

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

The Idolatrous Family

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia



to anger."
WHOLE-HEARTED COMMITMENT TO IDOLATRY

In our text verses, it is interesting to notice how that the entire family works together to commit evil. We read that the children "gather wood;" the fathers "kindle the fire;" and the women "knead their dough." All of this is done so that they can gather together to worship a false god at an idolatrous feast.

Children

Have you ever noticed how that in our
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We live in a day and time when there are many distractions to our service to the Lord. And, we live in a day and time when there is much to separate us from our God, or we might rather say, that there are many things that come between us and our God.

Today, I want us to read, for a text, Jeremiah 7:17-18: **"Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me**

A Church Without A Message

By I. M. Haldeman
(1845 - 1933)

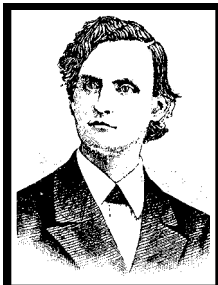


The church today, in the hands of some of its representative ministers and teachers, is denying that we have a distinct and unqualified revelation from God. How can the Bible be a revelation from God when, if the teaching of these men be true, the Bible is full of fictions and fables, full of questionable morality? Such a book is not from God---it is from man and man only. Instead of a message from God the church is giving a message from men, scientific men, philosophizing men, good men they may be---but only men. Instead of a message about Heaven, it is a message about the world. Instead of the affairs of God, it is the progress of

man.
Do men want to come to church to hear such a message as that? Do men want to come to church to hear about sociology, criminology, penology, politics, science and philosophy? Nay, when men come to church they want to hear about God and eternity; whether there is such a thing; whether behind the veil of death there is a level stretch of sunshine and glad welcoming; or, whether the night shuts down close and tight, sealed with silence forever. They want, when they come to church, to
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Our Social Problems

By J. B. Hawthorne
(1837 - 1910)



"Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9).

The introduction of sin into the world made every human being a pauper. Sin separates man from God. It prevents intercourse with God. In this condition the human soul is in darkness and bondage, and utterly destitute of nourishment and comfort. This is poverty a thousand times more deplorable and wretched than that which comes to our doors in rags. I would rather be as poor as the homeless and sore-footed tramp than be a spiritual pauper, going through this world of conflict and sorrow without God and without hope.

The infinite Jehovah, maker and ruler of all things, saw the poverty of this world and pitied it. He was rich, rich in Himself, rich in attributes which rendered Him infinitely higher and more glorious than any other being, and rich in having the homage, affection, and praise of all the unfallen

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On the Shortness of Time

In the sacred Scripture we find maxims, adapted to every individual of the human race, in all the diversified situations and circumstances in which they may be placed. And one part of true wisdom consists in being ready to consider and determine how the contents of Revelation apply to us, in the different spheres in which we are called to move. By making this our continual practice, we shall obtain an extensive acquaintance with the Bible, and, what is still more, be enabled to regulate our conduct by its most excellent rules. At the present juncture, that solemn sentence, I Corinthians 7:29, has very strong claims to our serious regard. Claims, which we cannot deny, without doing violence to reason and our best interest.

TIME IS SHORT. The truth of this Axiom is universally acknowledged. Oh that its momentous importance was so generally felt. I need make no apology for endeavouring to impress on the mind of every fellow mortal the weighty truth contained in this apostolic assertion; for whatever distinctions may subsist among us, in other respects, there are none, as we stand connected with time. The Monarch's days go with the same speed, as those of his meanest subject. Time is strictly impartial; and conveys the rich and the poor, the learned and illiterate, the grand and the ignoble, with the same alacrity to their destined home. And we have all great concerns demanding our attention; and therefore are under equal obligations to improve time. If it can be proved

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The Barrel and Cruse Shall Not Fail

By Chris Burke
of Catlettsburg, KY



"And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day

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"God sees, God guards, God guides me. His grace surrounds me and His voice continually bids me to be happy and holy in His service-just where I am!"

Charlotte Elliott -author of

"Just as I am, without one plea but that Thy blood was shed for me..."

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

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

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Shortness of Time

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that "Wisdom is the principal thing," and that reflections on the fewness of our days, tend to excite our minds to use strenuous efforts to obtain it; we may thence infer the utility of frequently thinking on the subject. That an heartfelt sense of the transitory nature of our existence on earth, greatly contributes to our rightly improving it, appears to be the sentiment of the Psalmist, when he prayed, "Teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom." Now, if we are likely to answer the end of our creation the better, by reflecting on the celerity with which our days pass away, it becomes an indispensable duty. The expanding foliage and the falling leaf, as they show the changing seasons, are as way-marks to the moral pilgrim; they are the same to him, as rising grounds are to the literal traveler. He there stands, and takes a retrospective view of the path which he has come. He discerns with sorrow where he had deviated from the right way. He recollects the place where he loitered, to no good purpose, and learns salutary lessons from his past miscarriages, His past errors become his monitors. He resolves, if possible, to redeem the time he has lost in a dilatory, or wandering course, by his future earnestness and caution; and conscious of his own weakness, he lifts his heart to Heaven for divine assistance, to enable him to prosecute his good resolutions.

In order that we may derive solid advantage from the contemplation of this theme, let us endeavour to illustrate and improve it.

TIME IS SHORT. Well for us, this is not that decisive sentence, which shall one day be uttered with inconceivable sublimity and grandeur, "Time shall be no longer!" The general assent given to this emphatic sentiment, that "Time is short," supersedes the necessity of attempting any proof of it. All are ready to own, that, the successive periods of our life hasten fast away--that days, weeks, months and years bear us rapidly on to our eternal habitation. But while we rejoice, that a truth so self-evident and important is generally received, have we not cause to lament, that we see as little of those salutary impressions and happy effects, which it ought to produce? Many who can sometimes talk fluently upon this subject, are nevertheless, as carnally minded, as indolent in their lives, as foolish in their conversation, as if they had no apprehension of the shortness of their probationary existence. By this means, they give awful demonstrations that they regard it merely as a subject of speculation; that they do not feel their own interest in it. They superficially think, or talk it over, but forget the chief thing, "Self application."

As it is essential to our improvement, that we should realize the subject as it applies to our own characters; let us notice some Scripture metaphors, made use of to represent to us the rapid flight of time. In the inspired volume, the most significant and expressive figures are used to impress on our minds the short duration of our present life. Sometimes the frailty of man, and his short continuance here, is compared to the tender herb, which just makes its appearance, when the earth is warmed by the genial beams of the sun; flourishes for a little time, and then dies away. So man cometh forth, weak and feeble; grows gay and sprightly, shoots up with vigor, for a little period, and having reached his meridian, declines; and the place that knew him, knoweth him no more. So important is man, so transitory his existence here, as to justify his comparison with the tender blade of grass; and so vain and unstable is all human glory, that the uncertain and fading bloom of the flower, most fitly represents it! Again, our life is compared to a vapour. "What is your life? It is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." So fluctuating and precarious is our present state! Like as the ships pass over the sea, the eagle through the expanse of heaven, or as the arrow cuts its way amid the air, so speedy are our days. They move with unabating agility, and will not be impeded in their way. Time is also very aptly compared to the impetuous torrent, which passes on in its course taking every obstacle with it. Historians relate the desolations made by its progress. They show us how the most elegant buildings, sumptuous palaces, splendid cities, yea, the greatest empires have been borne down by its hand. Poets and orators have very eloquently described the devastations of time; but their language has never reached our hearts like that which we read in the furrowed countenances of our friends, or, affected our feelings like the tokens of decay which in our own bosoms admonish us increasingly every year.

Job was a man of keen discernment, and judicious observation; and like all other wise and good men, he made diligent search into the subject before us. What was the result of this scrutiny? See this wise and virtuous prince rise up, with every mark of thoughtfulness and gravity; hear him utter the solemn declarations, "My days are as swift as the poet: they are more nimble than the weaver's shuttle, darting almost imperceptibly across the loom!" Well might the poet say, "Great God, on what a slender thread hangs everlasting things!" "A point of time, a moment's space, removes me to that happy place, or (tremendous thought) shuts me up in hell!" Who can help praying "Lord, engrave these sentiments on my thoughtful heart, and awake all my dormant powers to seek an interest

in thy love; that when my earthly house is dissolved, I may have an eternal one in the heavens."

Need there be any remarks by way of improvement? Surely a subject involving such important consequences will lead every judicious person to improve it by his own reflections. However, I will suggest a few thoughts, not to supersede the necessity of the reader's thinking for himself, but to assist him in it. A folio volume would not be sufficient to contain all the pertinent and profitable reflections, which might arise from a survey of the shortness of time. But I will only just mention a few particulars, and leave the reader to enlarge on them.

1. Every thinking mind must be struck at the critical situation in which man is placed. A boundless abyss opens before him; the manner in which he spends a few fleeting moments will decide whether he shall take up his eternal residence in the abodes of consummate blessedness, or the regions of misery complete! To be indifferent, in such circumstances, argues---shall I say madness? "O Lord alarm the torrid faculties of our souls that we may not sleep on this dangerous precipice, but flee from the wrath to come, and take shelter in the refuge set before us." 2. The folly of those who trifle and squander their time away in sloth; indolence, or frivolous pursuits, is hence apparent. Throw away silver, gold, estates, or kingdoms, and be blameless; but Oh, throw not away thy time! The justly admired Young asserts, that "the man is yet unborn who ever improved a day as it ought to be;" if so, what shall we say to those who are studious to waste it? 3. The subject before us addresses the covetous. It remonstrates with them on the absurdity of laying field to field, and joining house to house, as though they were to dwell here for ever. While every day's observation and experience testifies, that "here we have no continuing city." 4. If our time of trial and probation is so short, how diligent, industrious, and careful should we be, in applying it to proper purposes, in order to our answering the great end of life? We should aim to live apace, and through the grace of God, do much in a little time. This can only be accomplished by spending all our time in the service of God; maintaining a single eye to His glory, and doing every thing to promote the honor of His name.

(Baptist Magazine, July, 1810)



Idolatrous Family

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day and time, just as in the day and time of Jeremiah, the children of our nation and world seem to be devoted to nothing else but the satisfaction of the flesh? Brethren, in essence, this is what idolatry is---it is the satisfaction of the flesh at the expense of our service to God. Now, in the case of those that are unsaved, this idolatry is to be expected---it is not to be justified or tolerated on our part---but it is to be expected. However, in the case of those that are saved, and those that live in the families of the members of the churches of Jesus Christ, such idolatry must not be permitted.

The Apostle Paul had a lot to say about the Christian family, and its individual components. In Ephesians 6:1-3 the Apostle said, **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right, Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”** And then, in Colossians 3:20 the Apostle says, **“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.”** A key phrase here, in the first passage that we read, is this: **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord..”** Rather than concerning themselves with the lusts of the flesh, and the idolatrous feasts of Jeremiah’s time, the children should be obedient **“in the Lord.”** Of course, as we will go on to see, it is the responsibility of the fathers and mothers to see that the children are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. However, this does not remove the responsibility of the children to be obedient to their parents, as far as they are in the Lord.

You know, the Apostle Paul said that this was **“the first commandment with promise.”** I think what he means, is that, out of the Ten Commandments, this commandment number five, was the first commandment with positive conditions placed upon it, that were contingent upon the ability of the recipients to keep this commandment. In other words, there was good promised to those that would obey. This is very important for godly children in the families in the churches of Jesus Christ to consider. Do you know, children that are in the church, that the Lord has promised good unto you, if only you will honor your father and mother? We should stress this idea with our children. And we should expect that God will bless our children as they honor and obey their parents and their Lord. Certainly, we can at least say, that those who go about their idolatrous and ungodly practices, may not expect any of the least of God’s favors.

Fathers

As we consider the family in the time of Jeremiah, we find that as the children

were gathering the wood for the idols and the idolatrous feasts, even so the fathers were responsible for kindling the fire that would burn at those idolatrous feasts. You know, the same is true today. The children go about partaking of evil, and the fathers inspire the children to even further evil.

The Apostle Paul had this to say about the duty of the fathers: **“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”** (Eph. 6:4). Most of the time, we, as fathers, read this verse (coupled with Col. 3:21) and we think only of the fact that we, as fathers, are not to unduly provoke (tease, tempt, inspire) our children to the extent that they become angry. Well, this is certainly true, and this is something that fathers must beware of.

However, let me give you something else to think about. I think, especially considering the rest of this verse, and the context of this passage, that we could also understand this verse to be speaking of the motivation that we inspire in our children. In other words, we must not condone the wicked tendencies of our children, and we must not tolerate or even motivate their evil intentions. For, as this verse tells us, if we do such things, then the end will be the **“wrath”** of God.

In the times of Jeremiah the fathers should have not encouraged their children to go out and **“gather wood”** to burn unto the false gods. Instead, the fathers should have instructed their children, bringing **“them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”** so that they would know better, and they would fear to worship the Queen of Heaven or any other false god.

In our day and time we must do the same thing. We must **“nurture”** and admonish our children in the ways of the Lord, and we must not encourage those activities or emotions or desires that might tend to evil or wickedness. Instead, we, as fathers, must inspire and motivate our children to those activities and abilities and desires that will glorify God.

Women

The last member of the family in the time of Jeremiah that is mentioned in our text verses is the woman (or the mother). These women in these idolatrous families were not busy about the things of God, or even busy about the needs of their families. Instead, these women were busy kneading dough, so that they could then bake it upon the fire that the father had kindled, which utilized the wood that the children had gathered, so that the family could worship the Queen of Heaven. How awful it is to consider the actions of these women! Consider that the dough that they were kneading came from meal or flour that was purely a result of the providence of God! Consider that they were then putting forth much effort so



that they could consume the dough in a worship of a false god.

The Apostle Paul said this about women: **“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord”** (Col. 3:18). And he said this also: **“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan”** (I Tim. 5:14-15). I suppose that the two key phrases that I want you to notice today are these: **“as it is fit in the Lord”** and **“give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”** This is the role of the woman (mother) in the family. The woman must do what is **“fit in the Lord,”** and she must not give **“occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”** What kind of witness do you think the woman was giving when she baked cakes to offer to the Queen of Heaven? And what kind of testimony does a woman offer today, when she influences and condones evil and wicked tendencies in her own household, and amongst her own children?

I pray to God, that He would give wisdom and understanding to the women and mothers in our Christian families today. I pray that God would help them and encourage them so that they would not influence their children and their husbands to indulge themselves in the sins of the world.

MISDIRECTED EFFORT

Brothers and sisters, how apt is this description of the idolatrous family in Jeremiah’s times, and also as a description of the idolatrous family in our place and time.

Did you ever get the feeling that you, personally, or your family as a whole are only spinning your wheels? Did you ever get the feeling that you’re putting forth a lot of effort, but really just not getting anywhere good, and just not accomplishing anything worthwhile or commendable? Paul said this of himself, **“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. . . For the good that**

I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me” (Rom. 7:15, 19, 21). This is a situation that I find myself in very often. I will consider my ways, and the ways of my family, and I wonder, **“What are we doing that is profitable in the service of God? What are we accomplishing that might justify the time and effort that we are expending?”** Well, this situation is not unique to my family, nor is it unique to your family. You see, even as Christian families, we can, from time to time, find that we let some earthly desire or emotion come between us and our God. There are times in our lives, when we can read Isaiah 59:2, and we can relate it to our current condition before God: **“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”** This is what happens when a family, even a Christian family, will put something or someone between themselves, and their God.

We have noticed how that the family unit, in both Jeremiah’s time, and in our time, is easily and greatly motivated to commit evil and wickedness. Isn’t it amazing to notice how hard and diligently the family is willing to work when their labors are directed unto evil? In fact, we might even say that when it comes to idolatry and wickedness and evil deeds and desires, many families can work like a well-oiled machine. There is nearly nothing that is impossible for a family to accomplish as long as it is something that, in its wickedness, inspires every member of the family to labor.

Elsewhere in the Book of Jeremiah, we read these words of the Lord: **“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge”** (Jer. 4:22). The idolatrous families and peoples of this earth, in the time of Jeremiah, and in our time today, have a lot of wisdom and ability when it comes to doing **“evil.”**

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Idolatrous Family

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But, when it comes to doing "good," then "they have no knowledge" of ability or "understanding."

I think it would be a marvelous and an amazing thing if we could see Christian families of today that would be just as motivated to do good and righteousness as what the worldly family is motivated to do wickedness. In the parable of the Unjust Steward, which the Lord Jesus related to His disciples in Luke 16:1-13, we read this about the lord of the Unjust Steward, after that the Unjust Steward had sought favor from the debtors by reducing the amounts that they owed to the lord: "And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8). The point that I want to make from this verse, and this reference to this parable, is the fact that we, in the world, will sometimes work very hard, and we will make very good and profitable decisions. However, sometimes our worldly abilities and successes exceed those abilities and successes that we manifest spiritually. It is a shame, that so much of the world, and so many idolatrous families, are more successful in their wicked and idolatrous efforts, then what we are in our efforts for the Lord!

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let's read Jeremiah 5:30-31: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" We spend a lot of time, as Christians, and especially as members of the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, bemoaning the current state of affairs. We spend a lot of time complaining about the wickedness that is so prominent all around us. But, are we willing to do the things that are necessary to stem the tide of wickedness? Are we willing to tell the world what is wicked and what is good? Are we willing to separate ourselves from these same wicked devices and desires that so ensnare the world? In these verses that we have just read, I want you to notice the phrase, ". . .and my people love to have it so. . ." You know, we say that we are against evil and wickedness and the earthly lusts that so consume the world around us---and yet we "love to have" a part in some of these very same things. If we ever want to be credible and believable witnesses for good, then we must shun and decry the wicked.

Notice the end of the passage that we have just read: ". . .and what will ye do in the end thereof?" There is an end coming of all of the wickedness of this world.

When that end comes, will we be found to be partakers of that wickedness? Or, rather, will we be found to be preachers and teachers of righteousness, and men and women that abstain from the evil of this world?

Finally, let's read what the Lord Jesus had to say in Luke 18:8: "I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on earth?" Now, we don't have time to get into much of a study of this verse, and the parable of which it is a part, but allow me to just pose the same question that the Lord Jesus Christ posed: ". . .when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Don't imagine for a moment that the answer to this question is unknown to the Lord God; and don't imagine for a moment that the Lord Jesus Christ was asking this question because He desired that someone would enlighten Him. But I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is asking this question for our own good. We must recognize that the faithfulness of even the children of God will wane from time to time. And, we must understand that all of the saints of God will not always obey and be faithful unto their God. So, with these thoughts in mind (and also in consideration of the persistence of the deprived widow that is referenced in the parable that the Lord had just spoken), let us be motivated and inspired to be the ones of the elect of God that will be faithful and obedient. When the Son of Man cometh, let it be our faith that He shall find on this earth. This should be our goal.

There is a lot of idolatry still yet in this world. And there are a lot of idolatrous families that still walk the face of this earth. However, let us, and our families, and our churches, make a stand against idolatry. Let us make it clear to the world around us, that there is nothing that we place between ourselves and our God; and there is nothing that we love more than our God. In fact, let me say this: Faithfulness and obedience should be the very minimum that God can expect from those that claim to worship and serve Him.



Our Social Problems

(Continued from page 321) ♦

intelligences of the universe.

Moved with pity for our poverty He became poor that we might be rich. He became a man, and the poorest of men. The foxes had their holes, the birds of the air their nests, but He had not where to lay His head. He stooped to the position of a servant. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

By this poverty and humiliation He made it possible for us to be rich and glorious. By faith in Him we become heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ to an inheritance that is undefiled, incorruptible, and that fadeth not away.

In this scheme of recovering mercy we see the highest possible exhibition of unselfishness. He enriched the world by the sublimest self-denial that man or angel ever witnessed. We avail ourselves of the benefits of His sacrifice by imitating His example. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."

As He loved us, so we are to love one another. As He came into the world and lived and suffered and died for us, so we are to live and suffer, and, if need be, die for one another. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

The spirit which prompted Cain to ask the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is the spirit of Antichrist. It is the spirit which says, "Let every man take care of himself." It is the spirit which inspires a man to labor solely for his own advancement. It is the spirit which instigates all injustice, oppression, and cruelty. It is behind all man's inhumanity to man. It arrays neighbor against neighbor, class against class, community against community, and nation against nation.

That spirit dominates the age in which

we live. It threatens this great nation with the crisis of the centuries. If there is not a reaction in the near future, it will culminate in such a social upheaval as the world has never seen. The voices of its millions of victims are calling to Heaven, as the blood of the murdered Abel cried from the ground for divine vengeance upon Cain.

The power which propels the wheels of our present civilization is not love, but greed. In politics and commerce there is a premium on shrewdness and deception, while honesty and generosity are sneered at as virtues too sublimated and ethereal to be practiced by creatures who wear earth about them, and who have to grapple with such problems as, "What shall I eat? and what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed?"

A civilization that is based on selfishness, and that magnifies and rewards men who succeed by their superior cunning, has no power within itself to secure justice.

There is nothing that needs saving so much as a civilization that is guided by no moral principle, and that marches on without regard to God and His righteousness. The country that boasts of such a civilization is on the highroad to anarchy and barbarism.

Civilization is not a cause, but an effect. It is the product of character. It expresses the good and evil in the hearts of the people. Any government--national, State, or municipal--is just what the people make it. If a government tolerates such an iniquity as a bull fight, or a gambling house, or a bar-room, it is because the people are depraved enough to want such things.

The fountain of any civilization is in the moral character of the people who support it. If it is corrupt, it is because the people are corrupt, and it can be cleansed only by cleansing the people. The passage of more stringent laws will not stop the abominations to which I have referred. As long as the people do not rebel against indecent theatrical exhibitions they will continue to occur in all our theatres. As long as the people make no protest against obscene papers they will continue to be sold on our highways and at our news-stands.

We have already laws against these things. Why are they not enforced? Because the moral sentiment of the people is too weak to demand it. As long as the people are morally stupid, as long as they have but a feeble appreciation of the distinctions which God makes between right and wrong, vulgarity, uncleanness, and knavery will go unwhipped of justice. As long as the people are unjust there will be class legislation, despotic monopolies, political rings, bribery, and ballot-box stuffing. A righteous civilization can be established and maintained only by a people who love and practice

♦ (Continued on page 325)

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Our Social Problems

(Continued from page 324) ♦
righteousness.

We are like those foolish Galatians to whom Paul said, "Ye are bewitched." We have been bewitched by political teachers who have made us believe that the cure for all our social troubles is wiser legislation. Each of them has his economic theory and tells us that if we will send him to Congress, and he can get his theory transmuted into law, he will put an end to our social woes.

He may be sincere, but his proposition is absurd. Economic legislation deals only with things that are external to man's being. That is not what is needed. We need something that will touch the souls and transform the characters of our people.

The State does not make the people, the people make the State. The State is the expression of the thoughts of the people. It is the product of the people's faith. It is the realization of their moral ideas.

When the people are personally honest, the State will be honest; when the people abhor oppression, then oppressive legislation will be obliterated from our statute books. When the people are righteous enough to demand it, we shall have a faithful administration of every righteous law in our civil code. Good laws cannot be executed among a corrupt people.

Not long ago I read a very learned and beautiful oration on the old Roman law. The principles embodied in that great system of law emanated from a few great men. They did not come from the body of the Roman people. Those laws were in existence during all that dark period when the Roman government gave but little protection to life, liberty, and property.

Alfred the Great incorporated the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule in the English constitution, but they have been openly violated by every administration of the English government from King Alford to Queen Victoria.

A great writer on sociology has said that: "Laws written on tables of stone and printed in statute books are but the playthings of politicians, if they are not written in the hearts of the people. Laws cannot make men unselfish; police righteousness is not divine righteousness; the State cannot establish justice and righteousness on the earth. But justice and righteousness must establish the State."

What then is our hope? How can society be renovated? How can our civilization be purified? How can the State be so reconstructed as to furnish adequate protection to its subjects and all of their legitimate interests?

My answer to each of these questions

is, by substituting for the law of self-interest, which now rules our social life, the law of self-sacrifice, the law by which God acts, the law which He illustrated when He became poor that we through His poverty might be rich.

The cross of Christ is the solvent of all the great social problems of the world. There God unveils His heart to men; there He reveals His redeeming love, a love which expresses itself in absolute self-renunciation. **"He who knew no sin, was made sin for us." "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." "He died for us." "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities, . . . and by his stripes we are healed."**

In that complete oblation of Himself God teaches us that the highest expression of love is self-sacrifice, and that it is only by the sacrifice of ourselves that we can touch and supply the world's profoundest needs. The human race has never advanced one inch without human sacrifices. In every past age the men who pushed the world on and up to something better were martyrs. They suffered persecution, and in many instances death, for what they did for righteousness' sake.

Every great truth has secured public recognition only through the self-denials and heartaches of some moral hero. The world's darkness has been illumined only by the blaze of martyr-fires. What we have and enjoy today is the blood-bought wealth of the centuries. We can never pay to the generations that come after us more than an infinitesimal part of the debt which we owe to the generations that have preceded us. Any future progress must be secured by obedience to the same law, the law of self-sacrifice. Every inch must be gained and held by some struggling, suffering, unresting brain and heart.

My friend, is it the purpose of your life to be useful? If that is not your purpose and your dominant purpose, you have no claims upon the homage of the world. If you intend to be a disciple of Cain and repudiate all obligations to care for your brother man, you deserve to be treated as Cain was---branded as an outlaw. If you will not be your brother's keeper and burden-bearer, you are his enemy. You will seize every opportunity to defraud, oppress, and degrade him. The principle which controls you will make you a monopolist, or a gambler, or a bank-robber, or an anarchist, or a nihilist.

But, if your purpose is to be useful---useful not only to yourself and your own family, but to the world---your life must be a sacrificial life. You must look out on this wide world and recognize every man in it as your brother and acknowledge your obligation to help him, as far as God gives you the ability and the opportunity. To serve your day and generation according to the will of God, to make any

substantial and enduring contribution to the welfare of the race, you must make an oblation of your possessions and of yourself.

My brother, you sing,
"In the cross of Christ I glory,

Towering o'er the wrecks of time,"

but do you understand what you sing? Do you know the meaning of the cross? The cross does not release you from the law of sacrifice, but binds you to it by considerations that are immeasurable in their importance and solemnity. You must not only be reconciled to the cross, but reconciled to the law which it proclaims and to all the burden of toil, struggle, and sacrifice which it lays upon you.

The cross is not only the symbol of Christ's burden, but also of your own. You glory in the cross He bore, but do you glory in the cross which He offers you? If your heart is throbbing with the passion that burned in Him Who hung upon that instrument of shame, your life will be in some degree a repetition of what He endured, and your favorite sentiment will be:

Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?

No! There's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me.

The consecrated cross I'll bear
Till death shall set me free;
And then go home, my crown to wear,
For there's a crown for me.

"Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." This text should have a larger application to men of wealth than to the poorer classes, because they have larger possessions and more abundant opportunities for sacrifice. The rich men in the churches of this country have it within their power to solve our problems and save us from the fearful disasters which so seriously threaten us. Let these rich men become truly Christ like---let them become living sacrifices in the service of their God and country and race, and our clouds will disappear.

Jesus was no more under obligation to give Himself wholly to the task of saving men than the Christian capitalist of Nashville is to consecrate himself and his possessions to the same work. God had no more claims to the service of Christ than He has to the time, talents, and labors of every Christian lawyer of this city.

The manufacturer has no more right to operate his factory solely for his own benefit than Jesus Christ had to work miracles for His own profit. The Christian has no more moral right to an unconsecrated business or capital, than Christ had to an unconsecrated cross.

Whenever the business men in our churches heartily accept this doctrine

and conform their lives to it, we shall see Christianity grow as it never has grown. We shall see society quickly cleansed of its present abominations. We shall see the State purged of all favoritism and injustice; we shall see the strifes between capital and labor cease, and throughout all our borders a reign of righteousness, contentment, and prosperity.

God is calling today for men of capital who are willing to be financially crucified in order to establish the business of the world on the basis of the Golden Rule: **"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."**

In putting your own business upon that basis you may suffer great loss for a time, your profits may be enormously decreased, it may even bankrupt you; but in making the sacrifice you will gain the fellowship of Christ, you will manifest His spirit, magnify His truth, and extend the conquests of His kingdom. If every Christian man in business would do this the whole commercial world would be revolutionized and established upon principles that would insure steady and permanent prosperity to all classes of every community.

The world has never been more prolific of golden opportunities for Christ-like deeds than it is today. You can make the counting room as sacred as the sanctuary. You can make the legislative hall as hallowed as the mount on which Moses talked with God and received the law on tables of stone. You can make every gathering of the people, whether for religions, educational, political, or commercial purposes, as holy, harmonious, and happy as the disciples were on the mount of transfiguration. You can convert the din and roar of your industrial activity into a perpetual coronation hymn. You can be the knights of a nobler and grander chivalry than ever unfurled a flag or unsheathed a sword on any of the world's historic battlefields.



Barrel and Cruse

(Continued from page 321) ♦

that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah" (I Kings 17:8-16).

INTRODUCTION

Elijah was the man of God for the hour in the nation Israel. Elijah was a mighty prophet who seemed to come out of nowhere; like Melchisedec. Elijah was a man who preached the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He preached against the wicked sin in the land. He warned men of God's judgment

♦ (Continued on page 326)

Barrel and Cruse

(Continued from page 325) ♦

to come. But just like in our land today, most of the people would not hear the Word of the Lord, and would not take heed to God's prophet.

Elijah announced to Ahab the king the coming drought upon the land. We are told in James 5:17 that the drought lasted for 3 ½ years. This drought was God's judgment upon His chosen nation Israel because of their sins. God's true preachers today are also preaching that judgment is coming upon America except we repent of our wicked sins. But when a nation and people will not hearken to the voice of the Lord, God's judgment will surely come. And often times even God's faithful people suffer because of the nation's sins, as we see in our text.

1. First, we see the importance of hearing and obeying the Word of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord came unto Elijah. It is so important for God's people to be sensitive to the Word of the Lord, and to hear it, and to obey it. It is so important for the man of God, that He be sensitive to the voice of the Lord, and that He obeys the Lord's voice. Beloved, don't think that pastors aren't tempted to go contrary to the Word of the Lord. We need your prayers and support to be a faithful pastor. It is equally important for the people of God to hear and obey the message of the man of God, as this widow woman obeyed the voice of the prophet. Beloved, be sure that your pastor knows that he is nothing, and less than nothing in himself. Nevertheless, I know that it will be best for you if you will hear and obey the message that God gives me to preach.

God told Elijah to "**Arise, get thee to Zarephath**" (v. 9), which was a small Gentile town near Mediterranean coast between Tyre and Sidon. Zarephath means refinery, or a place where metals were refined. This was a time of Israel's refining because of their sins against God. Judgment was a long time coming for Israel, but God's judgment, though it be slow, it is sure. Elijah didn't question God's command to go to the Gentile town of Zarephath, but he arose and went just as he was told. God's preachers do well to obey the voice of the Lord.

God commanded this poor widow woman to sustain Elijah. The things that God uses to sustain His people are so contrary to human reasoning. God commands His people to do things that are unthinkable and unreasonable to the world. Who would think that this poor Gentile widow woman, who was about to starve to death herself, could be of any help to Elijah? It is not our place to question God, but simply to obey Him. If God chooses to use a poor helpless widow to sustain His prophet, then praise the

Lord! You see, in this way He gets all the glory and not man.

And so, in all these things it was vital that God's people heard and obeyed the Word of the Lord.

2. Secondly, we see that circumstances may get desperate for God's people.

The circumstances were desperate for this widow woman, but she didn't deny the God of heaven in her trials. In fact, she acknowledged that the God of Elijah lives! This was a great testimony from a Gentile woman of a country that worshipped Baal. Although she was a Gentile, she probably understood that the judgment of God was upon the idolatry in the land. She was despairing of her life because of her nation's sins. She was a worshipper of Jehovah God, but she was suffering because of the sins of her people and of Israel as well. So it is with saints today.

Although her situation was desperate, we see that she hoped to the end for the mercies of God. She was down to her last handful of meal and a little oil. But I believe that she was a praying woman, and through her trials she had been praying for God's help, and she kept on praying and hoping that God would hear and answer her prayers. She probably had heard that God was merciful to the widows and the fatherless in their afflictions. But now she was down to the very end of her resources, and she knew that unless God sent a miracle that she and her son would perish. Sometimes, beloved, life comes down to needing a miracle.

Yes beloved, God sometimes allows our situation to get desperate before He comes to our aid. Don't give up hope, but rather keep on trusting, and hoping, and praying to the end!

3. Thirdly, we see that help from God came at last.

Elijah told the widow to "**Fear not.**" Humanly there was great cause to fear. It appeared that the widow and her son were going to perish from starvation. But faith is the opposite of fear, and perfect love casteth out fear. Fear does us no good, but rather fear is paralyzing, and causes us to behave irrationally and to lose our senses. Fear not, but rather trust in the Lord, and He will bring us out of our troubles. Set our hearts and minds on the love of God wherewith He loves us, and our fears will be quenched. God's love is our greatest weapon against the torments of fear.

Elijah said "**Make me thereof a little cake first.**" Even in the hardest of times and in the severest of trials, God's people would do well for their own selves to take care of God's prophet first. Put God first, and His ministers, and His work, and He will take care of you.

Elijah told the widow by the Word of the Lord (vs. 14) that "**The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail.**" Though there be only

a handful of meal in the barrel and a little oil in the cruse, they shall not completely run out until and drought and famine are over.

In other words "You won't starve to death, but you will have enough for you and your family. You will not have steak and lobster, and the other delicacies of life, but you will have enough, and the Lord will sustain you." I wonder how we would do if we were in this widow's shoes.

Again, we see that the woman obeyed the Word of the Lord by the prophet Elijah (verse 15). True faith takes action, and obeys the Word of the Lord. I wonder what would have happened if the woman refused to obey Elijah. I wonder if she and her son would have starved to death.

I want to expound on verse 14 for a moment. We read in Amos 8:11: "**Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.**"

There is a famine in our land today. It is not a famine of bread and water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. Think with me for a moment about the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil.

We might liken the meal in our text to the Bread of life, the Lord Jesus Christ. All who have partaken of this bread shall never hunger. Jesus will eternally satisfy every soul who partakes of Him by faith. The life that Jesus gives shall never run out. It shall never fail. It is eternal and everlasting. But the people will not hear about Jesus. They will not partake of the bread of Heaven by faith in His work on Calvary. Yes beloved, there is a famine in the land. People are starving spiritually for want of the Bread of life. But for all who will receive this Bread, the Lord Jesus, there is an unfailing supply. His virtues shall not waste. They shall not spoil or fail. All who taste of Jesus by faith shall be satisfied. All that partake of Him shall live eternally.

We might also liken the meal in our text to the Word of God, which is spiritual bread for our souls. "**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,**" Jesus said. There is a famine in the land today for the hearing of the Word of God. But for all who will receive His Word, there is a bountiful supply. The Lord is still speaking to his children today, even in the refiner's fire of Zarephath. For those who will trust and obey the Lord, He is still speaking through His written Word and through His churches and His pastors. And the Word of the Lord won't fail or run out, but it is perpetual and perennial, and new every day, to all who will trust and obey.

The cruse of oil in our text we might liken to the Holy Spirit. The Bread of life and the Word of life can only be received by the preparation of the oil of the Spirit.

Otherwise they are only dry meal to the starving sinner's soul. But when the meal and oil are prepared together under the fires of repentance, and served to the lost sinner by the servant of God, they give life to the lost soul.

And as God's children we may not be filled with the Spirit as we should be, but if He is in our vessel, He will never fail, or run out, or leave us comfortless. He we abide forever within our hearts and souls. Again, if we would be filled with the Spirit, and with His power and blessings, then we need to trust and obey the Word of the Lord. We cannot be filled with the Spirit if we are leading disobedient lives to the Lord. This is a contradiction to the Word of God. But if we will trust and obey the Word of the Lord, then will we be filled with the Spirit, even in times of spiritual famine in the land.

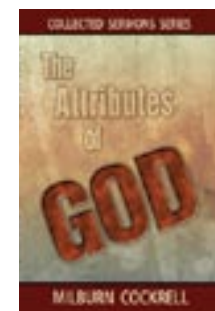
CONCLUSION

Not only did the barrel of meal not waste and the cruse of oil not fail, but the promises of God didn't fail either (verse 16).

Sometimes physically we may feel like we're down to our last handful of meal in our barrel and the last little bit of oil in our cruse. But don't give up trusting, and hoping, and praying to the Lord. He will come through for us, if we will trust and obey His Word. He may not work things out the way we hoped He would, but if we trust in Him to the end, He will work things out for His honor and glory, and for our good.

Sometimes spiritually we may feel like we're down to our last handful of meal and little bit of oil. But we can stand upon the promises of God and we be sure that the Bread of life and the Word of life shall not waste, and the Oil of the Spirit shall not fail until the time of refreshing come from on high, when Jesus shall come again for His people.

No beloved, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail the children of God. Do we hear His Word today? Are we trusting and obeying what we hear? May the Lord help us to hear Him and to trust Him and to obey Him in all things! Beloved, if we will do this, it will be well with us.



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This book contains fifteen chapters. Chapters cover the following attributes: Omniscience, Foreknowledge, Omnipotence,

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CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

Encouragement and thoughts from a prisoner to other prisoners and readers.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried" (Rev. 2:10).



Forgiveness?

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader. I hope this finds you in good health and the highest of spirits.

A lot has happened since I last wrote. I came up for parole, and promptly received a set-off. So I will be writing this column for at least another year. I was not too upset about the parole decision. I could have been set off for five years and was not. That is a blessing in itself.

If I am to believe the parole commissioner who spoke to my GRAD group back in 2006, then it is very likely I will make parole when I come back up next year. Please keep this in your prayers for me.

As is usually the case this column is about encouraging and teaching myself, as well as you, dear reader, and this month is no different. I figure that if I struggle with this stuff, then so do some of you.

I recently received a letter from my ex-wife who has not been a part of my life for over sixteen years. Out of the blue she writes to tell me she and her second husband are no longer together and that she wants to keep in touch.

I don't know at this writing what, exactly, she means by that, but I do know that to have any kind of relationship, friendship or otherwise---we must forgive each other for past wrongs on both sides. Therefore forgiveness is my subject this month.

May the Lord bless this message in my life, as well as yours, dear reader.

"When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).

This admonition is repeated at least three times in Scripture, so it must be very important:

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). And again:

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. 3:13).

From these texts we can plainly see that we are to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us. Now that sounds very saintly and we know it's the right thing to do. Why, it's right there in the Scriptures. But what is forgiveness? How did the Lord forgive us? Let's do as the Bereans and search the Scriptures to find the

truth (Acts 17:10-11).

First, let us define the Biblical words, **"forgive"** and **"forgiving"** ---the first, Gk. #863 means "to let alone, omit, put away, remit" and the other Gk. #5483 "gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue." (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Updated Edition, 2007).

To forgive is to omit, put away, remit, and pardon. To do away with on a permanent basis. What do the Scriptures say?

"Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Isa. 38:17).

The Prophet Isaiah is here talking about the Lord discarding all of his sins behind His back. To be thrown behind the back of the Lord is the same as never having existed. Those sins are gone forever. Each and every one of us who are born again has experienced this same casting away of sins.

This is what it means to forgive, even as Christ for our sakes has forgiven us. Those sins, those wrongs have to be cast behind our backs---as if they never existed.

Forgiveness is not a half-hearted, "Well, okay, I forgive you." Just to be brought back up the next time you have a disagreement with, or get mad at, the forgiven one. That's not forgiveness, that's keeping score. And we are not admonished to keep score.

In the words of the Psalmist, King David, we must follow the Lord and remove the wrong---how far?

"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12).

That's a pretty long way, and never shall the twain meet. This is another example of how we must forgive, even as the Lord for our sakes has forgiven us.

In order to forgive even as we were forgiven we must, with all our strength through the Lord, omit (leave out; fail to include or mention)*, remit (pardon or forgive; to set free, release)*, pardon (release from the penalty of an offense; to release from liability)*, and rescue (to free or deliver from; to liberate)* those who have wronged us.

If the Lord, in all His glory, can forgive us our vast array of morbidly black sins, how can we not forgive the petty wrongs of our fellow man, or woman?

One last thing I want to touch on before I close is the question of how often

are we to forgive someone. Do we forgive them once, and then if they wrong us again, kick them to the curb?

"Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:21-22). And again: **"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him"** (Luke 17:3-4).

The number seven in the Scriptures is the number of completeness, of wholeness, and I believe the Lord's use of it here is to convey to us that we

must forgive others until our lives are complete. As long as we are on this earth we are to forgive others even as Christ for our sakes has forgiven us.

I pray this message will bless my life and yours, dear reader. Please keep me in your prayers as I continue this journey called prison.

Note: If any of you learned elders out there have any insight and/or encouragement in the possible reconciliation between me and my ex-wife you can go to Jpay.com and send me an email. I look forward to your counseling and guidance. Send emails to: David G. Hoffman, TDCJ#809805, Jester 3 Unit.

* (definitions from, Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, Deluxe Edition, 2001)



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Obligation To Render Unto Ceasar

"Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:17-22).

Here the Pharisees and Herodians, natural enemies, made common cause against the Prince of Glory. They endeavored to set a trap for Jesus, so they could report Him to the governor as a rebel against the Roman authority.

"Is it lawful to give tribute. . . or not?" This was a controversial question in Judea 2,000 years ago. The Pharisees generally answered in the negative, the Herodians in the positive, though both obeyed the law.

Their question was full of subtlety, and the Lord Jesus' answer was full of wisdom. Jesus said: **"Shew me the tribute money. . . Whose is the image and superscription?"** He referred to the denarius, a Roman coin worth about 17 cents in our money. These coins bore the emperor's likeness, and a Latin inscription of his name and rank.

"Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." This unforgettable statement will stand for all time. It

teaches Christians to be loyal to their country and faithful to God. It also sets forth the separation of church and state, distinguishing between the things that are Caesar's and the things which are God's.

The Christian religion is no enemy to civil government, it is the best friend it has in all the world. Christ's kingdom does not clash or interfere with the kingdoms on earth. So as the state confines itself to its legitimate jurisdiction, it will not hurt, hinder, or hamper the work of the church. The state has to do with civil matters, while the church has to do with the Divine and spiritual things.

Christians are citizens of two worlds--one earthly and the other heavenly (Phil. 3:20). We must render obedience to both God and the state, for these duties do not necessarily conflict with each other. The things which are Caesar's do not just mean taxes, but all that citizens owe the civil magistrate.

We must render to God what He requires of us. We ought to live as those who belong to Heaven, but that does not mean we have no responsibility on earth. The Christian is a citizen of the country in which he dwells. So far as subjection and obedience to the civil power is concerned, he is obligated before God to obey it. But in his aim, in reason, in affection, in devotion, he is a stranger and pilgrim in every country upon earth. He is to use this world, not abuse it (I Cor. 7:31).

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Church Without A

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hear something that will convince them that God is, that He thinks upon them, and desires to do them good. They want, when they come to church, to hear about something that will help them to live every day and hope for every tomorrow. They want to know what the will of God concerning them may be, and how they may perform that will. It is not the noise of the earthly city and the stifling dust of it, they want to hear and breathe---they want to breathe the pure air of the heavenly city, and hear some notes of its unfailing harmonies. A church that is taken up with everything under Heaven but Heaven---with every sort of message, but a message direct from God and about God has lost its message to men. When a church has lost its message from God to men, it has ceased to have the right to give any message at all.

God set the church up in this world that it might deliver His message to men, inviting them to hear His Word and enter, by faith, into living union with His Son. God set the church up that it might speak, not to nations, but to **"every creature"**; that it might bring salvation, not to society, but to the individual in society. The church is not giving that message. It has forgotten that **"the power of God"** in this age is not through temperance and reform societies, not through political purgation and legislative agitation, but that Gospel wherein righteousness is revealed from faith to faith; that Gospel which tells us that the nexus between man's need of righteousness and God's readiness to supply it, is faith in that crucified and risen Son of God whom it proclaims as the righteousness of God unto, and upon, every one that believeth.

(THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, 00. 42-44, 1919 edition).



Render Unto Ceasar

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OBEY THE LAW

Since the authority for civil government comes from God, those who believe in Him are responsible to render obedience to the state. This applies to every Christian in every country in every age. **"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers?"** (Rom. 13:1).

The higher powers included the imperial throne of Rome in Paul's day. When he wrote Romans 13, the worst ruler Rome ever had was upon the throne, Nero himself. If a man like that were to be obeyed, then surely all other earthly rulers.

No person has the right to claim

exemption from the Divine mandate of Romans 13:1. **"Every soul"** means "every person." It includes the pope of Rome and all the clergy. It includes the House of Representatives, the Congress, and the President and his cabinet. This includes every Baptist preacher in the world and all Baptist church members. No person is above the law of the land. No individual has the right to flagrantly break the laws of the state.

THE REASON WHY

In I Peter 2:13-15 it is written: **"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."**

Here Peter gives two reasons for obedience to the magistrate. First, he says: **"For the Lord's sake."** True religion requires submission to the state. Thus, a Christian is not to be a disturber of the state. He must obey the magistrate because he is the minister of God and obedience to him is the ordinance of God.

Second, a Christian should submit to the civil magistrate because it "is the will of God." This is the strongest reason for any duty. He must conduct himself in such a manner before the law of the land as to put to silence the unreasonable reproaches of ignorant and foolish men.

Believers, who take seriously the teachings of the Bible, will not perform acts of civil disobedience even when they disagree with the state and federal government. Any minister of the gospel who deliberately refuses to obey ordinances is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Those who do so in the name of "civil rights" should have enough intelligence to know that they have a civil and religious obligation to obey the law. The Bible does not endorse civil disobedience. Those who violate the laws of the municipality, large or small, should be punished for their offenses.

Romans 13:5 gives a third reason for submission to the state: **"Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."** This means a Christian is to obey the laws of his county and country, because a good conscience demands it. The Bible teaches him to be a good citizen, and that obedience to his government is God's will. Therefore, he must obey all ordinances without grumbling and complaining.

THE EXTENT OF OBEDIENCE

God's children are to obey every regulation of the government unless it would be contrary to God's law and the fundamental laws of His spiritual kingdom. We are not to obey the government if it commands us to lie, steal, or perform cruel deeds. Whenever

one must choose between the will of God and the demands of the government, he must choose to obey God and be prepared to take the consequence (Acts 26:25). When Peter faced such a problem, he told the council: **"We ought to obey God rather than men"** (Acts 5:29).

The infinite Ruler is to be obeyed in preference to any earthly ruler. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were required to worship the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar, they refused (Dan. 5:1-18). When Darius insisted that Daniel not pray to his God, Daniel refused to obey this requirement (Dan. 6:1-24).

Government forfeits its claims to obedience when it requires what God has plainly forbidden, or forbids what He has required. Human authorities must not attempt to thwart the purpose of God. They must not punish men for disobedience to them who seek to obey God. Such rulers who set themselves in opposition to God will have a great deal to answer for at the judgment of God.

WHAT OBEDIENCE INVOLVES

To obey the magistrate means to pay all lawful taxes to the government. These are used to support our police, our law courts, our penitentiaries, our army, our navy, and our air force. We may think a certain form of taxation is unjust, but this does not free us from the obligation to **"render. . .to all their dues"** (Rom. 13:7). To cheat the government is to cheat the public of which we are a part.

Christ's example teaches this. He told Peter to go and to pay the temple tax which they both owed. **"Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee"** (Matt. 17:27).

A Christian is to go to war in defense of his country. Abraham did when he declared war on Chedorlaomer (Gen. 14:1-16). The children of Jacob often engaged in war against their enemies with God's approval. John the Baptist told the Roman soldiers to "be content with their wages" (Luke 3:14), not to become deserters or draft dodgers. Christ told Peter to put up his sword which belonged to the state, not to throw it away. One of the early Christians, Cornelius, was captain of a Roman cohort of 100 men.

In Luke 22:36 it is recorded that Jesus Christ said: **"He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one."** No amount of spiritualizing can escape the clear meaning of such a text. This verse overthrows any theology of non-resistance held by pacifists, conscientious objectors, Quakers, Jehovah's Witnesses, or any other sect.

Your government has a Divine right to bear the sword and to call upon its citizens to aid in this matter. As Christians we must bear arms if our government has

need of us. Our government has the right to delegate any of its citizens as its representatives in its military or naval obligation. One cannot scripturally be a conscientious objector.

SUBMISSION TO CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

At all times a Christian is to abide by the laws of the land and to let justice take its course. If he commits a capital offense, he must receive a capital punishment. If he commits anything worthy of death, he is obligated to accuse himself and give himself up to justice. He must make no attempt to escape or resist the powers that be.

On trial before Festus, Paul said: **"For if I. . .have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die"** (Acts 25:11).

When a believer is a judge or juror, it is his duty to favor capital punishment when the law of God and man requires it. In Deuteronomy 19:13 the elders of Israel were told: **"Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee."** Such judgment is good for society. Deuteronomy 19:20 says: **"And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you."**

HONOR THE RULERS

Those who are saved are obligated to show respect and honor to those in positions of authority. Paul said in Romans: **"Fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."** I Peter 2:17 tells us: **"Honour the king."** To those who live in America it could be understood to read: "Honor the President." When Paul addressed the procurator of Judea, he called him **"most noble Festus"** (Acts 26:25). When he spoke to Agrippa, he said: **"O king Agrippa"** (Acts 26:19).

Respect for earthly rulers and reverence for God are put together in one verse of Scripture. **"My son, fear thou the Lord and the king"** (Prov. 24:21). He who has no respect for the earthly rulers has none for the Divine Ruler.

Our high officials must be spoken of with great respect. Job 34:18 asks: **"Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly?"** It is interesting to notice that the reproving of a king in the Bible was done only by a prophet or one sent of God. Herod was reproved by John the Baptist (Mark 6:18). David was reproved by Nathan the prophet (II Sam. 12:1-14). Language like Shimei used against David must never be used when addressing a king (II Sam. 16:7).

To unleash bitter criticism against our President and Congress is to oppose the revelation of God's Word. We must not use derogatory or insulting words when speaking of even our governor or sheriff. Exodus 22:28: **"Thou shalt not. . .curse"**

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Render Unto Ceasar

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the ruler of thy people.” Ecclesiastes 10:20 declares: **“Curse not the king, no not in thy thought: and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.”**

PRAY FOR RULERS

It is also our responsibility to make fervent intercession for all people who have the rule over us. Writing to Timothy, Paul said: **“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”** (I Tim. 2:1-2).

We must pray to God for all our civil leaders, for president or prime minister, senator or sheriff, congressman or circuit clerk, federal judge or justice of the peace. If prayer for rulers was obligatory under the cruel Nero, the obligation must remain in all ages, irrespective of the form of government or the character of those in authority. Prayer for the government, rather than denunciation, is the duty of a Christian.

Let us pray for their health and happiness and the peace and prosperity of their government. The peace of the people is dependent upon the peace of the potentates. Jeremiah 29:7 declares: **“And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.”**

Only under a peaceable government can Christianity grow as it should. Under a reign like Solomon's in the Old Testament, Christians are enabled to live in peace, free from turmoil and oppression, and to pursue a righteous life in God's sight and honor in man's sight.

Rulers encounter many difficulties and are often subjected to severe criticism. A heavy responsibility rests upon them and they bear many burdens of the day. Their decisions have a hearing upon the lives of millions. Their problems are complex, and the temptation to abuse their high office is great.

The Bible reveals that evil spirits seek to manipulate earthly rulers. Daniel 10:13 reveals that Satan assigned a demon to influence the King of Persia against Israel. This is a very good reason to pray for those in authority, lest they become either demon possessed, or demon influenced.

God is greater than Satan. He can move upon the hearts of unsaved people to do things for the good of His people. Proverbs 21:1 reads: **“The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.”** The powers and prerogatives of

kings are subject to the King of all kings.

A CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD ALL MEN

The Apostle Peter made a tremendously significant statement when he said: **“Honour all men”** (I Pet. 2:17). Honor is not only due our national leaders, it is also due all men without exception. Even the wicked must be honored to some degree. We must not despise the poor (Prov. 17:5). “Honor” suggests the highest regard for the dignity of the individual.

Christians must remember that all men are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) and of one blood (Acts 17:26). We are to treat people with proper recognition of their essential worth. Every human being has feelings, aspirations, and basic rights. We should treat all men as gentlemen, not because they are, but because we are.

As born again believers, we should promote the concept of equal opportunity for all. All men, regardless of race or ancestry, are to enjoy the rights and privileges of humanity. But even these rights and liberties are to be subject to the limitations of God's moral law.



The Character of George Washington

By Dr. Gary Scott Smith

What made George Washington the most remarkable man of an extraordinary generation? He was not an intellectual giant like Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, or James Madison. Compared with most other founders, he was not well educated (he attended school for only about five years), and, unlike many of them, he disliked abstract philosophical discussions. Washington was intelligent, well informed, and astute, but he was neither a polished writer nor a spellbinding speaker.

Moreover, he was not particularly affectionate, said little in public meetings, and lacked the charisma of many of his successors. Defeating the British with his ragtag army was an impressive feat, but he was not a traditional military hero. He won no spectacular victories during the Revolutionary War. Although he is widely admired as an outstanding president, few of his policies were stupendous successes.

While praising his military and political record, many scholars contend that Washington's genius lies principally in his character. The only other American president who has been so highly extolled for his character is Abraham Lincoln. Since Washington, all presidents have been ultimately measured not by the size of their electoral victories or the success of their legislative programs, but by their moral character. His character helped sustain his troops throughout the travails of the Revolutionary War,

convince delegates to the Constitutional Convention to assign significant powers to the presidency, secure the ratification of the Constitution, and enable the new republic to survive in a hostile world.

Although scholars criticize Washington's personal ethics, sexual behavior, vanity, and ownership of slaves, his moral character, especially his refusal to yield to temptation, set him apart from most others in the late 18th century. He took the standards of his age very seriously and diligently strove to be virtuous. To many, the crowning achievement of Washington's character was his simultaneous resignation in 1783 as the commander in chief of the American army and his retirement from the world of politics. Throughout the Western world, his unprecedented relinquishing of power (which he did a second time when he declined a third term as president) was widely heralded. Unlike other victorious generals, he did not expect a political or financial reward for his military exploits.

Washington's character, Jefferson argued, probably prevented the American Revolution from subverting the liberty it sought to establish. The Virginian had a sterling reputation for integrity and honor, dedication to duty and his country, and remaining above the political fray.

Eulogists and early biographers imputed many virtues to Washington. They praised his wisdom, judgment, astounding courage on the battlefield, and dignity. Congress elected him the first chief executive, principally because its members trusted his moral character. Assessments of Washington applauded his military zeal and political passion on the one hand and his self-restraint and civil moderation on the other. Blending Stoic and Christian traditions, eulogists extolled Washington's perseverance in the midst of setbacks.

Many admirers considered Washington's self-control the key facet of his character. He could master events because he had mastered himself. Despite being surrounded by fear, despair, indecisiveness, treason, and the threat of mutiny, he remained confident and steadfast. Eulogists also heralded his self-sacrifice, devotion to the common good, compassion, generosity, and benevolence.

As president, Washington strove to establish public confidence in the new government and to demonstrate that political leaders could act virtuously. He believed his character was much more important to the success of the republic than his policies, and he spent much of his adult life creating and preserving a reputation for integrity and uprightness.

In 1788, the planter wrote to his trusted confidant Alexander Hamilton, “I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I

consider the most enviable of all titles) the character of an honest man.” His character helped hold the other founders together in the midst of tremendous trials and reassured them that they could construct a workable republic. His example of self-sacrifice, discipline, and moral goodness helped elevate the status of the presidency.

Both as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army and president, Washington worked to form an American character. Throughout the War for Independence, he expected both his officers and soldiers to act morally and “display the character of republicans” appropriate to “Christian Soldier[s]” who were defending their country's “dearest Rights and Liberties.” Speaking to the nation's governors in 1783, Washington argued that Americans could “establish or ruin their national Character forever.” As John Winthrop had done in his 1630 sermon “A Model of Christian Charity,” Washington reminded his countrymen that “the eyes of the whole World” were “turned upon them.” Guided by the complementary principles of revelation and reason, Americans must fulfill their civic duties because they were “actors on a most conspicuous Theatre ... peculiarly designated by Providence for the display of human greatness and felicity” (EP News).

“Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (II Cor. 8:21).

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).

“And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee” (Deut. 6:18).



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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What does it mean, Biblically, to give one another liberty? In what ways must we give liberty to our brethren according to the Bible? - Alabama

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As I looked up the Biblical references to liberty in my Strong's Concordance (Rom. 8:21; I Cor. 7:39; 8:9; 10:29; II Cor. 3:17; Gal. 2:4; 5:1; 5:13; James 1:25; 2:12; I Pet. 2:16; II Pet. 2:19) I found that most of the time the word had to do with freedom, power, authority, or permission.

For example in I Corinthians 7:39 a woman whose husband had died is free and has permission to marry whom she will, only in the Lord. A Christian widow is free to marry a Christian man if she so chooses. In this case there is freedom with a restriction: she is free to marry only in the Lord.

In I Corinthians 8:9 Paul issues a warning about eating meat that has been offered to idols. Believers know that meat does not commend or condemn us before God (I Cor. 8:8), nor does it make us more or less spiritual. Believers may eat any meat as long as they are able to give thanks for it (I Cor. 10:31; I Tim. 4:4-5). Even though we have permission, freedom, and liberty to eat any meat sanctified by prayer and thanksgiving we are warned that there are certain times when using our liberty may offend others unnecessarily. In such cases it is the better part of wisdom to refrain from eating as I Corinthians 8:13 states: **"Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."**

In Galatians Paul is stressing that our liberty is in Jesus Christ who justified us from the guilt and condemnation of the law apart from human effort or good works. The Judaizers were insisting that circumcision had to be added to complete salvation and justification. Paul refuted their heresy by stressing liberty in Christ and the Spirit (Gal. 5:1). After explaining our liberty in Christ Paul warns that we are not to use our freedom as an excuse to serve the flesh, but rather to serve others out of love by walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:13-16). Galatians reveals that we are saved and justified entirely by the work of Christ apart from the deeds of the law. Our justified, liberated state should result in a desire to walk in the Spirit and bring forth spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:16-25).

James makes it clear that the Word of

God is the perfect law of liberty that we are to obey and practice (James 1:25). Moreover, our thoughts, speech, and conduct should at all times be under the authority of the perfect law of liberty (James 2:12). True Christian liberty is bound up in cheerful obedience to Christ and His commands which enables us to bring forth spiritual fruit unto God (Rom. 6:17-22). The blessed fruit of freedom from the condemnation of the law is not just a justified position but also the ability to be holy in Christ. When we were saved we were set free to serve the Liberator of our souls and bring forth fruit unto Him! Praise be unto God for this wonderful liberty!

In I Peter 2:16 the apostle makes it clear that we are to use our liberty as servants of God. In II Peter 2:19 the apostle warns of false prophets who promise a false liberty whose doctrines lead to bondage and corruption.

The best way I can give liberty to my brethren in Christ is to love God, obey His truth, set forth an example of holiness, striving to serve God and others with every fiber of my being. When I may not see eye to eye with a brother or sister the liberty we have in Christ calls for a gracious spirit that speaks the truth in love. God help me to be gracious rather than offensive, kind rather than cruel, and compassionate rather than mean spirited. I want to use my liberty in such a way that I may be a blessing to others through words and deeds marked by love, compassion, grace, kindness, and service. May God give us all the grace to strive for the liberty Paul experienced: **"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men"** (Acts 24:16).

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"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). To give one another liberty I find not to be Biblical. We do not give anybody liberty (i.e.) freedom, that's God's work making men free, that's where freedom comes from. The Apostle Paul said, **"..work out your**

own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). I'm trying to understand this question. If someone already has liberty, how can anybody else give them anymore liberty than what they already have? Maybe some Church or preacher out there is telling its members to give a little "liberty" or a lot of "liberty" to the disobedient members, in which case it definitely is not Biblical at all!

The practice of turning our heads away from a potential situation that may require discipline is Biblical, meaning it's in God's Word, but the result of ignoring said situation concludes in heartache. King David practiced this kind of liberty in dealing with his son Absalom. For forty years David ignored the problems, all the while hoping either it was not

true or thinking since Absalom left for a time it would just go away, I hope we all remember what happened and learn from this event in history that we need to take care of the disobedient promptly.

What kind of liberty is there for a strict Baptist Church and its members? A Church with members that don't cotton to any funny business going on? Let the Psalmist tell us where our liberty is derived, **"So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts"** (Ps. 119:44, 45). Yes, that's right, we have liberty in what James calls **"..the perfect law of liberty.."** (James 1:25).

MIKE DEWITT



- A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF HAGGAI -

Working with God

By Timothy Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

Haggai 1:12-15

We noted previously that the Lord had sent a message of rebuke to the people at Jerusalem by Haggai the prophet because they had left off to build the house of God. God showed them by His Word that their lives were being ruined because they had not put God and the house of God first and foremost in their lives. Now we read of a positive response to the message of the Lord; and we find that God sends another message, not of rebuke, but of encouragement, to those who believed and obeyed His Word. The question can be posed in the hour in which you and I are now living, "Can things be better than what they are?" Can lives be changed today for the honor and glory of God? Can churches who are doing the wrong things turn and do right? Can church members have revival? Can the lives of people young and old be changed, and God be glorified in righteousness even now? I believe the answer to these questions is, "Yes, if God's people will believe and obey Him."

There is at work in the world and in churches today a spirit of idle complacency and outright apathy. The majority of people are resigned to the idea that they personally can do nothing to change the way things are, and so they reject responsibility for doing anything positive in a cooperative effort. These people focus their attention on pleasing themselves personally in fleshly and worldly pursuits, meanwhile ignoring the call to higher duty and nobler effort. They are satisfied with the poor condition that exists in their homes and churches, so long as they are not personally bothered or inconvenienced in too great a manner, and so can continue to do the things that please their carnal appetites.



You who are here tonight and saved are going to have to recognize and own your personal share in the work of this church, or else no good will come of your own spiritual life (II Chron. 7:12-

16). If pastors, church members, entire churches, and homes would repent of their infidelity and unconcern toward the Lord and His true work – which is none other than His kind of church – and turn their hearts toward God's house where God's heart is focused, then we would have true revival and see an improvement in spiritual things! And if spiritual things are not right, then nothing else will be right.

V.12 – We note first of all that the work progressed when there was obedience to the Word of God. **"Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God."** The leaders and the people together did what God said they were supposed to do. They had been disregarding the building of the house of God. They had been putting their wants, their desires, their pleasures above God's house. Now they obey God's voice. Did you know that God is still speaking unto you and me today? He is still giving us commandments of what He wants us to do. In Revelation 2:8-11; 3:7-13, Jesus told these two churches what He wanted them to do. To the one church, He gave commandment that they should **"Fear none of those things which"** they should suffer for the gospel's sake; but rather that they should **"be faithful unto death,"** and Jesus would give unto them **"a crown of life."** To

◊ (Continued on page 331)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What verses in the Bible remind you of the different seasons of the year (Spring, Summer, etc.), or thinking of the seasons what Bible verses come to mind? - Mississippi

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Ecclesiastes 3:1 declares: **"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."**

The passing of the seasons reminds me of the goodness of God, His sovereignty and providence, and the fact that He is in absolute control of all things. Psalm 74:16-17 states: **"The day is thine, the night also is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all borders of the earth; thou hast made summer and winter."**

Through the years I have learned to enjoy the beauty of God's providence as expressed through the passing of the seasons. This past winter God was pleased to bring lots of snow our way. Job 38:22 asks: **"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?..."** I was humbled as I thought about the uniqueness of each and every snowflake that fell from the Heavens and the all-wise Creator Who formed them. I also thought about the way in which snow blankets everything and makes it look white and clean when it is first fallen. I was reminded that our Heavenly Father sent His only begotten Son, the unique and holy mediator who covers me with His righteousness and makes me whiter than the snow. Isaiah 1:18 declares: **"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."**

Each Spring I marvel at the way in which our God brings the grass, plants, and trees back to life after the chill of winter. The brown grass soon is a lush green, the trees once bare and barren are filled with blossoms. Spring time causes me to reflect on God's resurrecting power. Christ conquered death, hell, and the grave. He rose from the dead and is alive forevermore! I have new life in Christ. I am risen to walk in newness of life. Even though they may lay my dead body in the grave, it shall be raised in glorification. Isaiah 61:11 states: **"For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the LORD GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the**

nations."

Summer reminds me of the importance of plowing, planting, weeding, and harvesting while the weather is pleasant. The laws of sowing and reaping are so prevalent in the Summer time. Whatever we sow, we will reap at a later time. The more seed we sow, the more we will reap. Sowing, reaping, and harvesting require discipline, diligence, and strenuous effort. Oh that God would grant us the grace to sow the good seed of the Gospel so that we may see a harvest of souls saved by the sovereign grace of God. We have so little time to sow and labor. Let us make good use of the time and labor with diligence. Proverbs 10:4-5 declares: **"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son; but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame."**

The colors of Fall remind me of the wonders and beauties of God's creation. Every year I look forward to the glorious landscapes the Lord paints with His gracious brush. I love the changing trees, the crisp frosty air in the morning, and the smell of the wood stoves in the evening. The seasons remind me that God is much greater than I am. God is in charge of the environment, the administration of His creation, and He upholds all things by the word of His power. Each and every year God orders the seasons according to His Divine timetable regardless what men do or don't do. **"The earth is the LORD'S and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein"** (Psalm 24:1).

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"To every thing there is a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven..." (Ecc. 3:1-8). I suppose one more verse would suffice. The Apostle Paul being a pretrib rapture preacher said **"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you"** (I Thess. 5:1) meaning, that no matter what others have said about anything other than a pretrib rapture of the saints, is false, for we look not for signs or seasons to expect

the coming of our Lord in the clouds, but we being of the day watch unto prayer for the imminent return of our Saviour. That's why Paul says **"therefore let us..."** (I Thess. 5:6). He includes himself, as he did in Chapter 4, in the watching for the imminent return by watching with sobriety, and not anything, or anyone else but Christ.

MIKE DEWITT



Study in Haggai

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the other church of which we read, He told them that they should **"hold fast that which"** they had, so **"that no man"** would take their crown. To each of His churches Jesus says, **"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."** The Holy Spirit still speaks to and instructs the churches of the Lord. He does not give them any new revelation, for the revelation of God is complete. Rather, He commands them according to the revelation of the Word of God to do those things which Christ commands. What did Christ command the first church? **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:15, 16). What did the Holy Spirit instruct the church at Antioch, which had been organized out of the missionary work done by the first church, specifically to do? **"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them"** (Acts 13:2). The Holy Spirit called them to go and preach Christ unto the nations. They obeyed, and the church obeyed in sending out Barnabas and Saul.

We note also that the message of God came to the people through God's chosen messenger. **"Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him."** One of the most outstanding needs of this hour is that churches would follow God-called, God-ordained, God-anointed, God-appointed men whom God calls and places in the ministry, and who approve themselves as ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Haggai was not a very important individual, except for this one thing: **"the LORD their God had sent him."** One of the spiritual afflictions and ailments of the hour in which we are living is that God-called men are preaching the Word of God, but people who profess to be believers are not hearing, not heeding, and not obeying. We need to pray that God would call some men into the ministry; and those whom God has

called and does call, we need to support with (1) our prayers, (2) our money, (3) our attention, (4) our encouragement, and (5) opportunities to preach and exercise their spiritual gifts in the work of the Lord. One of the greatest things that you can do in regards to the ministry is be obedient unto the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. This is one of the most outstanding ways you can bless your pastor, and others who preach the Word of God, is by believing and obeying the voice of the Lord (Heb. 13:7,17). Another way you can profit spiritually in your lives and bless those who proclaim the message of the Lord is by not taking heed to false prophets and teachers. Why, if some Baptists would spend as much time taking heed to their own pastors and teachers whom God has given unto them as they do the false ministers of Satan who are in pulpits, on television and radio, and in the printed media all across this land, then they would grow in the knowledge of Christ ten times more than what they have up to now.

"And the people did fear before the LORD." The people regained something that they had lost, the fear of the Lord. They had not had a right regard for God as God, for the Lord as their Saviour, Deliverer, Benefactor, and King. Whenever God is not feared, then true religion will fade. Whenever God is not rightly regarded, He is always under regarded. Proverbs 1:7; 9:10, The fear of the Lord is the nature of right religion. When a person fears God, he or she will hate sin. When a person fears God, then he or she will not fear other people and what they think. When a person fears God, then that person will humble himself or herself under the mighty hand of God, and own that all goodness and blessings must come from Him and Him alone (I Pet. 5:5-7).

There was a universal spirit of cooperation when the people obeyed and feared the Lord. Not only did the leaders begin to work, and put away their selfish and self-centered interests for the work of the Lord, but **"all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God."** Every able person became a willing participant in the work. We note that this verse does not specifically mention the work, as does a later verse. This verse mentions that they all **"obeyed the voice of the LORD their God"** and **"did fear before the LORD."** Until our hearts are right with God, then our hands cannot do a right work. Until we are surrendered and submitted to God in our spirits, then our bodies and minds cannot be used in His service (Ps. 51:17-19). If you have been slack in your religion toward God, have not been serving God whole-heartedly or even at all, and have not had a whole heart for God, then you are going to have to repent to God and be

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Study in Haggai

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made right with Him before you can do anything else in your Christian life. You need to be on right terms with the Lord, and you need to be following Him.

V. 13 – We note that when the people repented at the first message from God, God sent them another message. **“Then spake Haggai the LORD’s messenger in the LORD’s message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.”** The people had turned their hearts in repentance and restitution to God. Not only did they turn away from the things they had been doing that they should not, but they turned to do the good things and the spiritual things they had been neglecting and not doing. When they returned to following God, He turned to them in favor. God had never left the work, but the people had. They needed to return to God and the work of God so that God could once again turn in goodness unto them (1 Sam. 2:30).

The message that came from God to the people at this time was one of encouragement. He said, **“I am with you.”** This should be the most encouraging thing that could ever be said to a child of God from the Lord, **“I am with you.”** There were many who were not with the Jews at this time. Their enemies who opposed them rebuilding the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem were many and mighty. The difficulties which they faced were many and large. Yet, they had a message sent to them from God, **“I am with you, saith the LORD.”** This is still the most encouraging message which we can have in our Christian lives (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 18:7-11 Heb. 13:5, 6 Rom. 8:31). We can be sure that if God is with us, He is for us. If He is with us, then He will supply all our need. If He is with us, He will not leave us comfortless. If He is with us, then we can know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord, and that what we do for Christ according to His commandments is of eternal value. If He whom we love above all others is with us, then what can we lack!

In what way was God with the people of Haggai’s time? He was with them in the work of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, and in their exercise of true worship and service to God. He was with them in what He had commanded them to do. Never think that God will be with you in something He has not told you to do. Never think that God is with you in neglecting your place in His church, or in neglecting to study the Scriptures on a daily basis, or to pray daily, or to neglect witnessing to others about the Lord Jesus Christ. Never think that God is with you in not paying your tithe to the Lord in His house every time He gives you some income. Never think that God is with you in not singing to His honor and

glory in the services of the Lord. Never think that He is with you in not leading your home in a Christian manner. He is not with you or anyone else in these things. He was not with the Jews when they were running every man to his own house and God’s house was lying waste. No, beloved, He was with them in the work of His house; and He is with you and me today who are saved, scripturally baptized, and members of a true church when we are following His commands which He has given us. When we are going and telling others about the Lord by the enabling and guiding of the Holy Spirit out of a desire to exalt Jesus and see His name glorified in the saving of souls, He is with us. When a person who has repented of his or her sins and trusted Christ as his or her only Savior follows the Lord in scriptural baptism, God is with that person then and there. When you join a true church in obedience to the Lord and the teaching of the Scriptures, God is with you. When you pay the tithe unto God on the first day of the week, and when you give an offering to God above the tithe, or ten percent, then God is with you. When you live in a holy, virtuous, and godly manner, not following the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, but putting on the spiritual likeness of Christ in goodness, kindness, gentleness, forbearance, patience, purity, spirituality, and humility, then God is with you. When you engage to do all that you can do to benefit the work of God in and through His kind of church according to the teachings of the Scriptures, God is with you. You ought to desire God being with you more than anything else.

Vs. 14, 15 – We find also that God not only encouraged the people, but He enabled them when they surrendered to His will and His work. **“And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God.”** The leaders and the people had before lacked the spirit to work in the rebuilding of God’s house. Now that they were obedient to the voice of the Lord and feared before Him, He stirred up their spirits to do the work. The reason some people have no desire to do the work of God is because they have been so disobedient for so long. They have lost their taste and their zeal through long seasons of low spirituality and disobedience. The only answer to the low condition in which many now exist is repentance. **“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent”** (Rev. 2:5).

What is lacking in the work of the Lord can only be supplied by God. The

stirring up of spirits to work and labor for the Lord is beyond human ability. You cannot muster spiritual energy and desire in yourself or in others. Only when you humble yourself before God and fix your heart on obeying Him will you find the energy and the desire to serve God: and you will find that it comes from the Lord (Acts 17:16, 17). While Paul waited for his missionary companions to catch up with him at the city of Athens, **“his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.”** Why isn’t your heart stirred when you see people all around you lost and on the road to hell, blind to the truth of God? Paul’s spirit was stirred, and he preached and witnessed of the Lord Jesus Christ, and God enabled Him to preach one of the most outstanding gospel messages recorded in the Word of God, **“THE UNKNOWN GOD”** (Acts 17:23). You might be saying within yourself, “Oh, I couldn’t tell people I know about the Lord; I couldn’t tell them that they need to be saved.” You could if God stirred your heart. Why isn’t your heart stirred? Maybe you need to repent of some things you’re doing and of some things you’re not doing, and be right with God (Phil. 4:13).

“And they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God.” God had always been Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of hosts. He had always had all things – his hosts – at His command and disposal, to do with as He saw fit. The work that needed to be done was large. Many supplies would be needed to finish the rebuilding of the temple. Many obstacles would need to be overcome (Phil. 4:19). God has everything we need at His command and at His disposal. He can use whatsoever He pleases to use, and He can use it in whatsoever way He pleases to use it. He can use angels, the stars in heaven, the rain, the sun, the moon, the wind, the earth, and the creatures and the people on the earth in any way that He pleases to bless His people and His work. He can use things you don’t even know about to feed you and dress you and put a roof over your head, and yet we spend more time fretting and fussing about those very things when we don’t have any control over them to begin with. What will you do if God takes away your house, or your car, or your ability to drive a car, or the person who drives you around in a car, or any of the many, many other things that could happen that are outside of your control? God is the Lord of hosts, and He has from the largest of things to the smallest of things in the universe at His command to do with as He sees fit. He can take care of you, and He can meet the needs of His church if His church will do what He told her to do.

Haggai records the time in which this all did occur. **“In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second**

year of Darius the king” (Hag. 1:15). Three weeks prior to this the people had been backslidden. They had been putting off the work of God. Now they had repented and obeyed the Lord, and the Lord had stirred up their spirits to the work. How long will it be before you surrender to the Lord? How long will it be before you and I get as serious about serving God as we ought to be? God is ready. You and I who are saved need to give ourselves to His work (Zech. 4:6-10; Rom. 12:1, 2). God’s work does not depend upon great religious machinery, man-pleasing programs, toe-tapping music, pastor’s wives’ retreats, youth ministries, or any of the other things that spiritually ignorant people want to have in churches today. God’s work depends upon God. You and I need Him. The question that needs answering is, “Will you follow the Lord tonight?”



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The New Testament Baptist Church of Burton, OH is seeking a pastor.

For further information please contact the church at PO Box 840, Burton, OH 44021 or you can email your inquiry to ctiber@hughes.net.

If you would like to know more about the church, please visit their website at www.newtestamentbaptistchurchoh.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Indore Baptist Church and Pastor Paul Stepp have announced a Spring Bible Conference June 11th - 13th.

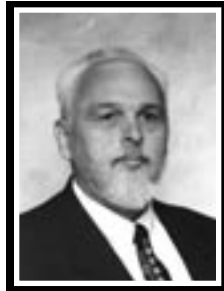
Various speakers are scheduled.

For more information visit the church’s website at www.indorebaptistchurch.org.

Any church that is without a pastor, please feel free to send your information in regards to the pastoral position for publication in these announcements.

The Church at Corinth

By Curtis Pugh
of Bocsă, Romania



Without giving his approval of their practices, the Holy Spirit through Paul's pen regulated the way in which the Corinthian Church was to conduct her services. They had been in the habit,

for example, of having many preachers (prophets) speaking in each of their services. The Holy Spirit said that only two or three preachers were to speak in a meeting and the same rule applied to those who spoke in tongues (I Cor. 14:27, 29). While it had been the custom of the women in the Corinthian Church to speak aloud in the services, the Spirit forbade this practice (I Cor. 14:34, 35). Nowhere is it said that God approved of their "popcorn" style of services, but God through Paul limited and regulated these activities, stressing the importance of orderliness, saying, **"Let all things be done decently and in order"** (I Cor. 14:40). This writer believes that it is a safe and scriptural conclusion to say that God did not nor does not give His approval to the "popcorn" style of services where members and/or others present in the congregation are free to speak, sing, or whatever.

Let us take a closer look at this Church at Corinth. Undoubtedly this Church was a Baptist Church, her members baptized with John's baptism administered at the hands of Paul or his coworkers whose work was authorized by the Baptist Church at Antioch (I Cor. 1:14-16). She was organized by authority of the Antioch Church for she sent out Paul as her missionary (Acts 13:1-4). It was what today would be termed an "independent, sovereign grace, landmark, missionary Baptist Church" even though both morally in trouble and disorderly in her public conduct. This writer has at times felt that he would not have wanted to be a member of this Church because of all her problems. However, upon reflection, if this writer had been a resident of Corinth in those days, he should have been a member there as this was the Lord's Church in that place. God forbid that there are today, independent, sovereign grace, landmark, missionary Baptist Churches with the same or similar problems as beset this first Baptist Church in Corinth.

The initial thing we would point out about this Church at Corinth is that her members were confused. They were confused about doctrine and practice. They had written to Paul asking questions: In particular they seemed confused about marriage and the propriety of it, but Paul said that they had written to him about

"things" indicating that their confusion was in regard to more than one thing (I Cor. 7:1). The reader can peruse the letter we know as First Corinthians, and see the many topics dealt with by Paul in that Bible book. This is a clear indication of the number of matters on which they were confused. Someone said that doctrine is to the Christian life what the skeletal system is to the body. Without a proper skeletal system our bodies could not accomplish anything. We would be human jelly. So it is spiritually, and these Church members had a deficient doctrinal skeleton. Concerning doctrine, Paul wrote against the people of God continuing in a child-like state saying, **"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine..."** (Eph. 4:14). There is no reason for continual doctrinal confusion and new converts should grow out of it by hearing the Word preached and by reading and studying the Bible themselves.

The next thing we would point out is that the members of the assembly at Corinth were childish. Paul clearly says that they ought not to be children in understanding (I Cor. 14:20). Furthermore, Paul wrote about his ministry there saying that he could not speak unto them as unto spiritual people, but **"...as unto babes in Christ"** (I Cor. 3:1). Now it is a wonderful thing to be a new born babe in Christ, but it is a terrible spiritual deformity to remain a baby. The Church members in Corinth were stunted in their spiritual growth! They were not able to receive the meat of the Word (I Cor. 3:2) and had to have a restricted diet of **"milk."** As little children still nursing cannot assume the responsibilities and duties of mature adults, so these spiritually stunted babies were not able to fulfill properly the responsibilities of Church membership. They were childish in all the bad senses of that word. And it seems at least a majority of them were in this sad condition.

Connected with this childishness is the third thing we would point out about this Church. They were carnal. This carnality seemed to both thrive on and promote divisions. They were divided over their preferences for preachers (I Cor. 1:11-13). Farther along in his epistle, Paul wrote, **"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"** (I Cor. 3:3, 4). Carnality is not a state somewhere betwixt being spiritual and being like the unsaved. It is behaving like lost people! How could these Church members have a testimony, living as they were, just like unsaved people? How could they properly worship and serve the Lord Jesus Christ and His Father? How could they know in their daily experience the joy of the Lord (which is our strength)

while they walked as mere lost men and women? They had their preferences. "Ah," said one, "I like that young preacher Apollos. He is learned and a great orator. He is the best preacher." Another said, "Not me. I prefer Paul. He is not young, but well seasoned and strong in doctrine and in the Scriptures. He is my kind of preacher." And these preferences became matters of contention and division within their Church.

What should our attitude be toward preachers? Obviously we are going to love those pastors who care for us and feed us the Word of God just as we do those members who suffer adversity with us. But we need to recognize that the important thing is the Word of God which the preacher preaches and not the personality or abilities of the man. I read that once Charles Spurgeon was scheduled to preach at a certain place. His train was late or he was in some other way detained. "Like all sensible people" Spurgeon said, they started the meeting without him. When he came into the building and as he made his way to the front, his grandfather was in the pulpit preaching. As he deferred to the younger man, Spurgeon's grandfather said, "Here is Charles. He may preach the gospel better than I, but he cannot preach a better gospel." There's the crux of the matter! However haltingly or with what rude speech God's man may preach the Word of God, if he preaches It as It is for men as they are, no one has a better message than he. It is not the humanly estimated value of the vessel that is important, but the God-approved contents of the vessel - i.e. the message preached.

The immorality within the Church at Corinth was the occasion of Paul's citing the next sad characteristic of the members of this Church. He wrote, **"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you"** (I Cor. 5:1, 2). The members were puffed up or conceited. Their pride stood in the way of their spiritual progress both individually and corporately as a Church. Just who was involved in immorality with his father's wife, we do not know. Probably the woman was the man's stepmother. Possibly the man was the pastor of the Church. This last has been supposed by some since Paul did not address the pastor in either of our two epistles to the Corinthians. It is a deplorable thing when Church members are fallen into immorality. It is worse than deplorable when the pastor is living an immoral life. And he was doing it openly for Paul wrote that **"It is reported commonly."** This matter of immorality was common

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Church at Corinth

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knowledge! The whole population of Corinth who cared to make the matter their business knew what was going on over at the Baptist Church! And the members were so full of conceit that they would not do anything to remedy the situation. Paul had to call these sins what they were. The immorality of the man who was a member and the pride and conceit of the other members were named by Paul and instructions given as to what must be done. The members had to forsake their glorying and exclude from the fellowship of the Church the man living in adultery (I Cor. 5:4, 5). No other option was given. It was conceit that kept the Church from doing what was right in the first place and I suspect it was conceit that kept the members from receiving the man back into fellowship after he repented. Paul had to write to the Church in his later letter and tell them **"Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him"** (II Cor. 2:6-8). Conceit or pride first kept the members from dealing with the problem of immorality in their Church and later the same conceit kept them from restoring the erring brother upon his repentance.

Next in order, we want to point out that the Church at Corinth was charismatic: that is, they had all the spiritual gifts then operating in the Churches. We know this because Paul wrote, **"So that ye come behind in no gift..."** (I Cor. 1:7). The Greek word "charisma" is translated 15 times as "gift" and twice as "free gift" by the King James translators. This is, of course, where the term "charismatic" originates and is currently used of those who emphasize the so-called spiritual gifts. Now I want to emphasize, again, before we proceed, that these people had all the gifts! Tongues and interpretation of tongues were among those which they possessed and yet they were carnal! Modern Pentecostals and Charismatics insist that these gifts are proofs of spirituality, but the Bible proves otherwise! Here was a "charismatic" Church full of gifts that was not only childish, conceited, and confused, but they were carnal. Do not ever let anyone try to tell you that speaking in tongues or some other such thing is evidence of the Holy Spirit or of spirituality. Tongues were in vogue in the Corinthian Church which was made up of carnal members! It is a perversion of Bible truth to suggest that tongues or any other gift is evidence of spirituality.

And finally, a word about the fact that this Church was made up of

Corinthians.. Corinth was the Roman capital of the Province of Achaia. It was the most important city in Greece, a great commercial city, cosmopolitan and cultured in nature with an educated population. But it was known for immorality. In fact, the Greek expression "to corinthianize," meant to corrupt one into living an immoral life. To call a young woman a "corinthian" was to indicate that she lived an impure life. Paul described at least some of the members of the Church at Corinth this way: **"...Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"** (I Cor. 6:9-11). **"And such were some of you."** This Church was immersed in a city of corruption and at least some of the members had previously lived wicked and immoral lives. It is a sad commentary that the Lord's Churches are affected by their moral environment. This is evident among some professed believers living in former communist countries where Christians lived under the influence of corruption, bribery and deception. And I think it is equally evident in more affluent countries like the U.S. where materialism, hedonism, immorality, and sexual perversions of all kinds and other such things are not only commonplace, but have now become socially acceptable.

In conclusion: Each of us should take encouragement and be determined that by God's grace that our own Church shall live victoriously above the moral climate in which we find ourselves. The Church at Corinth obeyed the Word of God and obtained the victory in the matter of public immorality and we have every reason to believe they were obedient in other matters as well. Obedience to the Word is the key! Paul wrote of them after they obeyed his first letter, saying: **"For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter"** (II Cor. 7:11). They gained the victory!

Let me remind you of another Church. The Church at Pergamos was victorious even when she abode where the very throne of Satan was. The Baptist Church at Pergamos was commended by our Lord Himself with these words: **"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those**

days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth" (Rev. 2:13). Let us profit from the lessons of the Baptist Church at Corinth, obeying the Word as she came to do and proving ourselves as faithful and victorious in our place just as the Baptist Church of Pergamos was in hers. May God bless His Churches to the glorification of His Son!



Keeping Our Trials from Becoming Our Troubles

By Donnie Burford
of Irvine, Kentucky

There is much confusion among God's people today concerning the trials that come into our lives, individually or corporately, as members in one of the Lord's churches.



The trials of life are of God's design, and they are purposed and employed by Him as a means of strengthening our faith, even to provide that which is lacking in it. James expresses this reality concerning the trials that God sends, **"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"** (James 1:3-4). Peter acknowledges the same ultimate reality of these trials as well, **"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"** (I Pet. 1:6-7).

The confusion seems to come from the fact that where you most often find these trials of God, you will also find temptation. Thus, most associate them together as though they are one and the same, or even from the same source and to the same purpose. They are not!

Temptation is used in two senses, the positive and the negative. The positive sense is always in regards to the trials that come from God, but the negative is always in regards to temptations we find within our own hearts, and is called 'Lust'. God never tries us or tempts us with, or to, sin. Rather, God-sent trials are always and ultimately for the positive purpose of supplying that which is

lacking in our lives and faith. James 1:4 says, **"that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."** James defines it this way, concerning the temptation to sin and its source, **"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren"** (James 1:13-16). It is important that we do not err in this discerning of the differences between trials and temptations, both of their sources and their ends. On the other hand, James refers positively to the trials that come upon the child of God's life (vs.17-18). Although these trials are a good and blessed gift of God, they are, of necessity, most times severe on our flesh. Although painful, as Spiritual growth often is, they are still to be kept in mind for what they are; precious and preparing gifts from God. Peter expresses it this way in I Peter 1:6-7.

Let there be no confusion over trials and our temptations. Our trials come from God as a precious and good gift to, by faith; draw us and our lives closer to Him. Our temptations will always drive us away from God, their source being derived from within our own depraved, evil, and fleshly nature, and are brought about by our own lusts.

How important is it to define, distinguish and discern the difference between these two? When you consider their end results, it should be obvious. Our trials from God are purposed in their end result to bring Glory to God in and from our lives **"might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"** (I Pet. 1:7). But the end result of our temptation is frightening, **"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death"** (James 1:15).

My friend, the only way to keep your trials from becoming your trouble is, by faith, receive them and know them for what they truly are; precious gifts of God to strengthen and draw us and our churches closer to Him. Thus, we can face them with joy (James 1:2, 1 Peter 1:6-8). Every child of God can suffer and persevere through much when they know and remember, **"... all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose"** (Rom. 8:28), **"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"** (Phil. 2:13). Then we can have the right understanding of trials and not let them, because of our lust, become our troubles.



THE BIBLE NEWS PAPER

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.

ADOPTION AGENCIES MAY BE FORCED TO VIOLATE RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES

(EP News)--Rep. Pete Stark, D-Calif, has introduced legislation that would force adoption agencies to consider placing children in same-sex households, even if it violates that group's moral and religious values. The bill (H.R. 4806) forces federally funded agencies to ignore sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status when placing children even though studies show kids do best in homes with a married mother and father.

CALIFORNIA ASKS IRS TO CHANGE TAX CODE TO ACCOMMODATE SAME-SEX COUPLES

(EP News)--If the Internal Revenue Service caves to a request from the California Legislature, it could change the tax code for the entire nation. California has issued a joint resolution asking the IRS to defer to state law on how to treat the property belonging to registered domestic partners and same-sex couples. AJR 29 does not have the strength of law, but conveys the Legislature's opinion. Everett Rice, legislative coordinator with the California Family Council, said such a move by the IRS would set a dangerous precedent. "It's the stealth way," he said, "of getting around all the states that have said, 'We support marriage between a man and a woman,' and 'Do not redefine it.'"

ALASKANS TO VOTE ON ABORTION INITIATIVE

(EP News)--The Alaska election board has certified that pro-lifers have enough signatures to put a parental-involvement initiative on the state's August primary ballot. The measure would require parental notification before a minor could get an abortion. Petition-gathers collected more than 36,000 signatures. They needed approximately 33,000 to put the measure to a vote. The signatures were certified last week. Alaska is poised to join 37 states with parental-involvement laws. Planned Parenthood is challenging the language in court. A ruling is expected this week.

PENNSYLVANIA LAWMAKERS TABLE MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

(EP News)--The Pennsylvania Senate Judiciary Committee tabled a marriage bill, SB 707, on March 16 that would have amended the state constitution to define marriage as between one man and one woman. The vote was 8-6. It was the third time in four years

that lawmakers have voted down a measure that would have protected the definition of marriage in Pennsylvania's Constitution -- keeping marriage safe from activist courts. In Connecticut, Massachusetts and Iowa, courts have redefined marriage to include same-sex couples. Michael Geer, president of the Pennsylvania Family Institute, said people in Pennsylvania "deserve the opportunity that those in 31 other states have already exercised to vote on whether marriage will remain the union of husband and wife." "With Tuesday's Judiciary Committee action, eight state Senators cast votes to deny Pennsylvanians that opportunity."

MARYLAND AG COULD BE OVERRULED ON MARRIAGE

(EP News)--Maryland lawmakers are considering a bill that would overrule the state attorney general's opinion on recognizing out-of-state gay marriages. Republican Sen. Nancy Jacobs introduced the bill in March. Attorney General Douglas Gansler said on Feb. 24 the state will recognize same-sex marriages performed elsewhere. For 34 years, Maryland law has defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Maryland's high court ruled on the issue in 2007, saying only the General Assembly could redefine marriage.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH APPROVES LESBIAN BISHOP

(EP News)--A controversial candidate for bishop in the U.S. Episcopal Church has received the necessary approval, according to the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. Following her December election, the Rev. Canon Mary Glasspool of Baltimore needed to obtain consent from a majority of bishops and diocesan standing committees. Glasspool will become the first partnered openly lesbian bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion if she is installed as scheduled on May 15. After the partnered openly homosexual Gene Robinson was installed as Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire in 2003, bodies of the worldwide Anglican Communion warned the Episcopal Church not to repeat the action. It observed a moratorium on consecration of non-celibate homosexual bishops for a time, but lifted the moratorium at last year's General Convention.

N.J. GOVERNOR PROPOSES ELIMINATION OF FUNDS FOR FAMILY PLANNING

(EP News)--New Jersey's newly elected

Governor Chris Christie eliminated funds for "family planning" from his fiscal year 2011 budget. In the budget proposal he unveiled in late March, he said the cut would help address an \$11-billion deficit in the state budget and reduce state spending and reform state government. Last year, former Governor Jon Corzine allocated \$7.6 million in the state budget for family planning agencies. These agencies advertise they perform "confidential" services for minors which include promoting abortion and referring for abortion without parental notification or consent. Planned Parenthood of Central New Jersey, which performs abortions and was the lead plaintiff in the 1999 parental notification case, has been one of the long-time recipients of this money.

THE SOCIAL COSTS OF PORNOGRAPHY ARE HIGH

(EP News)--A growing body of research suggests that the habitual use of pornography -- especially Internet pornography -- can damage people of all ages and both sexes, negatively impacting their relationships, productivity, happiness and their ability to function in society. These are among the social costs of pornography, according to The Witherspoon Institute at Princeton, N.J. The Witherspoon Institute in late March released "The Social Costs of Pornography: A Statement of Findings and Recommendations." The consultation was the first multifaceted, multidisciplinary, scholarly exploration of pornography since the advent of the Internet. The compilation of the consultation resulted in eight findings documenting the ubiquity of pornography, the qualitative difference in today's pornography, and its harmful effects on women, children, users, as well as society at large.

OPPOSITION TO HEALTH CARE REFORM INCREASES

(EP News)--A flurry of polling is showing a wide range of opinions among Americans after the passage of health care reform, from a slight rise in the number of people who approve as well as those who want it repealed. A Rasmussen Reports poll this week showed 49 percent of respondents said health care reform will be bad for the country, and 52 percent said they would vote for someone in November who runs on a plan to repeal. Jeff Crank, Colorado state director for Americans for Prosperity, said those numbers may change once the impact of the bill is felt.

"When it starts to get implemented," he said, "and people start paying those increased premiums, start having access issues with their doctors, there's going to be a gigantic revolt."

HEALTH CARE REFORM FOUGHT BY STATES

(EP News)--President Obama signed the historic health care bill on March 23 that includes federal funding of abortions. Attorneys general from 13 states immediately filed a lawsuit challenging the

law that breaks with more than 30 years of federal policy prohibiting the use of federal dollars to directly pay for abortions. Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum is heading up the lawsuit that was filed in federal court in Pensacola, Fla., to "protect the rights and interests of American citizens." South Carolina, Nebraska, Texas, Michigan, Utah, Pennsylvania, Alabama, South Dakota, Louisiana, Idaho, Washington and Colorado are also joining in the battle. A Rasmussen poll shows 56 percent of Americans oppose the current plan.

PENNSYLVANIA JUDGE SAYS 'NO' TO LESBIAN DIVORCE

(EP News)--Berks County Judge Scott Lash has ruled that Carole Kern and Robin Taney cannot obtain a divorce in Pennsylvania, because of the state's Defense of Marriage law that defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Kern and Taney were married in Massachusetts last year. Lash determined that the couple did not have a "fundamental right" to marry, and therefore to divorce. "Courts should be reluctant to identify a right as fundamental when not clearly required by the Constitution or established precedent," Lash wrote in his decision. "A court who finds a fundamental right where none exists bypasses the legislative process and denies the people a voice in effecting social policy, in essence, trumping democracy by judicial fiat."

PEOPLE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE WANT SAY ON MARRIAGE

(EP News)--When asked if a state constitutional marriage amendment should be placed on the November ballot, 64 percent of the towns that voted on the question at New Hampshire town halls said 'Yes.' The Legislature defeated an attempt in February to allow voters to have a say in defining marriage. Gay marriage was forced on the people last year by the Legislature, and advocates have been trying to derail democratic efforts to hear from voters ever since.

State Rep. David Bates said gay marriage supporters tabled the issue to avoid a vote in several town hall meetings. "The people want to vote on this," he said. "The Legislature has an obligation to their constituents to put this on the ballot so that people can decide."

HEALTH CARE BILL PASSES, FORCES AMERICANS TO PAY FOR ABORTIONS

(EP News)--When the House passed the historic Senate version of health care reform, it opened the door for the federal government to pay for more abortions than at any time in history. The bill allows for taxpayer funding of abortion, calls for federal regulations that would expand access to abortion and provides federal subsidies to help people purchase private insurance that covers abortion. Ashley Horne, federal policy analyst with Focus on the Family Action,

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said, "House Democrats also ignored the voices of tens of millions of Americans who believe federal funding of abortion is wrong. They changed 30 years of policy protecting Americans of pro-life convictions from being forced to pay for something that violates their personal and, in many cases, religious convictions."

HEALTH CARE ABORTION DEBATE CONTINUES ON STATE LEVEL

(EP News)--Tennessee lawmakers are considering a measure that would exempt the state from using tax money to fund abortions. The House Commerce Committee approved the bill, HB 2681. It would prevent state money from being used for abortion services in health insurance plans that will be established based on the recently signed health care reform that polls show most Americans oppose, according to a report in the Kingsport Times-News. Daniel McConchie, vice president of government affairs for Americans United for Life, said there are two methods states are using. "You have states that are trying to opt out of the abortion provisions like what Tennessee is doing here," he said. "You also have some states trying to opt out of the federal health care plan entirely. And, that is more tenuous. That will end up going to court." So far, 15 states have sued the federal government over federal health care.

NEW JERSEY PREPARES FOR MARRIAGE BATTLE

(EP News)--Homosexual activists in New Jersey are asking the state supreme court to mandate same-sex marriage. They're asking the court to reopen a case they had already won, in order to get an even more favorable outcome. In 2007 the court ordered the Legislature to give gay couples the same rights and benefits as marriage. The lawmakers responded by sanctioning civil unions. Len Deo, president and executive director of the New Jersey Family Policy Council, said, "That legislation was done for their benefit," he explained, "but they have done everything to discredit it, prove that it's not working, because they want that word 'marriage.'" Deo said of the 4,170 couples that have registered civil unions, only 12 have lodged formal complaints.

MISSISSIPPI PERSONHOOD AMENDMENT OFFICIALLY ON 2011 BALLOT

(EP News)--Mississippi Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann has notified Personhood Mississippi that enough valid voter signatures have been certified to ensure a spot on the November 2011 ballot. The Mississippi Personhood Amendment states, "The term 'person' or 'persons' shall include every human being from the moment of fertilization, cloning or the functional equivalent thereof." On Feb. 16, the citizen-led grassroots

organization Personhood Mississippi submitted over 130,000 signatures, affirming the personhood rights of preborn babies in Mississippi. The Personhood Amendment is the fourth ballot initiative since 1992 to be placed on the State Ballot. This was the first all citizen grassroots led effort to make the ballot in State history.

OBAMA APPOINTS HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVIST BEHIND SENATE'S BACK

(EP News)--President Obama bypassed the Senate confirmation process to appoint homosexual activist Chai Feldblum to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) while the Senate was out for the Easter recess. Feldblum is the primary author of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which forces employers to hire homosexuals despite their moral or religious objections. As a commissioner, Feldblum's ideology would shape the EEOC and its decisions. "In this position, Feldblum would not be impartial in her decision-making process. From her own account, Feldblum would have a difficult time ever deciding that religious liberties should trump homosexual rights," said Shari Rendall, Director of Legislation and Public Policy for Concerned Women for America. "She is way beyond what most Americans would consider mainstream. Feldblum not only asserts that 'gay sex is morally good,' she also believes in polygamous relationships."

CHRISTIANS "DEFAMED" BY MAINSTREAM MEDIA, ACTIVIST SAYS

(EP News)--"Many mainstream media outlets, like ABC and CNN, are irresponsibly reporting that those arrested in Michigan in the alleged plot to murder law enforcement officers are 'Christians,'" said Dr. Gary Cass of the Christian Anti-Defamation Commission. "Even if they identify themselves as Christians, what they were allegedly planning is absolutely contrary to Christianity. They may have illicitly co-opted the Christian faith to justify their murderous intentions, but it is defamatory for the media to keep referring to them as Christians. They are simply terrorists. I find it hypocritical that news organizations will not call someone who carries out Jihad in accordance to his faith what he really is, an Islamic terrorist, for fear of offending Muslims. But when some insane person claims to be a Christian and does something completely contrary to the Christian faith, the media keeps making the libelous association."

CONGRESS SET TO RECOGNIZE SAME-SEX "SPOUSES" ON FORMS

(EP News)--The House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct has passed a decision to recognize same-sex marriage on financial disclosure forms for elected officials. Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, said the move is in direct violation of the federal Defense of Marriage Act. "The unethical House Ethics Committee may be appeasing this radical special-

interest group, but they are destroying their credibility and trampling federal law in the process," he said. "This committee, charged with upholding congressional ethical, legal and financial standards, is violating a law passed overwhelmingly by Congress, which, for federal purposes, always defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman."

CENSUS BUREAU TELLS SAME-SEX COUPLES TO CHECK "MARRIED"

(EP News)--The U.S. Census Bureau has produced a controversial video telling same-sex couples they can be counted as "married" even without a marriage license. An announcer says "same-sex couples who are married – or who consider themselves to be spouses – can identify one person as a husband or wife. Other same-sex couples may instead use the term 'unmarried partner.'" Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, said the "law should count for something when the Census Bureau counts America's population, but apparently it doesn't on President Obama's watch. The President's Commerce Department is actively encouraging people to ignore U.S. marriage law and invent new definitions for their relationships. What kind of government actively lobbies citizens to lie on their forms?"

HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVISTS TRY "END AROUND" ON MARRIAGE

(EP News)--A bill on the California Senate floor would further undermine the institution of one man, one woman marriage. The Senate Judiciary Committee approved the bill on a 3-2 party-line vote. SB 906 would confuse the issue by renaming "marriage" as "civil marriage," opening the possibility for future multiple marriage categories, according to California Family Council Legislative Coordinator Everett Rice. California voters passed Proposition 8 in 2008, defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. "SB 906 is actually a direct assault against the more than 7 million voters that supported Proposition 8," Rice said. "These multiple marriage designations would lead to new definitions of each, eventually giving the courts the opportunity to redefine marriage."

JUDGE SAYS NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER VIOLATES SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

(EP News)--A federal judge in Wisconsin has declared the National Day of Prayer unconstitutional.

Judge Barbara Crabb ruled in mid-April that government recognition of the day violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The decision "carries out the Founders' plan of preserving religious liberty to the fullest extent possible in a pluralistic society," wrote Crabb.

Attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund want President Obama to appeal the decision.

"The National Day of Prayer provides an opportunity for all Americans to pray voluntarily according to their own faith – and does not promote any particular religion or form of religious observance," said ADF Senior Legal Counsel Joel Oster. "It does not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, and this decision should be appealed."

Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, was quick to criticize the decision. "It is unfortunate that this court failed to understand that a day set aside for prayer for the country represents a time-honored tradition that embraces the First Amendment, not violates it," he said. "This is the first step in what could be a lengthy legal process that ultimately puts this issue before the Supreme Court."

PRO-LIFE BILL HITS SNAG IN GEORGIA HOUSE

(EP News)--The Georgia Senate has passed a bill banning abortion in cases of coercion, gender selection and racial discrimination. But the landmark legislation has encountered problems in the House of Representatives.

Catherine Davis, director of minority outreach for Georgia Right to Life, said she was convinced SB 529 was near the finish line "We are now being told that the speaker of the House feels the bill goes too far because it will challenge Roe v. Wade," she said. "That's an amazement to me, since most of the people of Georgia have indicated that they don't have a problem with the bill."



Every Branch In Me

By Josiah Munns
(1816 – 1886)

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:2-3).

In the previous chapter, our Lord had been showing in a most wonderful way and manner, how He had left the glory of His Father, by what He stated to His disciples; it appears after the Passover supper, (not the Lord's supper) the Lord



Jesus was with His disciples, and Judas was also with them; He rose and took a basin of water, and laid His robe aside, and girded Himself with a towel, that was to show His great condescension,

He laid His glory aside, my friends, for a time. He humbled Himself, and in taking that basin of water, and washing the feet of His disciples, it was to show

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Every Branch In Me

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that He came as a servant, and that He came forth for that express purpose, for He said to the disciples, "Shall the servant be greater than His Lord?" He washed their feet, to show an example to the church of God; for He said, "If I wash your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet." Peter thinking it was too great a condescension for the Lord Jesus to take, to wash his feet, said, "Thou shalt not wash my feet." Oh! the startling word that came out of the mouth of Christ, "**If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.**" Then He said, "**Ye are clean but not all,**" knowing that Judas was then among them. This moved the spark of divine love in Peter's soul, and he said, "**Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.**" O! what a blessing it is to have a part in this great salvation. Then our Lord made use of these words, "**Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.**" But, what was the word? For it is not recorded here, but it was a word of sanctification, a word of setting them apart, you will find in the 17th chapter of John, where He speaks about sanctifying them, "They were sanctified by God the Father, and by Jesus Christ," these words imply, they were made holy, they were made clean, and by what means? From Christ the Fountain of Life, a Fountain of Light, a Fountain of Living Water, they were made clean and washed from all their sins by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

Now we shall endeavour to look at this text, "**every branch in me.**" Some might say, (especially free-willers) that there is then a possibility of being in the vine, and afterwards to be cut off from it, and they have no part or lot in the matter. But I shall endeavour to show what it is that the Lord cuts off. First, "Every branch in me, it is a branch in Him," but you will say, it says below, "and men gather them, and burn them in the fire." This I shall try and say a word or two about.

Now, first of all, can we ever believe that any poor sinner that has received life from Jesus Christ, shall ever be cut off, and fall short of eternal glory, because He says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, shall be cut off"? Now, why has the Lord made use of that figure? because God is a God of wisdom, and the man that understands vines, has to cut off many things from them. If you were to see him cut off those things you would think he was spoiling the vine, and just so it is in the divine experience of the child of God, we are sometimes made to feel when the pruning knife is brought upon us, that the pruner is going to cut us off altogether, but no! for every leaf in the vine receives its life from the sap, as well as the branch, and you must remember that Jesus is the true and living vine, from

whom the sap flows. There was no sin in Christ the vine, but there is sin in the branches, yes, in you and me, and yet we really and truly bring forth fruit, honour, praise and glory, unto that vine that bears us. When the Lord takes the poor sinner in hand, He makes him feel afraid that the Lord is going to make an entire end of him.

Now, here is the great distinction between planting, and the shooting out from the vine. These are solemn words friends, and God grant that you may take them to heart, "**Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.**" You may flourish in a church, you may flourish before the eyes of men, and yet not be one of God's right hand planting; therefore if there are plants which are to be rooted up, our Lord has described it in the parable of the wheat and the tares, and the time will come when they will be rooted up and burned. This puts me in mind of a man, I think it was my cousin, who said he was going along the road, and he saw a dog following two men, and he said, "I wonder which man that dog belongs to," for he did not know, but when they got to a cross road, the dog followed his master. His coming into this cross-way of death that makes things manifest, and therefore, "**every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.**" You see friends, there are false plants, and what do they bring forth, mock humility, and the heart knows it is hypocrisy; and there are thousands of that sort in the day in which we live, even amongst the churches of truth as well as in churches of error, and why is it so? Because a child of God should show the distinction that comes from the Spirit, and that which comes from the flesh. There is a sowing to the flesh, and a reaping of corruption, and there is a sowing to the Spirit, and a reaping of life everlasting. What is the reaping of life everlasting? For Christ to visit the poor sinners' breast, and to make him feel that there is nothing in this world to be compared to Him, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and you know without Him you must eternally perish. Well, that is producing fruit, God is stripping you as He did poor Job. He plunged Him into the ditch till his own clothes abhorred him, then He lopped off all those branches that bore no fruit, and at last the Lord sent a servant of His to him, and Job said, "**I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.**" God brought forth the precious fruit, and what a mercy to come under the pruning knife to feel that our sins are enough to damn us. God will lop off those things that dishonour Him. He will cut them away, but mind, cutting a piece of the branch, is not cutting off the branch. The sap is in the branches still. Let us see whether anything sprang up in the disciples of God that required to be cut off. "Lord shall we command fire

to come down from heaven to consume them?" Christ said to them, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." Did not that want cutting off? Yes, it did, and blessed be God He cut it off, but you are not cut off from the vine. Your hope is still in Him, and that causes inquiries in your souls from day to day whether you are a living branch. "**Every branch in me that beareth not fruit.**" Well, what did the disciples do? They wanted to inquire into certain things, because Christ was pleased to favour one of them more than another. "What shall be done to this man that leans on Thy bosom?" "What is that to thee if he tarry till I come." Now, you see, God cuts it off, and we have nothing to do with His secret counsel. He will make you to feel that it is a mercy that you are not entirely cut off from the vine. Again He says, "**That men gather them,**" what! Gather these things; yes, and we may say, that angels might stand amazed at what God's children are left to do. They do things which bring disgrace on their profession; does not that want cutting off? It does, now men gather them; could the devil have got up anything grander to dishonour the Lord of Life and Glory, than for one of His disciples to curse and swear that he never knew his Master? Did not that sort of work require cutting off? Oh! my friends, just look at it, to say that he never knew Him, now what was that good for but for men to gather, and to cast it into the fire, saying, "There is a pretty disciple?" Now my friends, what a mercy that God cut that off. How did He cut it off? By a look of eternal love in Peter's soul, and he went out and wept bitterly, and what a mercy to have a look from a precious Christ upon us. Now, "**Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.**" You see there are some that do not bear fruit, and some that do, and what is the fruit that the child of God bears? It is a blessed fruit, but it springs from Jesus Christ. Well, perhaps the child of God will read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, there is a challenge there, to all men in the world, whoever they are, to let their puny judgment fall. "He was cut off out of the land of the living, and who can declare his generation?" No man ever did, or ever can; therefore Christ was cut off, and the fruit that is brought forth is just what the Lord said: "**Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.**" Oh! my friends, that is blessed fruit brought forth, and I think one of our poets says:

"Give me humility and love."

"**Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.**"

Oh! what a mercy He does not cast us away. Why, He cannot, because He took our nature without sin; a perfect

nature, and having ingrafted into our soul that life, He had from all eternity, we are brought to feel and enjoy what the apostle says: "the engrafted word of life," so if you are ingrafted into Jesus Christ, the true and living vine, the poet asks

"Who can sever that soul that is bound by everlasting bonds?"

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall persecution, affliction, or trials? No; nothing ever shall. Now, look at the surplus branches which sprung up in the churches that required to be cut off in the days of the apostle, for the apostle said "Who is Paul, or who is Apollos, or who is Cephas?" These are all surplus branches, which sprung up in human nature, this great man, and that great man instead of God. This is idolatry friends, and God will cut it off, and when He does so, it is for your benefit, that you should come to the true and living vine, and that you should come to Him alone: the "brother born of adversity." Now, every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Well, how is this purging work done? It is not only given you to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake. Here is the purging work, and this purging work is, that tribulation is to work patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope that maketh not ashamed, and why? "**Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**" James says "**let patience have her perfect work.**" How can patience have her perfect work, say you? I maintain that there is a time when it has its perfect work, when God has loaded you with afflictions, troubles, trials, and distresses. When He has cut off every source and brought you solemnly to hang on Him for all, then you found that in "your patience possessed ye your souls."

Oh! my friends, it is through the patience and longsuffering of the dear Redeemer, and when this is done you will be able to sing that beautiful hymn of Toplady's:

Though justly of wrongs we complain,

Or, faithfully, sinners reprove,

Yet still we do all things in vain,

Unless we do all things in love;

'Tis love makes us humble and meek,

The wounds of ill-usage it cures,

It pities the falls of the weak:

The pride of the lofty endures;

Has God a command to fulfill?

Which nature untoward would shun,

Love brings to compliance the will,

And causes the deed to be done.

And, oh! poor sinner, when these surplus branches are all cut off, it will be all seen to be right in a precious Christ. There are many professing Jesus Christ, but who produce no fruits. Look how God produces fruit in the souls of His

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Funnybone

"... A time to laugh..." (Eccl. 3:4).

When asked what he thought about old age Brother Overmine Hill replied, "It's when you've still got a lot of get-up-an-go, but it's done got up and went without you."

Deacon Jones' son asked him, when filling out a job application, who to notify in case of an emergency.

Deacon Jones quickly answered, "A Good Doctor!"

Little Jimmy Johnson was sitting on the couch and across from him was his teacher. She had stopped by to discuss his grades with his mother when she inquired, "I see you have a cat litter box, what kind of cat do you have?"

Little Jimmy just crossed his arms and said, "No, we don't have a cat, that's just for company."

Pastor Brown was giving a little talk to the young kids after services about being faithful in what ever you do no matter how many times you fail.

Afterwards he began quizzing the young children about what he had talked about.

Susie Stew was standing there and spoke suddenly, "If at first you don't succeed, shouldn't you try doing it like your wife told you to in the first place?"

Bro. Knowe Counts was out shopping for a gift for his wife's 40th birthday.

While walking up and down the aisles of the store he noticed some cute little jewelry boxes that played a tune when you raised the lid. He opened one of them and it played the tune of "Happy Birthday." Thinking this is just what he was looking for, he picked up one still sealed in the box and preceded to the checkout line.

That afternoon several members of the church, along with other friends and relatives, were all gathered around



Mrs. Counts as she began opening her presents. She received several nice gifts and was really enjoying the party. She at last came to the small box that was from her husband, and with enthusiasm began opening the box thinking he had finally purchased her a new ring or at least an expensive piece of fine jewelry.

As she slowly opened the gift she saw it was a jewelry box and knew for certain her husband had gotten her something special. She removed the jewelry box from the wrappings and placed it in front of her. As she held her breath for the surprise and slowly opened the lid the box begin playing its tune.

When she looked inside and seen it contained nothing else that's when the tune that was playing hit her. It was the tune "The Old Gray Mare, She Ain't What She Used To Be!"

If anyone knows where Bro. Counts is, could you please contact Sister Counts. She's still looking for him.

Several of the ladies of Possum Trot Baptist Church were outside setting up the tables for a special afternoon meal at the church when some of the ladies inquired not seeing Bro. Dunlap.

Sister Bertha went over to inquire about him from his wife, if maybe he was sick and ill.

Sister Dunlap replied, "Nothing to worry about Sister Bertha, he's fine."

When the rolls are passed out yonder, he'll be there."

brings you into a dry place, it will cause you to cry out, "Lord, water my poor soul," ah! friends, God knows how to cut off these surplus branches, but that is not taking you out of the vine. Now, the Lord taught His disciples a good lesson when He washed their feet; you mind what He said to Peter, "You are clean every whit," and when Peter said, "Thou shalt not wash my feet," He said, "Thou needest not washing," that is to say, "You are washed in the blood of atonement, you need not washing in this, save the washing of your feet." Though Christ has atoned for your sins, and put them away, yet, how often

do your feet want washing? Where do thy lead you to? "You need not washing in this, save your feet." Did they not want washing? They did! But, did He require regenerating? No. Whom do men say that I, the Son of man am? Some said Elias, some John the Baptist, and other Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. He said unto them, "**But, whom say ye, that I am?**" And Simon Peter answered, and said, "**Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,**" and Jesus said, "**Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.**" Oh! then you see, He comes home close with a pruning knife. Now, poor sinner, Job was cut off in his feelings, he said, "I look to the right hand, and to the left, I looked where he did work, but could not behold him." Well, there he was, God was humbling him, cutting everything away from him, then after a while the Lord gave him a sight of death; He gave him a sight of the resurrection; gave him a sight of his intercession, and made him to cry out "Though worms destroy my body, yet, in my flesh shall I see God." God stripped Job, and he was brought to say, "**I know that my Redeemer liveth.**"

Then my friends, the grave is a resting place for the poor body, therefore as Christ took His precious body into union with His Godhead, He declares that His people shall be with Him, therefore fruit is brought forth to His honour and glory. He will transplant that into eternal glory, and He declares that His people shall have a body, like unto His glorious body. Now, God lops off those things that come out of our Esau nature, and though He hates it, He does not hate your soul. Why? Because His precious body bore all your sins away, this wretched Esau nature is with us, and it will abide with us until death separate us. These are the things that the Lord will cut off, and He will cut off all surplus branches. Now, I might take up a great deal of your time here in showing you how the life of God in the soul produces the fruit. Well, there may be some poor child of God here, saying, "I want to know whether I belong to the true and living vine." May the dear Lord grant thy desires.

I must leave off friends, for I am unable to say any more. May the Lord bless these few remarks for His Name's sake. Amen.

(Sermons, Memoir and Letters of Josiah Munns, 1883).



Comments on "Old Landmarkism"

by Tom Ross

"Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (22:28).

The landmarks referred to in our text were property markers that

distinguished the personal estates of one family from another among neighbors. This verse suggests the right to own personal property that has been lawfully obtained. Without the landmarks there would be constant contention over land ownership. The landmarks had such a prominent place in the culture of Israel, to remove them brought a curse upon one's head. Deuteronomy 27:17 declares: "**Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.**" Often times the personal property was the inheritance of fathers to their sons. It was considered sacred and valuable. Naboth would not sell the inheritance that his father had left him even though Ahab offered him a great deal of money for it (I Kings 21:1-4). Invasion of another man's property was considered a serious offence.

This verse is also applied in the spiritual realm by Landmark Baptists who are earnestly contending for the faith, i.e. the old landmarks. Landmark Baptists believe that Jesus Christ organized the first New Testament Church during His earthly ministry and promised perpetuity to that church as an institution until He comes again. From that time until now there has been a holy succession of true New Testament Baptist churches that have earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. Landmark Baptists believe in the Scriptures as their final authority, regeneration as a work of the Holy Spirit, believers baptism by immersion by the authority of a true church, the priesthood of believers, and the principles of religious liberty. These doctrines have distinguished true Baptists from their Catholic persecutors and Protestant counterparts throughout history.

In the early 1800's with the rise of "Campbellism," some Baptists began to allow non-baptists to preach in their churches and sit on their ordination councils. J.R. Graves of Tennessee and J.M. Pendleton of Kentucky raised objections to the new practice of pulpit affiliation among liberal Baptists. Soon, the term "Old Landmarkism" began to be used as the term to identify Baptists who were calling upon their brethren to return to the old landmarks of the faith once delivered. Much like using the term "Calvinism" to identify those who believe in the doctrines of grace (even though Baptists had believed these truths long before the rise of Calvin) "Old Landmarkism" came to identify those who believe in certain truths regarding the New Testament church. The tenets of "Old Landmarkism" soon developed into a doctrinal system that identified true Baptists and became widely accepted until liberalism and higher criticism began to infiltrate Southern Baptist Churches in the 1900's. Even though Baptists since the times of Christ have believed and

◊ (Continued on page 339)

Every Branch In Me

(Continued from page 337) ◊

people. He says, "I will bring down their hearts with labour." The Lord sometimes stops me in my poor spirit like this, "If I send thee to a rebellious house, be thou not rebellious like them, open thy mouth and eat that I give thee." What good can be done in the way of rebellion. Nothing whatever; it is sure to end in something wrong, and I have proved it, friends; what does God say? He says, "**The rebellious shall dwell in a dry land,**" and when God

Comments on

(Continued from page 338) ♦

practiced the old landmarks, it wasn't until the 1850's that this designation was used as an identifying moniker for genuine New Testament Baptists.

Some of the major tenets of "Old Landmarkism" are as follows:

1. The first New Testament Church was organized by Christ during His earthly ministry.

2. The first church was in doctrine and practice what we would today identify as a Baptist Church.

3. Christ gave the authority to carry out the Great Commission to His kind of church.

4. True Baptist churches alone have the authority to baptize converts, administer the Lord's Supper, organize churches, and ordain elders and deacons.

5. Scriptural baptism is made up of four essential parts: 1) It must be administered by a scriptural Baptist Church, i.e. proper authority. 2) Only a believer may be baptized, i.e. proper subject. 3) Baptism is by immersion in water only, i.e. proper mode. 4) Baptism is symbolic and has no saving qualities, i.e. proper design.

6. True Baptists reject the ordinances and ordinations of Catholics, Protestants, and cults as invalid and without scriptural authority. As a result true Baptists will not receive alien immersion nor will they practice pulpit affiliation with non-Baptists.

7. Baptists believe the church is a local, visible called out assembly of baptized believers who have covenanted together to carry out the Great Commission. As such, true Baptists reject the Protestant notion of a mythical universal, invisible church as well as the Catholic notion of a universal church headed up by the Pope of Rome.

8. Baptists believe that Christ promised perpetuity to His kind of church (Matt. 16:18; 28:19-20). There has been a holy succession of true Baptist churches from the times of Christ up until the present day (John 15:16).

9. Each New Testament Baptist church is independent and autonomous. As such no religious or political organization, board, or association may usurp the authority of the local church.

10. Only members in good standing may observe the local church ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Thus, the Lord's Supper must be restricted to those the church has the authority to discipline (I Cor. 5), meaning members only. The Lord's Supper is a local church ordinance, not a denominational ordinance.

11. Only saved people with scriptural baptism who are members in good standing of a true Baptist church are eligible to be in the Bride of Christ. All other believers will be guests at the

wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-9).

I heartily affirm that all of the above tenets are scriptural and God-honoring. Baptists have always hurt themselves by compromising their core principles in an attempt to be accepted and considered scholarly by other religious organizations. We don't need the approval of Catholics, Protestants, or the Charismatics. We need only please the great Head and Lawgiver of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wrote: **"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ"** (Gal. 1:10). May God help all Baptists in name only who are trying to please men by moving away from the old landmarks established by Christ in His church. May God grant us the grace to be fervent in our efforts to carry out the Great Commission and earnestly contend for the old landmarks until Jesus comes again.

(Editor's Note: Bro. Ross sent this short excerpt from a commentary on Proverbs, which he is writing. The editor feels that it is a most excellent explanation of the verse in Proverbs 22:28).



A Dose of Reality

"Common Sense Comments"

by Joseph Harris

Chairman of Biblical Studies
Southeastern Baptist
College, Laurel, Mississippi
www.miniedition.net

November Is Coming!

To the President and Congress of the United Socialist States of America,

As you sit there feeling smug over your latest cramming job down the throats of We the People, enjoy it while you can. November's coming! You act like you are really convinced that YOUR healthkill bill was wanted by the majority of Americans. Do you really believe that, or do you just not care? Maybe, just possibly, in your arrogance, you really do think it is what we need. I am convinced that in your ego-centric minds, you think that we as Americans are stupid and do not know what we need and have to have our diapers changed and meals prepared. Harry Reid is so blind; he cannot see or "understand" to put it in his words, why people are so upset. Over 10,000 people showed up in protest against him in his own state, then 100 showed up in support when he announced his bid for re-election. And he can't see what is obvious. All of you people in Washington are blinded by self interest, self ambition

and self enrichment. Harry Reid is so blind; he couldn't find a bowling ball in a bathtub. Remember, November is coming!

The socialists in the White House and in Congress decided years ago to withhold a portion of our hard earned money for our retirement, called Social Security, and then give it back to us in increments when we retire, since we are so unable to handle our own money and make preparation for the future. I guarantee the majority of Americans would have invested or at least preserved what you have confiscated from them over the years and fared much better with it than you have done with the "Lock Box" you have placed it in. By the way, we are not stupid in this matter and know the lock has been picked and the box is empty. What did you do with our money? November is coming!

We are tired of the cramming rod. We do not want cap and trade. We do not want to be told what kind of light bulbs to buy. You are counting on our short memory before November, but our memory has been lengthened by anger and outrage. Understand, we are not just irritated, or mad, or ticked off. We are red hot livid to the point of explosion. The tea parties you are seeing are real and the numbers are growing by leaps and bounds daily. November is coming!

Here is our promise. We promise to work just as hard, even harder than you did to pass the healthkill bill, to make sure you are not re-elected. But unlike you, we will follow the rules and play by the book. No back room deals, no extortion, no threats of violence, just the threat that you will not be seated again in your office. We are willing to work long hours, even consider spending money we do not have (you should be familiar with that) to ensure you are in the employment line. November is coming!

In closing, we say thanks. Thanks for the wake up call. We have been asleep far too long, lulled by the promises of Democrats and Republicans who have both spent like mad, (TARP) and grown government to its largest size ever. There is no question about replacing the liberals, but the so called conservatives need to get the boot also. Real conservatives are tired of being courted, lied to, taken for a ride, then locked in a closet and ignored, until the next election. You blew it. Pack your bags, We the people, the real Americans, your bosses, have spoken. November is coming!



Coming in next month's Banner... Protestant Persecution of Baptists in Early America

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 3-1-2010 to 3-31-2010

Beginning Balance	\$10,730.93
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary Ind. B. C., Everson, WA	500.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
.....	925.00
TOTAL	11,655.93

EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	440.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	440.00
.....	\$11,215.93
Interest	+ .97
.....	11,216.90
Less Corbin, KY des.	-1,406.12
ENDING BALANCE	\$9,810.78

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,406.12
RECEIPTS:	
TOTAL	1,406.12
EXPENDITURES:	
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,406.12

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 3-1-2010 to 3-31-2010

Beginning Balance	\$3,424.18
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	25.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	30.18
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	554.17
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	150.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	300.00
Bob Franks, Mantachie, MS (In memory of Onita Cockrell)	20.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Donnie McElmurry, Paducah, KY	10.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	200.00
Jim Cote, Westbrook, ME	2.00
Mrs. Joe Jurzec, Richmond, IL	50.00
L. H. Ferrell, Des Allemands, LA	100.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Southside B.C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C. Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	156.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Anonymous	310.00
Sub Total	\$3,467.35
TOTAL	\$6,891.53

EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	581.00
Postage	855.31
Supplies	86.22
Wages	2,300.00
Wages*	203.00
FICA	201.13
Dividing checks	150.00
Total Expenditures	4,376.66
.....	\$3,463.90
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,514.87

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

The God Who Works While We Wait For Him

C. D. Cole
(1885 - 1968)

“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him” (Isa. 64:4).

From the foundation of the world men, left to themselves, have never imagined what God is like. The best representation men have had to offer for God have been terrible caricatures. In their representations of God men have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and even to creeping things. They have confounded God with His creation. Among the gods of the heathen there has never been one that bore any resemblance to the God of the Bible. Men never dreamed of such a God as ours Who loves them and is Almighty and All-wise in His care for them. They have never known anything of the God who works wonders while they wait.

You will recall that great day on Mt. Carmel when Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a demonstration as to who was the true God. They set up their altars and Elijah proposed that they have their first innings. You pray first and the God who answereth by fire, let Him be God. You remember what they did. They cried aloud, “O Baal, hear us.” And in desperation they cut themselves until they were blood-soaked. And you remember, too, how Elijah mocked them and urged them to cry a little louder; that their god might be asleep or away on a journey. They wanted their false gods to work for them, but there was no voice or hand to respond to their frantic cries. Then when Elijah placed the sacrifice on his altar and made it as hard as possible for the true God to answer by fire, he prayed to the God who works, and fire fell from Heaven and licked up the water and consumed the sacrifice. Then the prophets of Baal fell on their faces and said, “**Jehovah, He is God.**” Yes, Jehovah is the Christian’s God, but how few professing Christians know much about Him or give Him much recognition.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WAIT FOR GOD?

1. It does not mean to substitute idleness for necessary and legitimate labor. It does not even mean to substitute prayer for work. We are to work and pray while we wait. The farmer breaks the soil; he harrows it and sows and then cultivates it, and while doing all this, he waits for God to give the harvest. The doctor uses all the skill he has for the cure of his patient, but he must wait for God to heal. The



preacher prays as he witnesses to the lost, but he has to wait for God to save. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God has to give the increase. I have known people to sit

down and do nothing and say they were waiting upon God. Parents do this way with their children. They never witness to them about the Lord---they seem to be afraid of their own children---and then say they are waiting upon the Lord to save them. Wives do this way with their husbands. They say they are waiting upon the Lord to save them, but they never witness to them---they seem to be afraid to invite them to go with them to church---they compromise their holy religion and let their husbands take them to forbidden places---and then say they are waiting upon God to save them. But this is far from waiting upon God in the true sense. You are not waiting upon God when you are in the path of disobedience.

2. To wait for God involves the recognition of our own limitations. It is to realize and say that I have done all that I can do, but this is not enough. If God does not work, all our work will avail nothing. We cannot get our daily bread by all our working; nor can we get it without our working. But we can as easily get it without our working as we can without His working.

Someone in the home is ill---suddenly and seriously ill. To our limit we do all we can. But we have sent for the physician and when we have done all we know to do, we say, “Well, there is nothing more we can do; we must wait for the doctor.” We recognize our limitations and wait for the expert---the man skilled in healing. But the doctor has his limitations, too. You have heard the doctor say, when he had done all he could, that the case is in

the hands of God---we can only wait for Him.

3. To wait for God also involves the fact that He has no limitations. He is adequate to every occasion. There are no crises with Him. There are no difficult cases for Him. There is nothing impossible with Him. This is a good thought for the dying hour. When life is in the balance and the doctor is at his wit’s end, we can feel that there is nothing too much for Him who is the resurrection and the life. Let this disease do its worst; let death turn this body into a dust heap; He can raise it from the grave, and fashion it like unto His glorious body.

This is a good thought for any hour. Whatever the problem is that confronts you, if you are right with God and have the right attitude towards Him and the spirit of obedience to His will, you can wait for Him who worketh for him that waiteth for Him.

Here is the road to the highway of faith. If you want great faith, then you must have a great God. No man’s faith can be stronger than his God.

And Jehovah is God everywhere. He is supreme in every realm. He is not confined to any particular place or limited by any set of circumstances. He is the Sovereign God who makes all things work together for good to them that love Him.

There is an ad that says of a certain firm “We shop for you in all the world.” There was pictured a map of the world. And the ad further stated, “We have buyers everywhere, in India, China, Africa, in Europe, in America---everywhere. We bring things from afar to your door-step, and deliver them to you. We shop for you in all the world.” And so does God. To those who love Him and wait for Him, His ships, like Solomon’s ships of Tarshish which brought gold, and silver and apes and peacocks---God’s ships of promise will come freighted with blessings from everywhere as may be necessary to fulfill all His purpose concerning you.

*“There’s never a heartache and never a groan,
Never a tear-drop, and never a moan;
Never a danger, but there on His throne,
Moment by moment He thinks of His own.”*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder Wayne Crow departed this life on March 24, 2010. Elder Crow had pastured the Central Avenue Baptist Church of Tampa, FL from 1978 till present. He was born on January 15th, 1931, and was ordained in 1959, and served as pastor to several churches though out his ministry.

Please remember his wife Sister Betty and the family and the church.

“And thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty” (I Sam. 20:18).

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, LA will be hosting a Bible conference June 11th thru June 13th. All are invited to attend.

Scheduled speakers are: Elders Leroy Pack, Larry Wilson, David O’Neal, Tom Horn, Al Horn, Jose Seranno, and Nathaniel Hille.

Service times are Friday at 6:30 p.m., Saturday at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., And Sunday at 9:45 a.m.

For more information contact Pastor Jerry Dodson at (225) 664-3223.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Northport AL, and Pastor Todd Bryant would like to announce a special meeting July 16th-18th.

Elder David O’Neal of Tulsa, OK will be the guest speaker.

Service times are Friday at 7:00 pm, Saturday at 10:00 am, with a meal provided, and Sunday at 10:00 am.

All are invited to attend.

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will be having a Fellowship meeting May 1st.

Scheduled speakers are Elder Tom Ross of South Point, OH, and Elder Jerry Dodson of Denham Springs, LA.

Service time is at 10:00 am. A meal will be provided following the services.

All are invited to attend.

Grace Baptist Church of Rural Hall NC is planning a revival meeting beginning on Wednesday May 12th thru Sunday May 16th. We extend an invitation to all to attend the services.

Wednesday thru Saturday services will be at 7:30 each evening. Services on Sunday will begin at 9:45. The ladies of the church will provide lunch with afternoon services starting at 1:00 pm.

Elder Lewis Kiger, pastor of New Testament Baptist Church of Bristol, TN, will be preaching at these services. Please pray for the meeting.

For any assistance or information please contact Elder Gene Kiger at 143 Cross Baptist Church Rd., Rural Hall, NC 27045. Phone (336) 377-9808 or email at gbckiger@gbcstanleyville.com.

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