

# 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

## From Simon to Cephas

By B. H. Carroll  
(1843 - 1911)

**"Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone"** (John 1:42).

Here is a manifest play upon the words. Just as if Jesus had said to him, "Thou art a hearer." That is what "Simon" means. "Before I am done with you, you will be an immovable rock." Now the transition from the hearer to the rock is what I wish to speak about as embodied in the life of a man. It is difficult to get a rounded view of a Christian from a single expression or action of his life. What he says or does on

a particular occasion, taken by itself, may seem to point in a different direction from what he says or does on another occasion.

There is a very famous lake, or little sea in Judea, called the Sea of Galilee, or Tiberias, or Gennesaret. Quite a number of cities were around it. It was an exceedingly populous country. On that sea lived two men, Jonas and Zebedee. Each of these two men had two sons. Jonas' two sons were named Simon and Andrew, and Zebedee's two sons were named John and James. And the four boys as they grew up together

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## What If Free Will Were True?

By Matthew Stepp  
of Wayne, West Virginia

"Lima beans or corn?" the waitress asked at my wife's favorite restaurant. Well actually, I want broccoli. What is a feller to do? It is really beyond my ability to force them to produce something that I want, isn't it? No matter how much I jump up and down, scream and make a fuss, the ultimate outcome will be a plate filled with a side of 1) lima beans, 2) corn or 3) nothing... I suppose that we would agree that I am quite helpless in



this case to change my circumstances and am confined to my own abilities, which are incapable of correcting this distasteful scenario.

Okay, let's go from a different angle as a more amenable patron of the establishment. "Corn, please, ma'am, as I don't care for

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## The Relation of Baptism to Salvation

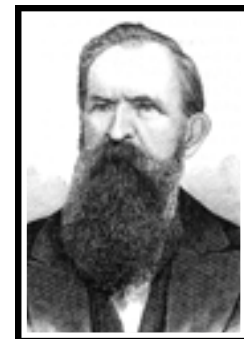
By James Robinson Graves  
(1820 - 1893)

**"And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"** (Luke 6:46).

**"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you"** (John 15:14).

**"If a man love me, he will keep my words" ---commandments"** (John 14:23). ---Christ

The above are the words of Christ, and fraught with meaning of the utmost moment to each one of us. The reasonable



inference from the above solemn declaration is, That Christ accounts no one as His friend, in fact, that no one loves Him, unless he obeys whatsoever things Christ commands him. Now

Christian immersion stands first and foremost among the commands Christ enjoined upon all who profess to love

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## The End of Human Greatness



*Behold the end of human greatness now:*

*Low to the dust is laid the lofty brow!*

*Of princely pride a skelton remains;*

*'Tis common dust.*

*The broken sword and chains that once enslaved mankind have lost their power:*

*Broken the glass that told his triumph hour;*

*The crumbling monuments bespeak decay,*

*The ruined towers, the sun's declining ray;*

*Shattered the oak that once the storm defied,*

*Scattered the rose-leaves in their beauteous pride.*

*Ah! such is human life! its end is death,*

*Its glories scattered by a passing breath.*

**"But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"** Job 14:10

## The Saviour's Fashion

By Joseph Irons  
(1785 - 1852)

**"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"** (Phil. 2:8).

Every circumstance relating to the incarnation, sufferings, and triumphs of the precious Christ of God, demands the

minute attention of every child of God: and every phrase or word employed by the Holy Ghost to set forth His Person, His official character, and His perfect work, will be found, upon close and prayerful consideration and meditation, to be full of meaning and instruction. All the characters He assumes---all the names and appellations given to Him--

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## Why Believers Compared To Sheep

By Benjamin Keach  
(1640 - 1704)

**"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"** (John 10:27).

Beloved, I have shown you what kind of knowledge Jesus Christ hath of all His sheep.

Fifthly, I shall now proceed to the fifth General Head, and give some of the characters or properties of the sheep of Christ. But before I do this, I shall show



you why the saints are compared to sheep.

1. *First it is from their clean and mild Nature.* Wicked men, from the consideration of their filthy and ravenous nature, and contrariwise compared to lions, wolves, foxes, dogs,

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*Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie,  
The fault that needs it most grows two thereby.  
"Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." 2 Cor. 8:21*

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Editor: Christopher Cockrell  
Staff: Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Kiser, Virginia  
Cockrell

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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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new address. The post  
office charges us \$.50  
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address.

## From Simon to

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became partners in business. They were fishermen. That was a very noted lake for fish, and a large part of the population of the surrounding country was dependent upon its supplies of fish for their food. These four young men grew up. One of them we know was married, and so far as the Bible story goes, that wife was yet living. Paul intimates that whenever Peter went about he took his wife with him--- a very judicious custom for preachers. We learn from the New Testament that this man Simon, who became Cephas or Peter, was at this time in perhaps middle life, at least thirty-five or forty years old, and had a large house. It may have been the house of his mother-in-law; we know she was living in the house. It was so large that he entertained Christ and His disciples at one time. He was a man of some means, with hired servants, but he was ignorant and unlearned, as we ascertain from a positive statement in the fourth chapter of the Acts.

Not only this, but he had the vulgar Galilean dialect. You remember the maid-servant recognized him by that---"Surely thou wast in the garden with him; thy speech betrayeth thee." He was a rough countryman with a peculiar twang to his speech. His occupation was of such a nature as to develop a robust physical man. This little sea was very stormy at times and the kind of work that he had to do was conducive to bodily vigor. So, we have the man before us, vigorous, uneducated, courageous, impulsive, and busily attending to his occupation. While engaged in this, he had studied what the Old Testament said about a Messiah. And there came an announcement that a new preacher had come, one very different from any other preacher, and was preaching out in the wilderness that bordered this same river that in its enlargement formed this lake. And Peter went to hear him, and learned that men ought to repent, and that they ought to believe in the Messiah who was to come, and so became one of his disciples. He repented toward God, expressed his faith in the coming Messiah, and was baptized. This was his start in the new religious life; but we will see directly what degree of religion he had at this time. Not long after he became John's disciple, the Messiah was made manifest in baptism, and John pointed Him out as He was passing by: That is the one I have been preaching about; there is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. One of each of these two families was standing by---John, the son of Zebedee, and Andrew, the son of Jonas. Andrew starts right off after his brother Simon, saying: "We have found him; the one that is to come; he is here; I have seen him; I have been where he dwelleth. Let

me show him to you." And Simon leaped up in his impulsiveness and went along with his eyes eager to look upon the One who was to be the Saviour of the world. And Jesus looked at him and used the language of the text; "**Thou art Simon (thou art a hearer); thou shalt be called Cephas (a stone)**" (John 1:42).

Now we have the character before us. Not long after this, our Lord goes to this very lake and these four men are out fishing. They were not having a great deal of success and He made them a suggestion. Acting on that suggestion, their nets were filled with fishes. The miraculous nature of it impressed itself upon Peter's mind and he felt that he was in personal contact with a supernatural being; so, falling down on his knees, he says: "**Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.**" An awe came over him. He felt that he did not have holiness enough; that he was not near enough to God to come in touch with One who could make the schools of fishes obey His direction and rush into nets. Notice the point that whenever in our imperfections and our shortcomings, knowing how rough we are in our daily life and how little time we have in the hurry of business to be soft of speech and holy and pious, we come suddenly in contact with the manifestations of holiness and divine power we shrink instinctively: "O Lord, go away from me; I cannot stand so close to holiness and purity; I am sinful." That is the way Isaiah felt when he saw the Lord in His glory; when the vision burst upon his mind he fell down on his face and kissed the dust, and put his hand on his lips and said: "**Woe is me. I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips and I have seen the Lord of hosts**" (Isa. 6:5). And yet Isaiah was an Old Testament Christian; and Simon was a Christian, but he was a very young Christian.

Let us follow Him. When they came to the shore, for Jesus came for them, He had a special mission. I confess I never would have done as He did. My ignorance and folly never could have comprehended the depths of His wisdom. When He got to the shore, He said: I want you four men; all of you. I want you to remain fishers, but I want you to fish for men. I want to glorify your business. I want to exalt it infinitely above what it is now. I change your fishing tackle, but retain your energy, rising early and sitting up late; your capacity to stem storms and overcome difficulties; your labor, but not for fish, for the souls of men. I can imagine what those men thought. "You ask us to be fishers of men. Why, we don't know how to speak in public. We are ignorant. We have never been to any great school, and what can we do in this great work?" His reply would be, Leave your nets now and follow me. Get right up, come, follow me. Just imagine how much they felt their unworthiness. "Jesus wants me and He wants me to be a preacher. He

wants me to be an apostle; He wants me to fish for souls." Why, the idea could not get into their minds all at once. Let us notice again. Peter says: "Lord, go home with me today. Here I have a big house. We have plenty to eat there. Come and spend the day. And another reason why I want you to come, my wife's mother is very sick. She is burning up with fever, and surely if You can make fish go into my net, You can drive away that fever." So He walked into the house, quietly laid His hand on the woman's head, and His soft, cool touch dried up all the fires of that fever. Simon shuddered again; what sort of power is this that fevers as well as fish obey? And he thought he could not go into this work, and the Lord came after him a second time. Leave your net and come, and I will make you fishers of men. Well, the next account we have of him is when Jesus ordains the twelve as apostles. These four, Jonas's sons and Zebedee's sons and eight others. There they are. What a lot of men! One of them is a tax-gatherer. Four at least are fishermen. There are others of different kinds. Now He sets them apart to a life-work. He sends them out to publish His gospel throughout all Judea. That is the work put on them. And they accepted the ordination.

We will now see Simon's personal Christianity developed. After his ordination Jesus preached some hard doctrine; very hard. I confess it would have staggered me if I had not been any farther along than Peter was at that time. And as soon as Jesus announced that little piece of hard doctrine a lot of people who had been following after Him in great crowds, turned round and said, "We will follow Him no more," and they did not. And when He saw the crowd thin out, go away and leave Him only a little nucleus, a little band of twelve, standing in the solitude where there had been a multitude, He says: "Will you also leave me?" Now, listen to Peter: "**Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life**" (John 6:68). Oh, you say that is surely a Christian. Well, yes, it is. He is in one of his bright moments now. There is a grand character in him. "We are going to stand right here. The hand of ordination that has been put upon us consecrated us to a great work and a glorious work. Let the crowd thin out; we have nowhere else to go. We will stand by Jesus."

Let us push on in his history. Jesus leaves that section of the country; goes away into the northern part of Judea to a town called Caesarea-Philippi, and the people have been talking about Him all over the country---this man who gave sight to blindness, and health to sickness, and life to death, and preached such strange doctrines which so agitated the public mind that men would stop at the corners and say, "What do you think of

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Him? What do you say? What manner of man is this?" And Jesus knew about all that questioning, and He called His disciples around Him who had been out mixing with the people and says: **"Whom do men say that I the Son of man, am?"** (Matt. 6:13). And they made a faithful report, that some thought that He was Jeremiah, come to life again, and some Elijah, and some another one of the prophets. There were many diverse opinions about Him. Jesus said, What do you say? Now you answer. Fasten your eyes on Peter. See him step right out at once and say: **"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"** (Matt. 16:16). Well, that certainly is a Christian. Listen to what Jesus said about it. He says, **"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: flesh and . . . blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven"** (Matt. 16:17). There is a God-revealed faith that you have, not earth-born, and upon that kind of faith will I build my church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. There he is on eagle's wings. But in ten minutes from that time when Jesus said, "I must go to Jerusalem and there suffer and die; wicked men are going to slay me, and it is necessary that this death should come," see Peter fall. "Far be it from thee, Lord; thou shalt not do it." Jesus turns upon him and says: **"Get thee behind me, Satan"** (Matt. 16:23). What! Is that possible? Satan now, when just before the rock? Well, yes, it means this: that we never do reach perfection at once. It means that Simon is yet Simon. It means that the life of religion in the heart does not, by one single sweet word, take a man from earth and put him in Heaven. It means that the religious life in him is a growth and that he will go away up yonder one day, and then he will have an awful fall the next day, and find out there is a vast deal of weakness in himself. I want you to get an idea of Christianity from a life, not from so many doctrines linked together. But just look at this man, who in ten minutes time passed from **"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"** (Matt. 16:16) unto one who would absolutely restrain that Christ from doing the Christ's work. But do not be discouraged about Simon.

Let us see more. They came to a house, or are coming to it, when a man rushes out and says: "Lord, my little girl is sick. Can anything in the world be done for her? If you cannot help her, she is dying." He says: "I will come and heal her." And now a messenger comes out, saying: "Don't trouble the Lord; your child is already dead." But Jesus says, "You, Peter and James and John, come with me"; and he takes those three thus selected from the twelve---this man to whom awhile ago he said, **"Get thee behind me,**

**Satan!"** (Matt. 16:23)---He selects them from the crowd for this high privilege and leads them into the chamber of death through the wailing and mourning crowd that gathers about the door; here the tears and anguish and cries and groans, and there the coldness and stiffness of death: "You three men come in here; stand by me now. Where is this girl?" There she lies dead, dead. And He takes her by the dead, cold fingers, and says, "Maiden, rise up." He did not perhaps say it aloud. It was the soft voice of authority that commanded, and she straightened right up, and the blood began to flow again through her veins, and the flush of health crept into her cheek, and her eyes opened and reason shone from them, and He says: "Here is your child; she was dead; she is alive." How do you suppose Peter felt about that? "Oh, I am glad that I was one of the three to see that glorious sight, the power of Jesus to raise the dead. I don't feel so much like Satan, now."

Well, let us follow this man along a little farther. Jesus says: "Peter and James and John, you three again come here. I want to show you something you have never seen in your lives." And they went off to the top of a mountain, and all at once the countenance of Jesus began to change; a perfect halo of light was playing around Him; His garments began to glisten, and in all the splendor of Heaven He stood before them, and there comes from the chambers of death the old prophet of Israel, the great leader, Moses; and there comes from the world of glory, where he had been carried in a chariot of fire, Elijah, the great prophet of another age; these two came and talked to Jesus, and those three men there looking on. And Moses and Elijah are talking to Jesus about what? His death that is soon to take place in Jerusalem. And Peter's head swims. He really does not know what he is talking about, but says: "Lord, had we not better put up three tents; one for You, and one for Elijah, and one for Moses?" Well, this man is making some progress, and we will see later how he gets on. He gets separated from Jesus soon after that, very soon after that. He goes out in a little boat, he and his friends, and out there a storm comes up, and it is night, dark, and a great fear comes on him: "Are we going to perish?" And suddenly they see something coming that looks like a ghost. What is it? That form in white that comes walking across the water? And some of them said, **"It is a spirit"** (Matt. 14:26). But John said, **"It is Jesus; it is the Lord."** And Peter rises right up and says: **"Lord, if it be thou, bid me to come to thee"** (Matt. 14:28). And Jesus says, **"Come"** (Matt. 14:29). Now, let us see how much faith he has. Peter steps right out on the water and the water held him up. And as long as he looked at Jesus it did hold him up. But poor fellow, he began looking down at the water. He looked away from the Lord and he began

to sink. His faith gave way, and then he began to pray, "Lord, I perish; help, help; I am sinking," and Jesus reached out His hand and said: "Oh, Little Faith!" that is a name just as if He had said: "Oh, Mr. Little Faith!" this man who had seen the dead raised. This man who had seen the glories of the transfiguration. Oh, Little Faith, why did you doubt? Do you mean to say that he cried out: "I perish"? That is just what he said. Do you mean to say that he felt that he was sinking? Yes, he did. Well, can a Christian ever feel in that way? Many a one has felt in just that way.

Well, let us follow him along a little farther. I want to show you the development of his spiritual life. Pretty soon after, he comes with a problem in his mind. He has been making some progress in religious things, and he says: "Lord, I am troubled about certain things, and I would like to have you answer. The question is this: How many times ought I to forgive a man for sinning against me; seven times?" Now, he was ready to forgive seven times if a man should commit an offense. Peter had religion enough to say, "I will forgive you seven times, but I am not sure about eight times. I will go ask Jesus. Lord, how many times must I forgive a man; seven times?" **"Seventy times seven"** (Matt. 18:22).

Oh, what a grand lesson. How boundless is the spirit of forgiveness when one studies under the Lord Jesus Christ! **"Seventy times seven."** Which is equivalent to saying: "No matter how many times he sin, if he repent, forgive him. Blot it out." Well, that was a grand lesson for Peter to learn. Pretty soon after that Peter begins to look back over what he had been. As I told you, he was a very prosperous fisherman. He had hired servants and a good big house back there on the Sea of Galilee. And this was a very poor business financially he was embarked in. So one day, he evidently had been thinking about it, he says, **"Lo, we have left all, and followed thee"** (Luke 18:28). Well, that was true. There was demonstrated genuineness in the man's religion. "I left that business you told me to leave. There is no money in this. Lord, we have left everything to follow thee." When I look at a case of that kind I am ready to say that man may stumble; he may fall; he may get into trouble; but I tell you he is a Christian. Jesus says, "They that have left all to follow me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall be in His kingdom, I will give them thrones to sit on. They will get it all back after a while." Let us go on then with more confidence to follow this man to the place when the life of Christ is drawing to a close, and the twelve with Jesus are eating a Passover supper, which is to be followed by the institution of the Lord's Supper, and all at once the startling announcement falls, "One of you twelve will betray me; one of you twelve."

Now, I have a problem to present to you; it is a question with reference to the uncertainty that men may honestly have whether they are in a state of grace. There was not a man of them that dared to say, "I know I am not the one," not a man of them. They had begun to distrust themselves. But Peter leaned over and whispered, "John, ask Him who it is. He knows. We don't know. Ask Him who is the traitor." And all around the question was passed, and each trembling one spoke up and said, "Lord is it I, is it I?" And they were ready to let Him say. And He told who it was. Now, you ought to think about this. I want you to get the thought in your mind, that very solemnly and very deliberately and without any sort of vain self-confidence they put the question to the Lord Jesus Christ, **"Is it I?"** (Matt. 26:22). Well, you say that a man who could do that is not a Christian. I tell you he was a Christian, and a good one too, but to be far better. Let us follow him a little farther. He was all the time looking at Jesus. He sees Him do a very strange thing. Jesus takes a towel, ties it around His body, and takes up a basin of water. You know they reclined at meals, with their feet out from the table, reclining on their elbows. Jesus goes on the outside of the circle and commences to wash their feet. Peter says, "Lord, you shall not do that. Thou shalt never wash my feet. Never!" Isn't it strange? He would not quit interfering with Jesus. This man who wants to dictate to God, is he a Christian? And Jesus said, "If I do not wash your feet you will have no part with me." And Peter said: "Wash me all over, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. Wash me." At one time the doubt seems to be on top, and at another time religious life seems to be on top. It plays up and down just in that way.

We will follow him on a little farther. Jesus said, "There are troublesome times ahead. Awful times." Peter says, "There is one thing certain. I will never leave you." Jesus says, "Peter, don't be too confident." "I tell you, Lord, if the whole world leaves you, I won't. I know I won't." Hear the boaster. He is lifted up. This is a different spirit from the other. Did you ever see a Christian like that? When he gets puffed up in the vanity of his mind, "I know I never would do as I see some people do." Well, you don't know. You are just a poor, frail creature, and if God's grace don't keep you from falling, you are going to fall." **"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"** (I Cor. 10:12). And Jesus said, "Peter, I want to tell you a secret. Somebody has been looking at you. Who do you think it was? Somebody has come and made a request to me about you." "Who?" "The devil. The devil is watching you. He has been studying you. The devil has heard you boast, and the dark, vile enemy of man has stepped right up and said, 'By

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your permission, I would like to sift him. I would like to shake him up a little and see if there is anything in him." "The devil came and asked for me?" "Yes, the devil has asked the privilege of seeing how much there is in thee, thou boaster, thou self-reliant, thou vain-confident man. And Peter, I am going to let him sift you. But I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail. You will think the world is coming to an end. You will think you are gone, but I am praying for you. You have a little faith and that faith is growing, but the devil can make you do anything if I turn you lose. I am going to let him have you for a little while. Peter says, "Let him, and I repeat, I never will deny you. Never while the world stands." Jesus says, "Peter, it is night now. Now, before the cock crows twice you will publicly deny me three times." Well, he did not believe it. He did not believe it could possibly happen.

Jesus says: "Peter, you and James and John, I am going to take you apart from the others again. I want you to go with me out here in this garden. Oh, my disciples, my feet are in the water, and I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished. I need sympathy. Won't you three kneel down here and pray while I go and wrestle with the great problem that is on me?" But they went to sleep, each one of them. Is it possible that Peter could sleep while his Saviour was battling with the power of darkness? Is he a Christian? Well, it does not look like it now. He is, but he does not seem like one right now. After a while Jesus comes and they notice that there are traces of blood down His face. Great drops of blood have exuded from His skin in the agony of that struggle in Gethsemane when He said, "**My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me**" (Matt. 26:39). And as they came out they saw lights flashing and a great crowd of men coming up, and directly one of them comes and puts his arm around Jesus' neck and kisses Him. "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss, oh, traitor!" And the crowd comes up and takes hold of Him, and Peter, prayerless Peter, grasps a sword to defend his Lord. But he could not fight much. He only cut off a man's ear. But Jesus said, "Put up your sword. My kingdom is not of this world. Do not lay your hands upon that sword to further the cause of Jesus Christ." And He healed the man's ear. There is Jesus bound, and it is a strange appearance to Peter. He becomes very much alarmed. "I have cut off a man's ear." And he followed, sneaking along. Just watch him! Is he a Christian? And he comes and looks in. Yonder is Jesus; nobody with Him; by Himself. And there is Peter; and directly a pert little

damsel steps out and says, "You are one of them. You are; I saw you in the garden with Him." He says, "I will swear I was not. I don't know Him." "I know you were there." And then he begins to curse and say, "God is my witness; I never saw the man in my life." Oh, those oaths; that awful lie of denial! Fallen, fallen! Track him down. Is that a Christian? Yes, he was a Christian. He has faith in his heart right now. Right then he had it, but his fear was on top. The devil---how could the poor man wrestle with the devil? He is bound to give way when his Lord has withheld His power. Well, it scared him, and just then he hears a cock crow. "Ah, me! That is what He said, 'before the cock crow twice I would deny Him three times.'" And do you know that tradition declares that this man never, while he lived, heard a cock crow that he didn't kneel down and ask God to forgive him. He looks into that house again and Jesus was looking at him, and he dashed out as if he was shot, away into the darkness, and he fell down and cried, "O God, forgive me; I have denied my Lord. I have left Him alone in His extremity." And with bitterness of heart he repented of his sin. Is this penitent a Christian? I think so.

And Jesus died, and it looked as though everything was blotted out again. You ask Peter, "Where is your hope now?" "Well, frankly, it seems to me to be dead." Is that idea scriptural? It certainly is. Peter says so himself, "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**" (I Pet. 1:3). His hope seemed gone, it was so dark. Well, even after the resurrection, did he stop then stumbling and falling? No, he did not. For he says, "About the best thing I could do would be to go back to my old business." Now, look at him. There is a preacher giving up his work. The man that had put his hand to the plow and said he never would turn back, there he goes fishing. The Lord comes to him and says, "Simon, do you love me?" "Lord, yes, I love thee." "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?" "Lord Jesus Christ, thou knowest all things and thou knowest that I love thee. I am a poor, miserable Christian, I will admit, but I do love thee, my Saviour. I stumble and fall, but I love thee. I rise up and try it again;

I don't turn loose forever. Lord God, thou knowest that I love thee." That is one of the sweetest parts of this man's character; his love for Jesus.

Later: "Peter, here are keys, and they are wonderful keys. They unlock the doors of Heaven, the doors of the kingdom of Heaven. You take these keys now and go and open the door. Peter, I want the world to come in." Peter takes them. Now, mark you, he puts the Gentile key in his pocket, but he is ready to use the Jewish key. "I will let the Jews in." And so, at Pentecost, he unlocks that door and he says, "Oh, men of Israel, come up and be saved." And the Jews come, and all around the nations are lying in darkness, and there is that other key rusting in his pocket. And years pass away and there is that key, and the lost Gentile world surging up against the door and no opening. Nobody but Jews! Heaven is for Jews! And on top of a house Peter is praying. How on earth can that man pray with that unused key in his pocket? And while he is praying he sees something white. He is on top of the house, and there is not a thing between him and the sky, and he sees a great white sheet knit together at the four corners, coming down like a great snowflake, and he looks over into it and what a sight! No Roman emperor in his amphitheatre ever saw the sight; no man on earth but Noah ever saw the like. Every beast and bird and reptile on earth was there in that sheet, the lion, the tiger, the skulking wolf, the hissing snake, the slimy snail, the loathsome vulture. And God says, "Peter, kill and eat." Now what do you suppose he said? "Not so, Lord, not so." There is the man that said to Christ, "You must not suffer." There is the man that said, "You must not wash my feet." There is the man whose past education clings to him yet, and he says, "I never have in my life eaten anything unclean, and I don't propose to commence now. I can't eat snails and tigers and lions and condors and things of that kind; they are unclean." God says, "Peter, what I have cleansed don't you call unclean. Don't contradict God. What I mean is this: you have held that key in your pocket and the Gentile world is lost. You call them dogs; you call them tigers; you say they are not worthy to touch the hem of your garment. You have a contempt for the fallen and the outcast. You robe yourself in your propriety, your primness, and say, 'I don't want to touch such people. They are unclean, not so Lord.'" I have seen churches become so proper that there was not a bit of salvation in all their services, so exceedingly fastidious that they would actually quote as Scripture that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." What Jesus meant was this, "I told you that I died for all men. I told you to carry my gospel to the benighted and the lost and the fallen, and you have held it back. O Peter, how dare you re-build that wall of partition? I break it down, and I will roll back on their hinges the doors of salvation, and I say, Let the fallen come.

Let sinners come. Man, man, don't try to hold that door shut. Don't stand with your propriety and say, 'Salvation is not for such people.' Don't look at God and say, 'Not so, Lord; not so, Lord, that crowd is not clean enough for me.'" The Lord have mercy on you, brethren, if you have the feeling of Peter in your heart.

I am now going to give you a bit of tradition to coincide with Scriptures. Peter was in Rome, and he was leaving the city on account of the persecution there; and as he was going out of the city he met in a vision the Lord Jesus going into the city, and he says, "Lord, where are you going?" And he says, "I am going there to be crucified again." Peter says, "I understand, that means me. I remember you have told me how I must die; that I must be crucified as my Lord was crucified. Oh, martyrdom, I turn not away from you again. I tried to serve thee living; it has been a miserable life; but I have done what God enabled me to do, and now it is time for my life to stop. Here, persecutors, nail my hands as they nailed my Lord's. Nail my feet as they nailed His. A servant is no better than his Lord. Crucify me. Let me die as Jesus died, only as I once denied Him, crucify me head down." And Peter has gone and his life has ended. Look now at this ended life. Behold the rugged outline, and never again judge of a man's relation to God from an occasional word or deed. The spiritual life is a development.

And in the name of that Lord Jesus, tonight I stand where had been a wall, a wall of partition, and I hold up before you the great fact that the door is wide open for the lost. Men who are like tigers, come. Men who are like lions, come. Ye birds of prey, come. Ye fallen ones, come. Come! Come! The door is open. Jesus died to save you. Oh, come to Him for life. I dare tonight to stand here and announce it as the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that He came into the world to save sinners. Sinners. And if I saw men gambling, I would say, "He will save gamblers, come." And if I saw men stealing, I would say, "O thief, He saved one just like you on the cross, come." And if I saw a drunkard, I would go up to him as he was lying down in the gutter, and I would say, "O drunkard, rise up and the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse thee from all sin. You have been drunkards, liars, thieves, gamblers, but God has washed you clean." Oh, that the lesson of the great white sheet let down from Heaven would impress itself upon your hearts tonight. And I stand before that open door and I plead with any man, any woman, any boy, any girl, and I say, salvation is for you if you will only have it.

Note. ---The suggestion of this theme came from Spurgeon, who being dead yet speaketh. But "his" sermon is one "indeed." B.H.C.

### GONE FOREVER TO RETURN NO MORE

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### GONE FOREVER TO RETURN NO MORE



# 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).**



## Derailed by Ike...

Greetings and grace to you, dear reader. I pray this finds you doing well and deeply blessed.

Remember when I told you that nothing was a done deal in TDCJ until it actually happened? Well, that bitter truth has raised its ugly head and bitten me once again.

Anyone who has read this column over the last nine months knows I've been waiting to go to a culinary arts program at another unit. However, as it turns out, I won't be going, at least not anytime soon.

No, I haven't changed my mind about cooking. I aspire to be a chef as much as I ever have. But the pursuit of my associate degree has placed a difficult hurdle in my path to chef-dom. Here is what happened:

After nine months on a waiting list my name finally came up for the culinary program. But when the roster of my class was made they looked on the computer and saw that I was enrolled in college academic classes and promptly scratched me from the roster. It didn't matter that the academic semester was going to end a week and a half before the culinary program was to begin. With a quick tap of the delete button nine months of waiting was for naught.

TDCJ has a policy that if an inmate is enrolled in college they can't be transferred for a vocational trade class, which is what the culinary arts program is. I'm not opposed to the policy, I just think it was misapplied in my situation because there were eight working days from the end of my academic semester and the start of the vocational program; plenty of time to transfer me for the class.

Then, after I found out I was deleted from the roster, I was told that if I still wanted to go I'd have to re-submit an application, wait another nine months to a year to come back up for the class, "and" not take any college classes while I wait--lest I get bumped off the list again.

For now I'm still in college. When I found out I wasn't going anywhere, I immediately registered for the fall semester.

However, I must admit I'm torn between the two. On one hand I want to finish my degree, but on the other hand I want to take the culinary arts program,

too. Cooking is going to be my career; I truly believe that is where the Lord is leading me.

Now, the culinary program is college level, it's a series of five classes totaling 15 credit hours that I can apply toward the elective requirements of my degree. But do I dare sit out two, maybe three, academic semesters just to be able to take this program? I have until the end of the semester in December to decide.

If any of my free-world readers would like to chime in with advice or opinion, I'd welcome them at: David G. Hoffman # 809805; 3 Jester Road; Richmond, TX 77406.

And from all of my readers I would request your prayers in this matter.

As for other goings on with me I have changed shifts and jobs in the kitchen. I'm now the 2<sup>nd</sup> shift Diet Cook. I went from helping cook the main course for 900 to cooking the entire meal for one hundred. I made the switch because working from 2-10 a.m. and then going to class several days a week from 6-9 p.m. was getting to be a bit much. I liked my old position better but my new schedule is too good to pass up.

Please continue to pray for me, dear reader, as I struggle with educational decisions while meandering down this path we call life on the inside. . .

\*\*\*\*\*

Due to power outage and lockdown conditions during hurricane Ike I was not able to complete a column on time. Please bear with me and keep me in your prayers.

The Lord willing I will have a fresh and meaningful column next time.

Bro. Jeff and family--I love you guys and you're in my thoughts and prayers daily.

Krystal Ruthann--I love and miss you very much.

Bro. Kevin--I love you, man. Keep your head up, you're not alone.



## Saviour's Fashion

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-all the figurative expressions employed respecting Him, have in themselves something extensively important and instructive; and we do well to meditate upon them, without allowing the idea of their sameness for descriptive of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, demands the closest investigation.

I am led to this remark at the opening of my discourse by the impression made upon my own mind in the reading of this verse, by the word "fashion," "being found in fashion." I could not help diverting my attempt for a moment unto the foolish use made of this word and contemplating what apes and fools persons make of themselves spending almost their last sixpence to follow what they call the fashion of the day. And then we are frequently told that some great personage set the fashion. Now I have to invite your attention to the great Personage Who has set a fashion that He will never allow to be changed. And if you do not go to Heaven in the fashion I am about to describe, you can never get there at all. It is the fashion Jesus Christ Himself was found in, not merely as a man. We must go a little into particulars about it, and if you think I am likely to be a man of fashion this week, I shall plead guilty to it, and not shrink from it. But, mind you, I am to keep the fashion before me.

Moses was a man of "fashion." He was commanded to make everything relative to the tabernacle after the "fashion" shown to him. So also the people of the living God, as they pass through the world, are directed not to fashion themselves according to the former lusts in their ignorance. Moreover, even the prospect of glory is put into these words: He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil. 3:21). And so I shall have to tell you, that he that is in "fashion" with Christ on the earth, shall be in fashion with Him in Heaven, and have a body "fashioned like unto his glorious body," to wear in His presence to all eternity.

This will suffice by way of exordium, although I could say some very severe things about the followers of worldly "fashion;" but it is of no use; for sure I am that unless the grace of God teaches them with regard to their appearance before the world, and the circumstances in which they move, no argument of mine will do it. I shall, therefore at once come to the subject, and, first, dwell a little on the "fashion" in which Christ was found; then on the obedience and suffering He endured in that "fashion;" and, thirdly, upon His rendering that "fashion" permanent and unchangeable.

I. Let us keep to old-fashioned things, as this is the "fashion" set before us. First, let

us offer a word or two about the "fashion" in which Christ was found; "being found in fashion as a man," sinless humanity was His "fashion"---sinless humanity, pure, holy, harmless, undefiled; and yet it was a perfect humanity, body and soul, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, not ashamed to call us brethren. Nay, more, it is emphatically stated that He was made in all things like unto His brethren, yet without sin. There is the "fashion." Our precious Redeemer would not have been competent to His work, had this not been the case. There were thousands of sinful men on the earth, who had been made the recipients of God's grace, many of whom had been employed as prophets, seers, and priests, under the Old Testament dispensation; and many of them were sent of God for the accomplishment of His all-important work. But not one of them, nor all of them together, would do for a Mediator---not one of them, nor all of them together, would do for a Surety, a Substitute. There was not one without the taint and corruption of Adam's nature, the blood of his fallen state running through all their veins. It follows, therefore, that the glorious Personage found in this sinless fashion was Himself sinless. "A body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5). A body prepared in the ordinary way of generation would not have done. The Holy Ghost overshadowed the virgin: as it is written, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35)---as sinless in His manhood as in His Godhead---as incapable of sin in His human nature as in His Divine. From His birth to His death, the world, and Satan, and the scribes and Pharisees, looked with eagle eyes, but found nothing in Him. His own challenge ran, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46). The Father's testimony even of His human nature was, "I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). This was the prophet whom the Lord God had raised up, as Moses predicted, "A prophet shall the LORD your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear" (Acts 7:37).

In the first place, mark the perfection of the manhood of Christ. One taint in Jesus' blood would have destroyed the whole of His work. The capability of as much as a sinful thought in Christ would have rendered entirely abortive all He had come to accomplish on the earth. It must be a perfect sacrifice, a perfect obedience, and required a perfect being to perform it. When I have dwelt a little in my secret musings on this point, and contemplated with holy joy the perfections of our Brother born for adversity, I think of that perfect manhood assumed and dwelt in by every attribute of the Deity. This is the

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## Saviour's Fashion

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"fashion" Jesus assumed for the purpose of redemption, which we shall presently show. **"It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell"** (Col. 1:19). What fulness? "Why," says the apostle, **"in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"** (Col. 2:9). So that all the attributes and perfections of the Godhead were veiled within the manhood that obeyed and suffered for the redemption and salvation of His people.

Right views of the person of Christ lie at the bottom of everything in theology, and the errors (most, if not all) that are abroad in the world, take their rise from erroneous notions about the person of Christ. For instance, Arminianism is very near akin to Socinianism, for if it believed in the Godhead of Christ, it could not reject His sovereignty; it could not reject His omnipotence, His omniscience, His immortality; and consequently could not reject the perfection of His salvation. I therefore look on the Arminian system as nearly allied to the Socinian, for although it does not in words deny the essential Deity of Christ, it denies it in effect; for if He be a God, how, according to them, is it that He should not set like one?--if He be a God, how is it that they make Him to disagree with the Father, and with the Holy Ghost, by atoning for more than either of the other Persons in the Trinity would love or save? If there is this disagreement between the Persons of the Deity, there ceases to be a Deity. I take this only as a sample. Such things serve but to forward the cause of Atheism. Let us come to the precious Word of God, which avows, that **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"** (John 1:1). Then, if it be at once admitted--and admitted it must be by every Christian--that He Who traveled the land of Judea, and went about doing good--that He Who worked at His reputed father's trade as a carpenter--that He Who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief--was God, and that the great mystery of godliness lies in His being manifest in the flesh--then the "fashion" in which He was found, will be

found to be the only fashion that can save the sinner, and glorify God. O beloved, all the glorified spirits in Heaven are in love with this fashion. They will never change it. They owe their glory to it, and would not go into any other.

But mark--our precious Christ was found in fashion as a man, yet that man assumed, and dwelt in, by all the perfections of the Deity rendered Him capable of performing all the work of salvation and redemption. I put "salvation" first, because the Word of God does so. He hath saved us and redeemed us--my salvation and my redemption, my Saviour and my Redeemer; so that the omnipotence of Christ is called forth in the midst of all the work--the omniscience of Christ pervades in the hearts of those who are saved--the Mediator is honoured--the eternity of Christ is asserted. **"Before Abraham was, I am"** (John 8:58), and the everlasting glory He shall maintain with the Father is contained in His closing prayer, **"O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was"** (John 17:5).

When our precious Christ entered in to the covenant, it was officially on the part of a covenant people. . . . When He gave forth the promise to bruise the serpent's head, it was on behalf of His covenant people, His own seed. When He set forth all the types and shadows under the Mosaic economy, it was officially for a covenant people; and although some persons seem to deny this, their denial amounts to nothing but falsehood, for we know from Scripture, that the atonement was to be for all Israel. Moreover, when He is pointed out by the prophets, His coming is on behalf of His covenant people. And when He came into the world, He says, "I came to search for my sheep;" **"I lay down my life for the sheep"** (John 10:15); **"I . . . know my sheep, and am known of mine"** (John 10:14). There is a connection, an official union, a special purpose pointed out in these Scriptures, and many more--a design to be accomplished--that the election of grace, chosen in the council of peace, distinct from the world, adopted as His family, and registered in the Book of Life; when fallen, and ruined, and lost, enslaved and vile, should be brought back, should be redeemed, should be forgiven,

should be saved, and that Jesus should be the doer of it. He was the official covenant Head He engaged to enter into the work, and go through with it, and complete it, which He did when tabernacling here below. . . .

That is the fashion in which our precious Christ was found. I know very well that some people do not like the fashion. I know there are some people who would have it torn and tattered to pieces, to put in a fashion more like their own nature, in order to accommodate proud free-will. And the fashion in which Jesus is sometimes set forth, in this day of awful rebuke and blasphemy, is sometimes like the following:--That He came from Heaven to complete a great work, and suffer an immense suffering, for no definite object; that is, merely to put man into a savable state, that sinners might be told much was done, and that there is mercy in the heart of Jesus--that He is able to save them, but that it was to be left to them, left for their own final veto, left for their prayers, and repenting, and believing, to make that complete, which Jesus had only partly done. I cannot bear that. It is worse than the paltry fashions in which people dress up in our day; it is worse than the sweep's fashion on May-day; it is utterly worthless and contemptible. I could not bear the fashion. Now the fashion in which I find Jesus doing the great work, is that of a perfect sinless man, truly and properly God, immutable, eternally the same, in the union of His Godhead and manhood, . . . under everlasting responsibility to accomplish, bring about and perfect all that was designed and planned in the covenant of grace, before all time. That is the fashion--my fashion I admire.

II. Now let us pass on, after these few cursory remarks, to glance at the obedience and sufferings of the Saviour. **"Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"** (Phil. 2:8). He humbled Himself. Where am I to find any pretext for human pride? Where am I to find a single palliation of it? The worst of all sins, the greatest of all sins, the parent of all sins, the first of all sins, was pride, that hurled the apostate spirits from their seats in glory. 'Twas pride that prompted our first parents to eat the forbidden fruit, and thereby ruin all the human race. **"Ye shall be as gods."** Pride snapped at the promise immediately. It was pride that set them sewing fig leaves together; it is pride that has driven mankind to excesses of every description; it is pride that keeps men from accepting the free grace salvation that is in Christ Jesus; it is pride that bids the stubborn sinner stand erect, and refuse to bow to the scepter of Jesus as an absolute Sovereign; it is pride that rejects the doctrines of grace; it is pride that spurns a full salvation, and will have

it part and parcel of man's work, instead of being entirely the work of God.

But **"He humbled himself?"** Oh, that God may hide pride from our eyes, and especially from our hearts! The proudest man is the man most unlike Christ. **"He humbled himself."** The proudest man is the man that has run as far as he can from God--the proudest man is the man that hath nothing of Christianity but the name. **"He humbled himself."** See what lessons of humility He has left; although He might have commanded Herod's throne--and Herod was mightily afraid of it--although He might have commanded every monarch's scepter on the earth--and the Israelites were simple enough to expect that He came for that purpose. He might have fixed His position in what are called circumstances of reputation, with plenty of this world's goods at His command, for **"the cattle upon a thousand hills"** are His--**"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of Hosts"** (Hag. 2:8). But He took on Himself the form of a servant--made Himself of no reputation. I never read of His possessing a house; but He says, **"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head"** (Matt. 8:20). Oh, when I find Christians fretting and pining, because they cannot grasp as much as they would, to gratify the flesh, I am horrified at their unlikeness to Christ! He rejected it all. Cold nights upon the mountains did He voluntarily suffer, hunger and thirst did He endure, when **"the cattle upon a thousand hills"** (Ps. 50:10), He could have commanded as His own.

**"He humbled himself?"** Nay, even among His own disciples, He humbled Himself. He had heard their contentions about who was to be the greatest, the common pride of man's heart; and towards the close of His ministry, when He knew that all the power in Heaven and earth was given into His hands, He took a basin of water and a towel, and girding Himself, proceeded to wash His disciples' feet, the very business of slaves in those days. Peter was astonished at the condescension of His Lord and Master, and said, **"Thou shalt never wash my feet."** **"He humbled himself."** He did not sit down in a lordly style, and commanded His disciples to wash His feet; but He says, **"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet"** (John 13:14).

**"He humbled himself."** Mark, how He humbled Himself still further, in the presence of Pilate, His false accusers, the chief priests and scribes, and the Roman soldiers, with their cruel mockeries. When smitten, buffeted, blind-folded, crowned with thorns, falsely accused He was led as a lamb to the slaughter; He opened not His mouth, rendered not reviling for reviling, but **"He humbled**

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## Saviour's Fashion

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**himself.** I have sometimes pursued these features of my blessed Lord's conduct, till I have stood ashamed and confounded at the petty pride of my own heart. Oh, that I were more like Jesus! **"He humbled himself."** Nor shall I forget the impression made in my mind, when reviewing, the other day, the contrast between the Master and the servant. We see how Christ stood before the august tribunal, to be condemned by Pilate, and how meek, and humble, and lowly, and speechless He was. Paul, His beloved servant, in similar circumstances, finds the old Adam nature ungovernable; and when smitten on the cheek unjustly, burst into a piece of the old Adam-temper, and said to the High Priest, **"God shall smite thee, thou whited wall"** (Acts 23:3). But when reproved, He says, "I stand convicted: this is not like my Master---this is not being humble as He was;" and Paul was immediately humbled, too.

Now I dwell upon these points more definitely, because I know that there is a prodigious mass of inconsistent pride among many of God's people, and in my own heart. Oh for grace to subdue it! I confess I have here deviated a little from the course I intended to pursue; but these things were laying on my heart. I must now invite your attention to the obedience of Christ.

**"He humbled himself"** in the very fashion as a man. Although He was a perfect man, a sinless man, a holy man, and truly and properly God dwelling in the manhood, yet He humbled Himself, the least of all; and through that species of humiliation, He became obedient--obedient to the Divine law, obedient to His Father's will, obedient to His covenant engagements, which were of a voluntary nature; obedient to the ordination of Providence, for which He was marked during His ministry on the earth; obedient unto death. And in that obedience do not lose sight of the fact that He was. . . performing that obedience for you and me---performing that obedience to the Divine law, that it might have no demand upon His people---performing that obedience to His Father's will, because He knew that none would do that will to the full extent if He did not---performing that obedience to the circumstances of Providence, through which He passed, without complaining, without murmuring, without a fretful enviousness of those who stood around Him faring sumptuously every day. No; He was obedient to the circumstances through which He was called to pass. . . and at length obedient unto death. And although in the sight of men, and in point of fact, His death was murder, He bowed obedience to it; although it was cruel and ignominious, He was obedient unto

it. And, even when He felt its bitterest pangs---(Oh, my Lord, endear thyself to me by these things!)---even in the midst of its bitterest pangs, when His humanity cried out, **"Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"** (Matt. 26:39). His inflexible obedience made Him exclaim, **"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."** Yea, that very obedience is described after the last of His sufferings, in the last moment. It is said, He bowed His head in acquiescence--bowed His head and gave up the ghost--bowed His head, as if He would say, "It is all finished now:" He did say so---bowed His head, as if He would say, "My engagements are fulfilled, the kingdom of Heaven is opened, righteousness is wrought out and brought in, my people are eternally safe"---He bowed His head, in token of obedience, and gave up the ghost.

Shall I dwell a moment longer on these sufferings of His human nature, just to remind you that they were vicarious? He stood forth as the representative of His people, in their name and on their behalf. Oh how I loathe those who would change the word vicarious for promiscuous. Oh how I loathe the wickedness that would strip this precious God-man, found in this fashion, of His responsibility. Oh how I abhor the blasphemy that would rob Christ of the certainty of seeing the travail of His soul. Oh how I shrink from the very approach and company of those who would presume to be sharers with Christ, in the way of merit. May God keep you and me eternally from such collision. It was vicariously that He obeyed, and that He suffered. The law saw all your debt and mine cancelled by His obedience. Justice acknowledged all the vengeance due to you and me to be exhausted and poured out upon the glorious victim, who stood forth as the responsible Surety for His people. All the attributes of Deity were glorified, exalted, and honored, when He obeyed and suffered on behalf of His people. Neither the truth of God, nor the holiness of God, nor the justice of God can demand payment, when all is paid. And Jesus having paid the mighty sum, having removed the enormous load, having put away sin from His people, by the sacrifice of Himself, in this precious glorious work, when found in fashion as a man, His people are exonerated, redeemed, emancipated, secured, and will be preserved and saved with an everlasting salvation, on account of what He did and suffered by His death.

Moreover, His obedience and sufferings were, and are, acceptable. They were acceptable to God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, as the stipulation of the covenant fulfilled. They were acceptable to all the glorified spirits, gone to Heaven before these sufferings took place, all of whom held their seats I should say precariously, if they had not known Him

to be faithful to His engagements. Had Christ failed in His engagements, failed in His obedience, failed in His sufferings, failed in His merit, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with all the Old Testament saints, must have been hurled from their seats to the bottomless pit. They sat gloriously. They saw how acceptable the precious work of Christ was. While the Father was pleased, they could not well be otherwise; and well pleased they were, because the bond was honored, on account of which they obtained their seats in glory.

Let me follow this thought a little further. The obedience and sufferings of Christ are acceptable to all on the earth who are taught by the Holy Ghost. Mark that. There are a great many who pass for Christians, who are not taught of the Holy Ghost; and to these the precious and perfect obedience and sufferings of Christ are not found acceptable. They will not accept of them. **"We will not have this man to reign over us"** (Luke 19:14), is the cry; but to all that are taught of God, the doing and dying of Jesus is most acceptable. And shall I tell you why? It reaches their case, it comes down to their ruin, it brings them all they want, it gives them all they need, it takes hold of them without consulting their wills, it holds them fast amidst all opposition; it secures to them life Divine to be enjoyed on the earth, and life eternal beyond the grave; it brings Heaven down in participation, and secures them for the enjoyment of Heaven in its consummation. It is very acceptable to them, because the obedience and sufferings of Christ include all that is requisite for full salvation, secure all that is contained in salvation, open all the blessings of salvation, and bring the consummation of all that complete salvation in the presence of God.

I should like my hearers to pause, and ask whether the doing and dying of the suffering Jesus is acceptable to you. All the grace, all the Divine merit, are the work of one Person. All who fear God, are to be personally accepted---all who have their names written and engraven on His heart, have the will to accept it created by the Holy Ghost. So that all the glory, from first to last, must and shall redound to its Divine Author. That is the acceptableness of it. I candidly acknowledge that for forty years past, and more, this fashion has been so acceptable, that I could not bear to have its shape altered in any way; this fashion has been so acceptable to me, that I cannot assume any other; that I cannot endure any other to be introduced---this fashion has been so acceptable, that I have allowed no interference with it. Well, may we not have a little adornment? None at all. You may adorn your doctrines, if you please, so far as respects your life, but to adorn the fashion of the obedience and sufferings of the Saviour is impossible. It is all over glorious, the admiration of Heaven, the terror of Hell, the joy of His

people upon the earth, and that which brings the entire revenue of praise and glory to all the attributes and perfections of Deity. I will not have this fashion altered.

One thing more. The doing and dying of Christ in this fashion, so completely, so perfectly, so entirely, was triumphant, as well as acceptable: so triumphant, that the apostle says concerning it, **"Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly"** (Col. 2:15), triumphing over them upon the cross, and then the prediction was fulfilled: **"O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction"** (Hos. 13:14). The ancient promise was carried out and performed, that He should bruise the serpent's head; and He has never lost the bruise to this hour. It is true, he put forth his most formidable resistance, employed all his Pharisee sharpshooters, and all the traitors he could thrust into his camp, and the powers of darkness seemed to muster every possible engine and effect, for the purpose of vanquishing this precious God-man, found in fashion as a man, for the purpose of redemption. And what was the result? They mustered to be conquered, they mustered to be vanquished; to push the old serpent in the vanguard, to get his head bruised, and meet the power of the all-glorious Captain, as suspended on the cross, Who took that very cross, and inflicted such a blow on the old serpent's head, that the traces of it will never be obliterated. He must wear it for ever. According to God's declaration, therefore, Christ's dying and suffering were triumphant.

Now, would it not be the greatest of all absurdities to imagine the complete triumph of a conqueror, and then that he should lie down, go to sleep, and let his enemy return, and carry off the spoil? It would not only be an absurdity, but madness. Would any officer, any general, any field marshal, ever do such a thing? I never heard of it. But here is the abomination. Free-will says, "Jesus did die, did conquer, and did triumph, and then retired from the field, and left the dead, the wounded, the groaning, and the spoils to the caprice of man, and the devil may come and take them back, if man does not prevent him." A pretty Captain, truly! I would not own Him as the Captain of my salvation, if He had done this. Glory to Him, every soldier of the cross is saved, every wound inflicted is healed, all the spoil won in the battle is secured, the entire triumph is preserved, the victors with laurel wreathed, and the glorious King of kings honored thereby.

III. Now let us say a word or two, in the third place, relative to His rendering this fashion permanent. I was amazingly struck with this. It is a fashion which never changes. It is immutable, it is unfallible, it is invincible, it cannot know any change. I trust you will forgive me, if

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## Saviour's Fashion

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I detain you a moment, with a contrast of the monster that pretends to this. Popery pretends to immutability and infallibility, and frequently we hear the most ignorant and besottedly superstitious amongst them, catching up this saying, technically, from their priests, "Our religion is unchanged and unchangeable." What a lie! It changes every day, it changes to every shape, it changes to suit the customs of every nation, it changes to everything barbarous and horrid. Look, what is the fashion of Popery in Italy? The fashion of the nightmare, a dark incubus, sitting with a morbid crushing power upon the intellects of its inhabitants. That is the fashion there. Is the fashion the same in Spain? Until very lately, the fashion there was a barbarous inquisition, racking human invention, for the tortures of God's saints. What is the fashion in France? Scoffing Infidelity, for after performing what they call the mass, they turn around and laugh, and are humbugging the people. What is the fashion in Germany? The fashion of rag-fair, where an old coat is exhibited, forsooth, as a holy coat. Popery changes its fashion everywhere, and yet they tell us it is "unchanged." What is the fashion in Ireland? The midnight assassin. What is the fashion in America? Libertinism. What is the fashion in England? A coquette, seducing all that it can possibly win with its fascinating charms. There is a changeable thing. Is it like our fashion? No! I could mention twenty other fashions, all as vile as he who invents them. But I merely give these as a contrast to the glorious old fashion of Christ's work, the fashion of His obedience, the fashion of His perfect salvation. It is immutable, precisely the same thing every day. It is perfectly infallible salvation, for it was never known to fail any poor sinner who confided in it. If it could fail in any, it could fail in me, but, blessed be God, it saves to the uttermost. It is infallible, it is an invincible salvation, for it comes right home to the sinner's heart and conscience, pierces him through and through, kills him and then makes him alive. I cannot find such another fashion of religion in Heaven, earth, or Hell. He was found in fashion as a man: I love His fashion. My Bible is a fashionable book: I love my Bible which declares my salvation in Christ, my covenant Head, to be secured by the immutable decree of the Deity.

Just mark, further, that this is the only fashion in which salvation can be found. I borrow this from my book of fashion again, this precious book: "**Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved**" (Acts 4:12). Jesus, and Jesus only--His perfect work--and that in His

official character. . . Oh the blessedness of having a right view of this important point. We cannot allow this fashion to be changed for a single moment. We go according to the fashion shown to Moses in the mount--we go according to the fashion of our precious Christ, and when salvation is received and accepted, we shall go very far by the mighty power of His grace, to the imitating of this pattern.

Now I must carry you back, for a moment, to the first portion of the subject--that of His sinless humanity. I do not mean to say we shall reach that on this side of the grave; but I insist upon it, that where the full salvation of Christ is accepted, and put on, worn, enjoyed, there will be such a loathing of sin, such a hatred of its nature and existence, such a fleeing from it, as from the face of a serpent, that the banner will be unfurled by every such recipient of God's grace, with the inscription, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Oh, where the fashion of Jesus' perfect manhood is established, the soul will desire to reach what the apostle John stated, "**As he is, so are we in this world**" (I John 4:17). Moreover, "**as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation**" (I Pet. 1:15), and godliness. See that we keep the fashion. Was Jesus holy? Then are His people holy also. Was Jesus separated from the world? All His people love that separation and pray to be more and more distinguished from the world, and kept from it. Was Jesus under the fashion of a man anxious to obey all the Father's will? Then says the apostle, be ye "**as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy**" (I Pet. 1:15). Now I argue from this quotation, the vast importance of the souls that have really accepted the precious Christ of God; they have been brought to put on His righteousness, and wear it; they are clothed with it from above, and delighted with this fashion, and should pray for grace to tread in His steps, to glorify His name with their bodies and their spirits, which are His.

Oh, let it never be said of us, beloved, according to the words I read at the commencement of our service, that "**all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's**" (Phil. 2:21). God forbid. Rather let it be our anxious concern to imitate His pattern, to tread in His steps, and prove we are emulous of His likeness, and Spirit, and mind, believing and confiding in His perfect work.

I hasten just to remark, once more, that none go to God but in this fashion. I presume you all know, that in this country, persons about to be presented

at court, or who have been frequently allowed to go there, study the fashion in which they ought to appear, and whether they would be likely to be rejected by the porters or door-keepers. I well remember reading one instance of a person going to court, who is named in a parable of our Lord. He was not in the fashion. He went in an old-fashioned rag. I suppose he had been to Reeves and bought an old coat. He had not gotten the fashionable dress. And what said the king? He would have the fashion: are you in the fashion? The fashionable dress at court is imputed righteousness. What was the result? What said the Saviour? How camest thou here? Take him away, he will disgrace the whole court. He dishonors even the name of the monarch. "**Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness**" (Matt. 22:13). That sentence will go forth against you as sure as I am now preaching, if you attempt to approach Heaven without Christ's righteousness on. You must have the fashionable robe, which has been the fashion in Heaven from the day Adam and Eve went there, to the present. It is the unvarying fashion of Christ, and will be the fashion to all eternity. It is the robe in which all the kings' daughters are clad, and every vessel of mercy must be found at court in the righteousness of the Son of God.

Let me remind you, before I close, that you cannot go to court, even now, with any hope of success, unless you go in fashion. You must go to court in the name, and pleading, the merits and obedience, the sufferings, the doing and dying of this precious God-man, Who was found in fashion as a man; and unless you go so, all your prayers will be shut out. Nay, they would be sin. To go not thus, you will never get an answer. If you go not thus, vain will be all the eloquent strains man can learn. Nothing will be acceptable in the ear of Jehovah, but that which is presented in the proper fashion, the fervent cry of a believing sinner, pleading the merits and righteousness of the Son of God. I can find no acceptance otherwise, even now--I can find no comfort, no joy in reading, without this even now: I therefore resolve to put it on, and wear it at once, and when I cross the river Jordan, and quit the wilderness, and enter the world of spirits, I expect to be found, as Paul says, "**Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith**" (Phil. 13:9). Angels will admire it, the glorified spirits will hail my brotherhood, as I approach their ranks, the Father of Mercies will smile at my wedding dress, and welcome me, the Holy Ghost will perfume it with unction from on high, and Christ will acknowledge that He dyed it with His own blood, and that it is the same He wears.

Such a prospect should cheer our

hearts, such a prospect will bear the closest examination and investigation, and I entreat my hearers who are coming to the Lord's table this evening, to take up this fashion. They may say, not as is the world's fashion, who shall have the preference in dignity? But come there in this fashion. It is he who stoops the lowest who is most in fashion; it is he who pleads most earnestly the blood and righteousness of Christ, who is the most in fashion; it is he who has the strongest faith in Christ, who is the most acceptable; and therefore be men and women of fashion, at the Lord's table this night, abhorring and spurning the world's silly notions; and putting on the righteousness of Christ, adorned with all the Spirit's graces, girt with the girdle of truth, having on the breast plate of righteousness, and thus approach the table of the Lord as welcome guests. What a contrast between those, and the rejectors of Christ and His righteousness! I do humbly hope that my hearers will retire from the house of God, adoring this precious Christ for His humiliation, for His obedience, for the fashion He assumed, and the work He did, and the triumphs He won, and blessing and praising Him, that He will not allow the fashion of saving sinners to be altered.

May the Holy Ghost fasten these things upon the hearts of my hearers, and conform them more and more to the image of Christ, for which the family of God were predestinated, and Israel's covenant God shall have all the glory.



## What If Free Will

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lima beans." As a matter of fact, if left to my own wishes and desires, I will continue to choose corn every time I come, as even the smell of lima beans is repugnant to me. This is also a reflection of my nature and is an exhibition of my free will, correct? Wrong!

To say that man is a moral free agent is quite correct. As displayed in the second setting, we are "free" agents to make personal choices, but as proven in the first, our "will" is anything but free. It is tied to our 1) ability, 2) nature and 3) circumstances. To claim to have a free will is nonsense. My free will wants to sprout wings and be president of the stars making up the Belt of Orion. "Will" cannot give that to me.

Ah! The bondage of the will. Almost all theology will come down to this summary statement. Is the will bound or free? The crux of works versus grace; the conflict of total depravity and easy beliefism; the center stage of debate in Calvinism and Arminianism. What I'd like to do in this article is follow the logical end of Free Willism and see if it

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## What If Free Will

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is what we thought it would be. On so many occasions a theory sounds good and applicable to a certain situation, but if we follow it through to its logical conclusion, we are much of the time surprised.

First let me show a few examples of what I mean when I say our will is in bondage. Because it's very important to see what it is in bondage to.

### The Will of Man is in Bondage to His Nature

As I look out the window, I see a cat stalking a robin in the front yard. Suddenly she springs and the bird hops a few steps, and then springs into flight. The cat chases for a few yards and then takes off in flight after the bird... Err, hold on here. No, the cat, no matter how much she desires or wills to keep pursuit of her prey, "cannot" erupt in a flutter of wings she doesn't own. Her nature restricts her actions! Like every other cat in history before her, she watches helplessly and futilely while the robin makes good his escape. **"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil"** (Jer. 13:23).

### The Will of Man is in Bondage to His Abilities

I love to hear the members of Big Creek Baptist Church sing in the choir and various specials from week to week. The talent the Lord has given to some of His children is awesome to me. I would love to be able to sing like some of these Wayne county songbirds, but it simply will never sound as good, because my will is bound to the abilities the Lord has blessed me with.

Will I ever get pregnant? I think not? No matter my desire for children, a man must get married to a loving woman and together they can do, what neither of them could do alone---again restricted to their varied abilities!

### The Will of Man is in Bondage to His Circumstances

So many opportunities are open to a man here in America that are not available in third world countries around the world. Some have only become available recently through technological breakthroughs. Leonardo da Vinci, no matter what his dream, was simply put, in bondage to the circumstances of fact that so many advances had to be made before Neil Armstrong could take that small step on the moon that was such a giant leap for mankind.

The bondage of despotism and tyranny has circumvented many enlightened desires of men in all of the millennia of the world to date.

Again, I reiterate, that to claim the will of man is completely free is pure hosh-posh. But our desire to put the matter to rest, once for all, leads us further down

this road of error where we will find more warning and caution signs to alert the serious Bible student.

### Where does Road of Free Will Lead?

Before we get to man's free will in salvation, I'd like to ask a question. Is God's will free? Surely for man to have free choice, free rein and free agency, then God the Creator must as well? If God doesn't have a free will, then how could His creation? Surely this is the first exit ramp of our study!

### Must Attribute Free Will to God First!

Free will means an "unbound" will. I think we would understand this as a God that can do anything! God is certainly not bound by anything or any creature of His creation, is He? **"..Thus saith the Lord GOD; There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord GOD"** (Ezek. 12:28). **"..yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it"** (Isa. 46:11). **"..he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"** (Dan. 4:35).

In other words, an "unbound" person would be omnipotent! Hey! God is omnipotent, isn't He? Does that mean He has a free will? Omnipotent broken down, means omni=all - potent=power; all powerful! God, without doubt, has all power! Any child will tell you that God can do anything! In fact there was a childhood song that I was taught by my mother---how did it go? Yes! I remember! It was **"God Can Do Anything but Fail"**! Hey, wait a minute! I also recall that the song perturbed me at times. My God can do "anything"! I have distinct memories telling other children that if God wanted to, He could too, fail! I mean, anything means "anything"!

But, as I grew more mature in God's Word, I realized that the song was correct as written. The Scriptures teach of a God that indeed cannot fail. That would be an abreachment of His sovereign omnipotence and decreed purposes. In fact the Bible is clear that there are several things that God cannot do! **"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began"** (Titus 1:2). God cannot lie, He cannot steal, cheat or be inequitable as He told the Jews of both Ezekiel and Malachi's age. **"Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?"** (Ezek. 18:29).

Now you may not think this next distinction is important, but let's examine it carefully before we make that decision. I believe the Bible depicts a God that has for His primary, underlying attribute that of holiness. The doctrine of Free Will demands a God that has for

His primary, underlying attribute that of omnipotence. Whatever this primary attribute is, will exclusively dictate God's actions and affect every single one of His attributes and emotions.

If God's holiness is His primary and underlying attribute that controls/affects foremost His actions, then that means His power will be restrained into only Holy avenues and purposes. This is why I truly believe that God cannot lie. God will only direct and decree what He has proclaimed moral and just. I think as you take this thought further along in your studies, you will concur that this is a true evaluation of God's nature and also find it a very profitable study!

### The Battle of Supreme Omnipotence versus Supreme Holiness

Let us observe, if we could for a moment or so, where the Road of Free Willism is leading us: if, as a truly unbound free will must be, that God's primary and underlying attribute be indeed His omnipotence.

Free will must mandate that God is able to will to succumb to temptations of evil (lie/steal/cheat), but of course never freely wills to do so. Well, at least we hope He will never freely will thus.

Why, beloved reader? Because, God has all power and if He had free will, then nothing would be impossible! His omnipotence is then forced by His underlying attribute. A God with a free will is able to use His power in any way, shape or form! Even further, as we investigate the implications of this theory, we must admit that this God could love any way He wants---even unjustly or capriciously. Whether He has manifested this or not, and of course we know He hasn't, the "ability" must be there! By the decree of free will!

Let us notice four grave errors that will put potholes in this Road of FreeWillism that I think we're going to have to admit is fraught with errors:

#### 1) In the Mind of Christ

**"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"** (Matt. 4:5-7).

This is a familiar text. Satan assaults our dear Saviour with at least three temptations here. The one quoted above asks the Lord to cast Himself off the pinnacle to prove God's Word that the angels would surely rescue Him. The crux of the matter as we attempt to follow our Shepherd's thought processes is going to cause us to diverge doctrinally. Christ was certainly tempted by Satan, similarly to the way that he will tempt us! What would you do, if tempted in the same

way? WWJD? A very pertinent phrase, that! What Would Jesus Do? Well, simply put, He resisted the temptation and did the right thing, going to Scripture and admonishing Satan and continued living a godly life.

If you believe that God's chief attribute is holiness, then with confidence you may assert that there was no chance in the world for Him to succumb to the temptation. There simply is nothing evil in His holy nature and it is impossible for Him to sin. His will as He considered Satan's words was bound by His immutably holy nature and the only possible result was a rebuff of the deceiver.

If, however, you believe Jesus Christ's free will cannot be bound by anything outside or within, then one is left with the conclusion that the Master could have succumbed to the temptation, but of course resisted triumphantly, as He always will. But the fact of the matter is that if it had been somehow His inscrutable will, He could have fallen into sin by the mere execution of His free will, if of course, it was His hidden will to do so.

#### 2) Capricious Love

**"I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness"** (Mal. 1:2-3).

Why did God love Jacob and hate Esau? This too, is another doctrine that is affected by this free willism, very dear to the hearts of the proponents of this theory. You see the results of Sovereign Grace quite quickly. God loved Jacob because He didn't see Jacob's sins, merely the shed blood of His Precious Son. God hated Esau, because He saw rebellious sin and depravity. Dependant upon your questionee, you will hear that God chose Jacob and not Esau in unconditional election, or that Jacob chose God in time and Esau didn't.

What if Esau repented, though, and sought God? There's even Scripture for that: **"For ye know how that afterward, when he (Esau) would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears"** (Heb. 12:17). Could God have tired of Jacob's conniving ways and re-examined Esau's case against the appropriately named "supplanter". Surely a God of free will could consider Esau a more likely case, coming with tears, looking for repentance and forgiveness? You don't find Jacob doing that!

Yet, you find uncomfortable editors of the Scripture putting in their margins that God didn't hate, Esau, He merely loved him less. Lest the God of free will be considered a capricious lover!

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What can you tell us about the woman named Deborah in Judges 4:4? How would she compare with women of our time?

Mike DeWitt Sr.  
PO Box 950  
Springfield, OR 97477

Pastor  
Parkway Landmark  
Baptist Church  
PO Box 950  
Springfield, OR 97477



In our day the strength of our Baptist women is not celebrated. God fearing Baptist women of faith abound in the Lord's churches and are the ones who a lot of times work behind the scenes to aid in the accomplishment of the church's work. I could not even imagine a church without faithful Baptist women.

Women who fear God are simply and wonderfully women who fear God. Deborah was such a woman of faith who was thrust into man's position for the reason that men were not being faithful to the Divine order. **"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman [is] the man; and the head of Christ [is] God"** (I Cor. 11:3) (Emphasis MD).

I really appreciate that Deborah knew that what she was doing was not only determined by God but gave opportunity for men to deal with the situation at hand. **"And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh"** (Jud. 4:9).

Deborah was definitely a leader, thrust into position to accomplish the plan of God. We may not understand all of God's plan but we see the means in which it was carried out. Exceptions are recorded in God's Word for our learning. We are without excuse in all areas of our service to God regarding the instruction of Holy Writ. This historical account of one of the servants of God serves as a reminder to man and woman that we all have our spheres of work to accomplish.

MIKE DEWITT

Raymond F. Bennett  
Berach Baptist Mission  
271 Gray Road  
Ithaca, NY 14850-8761

Missionary of  
Berea  
Baptist Church  
PO Box 39  
Mantachie, MS 38855



Judges 4:1-9, selected verses... **"And the children of Israel again did evil in**

**the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead....And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand. And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh."**

Actually these verses tell us more about Barak and Israel than they do about Deborah. Deborah can be summed up in these three statements.

1. She was an honest and true worshiper of God. Honest and true worship always issues in humble obedience. As you read this account it is obvious that Deborah did not seek the glory for the victory over Jabin, king of Canaan but that she took the glory only because of Barak's hesitant obedience. If Balak would have obeyed the prophetess, he would have gotten the glory (v. 9).

2. Deborah was a prophetess. She was ordained by God to be a prophetess! Please note that sometimes God "does" ordain female prophetesses. Philip's daughters were prophetesses. **"And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy"** (Acts 21:8-9). See also Luke 2:36. I know of no record of prophetesses after that time, nor are prophetesses mentioned in the epistles.

3. Deborah was a 'gutsy' woman! In the absence of a courageous qualified man, she stepped into the position of leadership, but please note: she did not seek or usurp that position. The leadership position was Barak's! Deborah knew that fact! It was necessary for God to use a woman to point that out to Barak but, in unbelief, Barak still backed away from the responsibility, and the honor

that should have been his.

What this tells us about Barak and Israel in general can also be summed up in three statements.

1. Israel had fallen to a very low spiritual state. **"And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead"** (Italics mine for emphasis). Pastors and spiritual leaders are an essential part of a godly society whether it is Old Testament Israel or the New Testament church. But a believing people should still be able to maintain a level of spiritual obedience even in the temporary absence of a pastor, or in Israel's case, a judge. Israel had failed, as have a lot of professing Baptist churches today.

2. When a spiritual body (remember that Israel was a Theocracy) must be led by a woman it indicates a sad and lowly spiritual state, especially of the men in that society. **"How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man"** (Jer. 31:22). The same is true of a church (or the elected/appointed leadership of a professing church).

3. Barak's timidity clearly shows the lack of men in Israel who were close enough to God to be called directly by God, as was Gideon, or who had the courage to stand up and fight if necessary. Barak literally hid behind Deborah's skirts.

May God be pleased to deliver His church today from such a lowly position! With all due respect to a lot of godly women, may the Lord give us men like Gideon (Judges 6-7) and Phinehas (Num. 25:7-11) instead of make us to be led by a modern day Deborah!

RAY BENNETT

Tom Ross  
6339 County Rd. 15  
South Point, OH 45680

Pastor  
Mt. Pleasant  
Baptist Church  
6939 County Rd. 15  
Chesapeake, OH 45619



Canaan and Sisera, the general of Jabin's army (Jud. 4:2-3). She turned out to be one of Israel's great patriots and was a notable judge.

Deborah was a woman who feared God and exhorted the nation of Israel to repent and turn to God. She had leadership qualities that were quite unique for a woman in the day and time in which she lived. God graced her with wisdom and the ability to delegate responsibility to those under her charge. She enlisted the help of Barak (Jud. 4:8-9) who was instrumental in defeating the armies of Jabin and Sisera. Barak was a man of courage and faith and is mentioned by name in Hebrews 11:32. He believed in the leadership and spiritual qualities of Deborah as evidenced by his desire for her to accompany him as he led his troops against the armies of Sisera.

Deborah was also a woman of keen spiritual insight. God raised her up as a prophetess and revealed to her that Sisera, the general of Jabin's army would die by the hand of a woman (Jud. 4:7-8, 18-22). God inspired Deborah to write one of the most poetic songs of praise in all of Scripture recorded in Judges chapter five.

Deborah was also called **"a mother in Israel"** (Jud. 5:7) implying that she was a woman of grace, integrity, compassion and love. She was truly a remarkable woman who had great influence for good in a time of distress and difficulty.

It is very difficult to answer the second part of the question because it is so general and the circumstances are much different. However, I have no doubt that we have lots of dear sisters in our churches who exemplify the spirit and character of Deborah. May God be pleased to raise up many more God-fearing, patriotic, spiritual and courageous women like Deborah who use their influence for good!

TOM ROSS



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The New Testament Baptist Church located at 12199 Claridon-Troy Road, Claridon Twp, Ohio would like to announce that they are beginning the process of seeking a full time pastor.

The church seeks your prayers in their endeavor to seek the Lord's will in filling this position.

They ask that prospective applicants email them at [ntbc12199@yahoo.com](mailto:ntbc12199@yahoo.com) or by postal mail at New Testament Baptist Church, PO Box 840, Burton, OH 44021.

Upon receiving your inquiry they will contact you. The church understands you will want to know all about them and have compiled a packet with their Statement of Faith and By-laws that can be sent upon request.

## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What can you tell us about a woman named Lydia in Acts 16:14? How would she compare with women of our time?

Tom Ross  
6339 County Rd. 15  
South Point, OH 45680

Pastor  
Mt. Pleasant  
Baptist Church  
6939 County Rd. 15  
Chesapeake, OH 45619



Lydia was a very successful business woman in the city of Philippi. She was a seller of fine purple. She was a devout Jewish proselyte. In fact, when Paul found her she was praying with some other women on the Sabbath day by a river. As Paul preached the Word, the Lord opened the heart of Lydia and saved her by His sovereign grace. She immediately followed the Lord in baptism. She was evangelistic and concerned for those of her household. When she was saved and baptized, those of her household were also converted and baptized. She was a woman of wealth, grace, and hospitality. She opened her home to Paul and his missionary companions. She treated the man of God with kindness, respect, and hospitality. Many commentators believe the church at Philippi met in the spacious home of gracious Lydia.

Lydia was smart, industrious, devout, spiritual, sacrificial, and hospitable. Herbert Lockyer, the author who was famous for writing *All the Women of the Bible* among many others believed that the Holy Spirit may have had Lydia in mind when He inspired Paul to write: **"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord"** (Rom. 12:11). Again, I believe there are many Baptist women in our churches who exemplify the spirit and character of Lydia. Thank God for women who are dedicated to the glory of God, faithful to the Lord's church, kind to preachers, pastors, and missionaries, and concerned for the souls of men.

TOM ROSS

Raymond F. Bennett  
Berach Baptist Mission  
271 Gray Road  
Ithaca, NY 14850-8761

Missionary of  
Berea  
Baptist Church  
PO Box 39  
Mantachie, MS 38855



Acts 16:14-15: **"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.**

**And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."**

We have even less to go on for the answer to this question than we had for Deborah. Nevertheless, the pattern of Scripture helps us a lot here.

The first thing we notice was that Lydia was a business woman and evidently a successful one. The Bible never condemns a woman for being a business woman. The submission of a woman is in the church and to a "godly" husband, not necessarily in the business world. Even in the home the wife is often a better business administrator than her husband, and a good man should not be afraid to let her lead in that area.

Then we must take note that "the Lord" opened Lydia's heart, not the great oratory of Paul and Silas. **"I...will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy"** (Ex. 33:19).

Thirdly we notice that Lydia **"attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."** "Attended" here means she "gave attention to and applied to herself" the things which Paul preached. In our day too many people, both men and women, don't give attention to or apply to themselves the things which are preached, but instead seek some way to avoid the commands and commitment of the Biblical message, and make it more palatable for them and their way of life and worship.

Fourth, we observe that Lydia did not attempt to interfere with or otherwise argue with what Paul preached. The incident in which we are introduced to Lydia was the first time she had heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. That she "worshipped God" tells us that she was either a Jewess or a Jewish proselyte. Her knowledge of God was all from the Old Testament and Jewish tradition. But she must have been both a "good Berean" and quite knowledgeable of the Old Testament because she did not argue from tradition but readily recognized that what Paul was preaching was right, according to the Scripture even if it "did" conflict with a lot of the religious tradition she had been taught.

One of the biggest problems for people to believe the Scripture, as it is written, is our addiction to the religious traditions we have been taught!

Finally we must notice that Lydia did not attempt to exercise any degree of authority over Paul. She opened her heart to God, opened her home to the man of

God, opened her home for a meeting place for those who would receive the Word of God and need a place to gather as a local church was formed.

Her humility is seen in her statement **"If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there"** (Acts 16:15). Here earnestness and passion is seen in, **"And she constrained us."** "Constrained" in this case is "to constrain one by entreaties." In other words, she didn't just "offer" her home, she "begged" Paul and his team to stay there.

RAY BENNETT

Mike DeWitt Sr.  
PO Box 950  
Springfield, OR 97477

Pastor  
Parkway Landmark  
Baptist Church  
PO Box 950  
Springfield, OR 97477



The only thing that I could tell you about Lydia was she was faithful in her service to God in her sphere as a woman saved by God's sovereign grace. She was faithful to the Apostle and others that worked with him giving them a place to rest, and her home was a base of operations in that area that was to be evangelized.

When I say Lydia's home was a base of operations, I really ought to say it was a mission. **"And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed"** (Acts 16:40). Lydia was not a preacher or the leader of the mission, her house was used for its meetings. The beginning of the Lord's churches is a wonderful thing to behold in God's Word. Missionaries sent by the authority of another church to establish a mission in Philippi proves that churches establish churches.

There's no difference in Lydia and women today. Women saved by grace then are the same as the women saved by grace today. Thank the Lord for Baptist women in service to God thru the Lord's church.

MIKE DEWITT



**Mini-Edition**  
by Joseph Harris

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



### Racism, Discrimination, and Segregation

Political correctness is a scourge in the media today. Reporters and pundits

are usually too afraid to speak the truth on any issue that might be connected to race, unless it is to label someone a racist. Consider the recent shameless debacle of the character assassination of nominee Charles Pickering. He is a good, decent man, and is not a racist. I know this to be a fact from personal acquaintance with the man. His real crime is being a conservative who is nominated by President Bush.

Concerning racist language, I do not believe anyone should intentionally slander or use hurtful words against another race, culture, gender or person. But hurtful words exist and are a part of history with numerous examples in many American literary works. The writings of Mark Twain and the poet Carl Sandburg come to mind. People today refer to the slang word "nigger" as the "N" word, afraid to actually say it within the literary context in which it may be found, thereby equating it with vulgarities and obscenities that are censored and bleeped out. I do not personally think this word should be used in a derogatory manner, BUT, to place it on the same level as vulgar and obscene four letter words that are unmentionable is ridiculous. I do not believe the word should be used in an offensive manner to denigrate and hurt people, but most of the ones who are crying "foul" have made a career of being offended. Vote pandering liberals and race baiting Black leaders such as Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton have almost succeeded in having the word removed from history, literature, and classic films, labeling anyone who might use or read the word in a quote, as a white supremacist, card carrying Klan member who would lynch all Blacks if only given the opportunity. Ridiculous! Disney has never re-released the classic *Song of the South* film. The movie is set in the time of American slavery, a very real part of American history, but there would certainly be an outcry if it was ever released again.

Among these thin skinned individuals are Blacks who do not even like to use the word "Black" but refer to themselves as African Americans, though few, if any of them were born in Africa or have even visited there. The correct terminology would be, Americans of African descent, as in Americans of Italian descent, Americans of Arab descent, etc. In other words, any American of foreign descent is American FIRST. But multi-culturalism has robbed many of pride in their American heritage.

The mere mention of an individual's race is not racist. In other words, all racial references are not racist (remember the Rush Limbaugh flap). Facts are facts and cannot be changed. According to the media, in their quest to not offend, when a murder occurs and the suspect is a Black person, then excuses are made for his behavior. But if a Black person is killed by a white person, the White murderer is immediately considered a racist. If a certain crime statistic reveals a higher percentage

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## What If Free Will

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But isn't that inherently true? Couldn't God choose to discontinue His love for the worthless Jacob and choose to start loving Esau? No, of course, you have foreknowledge to contend with, and the immutability of God. But suppose that was His will all along and we just didn't know it? Maybe it will be revealed in God's own time?

Does God really have to have a reason to love? Wouldn't that reason, whatever it may be, whether His promise, or a condition met by a human--bind His love? Force the God that has an unfettered will to love? No, a God with a true free will can love whosoever He wants. For the age or millennia desired, starting whenever and ending all in His own good time. Remember, neither holiness nor immutability can be the underlying attribute, if omnipotence and free will are! He can love capriciously, if truly a god of free will; nay more strongly put, He must be able to love capriciously whenever He desires!

### 3) The Oxymoron of Everlasting Life

I told you this road was gonna get bumpy! The Road to Freewillism, as any good Arminian will tell you, is exclusive of the gift of eternal life!

Let's look into the Old Testament again: **"And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. ...And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book"** (Ex. 32:9-10, 31-33).

I always use this passage to show that God has decreed the responsibility of man. God spoke these words of condemnation, giving Moses the opportunity to intercede on the behalf of his people. Moses did, and God's will was carried out in sparing the Tribe of Judah that must bring forth the Messiah! But hold on a second here. Could God have done this thing of destroying all Israel and make of Moses the Levite a great nation alone? Not if you believe in the immutability of God's decrees and prophecies. But if you believe in a free will God, then you have to at least credit Him with the opportunity and ability to do so. I've sat down with a Church of Christ fellow that believes exactly that! And I can't blame him! He's being honest about what he believes! He believes in a free will God that cannot be bound!

### 4) Do We Mere Humans Know All of God's Eternal Will?

Let's carry this one step further, outside the bounds of recorded history and look toward the future. We'll do this by examining Genesis 6:5-7---**"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."**

I've often said that in my finite eyes, I could close my eyes and continue reading. Verse eight might simply state: "And so He did." End of story. End of the Bible!

Not fair! What about Noah? Well, what about Noah? What did he ever do for God? Verse 8 doesn't say Noah found merit in the eyes of God. Any worth whatsoever! It just says He found grace--undeserved favor. In other words--God chose to save him, God's mercy was bestowed upon him. But what if He didn't? Certainly He didn't have to save Noah and the earth from His holy justice, did He?

I'd point to the promise to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15 and Adam's faith in 3:20, but a believer in the free will of God, must at least admit that God could have chosen to destroy the world at this time, but chose of His own free will, not to. But how dangerous a thought is that? All we can base our assumptions on are the revealed Word of God. What about the unrevealed Word of God?

Of course, He wouldn't really do that, but with free will the opportunity must exist! How can we really ever truly know what are the deep, undeclared counsels of God? How can we truly have confidence that the final plan is not to eventually show God's power and glory by ultimately destroying all of creation (including His elect!) to show His supremacy and beauty? I mean, that is solidly in the realm of logic, as we understand God's purity, isn't it? Unsurety---that's what we will have if God is not in the end bound by something!

### So God's Will is Bound?

So what binds our omnipotent God, beloved reader? His word! His word binds what? His will! If we don't believe this, then we have nothing! God will not, nay, God can not alter His word--His holy nature demands, nay, binds it! This is what Scripture proclaims, not some conscience or theory of man... **"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven"** (Ps. 119:89). God has no ability to change His word! He is too holy to be treacherous. He cannot change His mind when He makes a promise. "Unable"---

bound by His holy nature!

**"I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD"** (Ezek. 24:14). God won't go back on His word, He can't go back on it! He won't repent of an action, He can't repent of it! It would change Him and His being! **"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed"** (Mal. 3:6). How appropriate a text verse this is!

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it (Isa. 46:9-11). God has no desire or ability to change His prophecies or decrees. Not simply that He won't---He can't! I hope this has been proved to your satisfaction- God's will is bound.

### Refute Free Will in Man's Salvation

Some however will still claim that God is sovereign over the leaf that falls, the babies as they're born, the presidents as they're elected, but that God "must" in one case give up His sovereignty to man. They cry out at the Bible teaching of election---"unfair! To choose some and not others! God must leave the destiny of the lost soul in man's hands, for him to exercise free will. To choose some and exclude others would make men pawns in His hand. And that is not what a "just god" would do.

Can we do this? Have a sovereign God in all other matters, but He chooses to step back and give this saving power to a part of His creation? The only scenario that we have to look at, that could reasonably be argued for---is Eden. So let's examine Adam and Eve in Genesis 3...

### Scenario of Eden

Can or does man ever have the ability to choose right or wrong? Yes! They certainly did in the Garden of Paradise! However, being far from omniscient, they could not foresee all the ramifications of their actions. But Adam did know one thing---**"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"** (Gen. 2:17).

Essentially what we must understand is that they had the power to make the choice (as free agents), but not the power to change the consequences (free will). They could not "will" to eat and live, they merely "chose" to eat and die. No matter the immediate opening

of the eyes to understand their error, they were now irremediably dead. And now all of mankind finds themselves in an even straiter condition than our federal parents---bound by the nature of depravity, with the inherent lusts and rebellion therein. Now even our free agency is compromised to our sinful heart's desires, controlling our will with yet tighter reins. We (Scripturally) find ourselves unable to choose good. **"God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one"** (Ps. 53:2-3). **"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God"** (Matt. 19:16-17).

All we have left is what we exposed in the restaurant at the beginning of our study. We can only choose our actions based on nature, ability and circumstances. We have no sway over consequences, nor any clear perception of them.

Therefore, for man to do good (choose God), one of three things must be true:

### 1) He Already has Some Good

This is what many of those parking lot Free Will Baptists believe. No, God cannot do evil. It is not within Him. Therefore, for man to do good, there must already be some good in his being. Not totally depraved, or even totally dead, just merely very sick with sin. In desperate straits to be sure, but still with some hope that he may pull out of it. Some spark of good deep within his subconscious. Some part of him that was not destroyed in the fall of man that occurred in the Garden. Some part of him must have an ounce of holiness within that we can fan into a flame that will burn brighter and brighter. Soon it will be strong enough to evince a holy decision within his heart to call upon the Lord. However, if left alone, that small spark of godliness within, will eventually burn out. It will be overcome by the free will of man that desires no god, or deity other than that of his imagination. **"He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"** (Isa. 44:20).

Can this be true? Is there Scripture to back up such an assertion? I think that a passage of Job speaks on this matter. I call it the Parable of a Tree's Hope: **"For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; Yet through the scent of water**

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it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep" (Job 14:7-12).

In this story we see that there is hope in a fallen tree. There is indeed a spark of good life left in this part of God's creation. When that felled tree touches the life-generating power of water, it will again sprout! WOW! Even though it looked hopeless---the tree looked dead---there was still a spark of life within that water could resuscitate! But does this hope extend to fallen man? Can we find that ounce of holiness within to latch onto and give CPR to?

No, the passage is very clear that only God can resurrect the dead corpse of sinful man. Man falls---"lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake." No, I don't find any Scriptural support for the theory of some life remaining in Adam's race. I do find many however, some already quoted, that speak of total inability within man to secure salvation. Only a deceived heart will believe this first option---BEWARE! "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

### 2) Common Grace Theory

This theory states that God must gift each man with a measure of common grace that "will enable" each recipient to make a knowledgeable choice between good and evil. In other words transplant some good into the dead soul---quicken it just enough to allow a spiritual decision to be made. Then the eternal fate of each denizen will be allocated to each independent soul. What glory to God- if just some will choose! But what happens if that good effort on God's part is rejected by the half-awakened sinner? Not God's fault, they will say, in fact He is even further glorified by His attempted mercy.

Let me just say that this theory is, of course, the last straw grasped by someone with a dog in the fight, someone who starts with an idea and goes to the Bible to support and back it up. This is a terrible way to treat God's Holy Word! Please, beloved reader, go into God's Word with the intention of aligning your doctrine to His perfect revelation, not trying to align His Word to our own petty imaginings! See what choice the Nation of Israel made time after time. Was there any common grace therein to be imagined? "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children,

and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isa. 1:2-6).

### 3) Only option left is Sovereign Grace!

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:1-10). You see how neatly the Word proclaims credit for salvation unto the "Lord alone"? Election must be true---man will never choose to be made alive---there simply is no ability to do good, as our study has proven beyond a shadow of doubt! Election is based upon the covenant of redemption, powered by the atonement secured by Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary! Who chose to die? God did! Who chose the extent/purpose of the propitiation? God did! Who "substituted" Himself in the stead of His sheep? God did! Election points "always" to the atonement! Points to the blood of Christ which alone is the reason God can look upon us wretches, covered with the sores and pus of depravity.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised

for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. ...Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:4-5, 10-11).

### Conclusion

Let's go to Deuteronomy 30:19- "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." What, then is this verse saying? Is it exhorting man's free will? No, I think we can safely rebuff that statement. But then to what is Moses pleading? What hope does he have that "any" of the children of Israel will choose life and blessing? Aren't they completely incapable?

Yes! But you see, "God is able"! That's why the end of almost every service at Big Creek Baptist Church ends with an invitation for "whosoever will" to come before the church and profess salvation. To choose life and blessing! To answer the call for "everyone that thirsteth"!

Well, where's that found, beloved reader? Just go up to verse six in this same chapter thirty of Deuteronomy---"And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." God will work the miracle of grace. He will "circumcise" or "cut" our heart and reforge a new life---with new abilities and a new nature! A holy nature that will always choose life and blessings! That's all the new nature is capable of! Therein lies the struggle of the soul---A totally depraved body versus a totally spiritual life within! Praise God---give us more grace to win the battles!

Will we exercise "choices" in this life? Yes---but just as free agents. Please none of that nonsense of a free will. That just doesn't exist "anywhere" in this Universe---physically or spiritually. May God bless these words to your study and your heart!



## Relation of Baptism

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Him---the first and representative of all future obedience---since, embraced in its profession, is the pledge of unqualified and continued obedience in all the requirements of Christ. The questions proposed to be discussed, therefore, are:

I. Has Christian immersion any connection with salvation?

II. If any, what is that relation?

III. In what circumstances should we consider ourselves unsaved,---no friends of Christ unless we obey His command to be baptized?

There are those who evidence impatience at the announcement of such a topic, because, in their opinion, the Scriptures do not furnish the shadow of a reason to justify any one in supposing that immersion in water---an overt act, and contingent entirely upon the will of third parties---can, in any way, by a merciful Savior, be connected with our eternal salvation; that simple faith in Christ is the one and all-sufficient thing that Christ requires of a believer to secure His richest blessings here, and salvation hereafter.

If there be no semblance of a connection between baptism and salvation, how can we account for the fact, that every denomination of professing Christians, save the Baptists, do, in the published Symbols of their faith, ---whether called "Decrees of Councils," "Confessions of Faith," "Creeds," or "Disciplines," teach that there is a vital connection---i.e., that, where baptism is wanting, no salvation can exist; and base their constant practice upon this doctrine? There must be a relation of some sort, or we can not rationally account for the almost universal belief and perpetuation of so gross an error through so many ages. Naked error can not endure the light, and it must have the outer semblance of truth with which to clothe itself.

The theory that baptism is essential to salvation, and that, in the use of this rite as the effectual "means," the blessings of remission of sins and regeneration are obtained, and all the benefits of Christ's mediation secured to the recipient, whether adult or infant, is commonly known as "baptismal regeneration," and it might better be called "baptismal salvation," since a regenerated person is, without doubt, a saved person. Now, this theory is held and practiced today by the overwhelming mass of professed Christians, by all Catholic and by all Protestant sects, as well as by many hundreds of thousands who do not class themselves with Protestants; as the Campbellites, Mormons, and lesser sects.

Among these sects have been found, in every age of their existence, the profoundest scholarship that has blessed or cursed the world. We must therefore admit, that if the Scriptures do not clearly teach a "vital" relation existing between baptism and salvation, there must by a very strong appearance of it for so many to be deceived; and this we do admit. If asked, at the outset, how is it possible for so many to be wrong, and wrong for so many ages, on so important a matter, while only a comparative few have been and are in the right, my answer is, that

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error, carried the multitude; and that form of religious error that is peculiarly agreeable to the human heart is most certain to be popular. Mankind "easily" believe what they "want" to believe. It is the demand of the depraved heart of man to be saved, in part, at least, by his own self-help---deeds of righteousness that he can do---and not simply and solely by the unmerited "grace" of God. We might therefore expect that such a doctrine as salvation by circumcision would be universally popular to the Jews, and salvation by baptism to the Gentiles, who adopted the forms of Christianity, and this is lamentably true.

The following passages, in addition to those at the head of this, are the principal ones relied upon as proof-texts of a vital connection between baptism and salvation:

Matthew 3:15: **"Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."**

Luke 7:30: **"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."**

Mark 16: 16: **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."**

Mark 1:4: **"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."**

John 3:5: **"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."**

Acts 2:38: **"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."**

Acts 22:16: **"Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord."**

Titus 3:5: **"According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."**

Gal. 3:27: **"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."**

I Peter 3:21: **"The like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."**

Rom. 6:5: **"For if we have been planted in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."**

I Cor. 12:13: **"For in [not by] one Spirit we are all baptized into one body."**

I submit a brief statement of doctrine which all Protestant sects, in common with the Catholics, from whom they derived it, believe to be sustained by the above Scriptures:

### GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH

"Holy baptism is the appointed sacrament of salvation, by which all past sins are washed away, and without which there is no promise of salvation."

CHRYSOSTOM.---"In baptism, or the spiritual circumcision, there is no trouble to be undergone; but to throw off the load of sin, and receive pardon for all foregoing offenses."

### LATIN CATHOLIC

"The baptism of the church is given for the remission of sins."

"If there was nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless."

"The body of Christ is His true Church, into which no one can enter, except by baptism; by which sacrament the sinner is regenerated, and receives remission of all sins that are past: and it is therefore called the sacrament of salvation. If infants need not regeneration, baptism would be a needless grace, and an unmeaning ceremony to them."

### PROTESTANT

LUTHER.---"This is not done by changing of a garment, or by any laws or works, but by a new birth, and by the renewing of the inward man, which is done in baptism, as Paul saith: 'All ye that are baptized have put on Christ.' Also according to Titus 3:5: For, besides that, they who are baptized are regenerated and renewed, by the Holy Spirit, in a heavenly righteousness, and to eternal life, there riseth in them also a new light and a new frame; there riseth in them new and holy affections, as the fear of God, true faith, and assured hopes, etc.; there beginneth in them also a new will, and this is to put on Christ truly, and according to the Gospel."

It is still the doctrine of the Lutheran Church. This is from a manual for scholars and candidates for confirmation in that church, published at Halle, by Pastor Weber, 1834. Candidates are taught to believe and required to recite this before confirmation:

"Baptism is not mere water only, but water put into God's command, and united with God's Word. It effects the forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the Devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe it, as the word and promise of God show. \* \* \* The water, indeed, does not do this, but the Word of God that is "with and by means of the water," and the faith which trusts that Word of God "in the water." For without the Word of God the water is mere water, and no baptism; but, with the Word of God, baptism is a gracious "Water of Life," and a bath of the new birth in the Holy Ghost."

LUTHER'S CHURCH AT WITTEMBERG.---"We believe and confess that baptism is that sea into the bottom whereof, as the apostle saith, God doth cast all our sins."

CONFESSION OF SAXONY.---"I

baptize thee; that is, I do witness, that, by this dipping, thy sins be washed away, and that thou art now received of the true God."

CONFESSION OF BOHEMIA.---"We believe that whatsoever by baptism is in the outward ceremony signified and witnessed, all that doth the Lord God perform inwardly; that is, He washeth away sin, begetteth a new man again, and bestoweth salvation upon him. For the bestowing of these excellent fruits was holy baptism given and granted to the church."

HELVETIA.---"To be baptized into the name of Christ, is to be enrolled, entered and received into covenant and family, and so into the inheritance of the sons of God; that is to ay, to be called the sons of God; to be purged also from the filthiness of sins, and to be endued with the manifold grace of God for to lead a new and innocent life."

CONFESSION OF SUEVELAND.--"As touching baptism, we confess that it is the font of regeneration, washeth away sins, and saveth us."

PRESBYTERIAN CONFESSION OF FAITH.---"Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party to be baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace,---of his engrafting into Christ,---of regeneration,---of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life."

If baptism is indeed a "seal" of the Covenant of Grace, then no one ever was or can be saved without baptism, or be engrafted into Christ, or receive remission of sins or regeneration. If the rite is not a "sacrament" of salvation, it is essential to it.

### EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Every one confirmed in this church is required to give the following answer to the Bishop, after giving to him their "Christian" names:

QUES.---"Who gave thee this name?"

ANS.---"My sponsors in baptism, wherein I was made an heir of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

They are required to believe this in their hearts.

Mr. Melville, the most distinguished preacher of the Church of England, and standard defender of its faith, says:

"We believe it to be specially and through the sacrament of baptism that the Holy Ghost acts in renovating the nature which became corrupt through the apostasy. We really think that no fair, no straight-forward dealing, man can get rid of the conclusion that the church holds what is called 'baptismal regeneration.' You may dislike the doctrine, you may wish it expunged from the Prayer Book, but so long as I subscribe to that Prayer

Book, and so long as I officiate according to the forms of that Prayer Book, I do not see how I can be commonly honest, and yet deny that every baptized person is on that account regenerate.

These views of Mr. Melville were fully indorsed by Bishop McIlvaine. Because of these teachings, Bishop Cummings, a few years ago, seceded, and formed the Reformed Episcopal Church.

### THE METHODIST DISCIPLINE

According to this unalterable standard of American Methodism, it is conceded by Mr. Wesley that all infants are regenerated by baptism, and that, in the ordinary way, they can not be saved, unless baptized; and it is equally true that no regenerated adult person can be baptized according to the office of baptism of this church. Each one is required to confess that he is unpardoned and unregenerated, and comes to baptism to "seek" these blessings; and that he may receive them, the whole congregation is required to pray:

"Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin (and that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and they that are in the flesh can not please God, but live to sin, committing many actual transgressions), and that our Savior Christ saith none shall enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerated and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost, I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that, of His bounteous goodness, He will grant unto these persons that which by nature they can not have; that they may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made lively members of the same.

"O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in these persons may be so buried that the new man may be raised up in them. Regard, we beseech thee, the supplications of this congregation, and grant that these persons now to be baptized may receive the fullness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children."

Mr. Wesley, the father and founder of Methodism, in his Sermons and Doctrinal Tracts, the now standard theology of Methodism, says:

"It is certain that our church supposes that all who are baptized in infancy are, at the same time, born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition."---Sermon 14.

This he teaches is its efficacy in case of adults:

"By baptism we, who are by nature the children of God; and this regeneration, which our church, in so many places, ascribes to baptism, is more than barely being admitted into the church, though commonly connected therewith; being grafted into the body of Christ's church,

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we are made the children of God by adoption and grace. \*\* By water, then, as a means---the water of baptism---we are regenerated or born again; whence it is also called, by the apostle, the 'washing of regeneration.' If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; seeing, in the ordinary way, they can not be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism. Infants need to be washed from original sin; therefore they are proper subjects of baptism."---Sermon 14.

The last General Conference, held in Memphis, Tenn., decided that the increasing numbers, who were received professing regeneration before baptism, was "an evil," since it granted that one could be regenerated without the means.

### THE DISCIPLES; OR CAMPBELLITES; CREED

"Immersion is the means divinely appointed for the actual enjoyment of this first and greatest of blessings."---Mill. Harb.

"I affirm, then, that the first institution, in which we can meet with God, is the institution of baptism."

This is a law, or a work---i.e., something to be done.

"It is not our faith in God's promise of remission, but our going down into the water [an act of work] that obtains the remission of sins."

"I assert that there is but "one action" ordained, in the New Testament, to which God has promised, or testified, that He will forgive our sins; this action is Christian immersion."

"No man has any proof that he is pardoned until he is baptized; and, if men are conscious that their sins are forgiven, and that they are pardoned before they are immersed, I advise them not to go down into the water, for they have no need of it."

"Remission of sins can not be enjoyed by any person before immersion."

"Before we are justified in Christ, live in Christ, and fall asleep in Christ, we must be introduced or immersed into Christ."

If the above is not baptismal salvation, the following most certainly is:

"Is it, or is it not, through faith in the blood of Christ that we receive the remission of our sins through the act of immersion? [Here a work and faith are conjoined. Read on.] The value and efficacy of His sacrifice is the very document itself which constitutes the burthen of the testimony; belief of this testimony is what impelled us into the water. "Knowing that the efficacy of the blood" is to be communicated to our consciences, in the way which God has been pleased to appoint [through the act of immersion], we stagger not

at the promise of God, but flee to the sacred ordinance, which brought the blood of Jesus in contact with our consciences. [Here we have faith and works inseparably conjoined.] Without knowing and believing this, immersion is a blasted nut: the shell is there, but the kernel is wanting."---Campbell on *Chris. Bap.*, p. 521.

"In baptism we are in spirit, as well as in person, buried with the Lord, wherein also we are raised with Him."---Campbell on *Bap.*, p. 256.

The reader can see that all the different denominations---the last no more than the first---that were originated by men since the days of the apostles, do teach that baptism is virtually connected with salvation; so vitally, that without it, there can be no spiritual life, no possibility of salvation. They all understand the passages they quote to sustain their theory of baptismal regeneration "literally"; that sins are literally washed away by the literal water of baptism through the working of the Holy Spirit, and that it is the "bath" of regeneration, into which persons descend unpardoned sinners, and out of which they arise saints; that baptism seals them heirs of grace, washes them "whiter than snow."

The Baptist churches are "alone" in repudiating in faith and practice the above doctrine. They have alone, in all ages since the ascension of Christ, taught that a moral nature, renewed by the Holy Spirit---a birth from above---is in all cases essential to baptism, and that the rite, among other things, was appointed to symbolize this great fact; that it is the act for the profession of repentance "exercised," of faith "possessed," and regeneration "enjoyed."

In 1120, the Baptists of Europe, put forth a tract, entitled "Antichrist," in which they say this:

"A third work of Antichrist consists in this, that he attributes the regeneration of the Holy Spirit unto the mere external act [of baptism], baptizing infants in that faith, teaching that thereby baptism and regeneration must be had, on which principle he confers and bestows orders, and, indeed, grounds all his Christianity, which is contrary to the word of the Holy Scriptures."

They also put forth fourteen Articles of Faith, of which this is "one":

"ARTICLE 7. We believe in the ordinance of baptism. The water is the visible external, which [not confers, but] "represents" to us that which by virtue of God's invisible operation "is within us," namely, the renovation of our minds and the mortification of our members through the faith of Jesus Christ, and by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, "previously" professing and declaring our faith and change of life."

From the above the reader can see that the professed Christian world is

divided into only two grand divisions viz: Catholics, Protestants, Campbellites, and Mormons on the one side and Baptists alone on the other. All can see the doctrinal difference is fundamental and vital; and the two theories being the very antipodes of each other, they can not both be evangelical---scriptural. If one is scriptural, the other is perilously wrong; utterly unscriptural and subversive of the whole plan of salvation. "If one theory will save the souls of men the other certainly will not, else there are two distinct and opposite plans of salvation."

This is a plain, unvarnished, honest statement of the case, written to honor the Author and Finisher of the Faith, for He is the one Lord and Savior---and can be the author of but "one faith," "one" baptism, and "one" church as the pattern of all His churches. It is incumbent upon every one professing to be the friend of Jesus, to examine honestly and prayerfully the Word of God, and decide which of these two theories is the scriptural and right one; for the reader is bound to adopt the one or the other---risk his soul's eternal salvation upon one or the other---for there is no possible middle ground. I have placed the theories fairly before your eyes, expressed in the very words of their Creeds and Confessions, and indorsed by their standard teachers.

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## Compared to Sheep

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swine, and the like.

But now God's people have (through the operation of Divine grace) their unclean and filthy nature changed; that brutish, perverse and swinish disposition, which they brought into the world with them, is gone: "**Such were some of you: but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God**" (I Cor. 6:11). Sheep are of a clean nature, they like not to wallow in the mire as swine do: So the saints have a clean and holy nature wrought in their souls, or spiritual habits infused through the renewing of the Holy Ghost, having obtained a true righteousness, in which they stand justified, and appear without spot before God, even in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is counted them for righteousness to their justification, and are sanctified through the Spirit of Holiness.

2. *Sheep are a harmless and innocent sort of creatures; not crafty like the fox, nor devouring like the lion.* So the saints are harmless and innocent, they seek the hurt of no man, but desire to live peaceably in the land, and not like Romish wolves, who delight in nothing more than in blood and repine: They are like unto their Master, (or ought to be) i.e., holy, harmless, etc.

They are simple concerning evil, children in malice, though men in understanding (I Cor. 14:20). They are not like the ungodly ones of the world, who are full of wrath, hatred and revenge; they are so far from this, that if they arrive at their true character, they will speak evil of no man, but pray for their enemies, and for such that hate them.

3. *Sheep are patient under suffering.* In this they strive to imitate their blessed Saviour also, Who was led as a Lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep is dumb before the shearer, so He opened not His mouth (Isa. 53:7). How patiently did the poor martyrs go to the stake; they strove not with their persecutors, nor made resistance: And when they suffer from the immediate hand of God, they are patient as David was, and open not their mouths, because the Lord hath done it (Ps. 39:9): Like Aaron who held his peace, and patiently bore the heavy hand of God, when his two sons were devoured with fire before his eyes (Lev. 10:1-4).

4. *Believers may be compared to sheep from their profitableness to others.* We all know that sheep are very profitable creatures many ways, enriching and making land fat; as also for clothing, and for meat: How excellent is the flesh of sheep for food? So God's people are useful and profitable. "The lips of the righteous feed many," by their wise and pious discourse, counsels, and divine comfort, which they often communicate to many distressed and disconsolate souls: "They are the salt of the earth, the light of the world;" and what a profitable thing is "salt" to us, is "light" to us? Even so in many respects the godly, in a spiritual sense, are alike useful, and have been in their respective generations in this world.

What a blessing was Lot to Sodom whilst he was among them! The fire could not seize upon the wicked city until he left it: "**Haste thee, escape thither;** (said the angel) **for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither**" (Gen. 19:22). What profit did Laban receive by Jacob! What a blessing was he unto him! the like blessing was Joseph to his master. The godly are like sheep, the interest of those lands, nations, cities and families where they dwell.

The saints are profitable to others many ways.

(1) By that heavenly doctrine they maintain and hold forth.

(2) By the fervent and profitable prayers they make and send up to God on all occasions.

(3) By that holy and good example which they set for all those they converse with, and live among.

(4) And at their death, by martyrdom, great profit hath been received; from whence the proverb rose, That "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." Believers bring glory to God, and profit

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unto men.

5. *Sheep are tractable and obedient*, being ready to follow their shepherd whithersoever he goeth. It is the custom in some countries for the shepherd in leading the sheep, to go out before them; to which practice our Saviour doth here allude: So believers are obedient to Jesus Christ, they are tractable, and learn to follow Him; "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me." **"Thou shalt guide me (saith David) with thy counsel"** (Ps. 73:24). Christ's precepts are the saints directory, and His practice their pattern. Hence Paul exhorted the Corinthians, "to follow him as he followed Christ." Ministers are to be followed and imitated, no further than they follow and imitate Jesus Christ.

6. *Sheep love to feed in green pastures*; in clean and wholesome fields or meadows. So do the saints and people of God love sound and wholesome truths, good doctrine, food that is fit and proper for their precious souls; they must not, will not feed in the soul-rotting pastures of men's inventions, nor on the corrupt glories of cloudy doctors that lived in the dark times of the church. The spouse from hence enquires of Christ "where he feedeth, and where he maketh his flock to rest at noon?" that is, where His blessed gospel is truly preached, and His holy ordinances are duly and in a right manner administered. And He directeth her to go forth by the footsteps of the flock, and to feed her kids besides the shepherd's tents; that is, to follow the doctrine and example of the primitive church, which only is our rule and pattern in all gospel worship.

7. *Sheep are incident to divers diseases*; many of them are weak and feeble, sick and distempered, and therefore must by their shepherd be strengthened and healed, with much care, skill, and faithfulness: So are Christ's sheep, His saints, subject also to manifold spiritual diseases, weaknesses, temptations and afflictions, which of old moved the Almighty to great compassion, and sorely to rebuke the shepherds of Israel, for their cruelty and great remissness towards His flock: **"The diseased have ye not strengthened; neither have ye healed that which was sick"** (Ezek. 34:4). And therefore the great Shepherd saith, He would take the work in to His own hand; **"I will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick."** Some of God's people are attended with one spiritual disease, and others with another; Some with a spiritual "consumption of their graces," decline in their faith, patience, brotherly love, charity, etc. Others are afflicted with the "timpany of pride"; some with the "fever of passion, etc." Which were it not for the

care and faithfulness of their Shepherd, would prove fatal to them.

8. *Sheep are subject to go astray*; So are the saints to go astray from Christ, and to wander from His precepts: **"I have gone astray (saith David) like a lost sheep; seek thy servant"** (Ps. 119:176).

9. *Sheep also are subject to take soil and filth, and therefore have need of washing*; Even so likewise the sheep of Jesus Christ are subject to contract fresh guilt and pollution on their own souls and consciences, sin being of a polluting and defiling nature; and therefore David cried out to his blessed Shepherd to be washed: **"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow"** (Ps. 51:7). O cleanse my filthy and leprous soul in the fountain of thy Son's blood, signified by those ceremonial washings under the Law. **"If I wash thee not, (saith Christ to Peter) thou hast no part with me"** (John 13:8).

10. *Sheep love to feed and lie down together*; it is a difficult thing to scatter, sever, or divide them from each other; and if by dogs or wolves, etc. they should be scattered, they will quickly get together again; and such that straggle behind, the shepherd fears are not well. So the saints and sheep of Christ dearly love to assemble together; and it is an argument that such are diseased, or sickly, who forsake the assembling of themselves with the rest of the flock; **"Then they that feared the LORD, Spake often one to another"** (Mal. 3:16). **"They that fear thee, (saith David) will be glad when they see me, because I hoped in thy Word"** (Ps. 119:74). I can tell them that which will cause their souls to rejoice; I have been afflicted, and tempted, and yet have been succored and relieved by the Lord, because I hoped in His Word: So that none of them that meet with like perplexities, need to fear or doubt of God's gracious help and support. Sirs, if wicked men, like "dogs, wolves, or lions," do endeavor to scatter Christ's sheep by persecution, they will soon get together again: **"And being let go, they went to their own company"** (Acts 4:23).

11. *Sheep need a shady place when the sun shines hot at noon*: which is a great refreshment to them, where they chew their cud; and being secured from the scorching heat, they with the greater alacrity return to their pasture. In this also the saints may be compared unto sheep; for evident it is, believers do need a shady place, a place of refreshment to rest in and under, in the time of the great heat of temptation, affliction, and persecution: And at such seasons the Lord Jesus hath a place of sweet repose for them; **"In me you might have peace: In the world you shall have tribulation"** (John 16:33). **"In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge until these calamities be overpast"** (Ps. 57:1). Hence also Jesus Christ is said to be as **"the shadow of a**

**great rock in a weary land"** (Isa. 32:2); or in a dry and scorching country, which, "metonymically, is called **"a weary land"**, because it makes the people weary that abide therein. Christ refreshes His sheep under His own gracious protection, in time of the hottest persecution, and affords them relief by His own presence, and precious promises: And when they return out of those afflictions, with what joy do they feed in their pastures, calling to mind and meditating upon those blessed experiences they had of His goodness in those hot and scorching times.

12. *Sheep will live where greater cattle cannot, even upon very hard and barren commons*, where the grass is exceeding short, and be very well contented with it, nay, thrive upon it. So will the Faithful in Jesus Christ live, where and when the carnal professor cannot, even in a time of want and scarcity, when the great and tall cedars, whose hearts are not upright with God, fall away, and their spirits die in them. A poor believer can live by faith on the promises of God, when he can't see by an eye of sense how he should subsist, yet doth trust on God's providence, Who careth for him; and he is contented and well satisfied with those hard pastures the Lord is pleased to put him into: **"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet will I rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation"** (Hab. 3:17-18).

13. *Among a flock of sheep are oftentimes some goats, who feed with them, and lie down together*. So in Christ's flock are some evil and corrupt members, such who are none of His sheep, but hypocrites, though they seem to feed and have communion together; and these also are called "goats" by the great Shepherd (Matt. 25).

14. *Sheep are very fruitful*, and do multiply in a little time exceeding, though many of them may be killed by butchers. The saints may be compared to sheep also in this respect, for they from a few have often increased to a very great multitude. How few were the number of Christ's sheep at the time of His ascension, yet in a little space we read, that their number was five thousand; And though the heathen butchers killed many thousands, yet how wonderfully did they increase! Which was marvelous in the eyes of their enemies. The like may be noted in these days among us in "England"; what a few were they of the "Baptized Churches," and other "dissenters," not many years ago, and to what a multitude are they risen now? Also the saints grow in grace, they are fruitful, bearing twins, and none barren among them.

15. *Sheep are sometimes separated*

from the goats, for some special occasion known to the Shepherd. Even so at the last day shall all the sincere and truly Godly be separated from unsound and un sanctified ones, by our Lord Jesus the great Shepherd: **"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left"** (Matt. 25:32-33).

*Secondly*, To proceed: Tho I have already clearly opened the properties or characters of the sheep of Christ, in speaking to several parts of my text, yet I shall in a summary way, here add some few particulars further upon this account, which may serve by way of trial to all of us.

*First*, The first distinguishing character of them is, They "hear Christ's voice."

What is meant by His voice, and how they do hear it, we have shown.

*Secondly*, Christ's sheep have passed through a great change, a glorious, internal and visible change. They are converted persons, renewed or regenerated by Divine Grace: They were once like other men and women, and had no sheep-like nature, (as you have heard) but rather the same filthy, unclean, and brutish nature of swine, which is in all ungodly ones.

1. It is a real change from nature to grace; 'tis not a seeming, a nominal, or notional, but a true and real change; they have a new heart, a new spirit, a new nature created in them; they are become new creatures: all real operations of the Spirit suppose some real form; a real habit is infused, from whence they act, which works in them a ready inclination, disposition, and sweet propensity to do that which is truly and spiritually good.

2. And this is common to all the sheep of Jesus Christ; in this respect they are all alike, having all obtained the same precious faith, as to the quality of it: As all "wolves" have the nature of "wolves," and all "swine" the nature of "swine," and all sheep have the nature of sheep; so all the saints and children of God have the nature of saints; all believers and sheep of Jesus Christ have one holy nature.

3. It is a nature and disposition quite contrary to that which was in them formerly: 'Tis a mighty change, as when a "wolf" is made a "lamb," the "wolfish" nature (as one observes) is lost, and "the lamb-like nature is introduced. By corruption man was carnal and brutish, but by the new creation he is spiritual and divine; by corruption he hath the image of the devil, by this he is restored to the image of God; by that he had the seeds of all villainies, by this the seed of all graces." He was an enemy to God, had enmity in his heart against God; but now he loves God, loves Christ, loves holiness, loves the ways of God, and people of God.

◊ (Continued on page 457)



## Compared to Sheep

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4. It is an universal change, a change of the whole heart; as when a child is formed in the womb, it hath all the parts, nature doth not fashion one part and leave another imperfect: So the Holy Spirit forms every part of the new creature in the soul of the regenerate. This habit is but one, 'tis an entire rectitude in all the faculties, and an universal principle of inclining and disposing to that which is good and well-pleasing to God: there is a divine light in the "understanding," by which the soul sees God to be its chief good, and owns and looks upon Him as such. There is a change in the will that consents and chooses God as such; there is a change in the affections. There is no true draught of the image of God in us, unless there be a rectitude of affection and disposition: There is therefore a conformity of affections to God, they love God, and love as God loves, and hate as God hateth; they hate evil, because of that inward filthiness that is in it, and love grace and virtue, because of its pure and native beauty and excellency: therefore it is from hence the soul comes to take delight in God.

5. It changes not the heart only, but the whole life also; "**The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God**" (Gal. 2:20). Such live no longer to themselves, but to God; their tongues speak for God, their ears hear for God, their hands work for God; their actions are holy, just and good. There is a change of company also, a change of labor, of endeavor; and their whole end, aim and design, is to glorify God: Heavenly things are preferred by them before earthly things; they chiefly seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. They do not pursue the world as they did, nor fashion themselves according to the former lusts and the course of this world; nor pray as they did, nor hear as they did, nor give alms as they did: No, no, they do all things from another principle, from another

end, and with other zeal, endeavors, and diligence.

Thirdly, Christ's sheep will feed in Christ's pasture, in their own pasture, where they are put by Him; not but that they may, for good reason, be removed into another pasture, but they will not (unless under strong temptation) break down the hedge or fold where they are put, and run away; No, no, but are contented with that food, that pasture God affords them, though there may be some more fat and rich than theirs. Some sheep when they grow wanton, are unruly, and will break into other men's ground; so there are some professors, some church-members that rend themselves away from their own flock and fold, in a disorderly manner; "Which is an 'abominable evil,' and a shame to them: this destroys the relation of pastor and people, for what may be done by one individual, may be done by all; and (saith he) what liberty belongs to the sheep, belongs also to that particular shepherd who has the charge of them much more; it is a breaking covenant with Christ and the congregation, and therefore a great immorality: 'tis a schism, if there be any such thing in the world; it is a despising the government of the church; and there is as much reason a person should come in when he pleases, without asking consent, as to depart when he pleases: It is also very evil and unkind in another church to receive such a one, as not doing as they would be dealt with. Such a practice can issue in nothing but in the breach and confusion of all particular churches: It tends to "anarchy," putting an arbitrary power in every member, and breaks all bonds of love, and raiseth the greatest animosities between brethren and churches. The truth is, how can another shepherd justify such an act to the great Shepherd of the sheep; I mean, to take into his fold his neighbor's sheep, without Christ's order and authority?"

♦ (Continued in the next issue)



**THE**

# BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

### IN TV AD, ABORTION SURVIVOR CHALLENGES OBAMA

"If Barack Obama had his way, I would not be here." This is the message of a new TV ad featuring abortion survivor Gianna Jessen. She challenges the presidential candidate's voting record on abortion. As

an Illinois senator, Obama blocked the Born Alive Infant Protection Act, which would have required hospitals to care for infants who survive an abortion. "I am living proof these babies have a right to live," Jessen says in the ad, which is running in the battleground states of New Mexico and

Ohio. Douglas Johnson, legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee, said, "This is the type of message that can get a lot of people thinking. And once they start looking at Senator Obama's record on this issue, I think a lot of people are going to be appalled."

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### SOUTH DAKOTA GETS READY TO BAN ABORTION

(EP News)--The addition of Gov. Sarah Palin to the GOP presidential ticket has put the issue of abortion front and center. And Chris Hupke, executive director of the South Dakota Family Policy Council, is taking advantage of the momentum. He and his team are gathering support for Initiated Measure 11, which would "eliminate abortion as birth control," Hupke said. In November, voters will decide on the initiative, which allows for exceptions if the mother's life or health is at risk, and in cases of rape and incest.

"There's a lot of energy around the movement," said Hupke, who credits Palin's nomination with energizing the pro-life base. He said other states have shown interest in following his lead to limit abortion.

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### SCALIA: JUDGES NEED TO FOCUS ON INTERPRETING CONSTITUTION

(EP News)--In recent years, U.S. judges have leaned toward "abstract moralizing" at the expense of their real job, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia told a crowd at Utah State University this week. "I'm questioning the sanity of having value-laden decisions being made by unelected judges," he said. "Nothing I learned at Harvard or in my practice of law qualifies me to decide whether there is a right to abortion or to assisted suicide." The cure, Scalia said, is for "Americans to view the Constitution as a 'static' document and hire jurists who confine their role to interpreting it."

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### BIDEN SAYS HE BELIEVES LIFE BEGINS AT CONCEPTION

(EP News)--Sen. Joe Biden, the Democratic nominee for vice president, told NBC's "Meet the Press" that as a Catholic, he believes life begins at conception. Yet the Delaware senator has a strong pro-abortion voting record. "I'm prepared as a matter of faith to accept that life begins at the moment of conception," he said. Biden's comments placed him with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in a dispute with the nation's Catholic bishops over their representation of Catholic theology. Denver Archbishop Charles J. Chaput and Denver Auxiliary Bishop James Conley summarized the situation in the letter they released in early September: "Meet the Press has become a national window on the flawed moral reasoning of some Catholic public servants. On August 24, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, describing herself as an ardent, practicing Catholic, misrepresented the overwhelming body of Catholic teaching against abortion to the show's nationwide

audience, while defending her 'pro-choice' abortion views. On September 7, Sen. Joseph Biden compounded the problem to the same Meet the Press audience."

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### SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI WILL MEET WITH CATHOLIC BISHOP OVER ABORTION, COMMUNION

(EP News)--After her comments claiming the Catholic Church has not been consistent on its position against abortion and saying human life begins at conception, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has agreed to meet with San Francisco's archbishop. The meeting with Archbishop George H. Niederauer will cover abortion and communion. Niederauer indicates he may discuss whether or not it is appropriate for Pelosi to continue receiving communion following the controversial remarks. Niederauer told The Hill, a Washington, D.C. political newspaper, saying he had received emails from "many Catholics" expressing concerns about Pelosi's remarks. The letters reportedly said the Church should not allow Pelosi to continue receiving the sacrament because of her perverting it with her pro-abortion views and misleading comments about Catholic teaching.

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### PARENTS FOR TRUTH CAMPAIGN OFFERS STRAIGHT TALK ON SEX EDUCATION

(EP News)--The National Abstinence Education Association (NAEA) has launched a national campaign to educate parents about the harmful information their children are often exposed to in so-called "comprehensive" sex-education classes at school. NAEA Executive Director Valerie Huber said abstinence education is more important than ever.

"It has been thrust into the political debate as a key issue — among both candidates — with a lot of misinformation about what comprehensive sex ed is, about what abstinence education is," she said. "Parents need to know this, not only for what's going on in their own children's schools, but also so they can make informed decisions this November."

Parents for Truth aims to recruit 1 million parents over three years to fight groups like Planned Parenthood that are targeting children with dangerous and explicit sex-education curricula.

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### ADF SUES AFTER FLORIDA MAN IS KEPT FROM SHARING HIS FAITH

(EP News)--The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) has filed suit on behalf of a Christian man threatened with arrest for expressing a religious message on a public sidewalk in Lake Worth, Fla. Police told Martin Mikhail the Bible was a "work of fiction" and that he needed a permit to share his faith. In September 2007, Mikhail began sharing his faith after a police officer said he had no objection. Later, the same officer told Mikhail to stop or he would be taken to jail. When Mikhail followed up with the Lake

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## Bible & Newspaper

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Worth Police Department, he was told he needed a permit to share his message. "I can hardly think of speech more protected in the history of our country than what is spoken on a public sidewalk to fellow citizens to convey a message," said Bruce Hausknecht, judicial analyst for Focus on the Family Action. "That is what the First Amendment is for."

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### ILLINOIS CHURCH WINS LAWSUIT, CAN USE ITS BUILDING

(EP News)--An Illinois church can move into the building it purchased three years ago, thanks to a lawsuit by the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF). Carlinville Southern Baptist Church bought and renovated a Wal-Mart building in 2005 after the mayor and city officials approved the purchase. The mayor then backed out of the agreement, blocking the church's use of the building. "Churches should not be discriminated against in city zoning decisions," ADF attorney Daniel P. Dalton said. "We are pleased that the city has finally realized that it has no legal recourse to keep Carlinville Southern Baptist Church from using the property it has legitimately acquired for religious purposes."

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### FAMILY ADVOCATES CHALLENGE PG&E'S DONATION TO DEFEAT MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

(EP News)--The Pacific Justice Institute (PJI) has filed a complaint against PG&E after the California utility company donated \$250,000 to defeat California's marriage-protection amendment. Proposition 8, which goes to voters in November, would restore the definition of marriage as between one man and one woman. "It is outrageous that a mammoth utility used my money to undermine the values of families in my community," PJI President Brad Dacus said in a statement. Dacus has filed an administrative complaint with the California Public Utilities Commission, calling for an investigation of PG&E's contribution. He also has launched a campaign to alert Californians about an alternative natural-gas provider.

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### ARKANSAS WILL VOTE ON ADOPTION INITIATIVE

(EP News)--In Arkansas, a liberal activist group has decided to let the voters decide on a ballot initiative that would reserve adoption for married, heterosexual couples. The group Arkansas Families First had threatened to sue to remove the issue from the ballot, but instead will focus on fighting the measure. "We put together a proposal we felt was as bulletproof as it could possibly be," Jerry Cox, president of the Family Council of Arkansas, told the Arkansas Democrat Gazette. "I'm glad the people of Arkansas will have a chance to vote on this."

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### STUDY SHOWS PARENTAL-NOTIFICATION LAWS REDUCE ABORTIONS

(EP News)--Laws requiring parents to be involved in their underage daughter's decision regarding abortion are effective in reducing abortions among minors, according to a study by the Family Research Council. Data compiled from nearly all 50 states between 1985 and 1999 show that when a state enacts a parental-involvement law, the abortion rate subsequently falls by close to 14 percent. Dr. Michael New, study author and assistant professor of political science at the University of Alabama, said about 36 states have a parental-involvement law on the books. "The overwhelming evidence in support of parental-involvement laws should be a boon to legislators everywhere," he said.

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### LIBERAL LAW PROFESSORS LEAD TO LIBERAL JUDGES

(EP News)--Law professors at Harvard, Chicago, the University of Michigan and Stanford have given 100 percent of their 2008 election contributions to Democratic candidates. Furthermore, an overview of 17 top law schools shows faculty members have given 95 percent of their political contributions — more than \$1 million — to Sen. Barack Obama. Kelly Shackelford, chief counsel for the Liberty Legal Institute, said it's no coincidence that law schools are producing a growing number of liberal, activist judges. "(Elite schools) definitely have an agenda," he said. "It's a Left-wing agenda — versus having judges who would be on the court and respect the rule of law (and) would restrain themselves." Only one school — Northwestern — saw a majority of its law professor donations go to Sen. John McCain.

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### NORTH CAROLINA TOWN WILL ALLOW FREE SPEECH

(EP News)--Residents of Hickory, N.C., will be allowed to continue sharing their faith in public after the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) intervened. Matthew Boyd and Jesse Boyd were arrested in June and charged with trespassing after expressing their beliefs and distributing literature at a public festival. Festival organizers claimed such activities were not permitted during the event. ADF then sent a letter to town officials, explaining the constitutional right to free speech. "Christians shouldn't be penalized for expressing their beliefs," ADF Legal Counsel Tim Chandler said. "It was unconstitutional to charge these men with a crime simply because they chose to share their faith peacefully in public. But now the city of Hickory should be commended for responding so well to respect the First Amendment rights of its citizens."

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### IOWA SUPREME COURT SETS DATE FOR GAY 'MARRIAGE' CASE

(EP News)--Fifteen months after a judge struck down Iowa's Defense of Marriage Act — which defines marriage as between one man and one woman — the state's highest

court will decide the issue. In August 2007, Polk County District Judge Robert Hanson ruled in favor of six same-sex couples who had sued for the right to "marry." Hanson stayed his own ruling, but not before one homosexual couple was "married." The Iowa Supreme Court will hear the case Dec. 9.

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### CHRISTIANS DEFEND POLICE CHAPLAINS WHO RESIGNED OVER PRAYER POLICY

(EP News)--Pastors and Christian leaders held a press conference Oct. 8 demanding the reinstatement of six police chaplains who resigned over a prayer policy. They called on Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine and State Police Superintendent Col. Steven Flaherty to reverse the policy — which prohibits police chaplains from praying in Jesus' name — and reinstate the chaplains. In September, Flaherty issued a directive requiring police chaplains to offer only "nondenominational prayers" at public events, such as trooper graduations and memorial services. Victoria Cobb, president of the Family Foundation of Virginia, said the policy violates the First Amendment. "Requiring a Christian chaplain to effectively pray to an unknown God should frighten every American," she said. "Once again, our sacred rights are being sacrificed at the altar of political correctness."

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### ACLU SUES OVER TEN COMMANDMENTS IN COURTROOM

(EP News)--The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio has filed a lawsuit against a county judge who continues to display the Ten Commandments in his courtroom. After Richland County Judge James DeWeese lost a similar case in 2002, he added "humanist principles" alongside the Ten Commandments. Still, the ACLU claims his religious views should not influence his role as a judge.

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### ARIZONA GETS GO-AHEAD FOR PRO-LIFE LICENSE PLATES

(EP News)--Arizona drivers will be able to put a pro-life license plate on their cars, after the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal on the case. For six years, the Arizona Life Coalition has sought to create a "Choose Life" license plate. In January, the notoriously liberal 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals struck down a lower-court ruling and decided the plates are constitutional. Peter Gentala, attorney for the Arizona Life Coalition and The Center for Arizona Policy, applauded the court's decision. "Life-affirming expression is constitutionally protected just like any other speech," he said. "(Our) message has been censored for over six years. Now it's time for the License Plate Commission to act quickly to approve the plates so they can go into production, as the law requires." The plates could be available within a few months.

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### BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD FIGHTS FLORIDA'S MARRIAGE

### AMENDMENT

(EP News)--Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, the state's largest health insurer, is working to defeat the marriage-protection amendment that will go to voters Nov. 4. Randy Kammer, an attorney and vice president for regulatory affairs and public policy, claimed the amendment would "have a major impact on our ability to provide benefits for domestic partners." John Stemberger, president of the Florida Family Policy Council and state chairman of Yes2Marriage.org, told the St. Petersburg Times the ballot's language was crafted to avoid affecting domestic-partner benefits. "It's completely wrong," he said about the claim that domestic-partner benefits would be threatened.

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### BISHOP STUNS HOMOSEXUAL CONFERENCE WITH BIBLICAL MESSAGE

(EP News)--When Bishop Jaime Soto was invited to be the keynote speaker at the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries conference, attendees were expecting him "to explore the grace-full life in which Jesus loves us and saves us." At least that's what the brochure for the September event promised. Instead, the soon-to-be bishop of Sacramento shared a clear presentation of Church teaching on sexuality. "Sexual relations between people of the same sex can be alluring for homosexuals, but it deviates from the true meaning of the act and distracts them from the true nature of love to which God has called us all," Soto told the Long Beach, Calif., crowd. "For this reason, it is sinful." At least five members of the audience walked out during the bishop's address, according to news reports. And a board member apologized, saying, "We had no idea Bishop Soto was going to say what he said."

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### INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS FRC DEFENDS RIGHT TO LIFE IN IRELAND

(EP News)--The European Court of Human Rights will allow the Family Research Council (FRC) and two other pro-life organizations to defend Ireland's abortion ban in court. The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) will represent FRC. Three women who sought an abortion in Ireland are fighting to establish a "right" to abortion in the nation. A hearing could come next year. "No one should be allowed to decide that an innocent life is worthless," ADF chief counsel Benjamin Bull said. "ADF and FRC are looking forward to defending Ireland's abortion ban so that scores of preborn children are guaranteed the protection the Irish people gave them. "This case is not only pivotal to Europe; it's pivotal to America. With greater frequency, the U.S. Supreme Court looks across the ocean to see what other countries are doing when considering its own cases. This case could be the Roe v. Wade of Europe."



## Mini-Edition

(Continued from page 451) ♦

of Blacks or Hispanics are incarcerated as opposed to Whites, the cry "racism" is heard, yet, if the data is accurate, facts are facts. That is not racism, just factism. Truth is color blind.

I once read a news story about a Black mother who left her small kids alone at home during the day for weeks on end, while she went to work. The first response I heard was how this incident was proof of the lack of child care available and how the government must provide more child care workers or funds for her to pay for child care. To decry the crime of the woman was equated with racism. And the problem, according to the media, was not that she was irresponsible in her actions, but that the government was failing to help her raise her children. Child care is not the responsibility of government.

A common cry from some Blacks of today is that of victimization. They are "victims" in a White man's world. The truth is, they really have been victimized.... by White and Black liberals. Those who claim to be for the little guy, the poor and the minorities, have actually created a slave system of government dependency, thereby robbing these groups of the liberty to be all they can be, discovering their untapped potential. They have been successful in hypnotizing many blacks, including many Black preachers, into believing they cannot make it on their own and their economic salvation lies in the Democratic party and the promises of self appointed Black saviors. But the tide is turning and there is a growth in conservatism among Blacks today, as they throw off the man made shackles, reject government socialism, accept responsibility and begin to think for themselves. Until more Blacks take this step, they will remain in the racist world of Jesse Jackson, who is the king of racists.

Does any of this mean there is no such thing as racism? Certainly not. Racism is a part of humanity. It is virtually as old as the human race. Racism is also wrong. There is a litmus test which can be used to determine if you are racist. For instance, if you believe any individual is going to act a certain way or be predisposed to do certain things simply because of their color of skin or ethnicity, then you are a racist. If you think someone is more likely to be lazy, steal, be immoral, etc. simply because they are of a certain race or ethnic group, then you are racist.

If a certain act, acts, lifestyle, or philosophy seems to be more prevalent in one people group than in another, then culture is the culprit, not race. For instance, a people group speaks a certain language, not because of some inward racial programming, but because of culture and geographical location. There is, however, one inward trait which is inherited by all, regardless of race, and that is depravity. Sin

is inherited by all from father Adam and only ONE person ever missed inheriting sin....Jesus Christ. And that was simply because Joseph, who was descended from Adam, was not His father. The presence of sin is the root cause of racism and bigotry in mankind.

Is there a word from the Bible on racism? Is there any scriptural precedent on how man should treat man? In John, chapter 4, Jesus was so concerned about the eternal destiny of the hated Samaritans, verse 4 states, "**He must needs go through Samaria.**" The Jews hated the Samaritans and the Samaritans hated the Jews. The Samaritans were half Gentile, so race, as well as religion was an issue. Verse 27 tells us the disciples marveled that he even talked to the woman.

The book of the Acts gives conclusive proof that the gospel is for all men everywhere. Notice in chapter 8, Phillip the evangelist was sent on a divine mission to the Ethiopian Eunuch to explain the gospel so he could be saved. In chapter 9, a son of Abraham, Shaoul the Rabbi was saved on the Damascus road and later sent out as a missionary in chapter 13 with Barnabas. In chapter 10, God had to twist Peter's arm to convince him to take the gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile. Even then, Peter argued with God about the issue. Imagine, correcting God, but racism blinds to the truth and the God of truth. Chapters eight, nine and ten shout out a powerful message that God is no respecter of persons. The Ethiopian in chapter 8 is a descendant of Ham. Paul in chapter 9 is a descendant of Shem and Cornelius in chapter 10 is a descendant of Japheth. Each one is descended from one of the three sons of Noah, representing the three main people groups in the world.

Then notice the Scripture in Matthew 24:7. The rise of racism is a sign of the end time preceding the return of Jesus Christ. "**For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom...**" No doubt, wars and rumors of wars are also an end time sign and kingdom against kingdom describes this prophecy, but nation against nation describes racial strife. The word "nation" is speaking of nationality, tribe, race and ethnicity, or race against race. There seems to have been an increase in racial tension world wide over the past several years. The issue of "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia was racial, not just religious. And racial problems in this country, especially in metropolitan areas, seem to be on the rise.

The Bible makes no distinction between Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, etc. It does, however, make a distinction between Jew and Gentile, but the New Testament then erases this distinction in Christ, since the middle wall of partition has been broken down. There is one other very strong distinction of two classes of people found in the Bible: the haves and the have-nots. Whoever has the Son has life and whoever has not the Son does not have life, but

the wrath of God abiding on him. A true believer (one of the haves) filled the love of God, will not make an issue of race.

A fallacy often found today is the assumption that all discrimination is wrong. Everyone discriminates. I discriminate when choosing what to watch on TV, or what to view as entertainment, or who I want to spend time with. Is that wrong? I explained this one day in one of my classes at Southeastern Baptist College. When I "got off on" the issue of race and prejudice, some of the students, Black and White, began to get uncomfortable. I told the students to take notice at lunch time and watch as students left the campus to go eat at different restaurants in town. My point was that birds of a feather would flock together. Sure enough, most of the guys segregated from the girls and went together, the girls teamed up and went out and most of the Black ministers gathered up and went out to eat together, as well as our non-traditional ministerial students (non-traditional because they are older than the younger college kids and have families) who "discriminated" against all the rest, and grouped together. Did any of these groups discriminate against any of the other groups? No. They made discriminate choices concerning who they wanted to spend time with, but did not discriminate AGAINST anyone. At gatherings, religious and secular, I have seen men gather with men to fellowship, women gather with women, and among the children, boys with boys, girls with girls, rednecks with rednecks, professionals with professionals, but you get the picture. People of similar gender or interests or backgrounds or culture, gravitate to one another. They are not shunning others, just simply choosing their comfort zone. When allowed to choose, humans, as a rule, choose to segregate with their own kind, whether by race, gender, class or socioeconomic level.

Bottom line: Talking about facts of race is not racism. All discrimination is not wrong, and mutual segregation by choice is a normal accepted practice.

Joseph Harris welcomes the hate letters of all who disagree with him and God.



## World Scene

(Continued from page 460) ♦

"The Congressional Pardon for Border Patrol Agents Ramos and Compean Act" and right the dangerous injustice inflicted upon these brave agents' lives.

(Excerpts by letter, David Keene, Chairman, The American Conservative Union).

Editor's Note: This bill was placed into the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security on Feb. 2, 2007. It would seem to the editor that these men have been lost in the bureaucratic red tape of Washington.



### BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 9-1-2008 to 9-30-2008

Beginning Balance .....	\$7,903.91
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Amazing Grae B. C., Stockdale, TX .....	20.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL .....	52.83
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	826.54
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....	60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN .....	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV .....	300.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV .....	100.00
Central Ave. B. C., Tampa FL .....	300.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR.....	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
Grace B. C., Marion, IL.....	50.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL .....	50.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA.....	125.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC .....	50.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM.....	100.00
Lord's Church Beverly Hills, Summerville, SC .....	200.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH. ....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN .....	20.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
New Testament B. C., Leivasy, WV... ..	100.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA.....	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA .....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS .....	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL.....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC. ....	100.00
Sovereign Grace, B.C., Warren, OH.....	75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Walnut Creek B. C., Grove City, OH .....	50.00
Subscriptions .....	95.00
Anon.....	1,205.00
Sub Total .....	\$4,974.37
TOTAL .....	\$12,878.28
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing.....	581.71
Postage .....	757.37
Wages .....	2,390.00
FICA .....	167.71
Supplies .....	100.00
Total Expenditures .....	3,996.79
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$8,881.49

### BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 9-1-2008 to 9-30-2008

Beginning Balance .....	\$10,823.42
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN .....	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	2,100.00
.....	2,375.00
TOTAL.....	13,198.42
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	360.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	360.00
.....	\$12,838.42
Interest .....	+1.40
Less Corbin, KY des. ....	-2,170.92
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$10,668.90

### CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance .....	\$330.92
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	2,000.00
.....	2,330.92
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
WCTT .....	160.00
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,170.92



# WORLD SCENE

By  
Capt. G. Russell Evans USCG (Ret.)



## The Real Barack Obama

If you're outraged that the national news media are covering up the shocking, radical agenda of Senator Barack Hussein Obama---well, read on.

With Senator Obama gaining unprecedented power in Congress, it is absolutely critical that we reach hundreds of thousands of Americans with the truth about his socialist, anti-military, anti-family agenda. For instance, did you know that Barack Obama:

\* Voted "against" a bill to protect babies that survive abortion attempts?

\* Wants to "expand abortion rights" for same-sex couples?

\* Voted "against" the Bush tax cuts and against repealing the Death tax?

\* And wants to "raise" the amount of your Social Security benefits that can be taxed?

It's true. Yet thanks to the national news media's silence, millions of Americans have no idea what this man stands for. They don't know that Senator Obama:

\* Voted against confirming Supreme Court Justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito.

\* Believes that the Sermon on the Mount justifies his support for legal recognition of same-sex unions.

\* Has vowed to force "universal health care" on you and your family.

\* "Insists" that his support for legalized abortion doesn't make him "less Christian."

\* And "refuses" to wear a U.S. flag pin on his lapel or place his hand over his heart during the National Anthem.

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan calls Obama "the hope of the world." Billionaire talk-show host Oprah Winfrey has hosted massive Hollywood parties for him. And Obama's agenda is being pushed by big labor and one of the most radical groups in America---MoveOn.org! Mark my words: CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, "The Washington Post," and "The New York Times" won't tell you the radical truth about Obama. But I will.

Because I think you should know that Senator Obama voted "against" banning partial birth abortions, "against" declaring English the official language of the U.S. Government, and "against" a bill that would have doled out harsher sentences to gang members who commit crimes. If you believe you have a stake in this nation, then I urge you to join me in exposing the dangerous truth about Barack Hussein Obama's agenda---before it becomes the law of the land."

Through nationwide TV commercials, petition campaigns, and grassroots

lobbying here in Washington, D.C., Citizens United (CU) is fighting for the conservative, pro-family values you care about. There have been three blockbuster documentary films produced that left-wing Hollywood would never touch:

1. *Celsius 41.11*---to refute the lies that Michael More spread about George W. Bush in his left-wing "Fahrenheit 9/11."

2. *Hillary: The Movie*---exposing the dangerous past of Senator Hillary Clinton.

3. *Rediscovering God in America*---a film hosted by Newt Gingrich that exposes the liberal movement to remove God from the public square.

CU's (Citizens United) hard work has defended the ideals and values that built this nation---and that you and your family care about. However, I know we cannot rest on our laurels. Not when Senator Barack Obama is gaining support in the Congress to impose his socialist agenda on our families. The national news media will never tell the truth about Obama, meaning, it's up to you and me to warn the American people.

The documentary, "The REAL Barack Obama," is scheduled for release this summer. I don't have free publicity and millions of dollars for a marketing ad campaign like the Hollywood liberals do. Remember, Barack Obama has the financial support of Hollywood liberals like Oprah Winfrey, Susan Sarandon, and George Clooney backing him up. But, as you see in the movie, Senator Obama's "faith" is in government-run health care---he wants "change" that includes higher taxes and same-sex marriage---and the only "hope" he offers is a socialist agenda to America. Barack Obama is gaining enormous power in the U.S. Senate. Yet the national news media won't tell you what HE REALLY STANDS FOR!

The fall of man is written in too legible characters not to be understood. Those that deny it, by their denying, prove it. --- George Whitefield

(Excerpts are from David N. Bossie, President, Citizens United)

## Congressional Pardon For Border Patrol Agents

If you refuse to place the rights of a drug smuggling illegal immigrant over the rights of two highly decorated Border Patrol agents, then you need to know about H.R. bill 563. This is the "Congressional Pardon for Border Patrol Agents Ramos and Compean Act"---and it would overturn the unjust convictions of U.S. Border Patrol Agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean.

These two veteran U.S. Border Patrol agents are sitting in a cold jail cell for doing their jobs. . . .while the Mexican drug runner they were chasing is free as a bird---and suing the United States for \$5 million dollars!

Before I continue, let me tell you the facts:

\* Last year, Border Agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean were on duty patrolling our border with Mexico when they noticed a suspicious van near the Rio Grand River.

\* The van was being driven by illegal alien Osvaldo Aldrete-Davila who was smuggling 743 pounds of marijuana into the United States.

\* The illegal alien and drug smuggler saw Agents Ramos and Compean and ran for the border.

\* Agent Compean tried to cut off his escape, but was shot at by the fleeing drug runner.

\* Agent Ramos, in response to the attack on his partner fired a shot at Davila, but the drug smuggler was able to make it back into Mexico and avoid arrest.

Weeks later, Agents Ramos and Compean were informed that the U.S. government was filing charges against them for "violating the drug smuggler's civil rights!"

What they didn't know was that Agent Ramos' shot had hit the drug runner in the buttocks as he was escaping to Mexico. Osvaldo Aldrete-Davila and his family then had the gall to complain to the U.S. government for the injuries he suffered while attempting to smuggle drugs into our country and firing shots at U.S. Border

Agents!

What is even more galling is the fact that the U.S. government has taken the side of the criminal illegal alien and is treating these two brave Border Agents as the criminals.

Agents Ramos and Compean were sentenced to 11 and 12 years in prison, respectively. In January 2007, they began serving their time. After just one month in prison, Agent Ramos was attacked and beaten by four Mexican inmates who were yelling "Maten a la migra"---which means, "kill the Border Patrol Agent!"

Congressman Duncan Hunter introduced H.R. 563 because it was clear to him that the trial was unfair, the verdict unjust. . . .and that neither the U.S. Justice Department nor the President has the guts to step in and do what's right. That leaves only one option for Ramos and Compean: A Congressional Pardon to vacate their convictions.

As Congressman Hunter puts it: "Agents Compean and Ramos fulfilled their responsibilities as Border Patrol agents and rightfully pursued a suspected and fleeing drug smuggler. It is irresponsible to punish them with jail time." Thankfully, Congressman Hunter's bill---H.R. 563---already has 98 Congressional co-sponsors. That means we have almost half of the votes needed to vacate these unjust convictions and allow these two brave men to return home to their families. But it won't be an easy task to get the remaining votes.

Nancy Pelosi and the liberals in Congress have time and time again sided with illegal aliens over our law enforcement agencies and this case is likely to be no different. That's why we need to show an overwhelming amount of support for H.R. 563. We need to show Pelosi that the American people refuse to turn their backs on Ramos and Compean.

Below you will see what H.R. 563 says. Please help us get this very important bill passed.

### H.R. 563

"The Congressional Pardon for Border Patrol Agents Ramos and Compean Act"

Whereas, Agents Compean and Ramos did nothing wrong and were simply doing their jobs as Border Patrol agents when they attempted to pursue a dangerous drug smuggling illegal immigrant, and,

Whereas, the phony charges that landed Agents Ramos and Compean in jail---violating the "civil rights" of a drug smuggler and the discharge of a handgun in the commission of a felony---are nothing but political pandering to the ACLU and open borders crowd; and

Whereas, Agents Ramos and Compean should be saluted as American heroes for risking their lives on a daily basis in the defense of our borders instead of spending over ten years in jail with illegal immigrant inmates threatening to kill them,

Be it Resolved, that the House of Representatives should Pass H.R. 563,

◊ (Continued on page 459)

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