there are people who serve God

"acceptably with reverence and godly fear." They are not your foot-stomping, hand-clapping, get-me-all-I-can-get-from-God crowd. They are not the ones who brag on being a part of "the flock on the block that rocks". They are the ones who say, like Mary to the angel, **"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word"** (Luke 1:38). She expected stares, comments and questions regarding her supernatural pregnancy. She had not yet been taken in marriage by her husband. She knew of the possibility - nay, probability - that Joseph would put her away. And if put away she would have nothing. And yet, she was willing to experience the will of God in her life. She would worship and serve God whether He prospered her or not! And there are a remnant of people today - God's true children - who say Lord, whatever you will for me to have or not to have, it is right for me to worship and serve you. If you will give me grace to do it, I will do it. Such people as these do not boast of themselves. Nor do they think themselves entitled to receive good things from God because of their obedience. They serve God with a reverential fear and heart-felt love for Him and His truth.

Sorrowfully, we make this observation: those who are out for what they can get from God do not know Him. They have not experienced His grace - and rest assured, there is an experience of grace. **"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great**

God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people" (Titus 2:11-14). Regarding this last quoted text we note these things: first of all we doubt that the grace of God has appeared to all men - that is all men without exception, but it has appeared to all kinds of men and we think this is the meaning. Second: we point out that it is grace that brings salvation to individuals. Grace is not an offer to be spurned or received according to man's whim. Grace brings salvation! Grace does not offer salvation, it actually brings it. Since salvation is by grace, it does not come to those who seek to be right in God's eyes by their works or law-keeping. Third: the same grace that brings salvation teaches us to deny ungodly lusts, to live seriously, righteously and godly right in the middle of this wicked world. Further, it teaches us to live expecting the return of our Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed us and made us what we are. And what we are is a people of God's own particular possession - a people who serve God for nought!

There is a way that seems right to man but which ends in disaster (see Proverbs 16:25). Man thinks he has things figured out. He thinks God is like he is (Psalm 50:21) and concludes that he can bargain with God. God wants man to do right, he reasons, so if I do right, God will give me what I want. This kind of swap is completely reasonable to the natural man's mind. It is the same reasoning that caused the three-year-old preacher-boy to say, "People, if you're good, God loves you. If you're not good, God doesn't love you. People be good." It is works for salvation!

♦ (Continued on page 60)

God Is Not Helping

(Continued from page 59) ♦

But that is all it is: it is the natural reasoning of one who has not experienced God's grace and has not been taught the Word of God. Peter spoke of some people **"that are unlearned and unstable"**. These, he wrote, **"wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction"** (II Pet. 3:16). So it is that some who think to follow the Bible are actually torturing the Scriptures by making them say that people can obtain things by serving God for them. Their wresting is finding proof for their fleshly ideas in the Bible. They make the Bible say what they want it to say instead of letting it say what it says!

This all-important question must be asked: do you serve God for nought? Or are you serving Him for selfish reasons? If yours is only a thinly disguised seeking after things rather than Him whom to know aright is life everlasting, you are yet in your sins. If your so-called faith in Christ is in reality an attempt to get good things from Him, you have not the faith of God's elect. The Lord Jesus said: **"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent"** (John 17:3). Has God made Himself known to you? Has the grace of God which brings salvation taught you? Paul, writing about Israel as a nation said, **"...they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge"** (Rom. 10:2). That last statement may be applied to many people today – even we fear, many who are called Baptists – whose zeal of God is actually a selfish desire for His temporal blessings. They have a zeal of God, but it is ignorance of the truth. Thus they miss

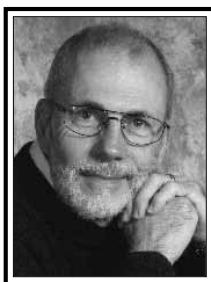
God and their religion is fleshly in every way and springs from a fleshly motive. Is it any wonder that this crowd of "unbelieving Christians" ends up seeking to entertain the flesh in their so-called worship services. They tickle the flesh with their music, dramatics, media presentations, and all that makes religion popular and pleasant to the flesh. Their aim is not edification of saints, but entertainment of sinners. Oh sir: Oh madam: seek to worship and serve God in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (See John 4:23-24). True believer, serve God for nought – leaving the consequences in His capable hands. Serve Him in prosperity and in adversity. Serve Him! Serve Him for nought! He is worthy of our adoration, our service and our worship.



Certainty of Instruction

By James L. Reynolds
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"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou



mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:1-4).

The divinely inspired human writer of the book of Luke and the book of Acts is **"Luke, the beloved physician,"** and both of those books are addressed to "Theophilus." There is uncertainty as to who Theophilus was, and we will not engage upon any speculation as to his identity, as it has no bearing upon our thoughts. Sufficient is our assertion, that any instructions which God gave to Theophilus through Luke are also beneficial for all of His people, including those of us in this present age. Therefore, we would like to briefly focus our on verse 4 of Luke's divinely inspired narrative, **"That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."**

From Luke 1:1-3 we can correctly surmise that Theophilus had received some instructions concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke desires to assure Theophilus that those instructions are certain, that is, that they were true and valid.

According to the Webster's dictionary one definition for certainty is "an assured fact." It behooves all seekers of the truth to make sure that the things in which they have been instructed concerning God and mankind are certain things, that is, that they are assured facts.

The Greek word which is translated "certainty" in Luke 1:4 (ασφαλειαν - asfaleian) is a grammatical variant of a Greek word that was only used two other times by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. In both of those instances it is translated "safety" in the King James Version of the Scriptures. One of the primary meanings of this word is "not liable

to fall," hence denoting security or safety. Various lexicons also define it as meaning: firmness, stability, security, safety, truth, undoubted truth. In those two other instances where this Greek word is found the King James Translators rendered it as safety as we just previously noted. **"Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within"** (Acts 5:23). Saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside" (NKJV)! **"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape"** (I Thess. 5:3).

So we see here that the word also denotes security, safety, or assurance. It was an assured fact that the prison was shut with all security. When they shall feel so confident and assured that they can say "Peace and security;" then sudden destruction will come upon them.

Luke desires for Theophilus to have assurance and security, that is, to feel that he has safety of soul as a result of those things in which he was instructed relative to the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Luke's desire for that safety, security, and assurance for Theophilus is primarily focused on those benefits for Theophilus which are everlasting ones.

"Have full evidence or proof of." -Albert Barnes

"Make no slip. Luke promises a reliable narrative." -A. T. Robertson

"The end the evangelist had in

♦ (Continued on page 61)

Certainty of

(Continued from page 60) ♦

writing this Gospel, and sending it to Theophilus, was that he might be more strongly assured of, and more firmly established in the truths of the Gospel." -John Gill

We all need to emulate Luke in this aspect. It is right and proper for us to have a concern for the temporal safety and security of those whom we know and come in contact with. But it is infinitely more important for us to have a concern for their everlasting safety and security. The everlasting safety of anyone can only be assured if their instruction in things pertaining to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ is certain, that is, if those instructions are valid and true. Those instructions must be based on assured and divinely declared facts.

There is only one sure source, there is only one certain source, there is only one totally true source for instruction in things pertaining to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"** (John 17:17).

While the inspired Word of God is the only totally certain, and therefore entirely safe, source of instruction in things pertaining to the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has given mankind other sources of evidence of Himself. Speaking of the revelation of God in nature the Apostle Paul confirms in the book of Acts that He was witnessed to by His goodness to mankind in general. **"Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness"** (Acts 14:17).

While these things are sufficient to reveal the certainty of God they are not sufficient to declare mankind's total depravity and the free and unmerited grace that God bestows upon some unworthy sinners through His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

With those thoughts in mind, let us briefly look at eight things which all of mankind need to be certain of, in order to have an assurance of an everlasting safety.

1. God is absolutely, entirely, utterly, and totally holy.

One of mankind's greatest and most tragic mistakes is their malformed concept of God's holiness. Because of our total depravity we can not on our own begin to correctly conceive the holy character of God. God charges us with that malformed concept in Psalms 50:21, **"These**

things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."

Because mankind is so prone to ignore sin and iniquities we sometimes ignorantly think that God will likewise ignore it, that He will just turn His back on it and let it go unpunished. That is a very erroneous concept and for many it will be an everlastingly detrimental belief.

Twice in the inspired Word of God we are instructed, that God is thrice holy. **"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory"** (Isa. 6:3). **"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they**

rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4:8).

It is not only the lost world that has a malformed concept of God's holiness, but much of the religious world, even some of professing Christianity is also lacking in a proper perception of God's righteousness. Even the nation of Israel, unto whom God had revealed Himself in a unique way, was guilty of not properly comprehending God's holiness. **"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God"** (Rom. 10:3).

The certainty of God's infinite holiness brings us to our second point of consideration.

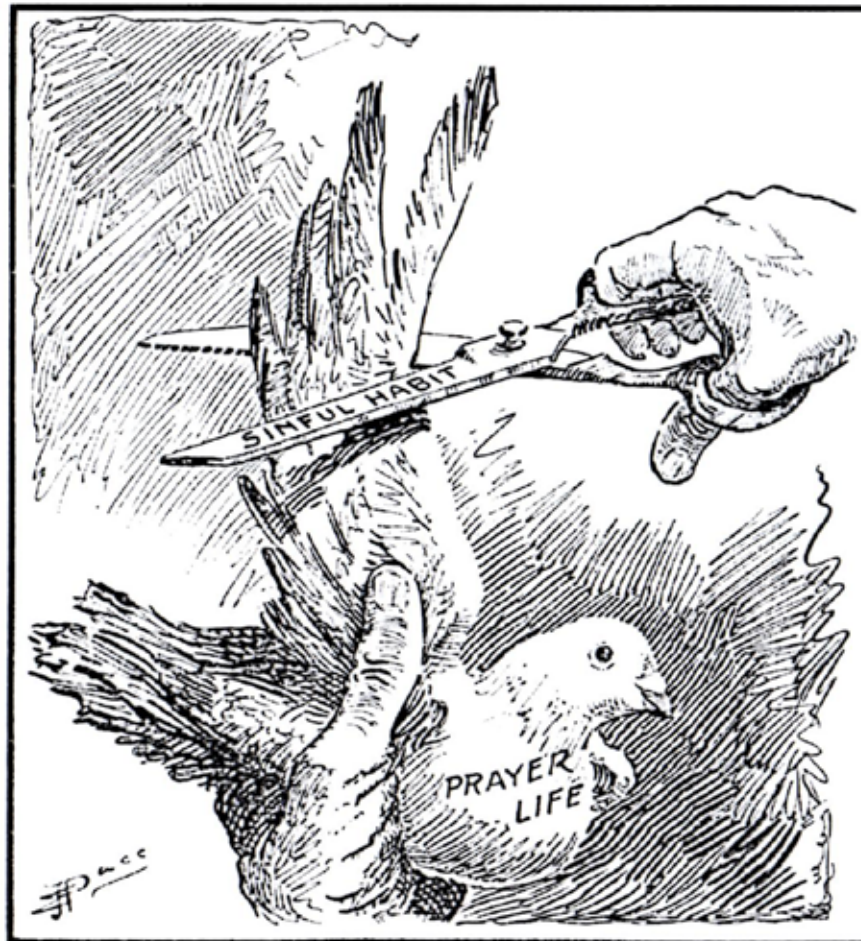
2. God hates sin.

Because God is so pure and holy, and because sin is so diametrically opposed to His holy character. He hates it with a holy and perfect hatred. He will not behold it, and it will never be permitted in His acceptable presence.

But it is not only sin that God hates. He also hates **"all workers of iniquity,"** that is all who are outside of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and who persist in their sin and in their rebellion against Him. **"The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity"** (Ps. 5:5).

Perhaps there have been occasions in our lives when we were confronted with an immoral and sinful circumstance or event, which we found to be loathsome and disgusting. We may have commented to ourselves, or perhaps to another individual, that we "really hate" this situation,

♦ (Continued on page 62)



Certainty of

(Continued from page 61) ♦

and that we “wish” we could do something about it. However, our weaknesses and frailties prohibit us from carrying through our design to take action against such injustices or such wrong doings. Beloved, God has none of our limitations to constrain Him from taking appropriate action against wrong doers. He will in His due time **“render to every man according to his works.” “The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity”** (Pro. 10:29). **“It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity”** (Prov. 21:15).

Evil and sinful people may hide from the authorities, and live their whole lives without being apprehended and punished for their crimes which they have committed. A few years back, one of the popular television shows was a fictitious drama called “Cold Case,” in which detectives solve murders that have been unsolved for years. This show was based on real “Cold Cases” being solved, some of which were also shown on another television program. But for all those cases which are not solved, for all those criminals who escape the justice of mankind and think their sinful crimes are unknown, there is no hiding from the holy justice and holy wrath of God. **“There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves”** (Job 34:22). In that day when all shall stand before the Lord, many will hear the frightening and dreadful command to depart from the acceptable presence of the Lord, and they will be cast into the

everlasting torments of His holy hell. **“But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity”** (Luke 13:27).

3. All of mankind are sinners and they are all totally estranged from their Creator.

There are many who will attempt to give instructions to their fellow humans in matters pertaining to the spiritual condition of mankind, and sometimes those instruction are false. Moreover, those instructions are sometimes detrimental to those who receive them. There are those who will tell us that although mankind has somewhat of a tendency to make “bad choices” there is some goodness in all of mankind and that given the proper motivation a person will nourish and fan that spark of goodness until it breaks forth into a raging flame of righteousness, which is acceptable unto God. While such concepts are certainly appealing unto the fallen nature of mankind, for they instill within them a false sense of power and ability, they are in reality diametrically opposed to what we see in our own lives, and more importantly they are in direct opposition to the clear declarations and teachings of the inspired Word of God. **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”** (Rom. 5:12). As the representative of the entire human race when Adam sinned we, being in his loins also sinned, and we became sinners by nature.

And it is just not a tendency to make “bad choices” that all of Adam’s posterity inherited as a result of his rebellion against his Creator. Adam, who had been created with a living soul and

a living spirit died spiritually when he sinned, and all of his descendants came forth from their mother’s wombs in that spiritually dead state. The Apostle Paul speaks of this very real spiritual death when he writes to the Ephesian saints, who had been made alive in the Lord Jesus Christ. **“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins”** (Eph. 2:1).

In the physical realm a person can not be a little dead or partly dead. A person is either alive or they are dead. There is no middle state that a person may inhabit concerning life and death. So it is in the spiritual realm, that a person is from their birth spiritually dead in Adam and they will remain in that condition unless they have been by God’s sovereign power quickened and made alive in the Lord Jesus Christ.

To contend that there is some inherent good in all of mankind is to contradict our own experience, and again more importantly, it is to deny the straightforward declarations of the Bible. **“From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment”** (Isa. 1:6).

Speaking of the entirety of the human race as they are looked upon outside of the Lord Jesus Christ our Creator and LORD give us the “certainty” of our condition. **“They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one”** (Ps. 14:3). The Apostle Paul refers to this divinely inspired assessment of mankind’s condition in Romans 3:10-18, **“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that**

understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

God declares that **“every man at his best state is altogether vanity,”** that is, altogether sinful. If at our best state we are in such a deplorable condition, what is our condition when not in that “best state?” God is not here talking about those instances when His people are engaged in those **“good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”** But He is talking about those things which religious and moral mankind engage in while seeking to commend themselves unto God thereby.

4. Mankind needs a Redeemer.

Having shown from Scripture that God is holy, that He hates sin and that mankind is unholy, it necessarily follows that if there is ever going to be a reconciliation between God and man, that it must be a result of the purpose and plan of God. There is an enormous debt owed unto the thrice holy God for violating His holy commandments and for offending His perfect holiness. Mankind is in an everlastingly desperate and dire predicament and it is a plight in which he is entirely powerless to extract himself. Speaking of the helplessness of God’s people to extract themselves from their

♦ (Continued on page 64)

THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

VIRGINIA AG WON'T DEFEND VOTER-APPROVED GAY MARRIAGE BAN

(WNS)--Following a seismic political shift in Virginia's top elected offices, the new attorney general said Thursday he has decided his state's ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional. In filing a brief Jan. 23 in federal court, Attorney General Mark Herring officially joined a lawsuit challenging the state Constitution's voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage. The Democrat campaigned in part on marriage equality but won by only 907 votes. The lawsuits in Virginia claim the state's ban violates the U.S. Constitution's equal protection and due process clauses. Federal judges recently struck down gay marriage bans in Utah and Oklahoma although the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously agreed Utah's law should stay in effect while the case there moves forward.

CHEVROLET ROLLS OUT PRO-HOMOSEXUAL OLYMPIC ADS

(WNS)--Chevrolet has rolled out a series of Olympic ads that take unprecedented steps toward normalizing homosexual families. Chevy says the ads are not political statements. One ad, called "The New Us," for the Chevrolet Traverse crossover SUV, shows a gay male couple with a son and a daughter. "While what it means

to be a family has not changed, what a family looks like has," a voiceover states. "This is the new us." Another ad includes a shot of a gay couple getting married. "Like the old love, the new love starts with a kiss," a voiceover states. "Like the old community, the new community still keeps us connected.... A whole new lineup for a whole new world."

NO BIG BANGS IN HAM ON NYE SCIENCE SHOWDOWN

(WNS)--The much anticipated debate between Creation Museum founder Ken Ham and evolution advocate Bill Nye likely disappointed spectators hoping to see a spirited exchange, with jabs and intellectual punches flying. Both men seemed more interested in offering academic explanations than lively repartee. But more than 900 people braved a winter ice storm to attend the debate at the Creation Museum, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. Ham represented the young-earth creationism perspective and Nye, popularly known as "Bill Nye the Science Guy" and the former host of a PBS children's science show, argued for secular evolution in an attempt to answer a very academic-sounding question: Is creation a viable model of origins in today's modern scientific era? Online tickets for the debate sold out within two minutes, an estimated 1 million or more people watched the event

streaming online, and it was the top Twitter trend of the day. The packed auditorium included every age group, from silver-haired seniors to flaming-cherry-and-electric-blue-haired college students.

SOUTHERN CITIES OWE BIBLE DEVOTION TO HILLBILLY ROOTS

(WNS)--The American Bible Society and the Barna Group's Cities Project is out with an updated ranking of the "Bible-mindedness" of the 100 largest American metropolitan areas. Chattanooga, Tenn., leads the way this year, snatching the top spot from its Volunteer State neighbor, Knoxville. Unsurprisingly, the rest of the top 10 cities are also located in traditional Bible Belt states. On the other end of the spectrum, most of the bottom 10 are in the Northeast. The Barna Group counts someone as "Bible-minded" if they both report weekly Bible reading and regard the Bible to be accurate in the principles it teaches.

CRUZ DEFENDS MARRIAGE

(WNS)--U.S. Sens. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Mike Lee, R-Utah, have introduced a bill that attempts to turn the tide engulfing state marriage laws. This past week, federal judges, citing precedent set by the U.S. Supreme Court last summer, overturned laws in Kentucky and Virginia that banned same-sex marriage. (Kentucky's in-state ban remains in place, but the state must recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.) Those decisions followed similar cases in Utah and Oklahoma, and a ruling on the issue is expected soon in Texas. The Cruz-Lee bill, called the State Marriage Defense Act,

would correct, "inconsistencies among federal agencies" that look to state laws when deciding whether a couple is married. The Obama administration, however, has been quite consistent lately in its insistence on recognizing gay marriage in all states. Last weekend Attorney General Eric Holder said the Justice Department would recognize all same-sex marriages in federal courts, regardless of local law.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS OVERSEAS CHRISTIANS CONSIDER AMERICA A MISSION FIELD

(WNS)--The United States is turning into a mission field for Christians in other countries. The Anglican Church of North America (ACNA) and its dozen or so associated Anglican groups have been looking to Africa for leadership. Now comes word that one of Africa's biggest Christian movements, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, is spreading across the United States. According to the BBC, "the Pentecostal movement started in Nigeria and opened its first American parish in Detroit in 1992. Today, Church leaders say they have 720 congregations throughout North America. Their eventual goal: a church within 10 miles of every community on the continent."



Certainty of

(Continued from page 62) ♦

deserved wrath, the Apostle Paul in Romans 5:6 explains what had to be done, **“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”** A grammatical form of the same Greek root word here translated “without strength” (ασθενων - asthenon), is also translated “impotent” in Acts 4:9, **“If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole.”** The “impotent man” was powerless to make himself physically whole and all of mankind are “without strength,” they are “impotent,” they are powerless to make themselves spiritually whole. A form of this Greek word is also translated as “weak” in Mark 14:38, **“Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.”** The flesh is “weak,” that is “without strength,” to resist temptation unless aided by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

So what can sinful, puny, and weak mankind offer unto God for an atonement for their sins? **“Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again”** (Rom. 11:35)? What are we going to offer to God that He will judge acceptable in lieu of the everlasting punishment due unto us for our sins against Him? **“Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul”** (Mark 8:37)? Shall we give Him the totality of all of our earthly possessions? **“For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills”** (Ps. 50:10). Perhaps one will rightly conclude that such a thought of offering material possessions unto God for our redemption is

preposterous. However, some of those same objectors will then declare that we can give God our heart. Some will claim that it is in our power to offer unto God something acceptable in exchange for the sin debt we owe and the punishment due us. **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it”** (Jer. 17:9)? Can we honestly say after reading God’s estimation of our hearts that we believe that a thrice holy God would want them. We do read in God’s Word that His people get a **“new heart”** and that it is God who gives it unto them. **“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh”** (Ezek. 36:26).

5. Mankind can not redeem themselves.

It is impossible for us to remove ourselves from the awesome sin curse and resulting debt that is upon us. There is nothing in mankind that is acceptable unto God, nothing that is commendable unto Him. No action or effort on the part of mankind will bridge the chasm between a thrice holy God and a totally depraved sinner. **“They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him”** (Ps. 49:6-7). Not only are we unable to redeem ourselves from God’s just fury, but we are also totally powerless to redeem any of our loved ones from their justly deserved wrath of our holy Creator.

There is not given unto mankind in God’s Word any hope that they can in any wise pay the

sin debt owed unto God. And we must be ever cautious and diligent so that we never present any such false hopes unto anyone. However, there is hope given in His Word that He has purposed to redeem a people from their hell deserving future, and to deliver them unto His everlasting bliss and acceptable presence. God has provided a Redeemer for His people. He has purposed to redeem a number from Adam’s fallen posterity and that purpose will, in His due time, be openly manifest as having been perfectly and solely accomplished by Him. **“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved”** (Eph. 1:5-6). Note that the Holy Spirit here declares clearly and pointedly Who it is that has brought to pass the redemption and therefore the acceptance of God’s people. **“He hath made us accepted in the beloved.”** God did all things necessary so that His people would be acceptable in His everlasting presence. Those who are redeemed and acceptable are so because they are **“in the beloved.”** The Father, in His infinite grace, placed those whom He had given to Christ, in the eternal covenant of election, in His Son. By divine imputation they became partakers of His perfect and sinless nature, as that was the only way any one would ever stand acceptable in God’s presence. However, the imputation of Christ’s righteousness unto His people was only one side of the redemption process. There yet remained the unpaid sin debt owed unto our holy God. His perfect and infinite holiness would not allow that sin

debt to go unpunished, so it was necessary that one be punished to pay the sin debt which was owed by those who were unable to pay that sin debt. **“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”** (II Cor. 5:21).

6.) The Lord Jesus Christ is God’s only acceptable redeemer for His people.

Although depraved but religious, mankind may have a plethora of schemes and ways that they declare are satisfactory to make a person acceptable unto God, and that everlastingly so, the inspired Word of God declares all of those ways to be false, to be uncertain, and to be unsafe. **“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”** (John 14:6). Our dear Lord here, with the finality and veracity of His eternal Godhead, declares that He is **“the way”** unto the Father and in so doing proclaims His singularity as **“the way.”** He announces that He is **“the way”** and in so doing He excludes all other ways. All the religions of the world claim to have a way to make one acceptable into God’s presence. Some will claim that Christ is a way but they are adamant that He is but one of many ways. All such claims are false and all such claims come from the father of lies, the devil, who will encourage lost and depraved mankind to be as religious as they like as long as he can keep them in a state of deluded, uncertain, unsafe, and false instruction.

There is but one way that any sinful mortal will be permitted in the acceptable presence of our thrice holy God and that is if they are as holy as He is. Such a state of

♦ (Continued on page 65)

Certainty of

(Continued from page 64) ♦

perfect holiness is only obtainable by being **“in the beloved.”** **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”** (Acts 4:12). When someone instructs others that there are more acceptable ways to redemption than the singularity of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are not simply contradicting what you, or I, or any other of God’s people believe. By those blasphemous statements they are contradicting the blessed and inspired Word of God. **“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”** (I Tim. 2:5). There is but one redeemer, there is but **“one mediator,”** there is but one hope for a lost and perishing world and the sinless Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ is all of those and infinitely more unto all those to whom He has revealed Himself.

7.) All who have been enabled to put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ are acceptable in God’s sight and that everlastingly so.

There is a segment of “instructors” who teach that after one has been made alive in the Lord Jesus Christ that they must maintain that acceptable state by their own efforts. They claim that if the newly birthed saint fails to keep themselves in God’s favor that they may fall from that favor. If, according to those “instructors” one dies in this fallen state they will be forever consigned to the flames and torments of God’s hell.

Before showing the terrible and God dishonoring fallacy of this lie, let us make a few statements concerning people who engage in

willful and continual sin.

First, we must wonder if those who once seemed to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus and then fell into, and remained in sin were indeed recipients of His grace. Outward appearance can be deceiving. We look **“on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”** All those who claim to be partakers of God’s wondrous grace are not necessarily correct in those claims. **“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”** (Matt. 7:21-23).

Secondly, those who once seemed to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, and then fell into sin and were not chastened by the Lord are declared by His Word to not be sons. **“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons”** (Heb. 12:6-8).

Now let us proceed to see what instruction we are given from the inerrant and infallible Word of God on this matter of the saint having everlasting life. **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life;**

and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:27-28). Our Lord here declares that His sheep will hear His voice and that they will follow Him. He also affirms that He will give them eternal (or everlasting) life, that they will never perish and that no one is able to pluck them from His loving, caring, and omnipotent hand.

For those who have been truly enabled to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their exclusive means of acceptance in the Father’s acceptable presence, everlasting life is not something to be obtained at some future date when they take their last breath and have held out unto the end. For them everlasting life is a sure and positive current possession. **“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God”** (I John 5:13). The inspired Scripture says that those who **“believe on the name of the Son of God,”** that is those who trust completely, totally, and solely in His person and work, **“may know that ye have eternal life.”** It is a sure thing because God is the author and finisher of it. It is not up to puny and sinful mankind to begin, to maintain, or to finish the work of redemption. In Romans 8:38-39 the Apostle Paul concludes that as a result of God’s marvelous grace in electing him unto salvation and calling him in the fullness of time to be a recipient of that salvation that he is persuaded that there is no circumstance or creature that can separate him from that divine love. **“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor**

powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39). The Lord Jesus Christ when “instructing” His people on the certainty of their salvation, and of Who instigated it, and Who will consummate it, gives them peace and comfort in those instructions. **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”** (John 6:37).

If God’s people were left to maintain their salvation through their own efforts there would not be a single redeemed person in Heaven’s glory. Because of our yet sinful nature and finite character we would all fail to keep ourselves. No one is kept secure by their own power or by a mixture of God’s power and their own power.

Peter says those truly saved have a heavenly inheritance awaiting them as a result of their being kept by God! **“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”** (I Pet. 1:4-5).

8.) Those who have been enabled to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their only means of acceptance in God’s everlasting presence need to be obedient unto Him and serve Him as He has commanded them to do. The Lord’s blood bought people need to be **“fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.”**

Service unto the Lord Jesus Christ is not a discretionary matter with His people. We do not have the option of doing what

♦ (Continued on page 66)

Certainty of

(Continued from page 65) ♦

we care to do and ignoring what we do not care to do. We are to be totally consumed with a desire to be doing what He would have us to do. As the Apostle Paul asked on the road to Damascus so we should daily ask, **“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”**

When we have done all that we are commanded to do, we need to humbly bow and acknowledge that we are yet unprofitable servants who have only done their duty. **“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do”** (Luke 17:10). We all need to pray that the blessed Holy Spirit will lead us in performing all that we are commanded and are graciously permitted to do in His service, so that we may one day hear that blessed summation of our earthly sojourn by our dear Redeemer and Lord, **“Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”**

As we go through this life, we are continually receiving instructions from others on a multitude of subjects. Much of those instructions are flawed, and of little or no value, or they pertain to things that will one day perish away. We are under no obligation to hear falsehood. We do not need to know falsehood, we need to know the truth. Sometimes we may receive instructions on everlasting matters from someone who is in error. We need to turn from such instructions and refuse to hear them anymore. **“Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge”** (Pro. 19:27). Not

only are we not obligated to hear falsehood we are commanded to avoid those who disseminate error. **“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them”** (Rom. 16:17). Thanks be unto God because He has given us His holy Word which is the only source of absolute “certain” instructions, that is absolutely safe instructions, in things pertaining to God’s holiness and His hatred for sin, mankind’s total depravity and their need for a redeemer, and their inability to provide that redeemer for themselves. It declares to us that only the Lord Jesus Christ provides the substitutionary sacrifice for the redemption of His people and that He provides it for their everlasting redemption. God’s inspired Word declares the necessity of God’s people to serve Him and it instructs them in the manner in which they should serve Him. Thanks be unto our thrice holy God for inspiring and preserving His Word and for the blessed Holy Spirit to guide us **“into all truth”** that we might **“know the certainty of those things, wherein”** we have **“been instructed.”**



Born of the Flesh

(Continued from page 45) ♦

into this world as a human being. The natural birth is just that, to be born of the flesh. It should be pointed out that when men are born of the flesh they are not born of the Spirit at the same time. Of men born by natural conception, only John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb (Luke 1:15). So men born of a woman are born of the flesh and that which is born of the flesh is flesh. So, all men and

women that have ever lived on this earth have been born of the flesh. Men are born of the flesh not by their choice. The usual method is for a man and woman to come together and conceive a child. The child did not make a decision nine months before his birth to be born. He did not go to his mother and father and ask to be born. Anyone can see the folly of such a thought.

Man that is born of the flesh may have a spirit but that spirit is separated from God from his mother’s womb. David said, **“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me”** (Ps. 51:5). Paul declared that men are **“dead in trespasses and sins”** (Eph. 2:1, 5). Paul is speaking of a spiritual death. This is the condition in which men come into the world. This is the condition of men “born of the flesh.” As the book of Job declares **“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one”** (Job 14:4), and again **“What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous”** (Job 15:14)? David said in another place, **“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies”** (Ps. 58:3). The Bible is very clear that all men are sinners and that there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Ps. 14:1; 14:3; 53:1; Rom. 3:12). No wonder Jesus said, **“the flesh profiteth nothing”** (John 6:63). Paul verifies the same for he said **“they that are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Rom. 8:8).

Now if that which is born of the flesh is flesh and men are born lost in their sins and dead spiritually, what can they do? Well Paul said that they **“CANNOT please God.”** Paul said in another place that **“there is none that seeketh after**

God” (Rom. 3:11). Do you think godly sorrow would be pleasing to God? After all, it is godly sorrow that **“worketh repentance to salvation”** and that repentance will never be repented of or turned away from (See II Cor. 7:10). The obvious answer is yes, godly sorrow and repentance are pleasing to God, but if **“they that are in the flesh cannot please God,”** as Paul tells us, then who can be saved? Well, that reminds me of what Jesus said concerning this very thing, **“With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible”** (Matt. 19:26).

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BORN OF THE SPIRIT?

If you will notice, the word Spirit is capitalized in John 3:6. The translators knew that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit involved in this birth. No wonder John in his first epistle called it **“born of God”** (I John 3:9; 4:7 5:1; 5:4; 5:18). Jesus said, **“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life”** (John 6:63). Just as you were quickened in your mother’s womb and born naturally into this world, so to in a like manner the child of God has been quickened by the Holy Spirit.

So how does this happen? It did not happen by any decision you made, as much as men would like to think that. It is no more by your decision than you were born of the flesh by your decision. To trust in a decision is not to trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ, but more on that in a bit. Men may write books on how to “get” born again as though there is something you can do to “get born again” as they like to say, but **“let God be true but every man a**

♦ (Continued on page 67)

Born of the Flesh

(Continued from page 66) ♦

liar" (Rom. 3:4). Well, why do we not just let Jesus answer us on how a man is **"born of the Spirit?"** Jesus never said you must **"GET** born again" but you must **"BE** born again." Here are the words of our dear Lord and Savior on how a person is **"born of the Spirit."** **"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit"** (John 3:8). Jesus compared the Holy Spirit to the wind. You can not see the wind. You can not tell where it came from or where is going. It **"bloweth where it listeth."** So too, with men born of the Spirit of God. The Spirit goes where He wants, and quickens whom He wants, and when He wants. He is sovereign in this matter! That should remove all boasting, you would think, but it seems to raise more anger in religious people than anything. Anger in people who are really trusting in something they have done. Someone will argue, "yes, but we have to receive Jesus, do we not?" Well, who receives Him, I would ask? The Bible tells us. **"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"** (John 1:12-13). Did you get that? The ones that received Jesus as their savior were the ones already born of God (**"were born"**). They were not born again through the blood of their parents or ancestors, nor of the will of their flesh, nor the will of any man, but of the sovereign pleasure of God who is

all mighty to save.

So who are the ones that are **"born of the Spirit?"** It is the ones that **"believe to the saving of the soul"** (Heb. 10:39) as evidence of that new birth. Paul said, **"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"** (Rom. 8:8-9). They are the ones who bring **"forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold"** (Matt. 13:8, 23).

THE FRUIT OF REGENERATION

Why did Jesus use the term **"fruit"** for good works so many times? May I use the analogy of a fruit tree? Let us say an apple tree. Does an apple tree obtain life because someone hung apples on it? Does it become a different tree, now an apple tree, because someone hung apples on it? Do apples produce life in an apple tree? Or is it that the tree first has life and is an apple tree and therefore produces apples? These are rhetorical questions as the answers are obvious. Only God can give life. So in the spiritual realm it is the same. Men are dead in sins and God quickens to life and that new man that is created in the new birth produces the fruit of godly sorrow, repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as his Lord. Listen to Jesus' words in Mathew's gospel chapter seven: **"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree**

cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:15-20). Notice Jesus said that a corrupt tree "cannot" bring forth good fruit and a good tree "cannot" bring forth evil fruit. It is the old man that was "born of the flesh" that cannot bring forth good fruit. But the new man that God has created "cannot bring forth evil fruit." Now we still live in this body of flesh and we must crucify the old man daily or that old man will rob us of our joy in the Lord. You see we are not a reformed people. It is not that the old man has been reformed at all, but a new man has been created. **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"** (II Cor. 5:17).

So, my friend, godly sorrow, and repentance, and true faith in Jesus Christ are but the fruit of the quickening of the Holy Spirit. We have nothing to boast of. Our **"salvation is,"** as Jonah said, **"of the LORD"** (Jonah 2:9). We are saved by faith, but faith is what brings us forth, and the cause of it is the quickening of the Holy Spirit. Babies in the flesh breathe, cry, and grow, and do all sorts of things that pertain to the life in the flesh, but these are the results of being quickened in your mother's womb.

THE DOOM OF DECISIONAL REGENERATION

Let us go back to the words of Jesus again and quote a lengthy passage and look at it in the light of what has been pointed out so far. **"Enter ye in at the strait**

♦ (Continued on page 68)

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 1-1-2014 to 1-31-2014

Beginning Balance	\$7,075.54
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Everson, WA	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
TOTAL	525.00
TOTAL	7,600.54
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	614.98
Tape Production	195.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	809.98
October interest	6,790.56
ENDING BALANCE05
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,790.61



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 1-1-2014 to 1-31-2014

Beginning Balance	\$1,330.19
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	50.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Carol Willitt, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	25.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Pumerville, AR	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Burghill, OH	75.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	296.00
Anonymous	2,200.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$4,666.95
TOTAL	\$5,997.14
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	694.46
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.90
Dividing checks	150.00
Supplies	349.45
Total Expenditures	\$4,159.81
.....	\$1,837.33
Bank Service Charge	-13.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,824.33

Born of the Flesh

(Continued from page 67) ♦

gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:13-23).

The "many" in verse 22 are not the Muslims of the world who deny that Jesus is the Son of God. They are not the atheists of the world. They are not the Jews that reject Jesus as Messiah. Notice, they tell the Lord Jesus Christ that they had done many wonderful things in HIS NAME. They had done these wonderful things in the name of Jesus. They had prophesied in the name of Jesus. They had cast

out devils in the name of Jesus. But, you see, that which is of the flesh is still flesh. The "flesh profiteth nothing." These people had decided certain things about Jesus Christ. Certainly they would have said they made a decision to follow Jesus or made some sort of decision for Him. But decisions done in the flesh CANNOT produce life. Paul said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing."

So what does Jesus say about these people and their wonderful works that they had done in His name? He said, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." And notice it was not that they were once saved and just lost their way, for Jesus said, "I NEVER knew you" (Emp. LL). There was never a time that He ever knew these people. What an awful doom. What awful words to hear. What an awful thing to be deceived by preachers who had taught them to trust in a decision, a prayer they had prayed, or a card they had signed rather than the completed work of Jesus Christ.

THE COMPLETED WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

You see when Jesus died on that tree He obtained eternal salvation for His people. "For 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). "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12). "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11). May God bless!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will be having their Spring Fellowship meeting on Saturday, April 26th. Service time is at 10:00 a.m. All are invited to attend.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH is in need of a pastor. Any interested candidates possessing the qualifications and traits concerning the office as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are asked to contact either of the following: Bro. Randy Coffey at (614) 871-2406 or email recoffeypot@aol.com, or Bro. Joe Vass at (614) 846-8699 or email jamijoe@wowway.com.

The Glade Creek Baptist

Church, Summersville, WV, is in need of a pastor. This church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and church truth. Any interested Elder should call Bro. Rodney Perkins at (304) 742-3050 or Bro. Allen Frame at (304) 742-5775.

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street, Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.

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

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is in need of a replacement pastor. Elder Raymond T. Ellis is the current pastor, but due to his age, is needing to resign. The church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and the local church. Any interested Elder may contact Elder Ellis at (618) 983-8697 or Bro. Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228.

The Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church of Hamilton, OH is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Organized in 1938, the church holds to historic Baptist truths, including the Doctrines of Grace. Please visit the church's website at <http://twinbrook.net> to view the Church Constitution and other items that describe our beliefs and show what the church is doing today. Please contact Bro. Chris Willis at Elohimfirst@gmail.com for more information.

ARTICLE INDEX

Behold The Lamb by Milburn Cockrell	p. 52
Born of the Flesh and Born of the Spirit by Lucien LeSage	p. 45
The Bible and the Newspaper	p. 63
Certainty of Instruction by James Reynolds	p. 60
Forum	pp. 56-57
God Is Not Helping Us by Curtis Pugh	p. 45
Watering the Tulips by Todd Bryant	p. 47
What Are They Among So Many? by Paul Stepp	p. 45
What Meanest Thou, O Sleeper by Timothy Hille	p. 45
When Crowds Get in the Way by Richard Heatherly	p. 49