

The Berea Baptist Banner

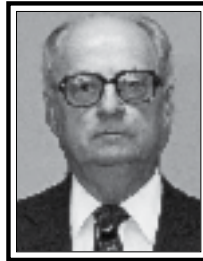
"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" Ps. 60:4

The Christian and Evil Days

By Wm. Doyal Thomas
(1932 - 2018)

As I sit in my study on this cold, overcast, and dreary day I meditate upon the conditions that mortal man faces each day. All around is the visual and the sensory perceptions of darkness and dread. There is the apparent evidence that the day holds many forebodings and anxious moments as one must face unpleasant conditions and circumstances. Just to go outside into such an environment as winter presents requires one to seek to muster up an extra measure of courage and strength. And I do not enjoy this set of circumstances, for I do not like the dark and dreary.

Why, do you suppose, do I and others have this particular feeling toward our lot and portion during the winter? Is there something that is inherently bad about winter? Surely, God has wisely appointed the seasons and the associated weather patterns for good and beneficial reason. He tells us, specifically, that seasons are in our best interest, and they produce much good, and that there is a time for all things. "To



every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).

I think, as others must surely think, of the ever present desires and choices of the flesh as it seeks to find gratification for itself with seldom a thought past immediacy. I want to face, or otherwise be confronted with the warm, the pleasant, the easy, and the enjoyable. I want everything to bring me into, and then to sustain me in a state of human pleasure. I want life to be everything that causes the flesh to find contentment in the world, as if one can stay in the world forever; as if there were no hereafter. I want what I want, and I want it now. I, being mortal, am sinfully fallible, and being such, am depraved and self-centered. I am a sinner.

Yes, even in normally warm south Texas, there are times when cold, somber dreariness sets upon us as a blanket of gloom and uneasiness. There are some days

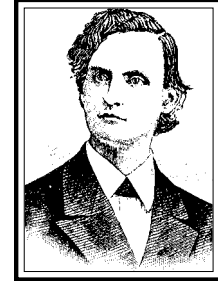
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The Pre-Eminent Name

By J. B. Hawthorne
(1837 - 1910)

"Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

Verily there is something in a name. It may and often does represent a mighty factor in the life of the world. Back of all the world's history there were names that inspired human courage, purpose, and enterprise. The names of great men have become synonyms for the principles and institutions to which they devoted their lives. They have become slogans,



watchwords, and battle-cries, to arouse the enthusiasm of men and to nerve them for heroic action in the midst of great crises.

When the old Greek orators saw signs of dullness and inattention in their audiences, they could arouse every man before them and raise enthusiasm to the highest pitch by simply pausing for a moment, and then shouting, "Marathon! Marathon!" Since the day you

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Bringing Up Children God's Way

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant" (Gen. 33:5). "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Ps. 127:3-5).

Children are a heritage of the



Lord. Children are a blessing from God. Though our world and our current American society may disparage, disapprove, or even physically destroy the children in our midst and the sanctified idea of a family; still, in the sight of God, and in the conscience of honest and upright people, the children in our midst are a measure of the goodness of God to mankind. I suppose, the subject of bringing up children God's way must require a people who, first of all, have a desire for children – the

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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.



By the Editor

Church For Sale!

Recently I was leaving the courthouse and noticed a sign posted on the bulletin board that read, "Church For Sale - Plus Contents." Well, most of us would assume that this meant that the church building plus its furnishings was what was for sale. But we as Baptists know that it is the people that make up the church not the building or any of its contents. Let us stop for a moment and think of it in another way. What if it meant the actual church (real live members) were for sale? What would be a good asking or selling price? Maybe it would depend on the church itself.

CHURCHES FOR SALE, BUILDINGS INCLUDED

Church number one: This church has a large congregation and many visitors. Sunday morning services are overflowing with standing room only. Evening services are usually of moderate size. Mid-week services are modest and enjoyable. Included is a large multi-thousand square foot building in a prime location with all the latest technology and seating arrangement and refreshment areas. Many types of functions and activities to help raise funds for all of the outreach programs, and church expenses. Always special guest speakers on holidays. Musical events throughout the year.

Church number two: This church has a small membership but are friendly and outgoing. Always visiting the sick and witnessing to

all in the neighborhood. Members attend all services as well as special meetings. Very few special activities other than services, but always giving and supplying the needs of the church. Included is a small building, somewhat modern, but with few perks other than the necessary.

Which of these two churches would you buy?



The Christian and

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when life has some difficulties, and some unpleasantness with which the natural man must contend. There are plenty of reminders that we are mortal, and that as such, we must be required to bow ourselves before our Mighty Sovereign and confess our weakness and our propensities to murmur and complain at the situations we face.

Could this rather simple illustration of the condition of the natural man be of great and wonderful instruction for us; for we who claim eternal standing before God in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? Could this also be a reminder that even though this particular day is cold, dark, and dreary, there is another day coming in which none of these present factors will be our portion?

There is another simple fact that I want to share with you as well. As I sit here in my study and look outward to my surroundings, to those conditions outside my home, I see the darkness and dreariness that I have described. But here, inside, I am pleasantly warm, and there is the feeling of comfort and security that all is well. In spite of what goes on around me, all is well. My God is

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in control. All is well.

One of the problems that we as Christians face is the simple truth that everything is not always as it at first appears to be. Sometimes the only real problem that we have is one of perception, rather than one of reality. Sometimes all we can see is what we can see. Sometimes we are looking, and then walking by sight and not by faith. Is this the case with me? With you also perhaps, at some time or times in your life? Is it the case with all of us much more often than we admit or perhaps even realize?

Recently, I wrote on the subject of "Perilous Times." In that message, I sought to point out that we are living in times that are fraught with evil, and with the peril that is associated with evil times. I made an effort to describe just a few of the types of evils that all men are confronted with in these last days, for truly the evil is present in the world, and we, as do other men still live in the world.

In that writing I sought to alert God's people to the awful and fearful conditions around us, beginning with the human governments that God has appointed to rule over us, and then cascading down through all strata of human society to the individual; to alert us all to the conditions as they are in the natural realm, and as they appear to be in all realms of life. That was, and is my intent, for I believe that we must be brought to the point of recognizing that **"... all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world"** (I John 2:16).

Dear reader, I want all to see that the world is rushing head long to a

collision with the just, proper, and promised condemnation as God deals in judgment against Satan, fallen angels, and all unrepentant men. This is sure judgment, for God has also said, **"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof..."** (I John 2:17).

So, we may properly conclude that all the dark, dreary, troublesome times that are associated with these "evil days" in which we all live prior to the dawning of the new day that God has promised are but a temporary thing, for **"... the world passeth away, and the lust thereof."** We may properly conclude that the Lord is coming, and **"... he that doeth the will of God abideth forever"** (I John 2:17).

Yes, beyond this promised day there will be for the believer all joy, bliss, contentment, and eternal blessing. Eternity will provide all that brings those who dwell with God the unending privilege of worshipping, praising, and serving Him. In eternity, there will never be the slightest hint of unpleasantness. There will be no element allowed to enter in to cause any anxiety to the children of God. There will be no pain, nor anguish, nor sorrow, nor doubt. All will know that to be with the Lord is the epitome of life that is ordered, structured, and good. We will be forever happy, and we will know that nothing could be an improvement of this eternal state.

But, what about the day that follows the present time of man's day? Before the eternal state, but following the day in which man presently finds himself is another day. This anticipated day is spoken of as the Lord's day. It is the predicted and promised day of the millennium. It is the time in which the Lord Jesus Christ will rule and reign in perfect

righteousness upon the earth from His father David's throne in Jerusalem.

I am well aware that there are many who will and do deny that such a day will come. There have long been those, some who even profess to be, and call themselves 'Baptists,' who deny the millennium. There are even some who identify themselves as sovereign grace 'Baptists' who are of this persuasion, and who have convinced themselves of this terrible error by their "spiritualizations" of the literal Scriptures. And error, when imbibed, taught, and practiced becomes heresy. There are others who shun to contend for this precious truth, and in so doing, bring great shame and reproach upon the Lord and upon His true churches as they, under His command go forth proclaiming this wonderful approaching day. But, we must be true to Him who has called us to witness the truth, and announce to each of you who read these words that there is a millennium coming, and that Christ will usher in that great day at the conclusion of the time of great tribulation.

Let us now take a look at this coming day, as we seek A GLIMPSE OF MILLENNIUM.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon

them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:1-6).

Dear reader, some will reign with Christ for a thousand years. And that is a literal thousand years, rather than a "spiritualized," imagined undetermined time. And that reign will be upon this earth. I know, Christ presently reigns in the heart of His people. But, this prophecy is literal as to the reign of Christ, and as to when, where, and over whom this reign is to be. It is dishonest to seek to make a part of this prophecy "figurative" while holding other parts of it literal. It is either literal, or it is not! I emphatically declare, "It is literal."

When? Following the tribulation time, which is Daniel's seventieth week. The millennium will follow the great tribulation time. Where? Upon the earth, for that is where David's throne is, and it is upon David's throne that Christ will reign, as the rightful heir to that throne. And God has promised that there will never cease to be a true and legitimate claimant to the throne of David.

I recently (within the past two weeks) heard a heretic, posing

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as a true sovereign grace Baptist declare in his message that was broadcast over the radio airwaves in this area that Christ entered into heaven at the conclusion of His earthly ministry and claimed and occupied "His father David's throne in heaven." Can you believe such heresy? Can you believe that some imagine that David's throne is in heaven? And in order to believe such foolishness requires a most vivid imagination. Surely, no such teaching can be found in the Bible.

Who will reign with Christ during this literal thousand years upon the earth? Verses 4 and 5 of this passage tells us. It is those who are made to be partakers of the first resurrection. It is those who are redeemed. Specifically, verse 4 tells us that among those who will reign with Christ are those who were slain by the beast during the tribulation, and that because of their witness of Jesus and for the word of God. These had been enabled to refuse to worship the beast, the image of the beast, or to receive the mark of the beast during the tribulation. And this DOES NOT teach the great error of the post-tribulation theorist. These are tribulation saints to be sure, but they are NOT saints who composed the Lord's true churches prior to the opening of the great tribulation week of years. These are those who were saved during the tribulation, but were never a part of the Lord's true churches. The saints of the church age were gathered out prior to the beginning of Daniel's seventieth week, which time is also known as "**the time of Jacob's trouble**" (Jer. 30:7).

Remember also that all that are made to be partakers of the first

resurrection are the saved of God. This innumerable host which no man can know or number, but whom God knows, every one, reaches all the way back to the first redeemed soul and includes those who are redeemed, even during and out of this great tribulation.

What is the day of the Lord, the span of which will constitute the reign of Christ upon the earth, commonly called the millennium? It is the manifested kingdom of Christ that John the Baptist announced as being "**at hand,**" in Matthew 3:2. John the Baptist said, "**Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**"

Literally, it is "of the heavens," signifying the Messianic earth rule of Jesus Christ, the Son of David. It is the kingdom covenanted to David's seed in II Samuel 7:4-17; described in the prophets in Zechariah 12:8, and confirmed to Jesus Christ the Son of Mary as announced by the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:30-33.

In Zechariah's prophesy, the Lord is seen as He delivers His people, particularly Judah as He defends the inhabitants of Jerusalem, putting down all opposition as He prepares to take the throne according to the Davidic covenant. It is the ushering in of the day of the Lord.

What conditions will exist during the reign of Christ upon the earth, during the millennium? Can we know about these matters? Does the Bible declare the state of the earth during this glorious day of the Lord? Does the Bible describe the six days that constitute "man's day" so graphically, and then totally ignore the day of Christ? Remember, we are still living in "man's day," but soon, the day of Christ will dawn and all will be such as was not since sin entered and man fell.

The Scriptures clearly teach that

when Christ shall come He will set up a perfect reign of righteousness over all the earth. Man will be governed by a Perfect King and even though many will occupy the earth during this glorious span who are unregenerate, their lives will be regulated by the perfect law of God. Children will be born, life will go on, business and commerce will continue, and men will die.

The land will bring forth in abundance and men everywhere will be supplied all that is needful, of course being required to utilize lawful means to obtain what is needed (No well-fare state then). The crop land will flourish and the herds and flocks will be fruitful. World order (a true New World Order) will be maintained so that every one may dwell in safety and peace, and when men violate God's law they will be swiftly and properly judged and punished. Law will prevail at all times and under every circumstance. (I wonder why some who claim to be Bible believers will acknowledge that God of old required men to live under law, and will do so again in the millennium, and then imagine that He does not require that His people live under His law today. Are there more antinomians than we imagine?)

Even among the beasts of the field and the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea there shall be compatibility and harmony. The bear shall feed along side the cattle and the lion shall lay down with the kid or the lamb. The adder shall not harm, nor shall the scorpion sting. The young child will be able to play with what they will without danger of hurt.

What a day the day of Christ shall be! And listen, dear child of God, we will reign with Christ during this time. I do not pretend

to fully know of this great time in completeness, but the Scriptures clearly teach that the saints of God will reign with Him. He being the Absolute Monarch will rule, and we shall reign with Him.

I do not know of the form of governmental activity that we will be involved in, but I truly believe that what ever human instrumentality of government He is pleased to employ will be manned by His saints. If there is such office as mayor, or sheriff, or judge, or whatever, those offices will, I believe be filled by men of the Lord's appointment from among His redeemed and glorified saints.

What a day the day of Christ shall be!

But what of the Christian and Evil Days?

Surely the millennium that we have been speaking of can not be described as being even slightly tainted with evil. The millennium is not the evil days, alluded to in the title of this message. NO, the evil days are the days in which we presently live while we await the catching away of the saints at the rapture, then the tribulation, and THEN the millennium.

How should the Christian be conducting himself now, while we still live among men, being used of God to witness to them of their sin and of the only Saviour, the Blessed Lord Jesus Christ? What should we be doing? What should we be saying? How should we be living in these "EVIL DAYS?" I am persuaded that God's children should be living as children of God, and that we should be expecting Him to return at any moment. How should we be living? As if He would come at any moment! Do you think that He will be pleased to find His children living as though they did not expect

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Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



Acquaint Now Thyself With Him #8

The Arm of the Lord Job 40:1-9

In our examination of the Lord, we have been noting the being of the Lord. The Bible gives us glimpses of the Lord's being throughout the Scriptures. He is described as the prophet Isaiah stated, **"...here a little, and there a little"** (Isa. 28:10). We now feel impressed to look at "The Arm of the Lord."

In our text, the LORD (Jehovah), is speaking to Job out of the whirlwind. He asks Job a series of rhetorical questions. Let us put ourselves in the place of Job and ponder this question he was asked: **"Hast thou an arm like God"** (Job 40:9)? Obviously, the answer is an emphatic **"NO!"** Nevertheless, let us examine the arm of the Lord to see how great an arm(s) the Lord does really have.

THE ARM OF THE LORD DESCRIBED

The Holy Spirit moved holy men of old (II Pet. 1:20-21) to record several descriptions of the arm of the Lord. The psalmist recorded the arm of the LORD as being **"strong"** (Ps. 89:10), **"mighty"** (Ps. 89:13), gives strength to David (Ps. 89:21)—a clear reference to the Messiah. In Psalm 98, the Holy Spirit describes the arm of the Lord as **"holy"** (Ps. 98:1), accompanied by the right hand of God as having **"done marvellous things"** and **"gotten him the victory"** (Ps. 98:1). The arm of the Lord is often spoken of

as being outstretched or stretched out (Exod. 6:6; Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 9:29; 11:2; I Kings 8:42; II Kings 17:36; II Chron. 6:32). The outstretched arm of the Lord speaks of that which is actively engaged in a work, or **"coming down"** (II Kings 6:9—here the Syrians are described as coming down, or there army as being stretched out). In connection with God's mercy, the psalmist records that by the arm of the Lord Israel was delivered from Egypt (Psa. 136:10-12). The Holy Spirit depicts the arm of the Lord as being **"glorious"** (Isa. 63:12).

In response to the Lord's question to Job, **"Hast thou an arm like God"** (Job 40:9)? we have to answer back in agreement with Isaiah 46:9, **"...For You are God, and there is none else; You are God, and there is none like thee."**

THE WORK OF THE ARM OF THE LORD

The Bible also attributes certain work unto the Lord's arm. As we noted already, there is no arm like unto the Lord. Therefore, the work that His arm does cannot be equaled, paralleled, or duplicated by any other arm. The work alone belongs to Him.

NOTE: The work of the Lord's arm is attributed to His arm in one passage, and perhaps something else in another. This ought not to cause us to say, "Well, which is it?" Rather, if in one passage the Lord's arm is attributed to doing a great work, and in another passage, a different part of God is said to have done the work, does it not

stand to reason that both were involved? Observe your own life and body. When you say I reached out with my arm and took the book, is there not an implication that your hand, shoulder, and the rest of your body played a part in it as well? Certainly so. Let us not conjure up any of the so called "contradictions of the Scriptures" for we know that God nor the Word of God is in contradiction to Himself or itself.

CREATION

Jeremiah 32:17, **"Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee."** Beloved, observe that this is a prayer of Jeremiah (Jer. 32:16). Jeremiah had been committed to prison by King Zedekiah of Judah because he dared to preach **"Thus saith the LORD"** (Jeremiah 32:1-5). The city of Jerusalem was currently under attack by Babylon's army. Jeremiah had prophesied that the city would be taken. Yet he also believed that Israel would return to the land that God had promised him. In Jeremiah 32:16-25, Jeremiah prays unto the Lord. Observe, how in prayer Jeremiah comes before the Lord with holy reverence for the Lord, as well as strengthening himself in the great power of the Lord. Jeremiah begins with "hallowing" the Lord, does he not? He attributes the work of creation, a work of mighty, strength, power, sovereignty and providence, omniscience to the Lord GOD. This would strengthen the faith of Jeremiah that God was able to bring to pass that which He said He would do, namely the return of Israel to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. SEE EZRA 1:1-4.

Beloved, we ought to look to the

creation, both heavens and the earth and all the host thereof, and it ought to strengthen our faith in the Lord seeing that by His **"great power and stretched out arm"** was it all created, both seen and unseen. Furthermore, we ought to come to the same conclusion as Jeremiah did, **"and there is nothing too hard for thee"** (Jer. 32:17).

SALVATION

The prophet Jeremiah continued to pray. In that very same prayer He ascribes Israel's deliverance from Egypt as from the **"arm of the Lord."** **"And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror"** (Jer. 32:21). Throughout the Scriptures, the Lord makes it clear that HIS arm brings about salvation (Isa. 40:11, **"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young"**).

Psalm 77:15, **"Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah."** Here the act of purchasing His people from the slave market is attributed to the arm of the Lord. The greatest stress is placed upon the great fact that it is the LORD's ARM and not our own that has brought us forth, or redeemed us.

The arm of the Lord is often depicted as being **"stretched out"** or **"outstretched"** when referring to salvation. This speaks of the work that God did in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "outstretched" or "stretched out" may be rendered "going down." It was the person of the Lord Jesus

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Little Hills

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Christ who came down from the throne of heaven to this earth, who humbled Himself a little lower than the angels, that He might take upon Him the likeness of our sinful nature, that He might be and perform the work of the kinsman redeemer.

WHO IS THE ARM OF THE LORD?

The Scriptures make it clear that the arm of the Lord is a person. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. Who is it who hath **“gotten Him the victory”** (Ps. 98:1)? I Cor. 15:54-57—that it is through our Lord Jesus Christ that we have gotten the victory. It is His arm that gathers the lambs (Isa. 40:11); the Scripture teaches us that He shall rule by His arm (Isa. 40:10); by His arm shall He smite the nations (Isa. 30:30). All of these are attributed to the Christ of God, the Lord Jesus. He is the arm of the Lord. He has gotten the victory, He has gathered the lambs, He shall rule and reign, He shall smite the nations.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Having observed the arms of the Lord, we are now better able to answer the question, **“Hast thou an arm like God”** (Job 40:9)? No, Lord, I do not have an arm like yours. I have not found any arm to even be comparable to Your arm. Oh soul, why then do I trust in my own arm? Or in the arm of another? Lord, help me to examine your arm and the works of your arm so that I might say with Jeremiah **“Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee”** (Jer. 32:17). Let me be as the isles (islands) of whom it is said **“...the isles shall**

wait upon me (the Lord), and on mine arm shall they trust” (Isa. 51:5).



The Christian and

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Him to come at any moment?

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?” (II Pet. 3:10-12).

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (men of all sorts, WDT) ...Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Titus 2:11-15).

What about The Christian and Evil Days?

The Christian should be Christ-like. The Christian should know that we will not change the depravity that lurks in the hearts of men, even ourselves, but that

does not mean that we should not earnestly contend for the faith. That does not mean that we should surrender and stop all efforts to be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. That does not mean that we should be reticent when it comes to our opportunity to tell others of Christ and of His righteous demands on us and upon them as well.

I believe that one of the major failures of Christian people today is twofold. First, hesitancy to tell sinners of their sins and of the Saviour. Second, reluctance to insist to ourselves and to other Christians that God requires faithful stewards to be about His business, which is, to tell sinners of their need and to tell Christians that they should conduct themselves in a manner that honors and glorifies the Lord in all that we say, in all that we do, and in all that we are.

In these evil days, Christian, fortify yourself with the Word of God, and seek His face in all that you attempt to do, and then do what He demands of us. Nothing less is acceptable in order to hear Him say one day soon, **“Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”** (*The Baptist Herald* - January, 1996).



The Pre-Eminent

(Continued from page 1) ♦

first read the history of that struggle which culminated in the independence of the American Colonies and the establishment of the American Republic, the name of Washington has stood in your mind for patriotism, and the mention of it has stimulated your patriotic sentiment. That name has ever been a favorite countersign with American soldiers, and the

use of it has helped many a weary, shivering picket to stand at his post and watch the stars.

The day I was born my father named me for Boardman, that dauntless hero who preceded Judson in missionary work among the Karens. When I was old enough I read the history of the struggles, sufferings, and achievements of that brave young man. His name, which I so unworthily bear, has been to my soul an abiding and unfailing inspiration. Luther, Calvin, Knox, Bunyan, and Carey were long ago gathered to their fathers; but the power of their names is still invoked wherever Christian workmen need a higher courage, a steadier purpose, and a more fervent zeal.

But there is a name above every name—a name which is reconstructing our disordered planet, recreating our fallen and ruined humanity, and which stands everywhere for the sweetest charities of earth, the synonym of the purest life, and the symbol of the highest civilization; a name which carries healing to the wounded, rest to the weary, pardon to the guilty, and salvation to the lost; a name which makes the dark gateway of the tomb the portal to a temple resplendent with the glory of celestial light, where the music of golden harps by angels' fingers touched is ineffable and eternal.

In the shock which followed the entrance of sin into the world man fell away from God, and heaven and earth went asunder. The sinful soul is diseased, polluted, fettered, imprisoned and hid away from God. Its deepest problem is how to be cured, cleansed, freed, and restored to the divine presence and favor. The solution of this problem is in the matchless and adorable name which we are

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Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of
Temperance, Michigan

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God" (Deuteronomy 32:2-3).



ELISHA ON CONTENTMENT, "IT IS WELL"

II Kings 4:8-37

Today we look at the life and service of this Shunammite woman. The city of Shunem meant "double resting place" and we see that it was Elisha and his servant Gehazi that found rest in this woman's home. God's Word refers to her as a "great woman" (v. 8). What great blessings must await one who shows such love and charity to men about the Father's work!

The initial Blessing came to the Shunammite woman in response to her generous heart toward God's prophet. **"And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life" (II Kings 4:13-17).** Her response to

this offer was that all was well, she did not have a want that drove her to love on them but rather it was an unconditional act of love!!

As the boy was a little older we see a great test of faith for his mother. **"And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died" (II Kings 4:18-20).** Oh how her words come back to haunt this writer as we see this test that has come about. **"Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid" (II Kings 4:16).**

Where did this dear woman run during her time of trouble? **"And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again" (II Kings 4:22).** To the man of God! We, too, should write it to our memories that there is no better place to run to in our times of trouble than to God and His living Word.

Did she run expecting another blessing? Perhaps she might think that another son might be gifted to her as a replacement? In II Kings 4:23 when asked why she was running to the man of God she says to her husband **"It shall be well."** Her husband even pointed out that it was not the time of the

year or month or even time of the week in which she should expect to be seen or hear from the man of God. She responds that **"It shall be well."**

Beware of the words of Satan as he tempts us to lose faith, sometimes even using those closest to us, that he might speak fear into hearts made anew by the work of the Lord. I recall even the words of Job's dear wife when she asked, **"Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die" (Job 2:9);** as this poor family lost everything and everyone that they held dear in this life. Let us now hear his response to his wife from Job 2:10, **"Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"** What is given of God is always good. What is taken of God is always good.

Upon losing all he had in this life aside from his own life and health, Job fell upon the ground and worshipped saying, **"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).** Note 'Yhwh' is used to name the God Who gave as well as the God that taketh away; He is one and the same eternal and living.

When Jesus was explaining to the Church all the things that He would suffer for my sins Peter began to rebuke him, saying **"Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."** To this Jesus turned and said **"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matt. 16:22-23).** God has ordained for things to take place in this life exactly how they need to, **"for**

good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

Did this woman want her son back? To answer this question I want to look at two things: where she went and how she felt.

"So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel" (II Kings 4:25). A great many trials of faith have occurred here. One most recent to this account is Elijah. In I Kings 18 he showed the very existence of God to the nation of Israel as he slayed the 450 prophets of Baal, at mount Carmel. In I Kings 19 he departs the mount a day's journey and in fear cries out for the LORD to 'take away his life' for in his own ability he could do nothing. She came to this mount seeking the counsel and comfort of God, through his prophet. Be careful, dear reader, that the trials in our life send us to God rather than fleeing away from Him.

In looking at how she felt we read in II Kings 4:26, **"Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well."** She did not scream from pain and sorrow. She did not lash out in a lack of faith. She did not even give the specifics of the problem to Gehazi, but rather recognized her condition was of the hand of God.

This 'great' woman was having her faith tested, and in so doing she has provided for us an amazing testimony! As she reached Elisha he recognized her **"soul was vexed"** meaning bitter or twisted. She was hurting. **"Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me" (II Kings 4:28)?** She had not asked for this son so her question now was, why give me that which

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Small Drops

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I did not ask for only to take it away and cause such pain....such a trial of her heart...such a vexing of her soul?

This happens from time to time does it not? Doubtless many who are reading this have lost someone they loved and asked the question "Why Lord?" My wife and I have had two miscarriages over the past three years. Neither one hurt more than the other, yet they both hurt. Time distances us from the pain of the initial discovery of our loss, but it does not replace what we had hoped to have. Why do we go through these very painful, very real occurrences in life? Hebrews 12:10 says that it is for our profit, **"that we might be partakers of His holiness."** I am certain if you are in that particular season today as you read this, these words may not help much. Understand that the plagues caused in Egypt during the great Exodus were for the same purpose. It was God's wrath on Egypt certainly, but if you look closely at the Scriptures (Exodus chapters 7-12) and watch the nation of Israel, they are being sanctified or separated from Egypt with every plague. They are being cleansed and distinguished with every great movement of God's hand. Praise the Lord that He thought enough of us, while we were yet enemies, to do the same for us. With everlasting life we are forever able to sing, "it is well!"

THE COMMODITY OF TIME: OUR GREATEST EXCUSE

There was a song a few years ago that always comes to my mind when I discuss time management. "Basket Case" by Green Day opens with the words, "Do you have

the time to listen to me whine about nothing and everything all at once?" In our society today, the answer would likely be a resounding "no."

On Mondays, I start my secular day job at 6 a.m. and come home late in the afternoon to be with my children while my wife goes to work for the rest of the night. On Tuesdays, I stay home and homeschool the kids and begin preparing my Sunday sermons. My wife is gone from sun up to sun down working. On Wednesdays I am back at my day job until it is time to come home to get ready for church. My wife is homeschooling all day, running the kids to band, ballet, and the classes at the library as needed. We get home from church late on Wednesday nights and prepare for another busy Thursday with my wife working in the morning, me working into the evening, and our kids learning and playing all day long. Fridays are our catch-all day, and as my wife wraps up schooling our children, I work and finish up my sermons. Most Saturdays, I work all day and look forward to our family time in the evening. On Sunday, we spend the day at church with family and friends.

After reading the above paragraph, let me pause to ask for your prayers! We are not the only family living a schedule like this, as no doubt, yours might be even worse! One thing the Bible is very clear on is that God has only made a finite amount of time for us all.

The book of James is written to Christian Jews who were experiencing a great deal of persecution and having trouble maintaining their testimony for God. Strangely, James tells them to rejoice! I will admit that in the throes of a typical week, it is sometimes hard for us to rejoice with all the chaos. Herein,

though, we find comfort. We are told that all things come to an end; we should take the time to rejoice while we have it. James 4:14, **"For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."** This moment of your life is merely a season, a little time. Some seasons are cold and bitter amid financial struggles, busyness, sleepless nights, or failing health. Other seasons bring joy in moments of sunshine, laughter, and peace.

James is not telling us to quit our jobs or give up our kids' piano lessons and baseball practices. He reminds us to rejoice where we are! If you are working a lot of overtime, praise the Lord He gave you the opportunity to make some extra money for your family. Take a minute during your day to thank Him! Take the time on Sunday to listen for how the Lord might call you to give it back faithfully. Do you find yourself having to multitask in the car while your children take dance or music lessons? Praise the Lord for their gifts. So many families do not have such opportunities, and some children are not healthy enough to carry out these activities. Praise Him for the gift of having children to run places.

We must ask ourselves if we are using our time as an excuse or a blessing to others? Countless hours are lost in front of TVs and other electronic devices; these are hours of false busyness. People spend less time reading their Bibles, visiting rehabilitation centers with elderly folks, and even playing with their children than in any previous generation. Today is but a vapour; it is quickly vanishing away. What will you do with it?



The Pre-Eminent

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to consider this morning: Jesus—Saviour.

"There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Jesus Himself stood up among men and boldly declared that He was the one and only way by which lost men could get back to God.

But in what sense is He the Saviour of men? A mistake here is radical and fatal. Is He simply the ideal man, showing by His own manner of living how other men ought to live? If He is no more than that, He is not the Saviour that we need. He is indeed the ideal man. His life was perfect. It was absolutely without spot or blemish. And He does require us to follow Him in the sense of reproducing His virtues. But if He is only the ideal man, and does no more for us than show us how to live, He does not compass our necessities. Setting before us an example of right living, and inviting, entreating, and commanding us to follow it, will not save us from our sins and restore us to the favor of God.

Nor is He the Saviour of men in the sense that He shows them the way of salvation. If He is only a law-giver, or a teacher of divine truth, or a fingerboard to direct us in the way of righteousness, He is insufficient for our needs. The man who shows me the way to New York is not himself the way. The person who merely teaches me the truth is not himself the truth. And if Jesus is only a teacher of the way of salvation He is not Himself salvation. It is true that man is sadly and fearfully ignorant both of himself and of the infinite God to whom he must give account

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Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of
Clendenin, West Virginia

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14)

WHO HATH BELIEVED?

Isaiah 53:1, **"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?"**

Seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah proclaimed perhaps the clearest gospel message in the Old Testament. But the whole book, from beginning to end, is about Jesus. Our Lord Himself said in John 5:39, **"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."** And then, on the road to Emmaus, as the resurrected Jesus opened up the Word of God to the disciples, Luke 24:27 tells us, **"beginning at Moses and all the prophets, [Jesus] expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."** So when Isaiah asked, **"Who hath believed our report"** he is one of many Old Testament witnesses, who at various times and in different ways, conveyed the message of the saving grace of God, the promised Saviour, and God's plan of redemption. The report began in the Garden of Eden, and continued with Noah, and to Abraham and his descendants. The report was declared by Moses and in types and shadows, pictures and ceremonies. With poetry, pictures, and prophesies God gave us more of this blessed report. By types and teachings, we learn more of the coming Messiah who would save His people. Down the centuries and by many different men, the report was preached and

remained consistent because it came from God.

So, what is the answer to this first question? Who did believe the report? Much like today, relatively few people. Prophets pleaded and preachers proclaimed and yet the people did not hear the Word of the Lord. The scene is repeated through the ages and sadly even today. The good report is made known, yet who will believe? The question is amazing. People do not believe the report? The good news that God forgives sinners, not based on works but by grace, through faith in the death of God's Son who came and paid the debt of sin and pardoned us with His blood. This report is about the Christ. The arm of the Lord, a phrase in the Bible describing God's power and particularly, in the person of Christ (Isaiah 40:10). The strong arm of the Jehovah, Jesus Christ, is mighty to save and the report, though not universally received, is believed by those to whom God has revealed it. The answer to the first question about few believing the report, is explained in the answer to the second question, Christ must be revealed. The God of all grace, according to His mercy, provided full and free salvation to all who come and believe. But even the good news itself was not sufficient to save because man is both unwilling and unable to come to Christ to be saved. The Lord, in mercy and grace, and in great power, reveals Himself and draws sinners unto

Himself and gives them life and faith. **"Is the LORD'S hand waxed short?"** No, He is mighty to save.

A PICTURE OF A DAD

Around Father's Day, I always notice how our society portrays dads -- aloof, absent, uninvolved, or selfish. Selfish, self-centered men whose lives, if they have any guiding principle at all, are governed by sports, hobbies, or pleasure. The Bible paints a very different picture of what it means to be a dad. There are a multitude of passages that give us a picture of what a dad should be, so do not take your idea of fatherhood from the media, but from God's Word.

A father needs to correct and instruct his children. Far too many men have abdicated the role of discipline to the mother. By doing so, they have forsaken one of the primary duties that God has given them over their children. The responsibility of discipline and correction lays at the feet of the father. In Proverbs 3:12, Solomon tells us how God corrects His children, then reminds us how it is similar to a dad correcting his children, **"For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."** The dad in proverbs corrects the son he loves. The proverb says the father has delight in his son -- he loves him, and because he loves him, he corrects him when he is not walking in the right path.

Paul uses similar language when he describes his own ministry in I Thessalonias 2:11. **"As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children."** Paul acted like a father should. He exhorted them, or urged them on to do

the right thing. Fathers need to correct their children when they do wrong, but also exhort them to do right. Nothing is more frustrating for a child than to always be told what not to do, but never instructed on what they need to do. Paul also comforted them, or gave them heart to press on in their work. Dad needs to show the right way, but work in the heart of the child to want to do the right thing. Johann Albrecht Bengel said, "Exhortation leads one to do a thing willingly; consolation, to do it joyfully." Paul charged the church or appealed to their solemn responsibility to God to walk worthy. The father has the duty, but also the responsibility to raise his children and his authority comes from God. It does not come from being bigger and stronger or having a deeper voice. The authority to lead, teach, instruct, and correct is given by God.

Do not let this go to your head. Where some men would rather go play and leave the children to mom, other men become overbearing dictators and see their children as little serfs. Psalm 103:13 says, **"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him."** Dad, you need to have compassion on your children. Remember their frame. You want them to grow up to be strong men and godly women, but they are not there yet. Have compassion, take interest, get involved, love them and lead them. They may not like it and you may not get to be their buddy, but you are their dad, and they would much rather have you be their father than for you to be their buddy.



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum EXTRA

(Editor's Note: I missed getting Bro. Tom's answers in last month's issue).

1. What comparison can you make with the youth of today compared to those in II Kings 2:23-24?

The passage under consideration is where a group of young people were found mocking the prophet Elisha. Their disrespect and mockery of the prophet brought the judgment of God upon them as two she bears came out of the woods and tore up 42 of them.

I believe the Scriptures clearly teach that all children are born with a depraved, fleshly nature that hates God and rebels against His laws (Psa. 51:5; 58:3-5). Thus, all children are bent toward evil and sin. Rebellion is in their nature. For example, no parent has to teach their child to lie, it just comes natural due to their sin nature. No parent has to teach their children to be stingy with their toys, it just comes natural because they are little sinners. Rather, parents are given the responsibility to **"Train up a child in the way he should go..."** (Prov. 22:6). Parents are to mold, train, instruct, and model the principles of truth each and every day as Deuteronomy 6:4-9 declares: **"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.**

And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Every father should say to his children: **"Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding...My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways"** (Prov. 23:22-23, 26). When parents are diligent in teaching scriptural principles and moral virtues it has a restraining effect upon a child's depravity. By itself the Word of God and the principles contained will not save a child. The Spirit of God must give spiritual life in the new birth, and the ability to exercise the gifts of repentance and saving faith in conversion. However we can train our children to respect authority, to be obedient, courteous, kind, compassionate, and thoughtful. We can teach them to be diligent in their work and studies. To be disciplined in the way they live their lives so they may be able to complete tasks in an orderly and efficient manner. We can teach them how to be contributing members of our family and society at large. When a society has parents who care enough about their children to teach and model truth according to a Judeo-Christian ethic, families and communities will enjoy God's goodness. Where this ethic is wanting, you may expect depravity to be brazenly manifested in a variety of ways.

The 42 young people who mocked Elisha and were judged

for it deserved what they got. All sinners are worthy of the unabated justice of God. All sinners are fully responsible for their personal wickedness. The children back then were a product of tumultuous times in Israel. They probably received little if any training from their parents. They were not earnest or desirous of knowing and practicing the truth. They were rebellious and disrespectful. They hated the man of God and had no fear about mocking him. As a consequence, they were judged by the Almighty. The laws of sowing and reaping are universal and indefatigable. You sow to the wind, you will reap the whirlwind of God's wrath. Galatians 6:7-8 states: **"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."**

As for the comparison to the youth of today, an overwhelming majority of young people are much like the 42 in Elisha's day. They are the product of three generations of people who have valued possessions, popularity, pleasure, and wickedness over the things of God. Most are taught that they have evolved from animals, and without training in moral virtue they act like animals. Most are handed everything by doting parents so they are spoiled and entitled. Most are rebellious and have no respect for God, His Word, His laws, or His ways. Like the young people of Elisha's day, they will be judged by Almighty God unless they repent and believe the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Times and circumstances may change, but man in every age is wicked and depraved in need of a great Savior,

the Lord Jesus.

As I travel and preach in churches my heart is blessed every time I see young people who are cheerfully serving the Lord and honoring their parents. I rejoice that there is a remnant of young people who are taught the truth and desire to walk in it. I am very hopeful that God will use these young people to be faithful servants of the Lord. I believe God can raise them up to be bold witnesses that will stand in the gap and courageously declare the Gospel of Christ to a darkened world.

TOM ROSS

2. Was faith a necessary requirement for the "miracles of healing" in the New Testament as stated in Acts 14:8-10?

A similar passage is found in Mark 10:5-52 where Jesus healed the blind man and said to him: **"Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way."** We know for sure that in both instances personal faith was noted and commended. In these two passages it is obvious from the text that faith was a necessary aspect of the healing that took place. It should be noted however that all true faith comes from God, so ultimately the reason why they had faith to believe is because God graced them with this gift. Ephesians 2:8-9 makes this clear: **"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."**

There are other accounts in the four Gospels and the Book of Acts where faith is not mentioned in association with the healing. Matthew 8:14-17 and Acts 3:1-11 are two passages where no

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faith on the part of those healed is mentioned. That certainly does not mean that God did not give them faith to believe in the miraculous power of God. Man in his natural, sinful, depraved state has no real spiritual faith. **“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Rom. 8:8). As such, God must give the gift of faith in order for anyone to please Him. Hebrews 11:6 declares: **“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”**

The truth of the matter is that God can heal who He wants, when He wants, and how He wants with no requirements or conditions on the part of the afflicted. God is sovereign and independent. He is not bound by what man does or does not do. Every healing, whether large or small, God is the sovereign source of the mercy. There are plenty of people who are healed from colds, infections, and the flu who have no faith at all in God. They do not even acknowledge His healing power after they recover. Yet God's goodness was poured out upon them.

Those who are in the fake healing business are fond of saying that the person they tried to heal did not have enough faith. Men do not have the power to heal others, only God does. Men who receive money for their fake healing services are charlatans who are going to burn in the Lake of Fire for their greedy deception of the masses. If they had the power of God to heal why do they not go to the Children's Hospitals across the land? I guarantee you that every one of those kids have

plenty of faith if someone could promise them relief with a healing touch. Truth is, fake healers are like filthy maggots that feed off the misery of others.

TOM ROSS



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for the deeds done in the body; and it is also true that by coming to Christ he can be relieved of this ignorance. But if Jesus is only a pedagogue or schoolmaster, He does not touch the deepest necessities of man's condition. Such a view of Him may improve a man's morals, and elevate him somewhat in other respects, but it can never save him from the power and consequences of sin. Jesus is Himself the salvation which He taught, and which He commissioned His disciples to preach. He is the wisdom, the grace, the mercy, and the power that save men from their sins. The saved man is not he who attempts merely to copy the virtues of Jesus nor he who merely accepts His doctrines, but the man who trusts Him, as the little child trusts its mother when it lies helpless and peaceful in her arms.

No man can have a true conception and appreciation of the mission of Jesus until he comprehends man's condition and necessities as a sinner. Why does that hired infidel go through the land outraging not only Christian feeling but common decency, by making sport of the question, **“What must I do to be saved”** (Acts 16:30)? It is because the Satanic power to which he has sold his birthright has blinded him to the nature of sin and the condition of the sinner. If his worse than Judas Iscariot baseness and cowardice and his demoniacal

blasphemy have not already placed him in the category of those who have committed what John calls “the sin unto death,” and he could have just one glimpse into the fathomless abyss of his own iniquity, his cry of distress would surpass any wail of anguish that has ever vibrated the air of this globe, and his entreaties for divine mercy and salvation would exceed any prayer that convicted publican or harlot ever made.

Sin is no idle fancy or innocent hallucination with which circus clowns, street vendors of patent medicines, low comedians, and such peripatetic infidel buffoons as I have just referred to, may with impunity amuse themselves and the frivolous people who listen to them. Sin is the most terrible fact in the universe of God. It is the intolerable burden of a soul that is destined to live forever. It is a black darkness which invests man's whole moral being, and conceals from his vision everything that belongs to the highest and grandest realms of realities. It is a disease that is converting him into a lump of rottenness and a feast for “the worm that dieth not.” It is a fiend that has bound him hand and foot, and that is dragging him down and down to a region of infernal flames. From such a power man can be delivered only by the personal intervention and act of a personal God of infinite mercy and might.

The sense of sin is not something into which we, who live in a Christian country, have been educated. It is a universal experience, and inheres in the very nature of man. Wordsworth voiced the truth when he said, “The recognition of the fact of universal wrong-doing is perfectly independent of Christian teaching.” Every man who has even a general acquaintance with the

world's history, knows that every ancient religion and philosophy grappled with the problem of sin. All the records that we have of the races and tribes which have dwelt upon the earth show that men have ever been conscious of sin, and that sin is a stern fact of human nature which no people have ever been able to ignore or reason away. Men have never ceased to think and talk and write about it, because in every generation and in every region of the earth it has shadowed their pathway and burdened their hearts.

Ingersoll would have you believe that all of this talk about sin and its consequences originated with Christianity. How absurd! Buddhism antedates Christianity by nearly six centuries, and Buddhism is as full of the doctrine of sin as is the religion of Christ. Homer, the father of poetry, sang of sin and the wretchedness it had made. Sophocles, as he thought of the misery born of human depravity, declared that the best thing for man was death. Whether you read Greek poetry, Greek history, or Greek philosophy, you find not only lamentations over the woes of man, but a distinct recognition of the fact that all man's woes are traceable to human sin.

Sin figures in all the great poems and dramas that men have written. A semi-infidel critic has had the candor to confess that “a guileless hero would be no hero for a drama.” Eliminate the part which sin plays in Homer's immortal *Iliad*, and how much of it would be left? Take the thieves, hypocrites, liars, adulterers, conspirators, and murderers out of Shakespeare's tragedies, and who would go to a theater to see one of them performed? Who was Macbeth? A murderer. And what was the

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Was Onesiphorus dead when Paul wrote the second letter to Timothy? He only says **“the house of”** and **“the household of?”**

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There is no indication in the scriptural account or in historical records that can affirm that Onesiphorus was dead when Paul wrote the second epistle to Timothy. Onesiphorus, according to Paul's inspired account, was a tremendous help and blessing to the apostle. He was especially helpful when Paul was in prison at Rome and hard to locate. Onesiphorus risked his own life and reputation to find Paul in a pagan city that was hostile to Christianity, as it was under the iron rule of Nero. Onesiphorus was diligent in his efforts to comfort and provide for the imprisoned apostle. Paul prays that the Lord would show great mercy upon Onesiphorus and his household, perhaps recalling the words of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 5:7; 10:42; 25:35-40). Paul obviously felt that the kindness of Onesiphorus ought to be rewarded.

At first glance when I read the question, I wondered why this inquiry would be raised. Upon further study I found that Roman Catholics use these verses to support their unscriptural and heretical doctrines of prayers for the dead and Purgatory. The Papists falsely reason that since the salutation was to his

household rather than to him personally, Onesiphorus must have been deceased.

Hezekiah Harvey, the Baptist preacher, educator, and commentator wrote:

“Roman interpreters, from the mention of ‘the house of Onesiphorus’ have inferred that he was not himself living at the time this Epistle was written, and have used this passage as an argument for prayers in behalf of the dead. But the assumption of Onesiphorus’ death is wholly gratuitous; the utmost that can legitimately be informed from the absence of salutation to him is that Paul, knowing the plans of Onesiphorus’ journey, did not suppose that he would have reached Ephesus at the time this Epistle was received, and therefore sent salutation to his household rather than to him” (*An American Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 6, p. 92).

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Now I can understand why the question was asked. There seems to be a disagreement among scholars whether Onesiphorus was still living at the time of Paul's writing the second letter to Timothy. I personally do not know so I can only relate to the questioner what I have found

and hope it gives a satisfactory answer.

Concerning II Timothy 1:16 and II Timothy 4:19 whether Onesiphorus had died or not I will quote Albert Barnes' *Notes on the Bible* in view of these verses. “The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus. The family of Onesiphorus--for so the word house is often used. He was himself still living, II Timothy 1:18, but not improbably then absent from his home. Compare II Timothy 4:19. He was evidently of Asia, and is the only one who is mentioned from that region who had showed the apostle kindness in his trials. He is mentioned only in this epistle, and nothing more is known of him. The record is entirely honourable to him, and for his family the apostle felt a warm interest on account of the kindness which he had shown to him in prison. The ecclesiastical traditions also state that he was one of the seventy disciples, and was ultimately bishop of Corone.”

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary concerning II Timothy 4:19 **“the household of Onesiphorus”**--If he were dead at the time, the **“household”** would not have been called **“the household of Onesiphorus.”** He was probably absent (see II Timothy 1:16). Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary, II Timothy 1:16, **“The Lord give mercy”**--even as ONESIPHORUS had abounded in works of mercy. The house of Onesiphorus--He himself was then absent from Ephesus, which accounts for the form of expression (II Timothy 4:19). His household would hardly retain his name after the master was dead. Nowhere has Paul prayers for the dead. God blesses not only the righteous man himself, but all his **“household.”**

It is evident however that all

agree whether they believe he was dead or not, that Onesiphorus was absent from Ephesus when Paul wrote the second letter to Timothy. I would lean toward the fact that Onesiphorus was not dead because there is no mention of Paul speaking of his very close friend and brother in Christ being dead. I also would agree with Jamieson-Fausset-Brown that his household would hardly retain his name after the master was dead.

Let me also note that after reading other commentaries, that they “assume” that because Onesiphorus was not with Paul or at Ephesus he was dead. We should be very cautious that we do not assume anything even when we are in the majority or the minority. I would rather say, as I have already stated, “I do not know,” rather than to assume it is this way or that way. I would suggest further study to help the questioner to be totally satisfied. God Bless!

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“The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well” (II Tim. 1:16-18). I know some folks use this passage to try to prove that Paul

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What was **"the right hands of fellowship"** mentioned in Galatians 2:9?

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"...They gave unto me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship." This would represent a solemn vow of friendship and a mark of partnership. The right hand of fellowship signified the apostles' recognition of Paul as a teacher of the true gospel and a partner in the ministry. It is important to note the three men extending the right hand of fellowship; **"James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars."** It was an historic moment. Not only was Paul being accepted as an equal (as to apostleship), but was being seen to be such by this act. **"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."** (Rom. 1:1).

Also, the right hand of fellowship was given as a token of a covenant or agreement between them; they took them, as it were, into partnership with them, admitted them as apostles into their society, and gave their full consent.

Clearly the giving of the hand suggests a pledge given. In Ezekiel 17:18 it is equated with an oath or covenant broken after the pledge had been given **"Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not**

escape" (Ezek. 17:18).

I liked the way one writer put it concerning giving the right hands of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas: "The scene before us must have delighted the heart of God and Christ as these five men stood and shook hands, thereby pledging themselves unitedly to carry the same gospel to the world of Jew and Gentile."

It used to be years ago a hand shake was all that was needed to strike a deal or contract with another person. Now days we need a room full of attorneys and a pile of paperwork and many signatures to make a contract. And if that contract is not worded just right then it is not worth the paper it was written on. Wow, how things have changed over the years. If men would just adhere to the Bible and do it God's way how much better off we would be. God Bless!

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"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Gal. 2:9). A right handshake of fellowship shows an affinity, agreement and even partnership with the two

or more sharing these intimate handshakes. It is a public acknowledgment of brotherhood. John Gill mentions this as common usage to be admitted into an "elite society" and gives full consent to their membership therein. Selah! Think about it!

When we add new members to our "elite society" of the body of Christ's baptized believers, we extend the "right hand of fellowship" to them. In full confidence, friendship, fellowship and favour! Also, after a time of dismemberment because of church discipline, when the member is restored to the fold, again the full measure of the privileges and responsibilities of membership is again reinstated and shown by the "right hand of fellowship" as we again line up the church members to pass by the restored member and intimately shake hands with this honorable and Scriptural action.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness" (II Cor. 6:14)? Fellowship must be valued and preserved as holy and righteous. I do not know that the English words "righteousness" and "right hand" are coincidences, but God makes a prominence of the right hand in Scripture to show the picture of strength and authority. **"And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn"** (Gen. 48:14). In this case, Joseph tried to straighten out his dad, because he knew the right hand blessing was preeminent.

"Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" (Ex. 15:6). Any extension of God's hand is going to be powerful and glorious, but the inspired writers depict the superiority of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the very iconic image of God's most supreme authority. **"And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them"** (Deut. 33:2). **"But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, ...Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins"** (Acts 7:55; 5:31). **"Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him"** (I Peter 3:22).

In every picture of authority and power, the saints of God are commanded to show that honor with the right hand. If you are a left-handed person, please do not cavil at the Word of God! God made a certain percentage of folks in this world "lefties," for purposes of His own. Your blessings are certain and sure. But do not try and give a "left hand of fellowship," because that would mar the picture of God, Himself. Even the priestly and tabernacle pictures acknowledge that the right thing to do, is anoint the right members of the body. **"Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of**

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Forum #1

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prayed for mercy for the dead in Purgatory, but it does not make sense either theologically, or in the above text. A couple of things to note in the passage: **“he may find mercy of the Lord in that day”** points toward a future, yet-to-come death and judgment, which if he were dead already, could not be so phrased. A future death/judgment indicates that Onesiphorus was still yet garnering those rewards. Selah! Think about it! **“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work”** (John 9:4).

Paul's letter to Timothy presents clearly that Onesiphorus' trip to Rome was recent enough that it would be “news” to Timothy, unlike the many “ministering acts” Onesiphorus had done in Ephesus. Timothy already knew them quite well, but the Rome events, not so. If within Paul's recent knowledge Onesiphorus had died (in Rome), then that event would surely have been part of the letter informing Timothy of his dear friend's passing to Glory. Scripturally and clearly, the last Paul knew, Onesiphorus was still alive.

“All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household” (Php 4:22). **“Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord”** (Rom. 16:10-11). **“And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other”** (I Cor. 1:16). Four other instances of Paul mentioning or praying for other households

gives no indication that the head of those households was dead. Caesar certainly was not dead. The household of Narcissus are referenced to as being **“in the Lord.”** Some might consider them all to be dead? But, no, they are not in the very presence of the Lord, but in Christ, their Hope of Glory, because Paul tells the First Baptist Church of Rome to convey his greetings to them personally- in the flesh!

The request by Paul for mercy and salutation to the house of Onesiphorus indicates that this man was blessed with a large and extended family that had learned from their patriarch how to be a blessing to Paul and the Lord's churches and missionaries. Aquila and Priscilla were both named as blessings (II Tim. 4:19, **“Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus”**) three times in Paul's epistles, which indicates that they were used as a couple in the labors of the Lord. What a great honor to be listed as a husband and wife that were co-laborers with Christ. I am sure this happened many times within the Lord's churches in the Apostle's days, because it happens many times in our days, too. You can not mention Aquila without thinking about Priscilla, too. Abraham and Sarah. Isaac and Rebekah. Leroy and Beverly Pack. Zacharias and Elisabeth. Sometimes we are not even given their name, but who thinks of Noah on the ark without his precious wife? Job's wife (Mrs. Job) was required to endure patiently, at his side, for the Lord to ultimately bless them with seven more sons and the three prettiest girls in the land.

But no mere mention of what Onesiphorus and his wife would do. **“The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus...”** (II

Tim. 1:16). The whole household had imprinted themselves on the memory of the Apostle Paul and Timothy, and he must needs mention them all (twice!) in the Holy Scriptures. **“Salute ...the household of Onesiphorus”** (II Tim. 4:19). Wow! But then I, too, know something about that kind of blessing. I have been to a few of those blessed households, where a mere mention of the father, or even the husband and wife would be a sadly incomplete message. The whole family had diligently blessed my soul and had ministered to the service of God. Praise God for every faithful household blessed by God to be able to labor together. The Dan Stepp household. The James Hobbs household. The house of Cockrell. The house of Salacup. The Lord is good. May each of our households be blessed of God for the work He has appointed us. Selah! Think about it!

MATHEW STEPP



Forum #2

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his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about” (Ex. 29:20).

The exchange of right hands shows an equal investment of our priorities. The right hands offered in our text was likely at the conclusion of the Acts 15 conference on the inclusion of Gentiles in God's churches and future. The 100% acknowledgment of James, Peter and John to the equal authority of Paul and Barnabas could be shown no more perfectly that for all of the church representatives to see them exchange the right hand of fellowship. My fellow laborer.

My great friend. My brother in Christ.

And that is exactly what we do still yet today. Baptist traditions must be rooted in Scripture. And by God's grace and preservation, they still yet remain. Selah! Think about it! God bless us all.

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Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians to establish the truth of salvation by free grace and justification by faith as opposed to the works and ceremonial salvation proposed by the Judaizers. He exposed the heresy of legalism promoted by the Judaizers and sets forth a masterful defense of the truths relating to sovereign grace. The Judaizers questioned the authority and veracity of Paul's apostleship and message.

In chapter two of Galatians Paul is describing the time he met James, Peter (Cephas), and John while in Jerusalem. They were considered pillars in the church, alluding to the idea that they were recognized as great teachers. The fact that these pillars of the faith extended to Paul and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship served to validate the ministry and apostleship of Paul. The right hand of fellowship signified the doctrinal and personal fellowship that existed between these brethren. They all contended for the one true and only Gospel. Interestingly enough, the four apostles named in this verse wrote 21 of the 26 books of the

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Forum #2

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New Testament. Not once did their views on grace, the Gospel, or the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ ever contradict one another.

I like the comment of John MacArthur on this verse:

"In the Near East, to clasp the right hand of person was to make a solemn vow of friendship and was a mark of fellowship, or partnership. The pillars at Jerusalem recognized Paul not only as a true preacher and teacher of the Gospel but also as a beloved partner with them in Christ's service. They had different files of service—Paul and Barnabas ministered primarily to the Gentiles and the Jerusalem leaders primarily to the circumcised—but they all proclaimed the same Gospel and served the same Lord in the power of His Spirit. That act of affirmation both of Paul and of his message was a devastating blow to the Judaizers. In fact, Paul's apostolate to the Gentiles was recognized as the equal of Peter's apostolate to the Jews" (*The MacArthur Commentary on Galatians*, p. 42).

TOM ROSS



The Pre-Eminent

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inspiration of his challenge to the horrible shadow and unreal mockery that haunted him in his hours of seclusion? It was a conscience stained with blood and aching with remorse.

There is in every man's bosom a tribunal which pronounces judgment on his conduct and by which he is made to know that sin is a terrible reality. Or as Tennyson

has expressed it :

He ever bears about

A silent court of justice in his breast,

Himself the judge and jury,

And himself the prisoner at the bar.

The Bible says, that "**Fools make a mock at sin**" (Prov. 14:9). Mr. Ingersoll calls a conviction of sin, "a nightmare—the result of too much appetite and too little digestion." It is not possible to conceive of a more unmitigated absurdity. Surely it was something more real than nightmare which David felt when he thought of his double crime of adultery and murder, and cried, "**Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight...**" (Ps. 51:4). Surely it was something more serious than nightmare which made Judas throw down the price of his infamy in the temple and exclaim, "**I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood...**" (Matt. 27:4). Surely it was more than a nightmare that inspired the prayer of the dying thief, "**Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom**" (Luke 23:42). Surely it was something more serious than melancholy, born of indigestion, that afflicted a more honest infidel than Ingersoll, when he cried, "My principles have poisoned my friends, my extravagance has beggared my child, and my unkindness has murdered my wife! O God! is there yet another hell? But hell itself will be a refuge if it only hide me from thy face."

Among the many abominably false "isms" to which even some people who call themselves Christians have committed themselves, is one which declares that, "Evil is a blessing to mankind; a means selected from the infinite resources for our development; a ladder whereby we climb to

moral heights yet unattained." Whether you call this pantheism, or Hegelianism, or Universalism, or monism, or Christian science, it is a plain and unmistakable denial of the Word of God. That Word forbids us in the most positive and intelligible terms to call evil good. It represents Satan as a distinct personality, as the father of lies, as the source of evil, and as the enemy of God and man. It teaches us not that sin elevates, but that it degrades; not that it leads to happiness, but to misery.

The doctrine of the Bible on this subject is supported by the everyday observations and experiences of men and by the common sense of the world. No philosophy in the universe can convince the average man that a participation in the vices, debaucheries, and deviltries of bar-rooms and gambling dens, is included in the divine plan by which men are to be disciplined into virtue and developed into the likeness of God. To the end of time the common sense of the world will support the Bible in saying that, "**He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed**" (Prov. 13:20) and that "**evil communications corrupt good manners**" (I Cor. 15:33).

The application of this false philosophy would be the repeal of all laws forbidding vice and crime, the abolition of all agencies for the prevention of evil, and the glorification of all that is earthy, sensual, and devilish. I know of no reason why men and women who advocate such a system should not be sent to the lunatic asylum, except that they are too absurd to be seriously harmful.

Man is a complete and distinct entity. He is not a part of the Divine Being. What he does is not God's act, but his own. He is

a distinct moral entity. He knows good from evil. He has the power to love the one and hate the other, and to choose the one and reject the other. In the exercise of this power he makes his glory or his shame, his happiness or his wretchedness, his meetness for heaven or his fitness for hell. Sin then is the will of the individual man asserting itself against the will of God. It is the deliberate and willful rebellion of the creature against the Creator. In its final analysis it is selfishness pure and simple. It is a man's defiant assertion of his purpose to be lord and monarch of himself. It is his absolute repudiation of any higher law than his own will. It is self-damnation—a man's own choice of "**everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power**" (II Thess. 1:9).

Here then the world is confronted with the most fearful of all realities—sin—God's enemy and man's destroyer. That reality makes the gravest problem with which human thought has ever grappled. Here is a disease that has laid its destroying hand upon every fiber of man's moral being. How can it be cured? Here are immortal spirits bound with infernal fetters. How can these shackles be removed? Here is loathsomeness worse than the rottenness of the grave. How can it be cleansed? Here are beings in communion with fiends. How can they be transformed and lifted into fellowship with the angels? Here is the great temple of humanity in ruins. Who can rebuild it, and make the glory of the latter house greater than the former? Here are two worlds—earth and heaven—separated by a great gulf of darkness and horror. Who will span it with an available

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The Pre-Eminent

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highway, so that angels may come to us and that we may go to them?

All these questions are but different forms of the great question which the apostles answered on the day of Pentecost: "What must I do to be saved?" When Mr. Ingersoll gets upon the platform and sports with that problem he mocks the wail of a perishing world, dehumanizes himself, and speaks a language akin to the dialect of devils.

How can we get rid of sin? That is man's supreme question. The history of the world shows that there has never been a time when men did not believe that some remedy for sin had been provided. Abel expressed this belief when he kindled the first altar fire and made an offering to the Lord. Noah expressed it in the sacrifice which he made on leaving the ark. Abraham believed it and taught it to his children. Moses expressed it in the institution of the symbols and ceremonies of the tabernacle; and the prophets of Israel proclaimed it with almost seraphic zeal. The whole pagan world has ever cherished the belief that there has been provided some remedy for sin. It has always had its altars and sacrifices; and not knowing the true and living God, it has made its appeal to gods of its own creation. It has stretched out its hands into the darkness and laid hold on a thousand delusions.

Let us thank God there is a cure for sin. "There is a balm in Gilead, and a Physician there." There is an eye to pity and an arm to save. The angel of the Lord announced that remedy when he said to Joseph, concerning the child to which Mary should give birth, "**And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from**

their sins" (Matt. 1:21). A great multitude of the heavenly host proclaimed it when they hovered over the birth place of that Divine child and sang, "**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men**" (Luke 2:14). John the Baptist saw it when on the banks of the Jordan he pointed the multitude to the form of a Galilean stranger, and said: "**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29). The people saw it who followed that Man of Galilee from place to place and witnessed His mighty works. The poor distressed harlot saw it when Jesus said to her, "**Thy sins are forgiven**" (Luke 7:48). The dying thief saw it and felt it when he heard those gracious words, "**To day shalt thou be with me in paradise**" (Luke 23:43). Three thousand people at Jerusalem saw it and felt it when they gladly received the message of salvation from the lips of the apostles. It was seen by Lydia when she attended unto the things spoken by Paul. It thrilled the soul of the Philippian jailer when he "**rejoiced, believing in God with all his house**" (Acts 16:34). It was known in Macedonia, Greece, and Rome, and wherever the apostles and their co-laborers told the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is known and felt today by the millions of happy men and women who bear aloft the banner of the Cross and sing the coronation hymn. The sun in his course shines upon no land where there is not a sacramental host rending the air, and making the welkin ring with the rapturous shout, "Messiah is come, and his people are free."

"**He shall save his people**" (Matt. 1:21). The point to which I would give special emphasis in closing is, that the Saviour of men is not a doctrine, not an ordinance,

not a church, but a person—a divine-human person. The Word that was in the beginning with God and was God, was made flesh and dwelt among us in the person of the man Christ Jesus. Salvation is in Him, and not in anything He ever said, nor in anything that He commanded others to say. The doctrines of the Bible are only finger-boards that point us to Christ. You may accept every one of them, and contend for them with a martyr's zeal, and then die in your sins.

A man may know the saving power of Christ without being able to define any of the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel. Doubtless the woman who bathed the Master's feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, knew scarcely anything of His doctrine. But she knew Him. She believed on Him, and in believing felt His saving power. That demoniac of Gadara, when he went down to his home to tell the story of his rescue, knew nothing about the system of truth which Jesus taught, but he knew Him; he knew that He was a divine Redeemer, and that much he could declare to others with the utmost clearness and zeal.

The woman of Samaria to whom He gave to drink of the water of life, ran into the city and told the story. What was the story? Something about the doctrine that He taught? No, for of that she was utterly ignorant. It was something about Him, and about the redemption which He had bestowed upon her. Many a child has known Jesus and His salvation before it had read one-third of the New Testament.

Oh, my brethren, I do know that there is a vital difference between believing on the Divine Christ and believing in a creed. I do know that the former brings salvation to the

soul and the latter does not. I do know also that the faith of many in this day reaches no higher than a creed and never touches the person of the living Redeemer.

The power of redemption is not lodged in theories of the atonement, nor in definitions of regeneration, nor in Confessions of Faith, nor even in the Bible as such. This may seem to you extravagance of speech, but I cannot believe that it is. There is a condition of things about us today which warrants me in saying all this and even more. There are no words of reprobation too strong and severe for that conception of Christianity so common in our time which reduces it to a mere pedagogic arrangement, and puts it on a level with every human system of philosophy and ethics.

If every church creed, and even every copy of the Bible, were burned to ashes, Christ and His salvation would remain the same. He would still sit on His mediatorial throne, and save His people from their sins. The doctrines of the Bible are divine, and yet as I have already said, they are only finger-boards to point us to Christ. You can believe them and be lost; but if you lay the hand of faith on that living divine personality whose name is Jesus, you shall be instantly and eternally saved from your sins; your transgressions of divine law shall be forgiven; your whole moral being shall be unfettered, cleansed, and reconstructed; every barrier which separates you from God shall be removed; the Lord will make you His tabernacle, and will be the comfort and joy of your life; in the power of His might you shall have the mastery of every spiritual foe; and on the steppingstones of conquered difficulties you shall rise day by

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The Pre-Eminent

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day into a diviner life and a more glorious freedom. Coming to the margin of death's cold and sullen stream, its dark waters shall divide and make you a passage to the shining shore. As you approach **"the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"** (Heb. 11:10), the gates of pearl shall be lifted high, and as you step upon the golden pavement within those Jasper walls, the same benignant Jesus who saved you from your sins will greet you with every token of welcome, robe you with resplendent beauty, crown you with imperishable honor, and conduct you to a seat at His own right hand, high above all principalities and powers, where you will sit and reign as long as immortality endures.

When we think of the sublime significance of this Name which is above every name, and of the unspeakable grace and ineffable beauty of the adorable Being who bears it, we are lifted into sympathy with him who wrote :

Oh, could I speak the matchless worth,

Oh, could I sound the glories forth

Which in my Saviour shine,

I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings,

And vie with Gabriel while he sings,


In notes almost divine.

If present contemplations of that best and most glorious of all beings are so fruitful of bliss, who can conceive of the blessedness of an abiding place in His immediate and visible presence?

The delightful day will come

When our dear Lord will call us home,

And we shall see his face.



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.

A MAJORITY OF AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT ABORTION IS A SIN, A NEW SURVEY FINDS

(CH)--According to Ligonier Ministries "State of Theology" survey, 52 percent of Americans agree that abortion is a sin compared to the 38 percent who believe it is not. In a press release issued by Ligonier Ministries, they note that there has been a slight increase in opposition to abortion since 2016, increasing from 49 percent opposition in 2016 to 52 percent in 2018. Dr. Stephen Nichols, chief academic officer of Ligonier and president of Reformation Bible College commented on the statistic saying, "Regular churchgoers are even more emphatically opposed to abortion, with 79 percent of them saying that abortion is a sin. Likewise, 76 percent of regular churchgoers say that sexual relationships outside of traditional marriage are sinful."

TWO MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS ARRESTED FOR CONSPIRING TO KILL CLASSMATES AS ACT OF SATAN WORSHIP

(CH)--Two middle school girls were arrested in Bartow, Florida on Tuesday, after plotting to kill classmates as an act of Satan worship. The two middle school girls, one 11 and one 12-years-old, brought scissors, knives and a pizza cutter to school with them in order to stab, kill and dismember unsuspecting students in a school restroom. "They wanted to kill at least 15 people and were waiting in the bathroom for opportunity to find smaller kids they could overpower to be their victims,"

Bartow Police Chief Joe Hall said. They told police they came up with the horrific plan and were doing it in the name of devil-worship. Fortunately, the girls were found by the assistant principal before they could carry out the alleged attack. Local authorities have searched the girls' homes and reportedly found a map of the school with the words "Go to kill in bathroom," written on it. Investigators say they also found messages on the girls' cell phones about the planned attacks.

".. Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder..." (Matt. 19:18).

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Ps. 22:6).

'THERE IS NO GOD,' THE LATE STEPHEN HAWKING SAYS IN FINAL BOOK

(CH)--Physicist Stephen Hawking died in March, but not before working on a final book that provides his answers to a host of major issues – including his disbelief in God. The book, *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*, wasn't complete when he died at the age of 76, so his family and friends used his notes and archives to finish it, according to CNN. "Do I have faith?" he writes. "We are each free to believe what we want, and it's my view that the simplest explanation is that there is no God. No one created the universe, and no one directs our fate." He adds: "When we die, we return to dust." **"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable**

iniquity: there is none that doeth good" (Ps. 53:1).

FORMER ATLANTA FIRE CHIEF, FIRED FOR CHRISTIAN BELIEFS, TO GET \$1.2 MILLION

(CH)--The city of Atlanta agreed Monday to pay former fire chief Kelvin Cochran \$1.2 million, four years after he was suspended and then fired for publishing a book containing historic Christian beliefs. Cochran's self-published 162-page book, "Who Told You That You Were Naked?: Overcoming the Stronghold of Condemnation," included Bible verses addressing sexuality and homosexuality. It was the latter topic that sparked a controversy and an investigation and eventually, his termination. He wrote the book on non-work time. A federal court ruling in December 2017 ruled against a city policy that required employees to get permission from the government before writing books or giving speeches. The judge said the policy was too broad and "stifled speech."

SUSAN COLLINS CALLS PLANNED PARENTHOOD OUT FOR ITS HYPOCRISY

(CH)--After receiving heavy backlash for supporting the nomination of Justice Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) opened up about her frustration with the hypocrisy of Planned Parenthood. "I would note that Planned Parenthood opposed three pro-choice justices just because they were nominated by Republican presidents: David Souter, Sandra Day O'Connor and Justice Kennedy," Collins said. She then recalled the organization's line when pro-choice Justice Anthony Kennedy was nominated, saying, "They said the same thing: Women will die. This is

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just outrageous.”

PLANNED PARENTHOOD DESIGNS ‘ABORTION UNDERGROUND RAILROAD’ FOR POST-ROE AGE

(CH)--Fearful of a future where Roe v. Wade is overturned, abortion rights activists have announced a three-prong plan to guarantee access to abortion in what one supporter labeled an “abortion underground railroad.” The “Care For All” plan announced by Planned Parenthood Action notes that there are “13 abortion-related cases that are just one step away from the Supreme Court” and that “20 states are poised to ban abortion should Roe v. Wade be overturned.” If the issue of abortion is tossed back to the states, Planned Parenthood wants to ensure that abortion in the states where it remains legal is as accessible as possible.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES POLICY NOW IN EFFECT, DECLARES “LIFE BEGINS AT CONCEPTION”

(CH)--In its strategic plan that went into effect Oct. 1, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ policy now defines life as beginning at conception. “HHS accomplishes its mission through programs and initiatives that cover a wide spectrum of activities, serving and protecting Americans at every stage of life, beginning at conception,” the plan says. “A core component of the HHS mission is our dedication to serve all Americans from conception to natural death,” the plan says. The strategic plan is part of what seems like moves by the HHS to support pro-life policies. In June, an official with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services spoke at the

National Right to Life convention. “Our president is fearless when it comes to life and conscience,” said Roger Severino, who directs the Health and Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights. “We’re just getting started.”

EVANGELICAL BELIEF IN REINCARNATION AND ASTROLOGY SHOCKINGLY HIGH, SURVEY FINDS

(CH)--Roughly half of self-identified evangelicals affirm at least one New Age belief, including a third who believe in psychics and one in five who believe in reincarnation or astrology, according to a new Pew Research Center poll. The survey of Christians and non-Christians found that New Age beliefs may be more widespread than previously thought. Among self-identified evangelicals: 24 percent believe “spiritual energy can be located within physical things.” 33 percent believe in psychics. 19 percent believe in reincarnation. 18 percent believe in astrology. Forty-seven percent of evangelicals affirm at least one of the four New Age beliefs. That percentage is even higher among Catholics (70 percent), mainline Christians (67 percent), and Protestants from the historically black tradition (72 percent). Twenty-two percent of atheists and 56 percent of agnostics affirm at least one of the four New Age beliefs. Among the general population, 69 percent of women and 55 percent of men believe in at least one New Age tenet.

U.S. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT CUT CONTRACT TO PURCHASE “FETAL TISSUE” FOR TESTING

(CH)--The U.S. Health and Human Services Department has cut its contract with a biomedical procurement company that would have allowed the FDA to purchase

“fetal tissue” for drug testing. The decision comes after 85 members of Congress signed a letter to FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb, calling for an end to the contract. “Unborn children are not commodities to be bought and sold,” the letter said. “The practice of conducting research using the body parts of children whose lives have been violently ended by abortion is abhorrent.” The FDA initially wanted to contract with the company to buy fetal tissue that would have been used for research, but this week HHS announced it would not be working with the company and canceled the \$15,000 contract.

PASTORS TO HOLD “BLESSING” OF OHIO PLANNED PARENTHOOD FACILITY

(CH)--A group of Ohio pastors will gather next month to “bless” an abortion clinic. The Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice will host the event on November 9th at Planned Parenthood of Ohio’s East Columbus Surgical Center. The event will “ask God’s blessing upon Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio’s East Columbus Surgical facility, the abortion providers and staff, and all those who pass through the center.” The “blessing” will feature prayers, “testimonies about receiving and providing abortion care,” and a message from Susan K. Smith of Crazy Faith Ministries. The Coalition joins other pro-abortion advocates who use moral and religious language to argue for unfettered access to abortion. The President of the pro-life advocate Created Equal, Mark Harrington, told LifeNews that using moral and religious language to argue for abortion goes against biblical teachings. He said, “To suggest that God advocates for the shedding of innocent blood is blasphemous. Authentic ministers of God oppose

the killing of the preborn, they don’t promote it.”

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight” (Isa. 5:20-21)!

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS THOUSANDS OF SWEDES ARE INSERTING MICROCHIPS UNDER THEIR SKIN

(AP)--In Sweden, a country rich with technological advancement, thousands have had microchips inserted into their hands. The chips are designed to speed up users’ daily routines and make their lives more convenient — accessing their homes, offices and gyms is as easy as swiping their hands against digital readers. Around the size of a grain of rice, the chips typically are inserted into the skin just above each user’s thumb, using a syringe similar to that used for giving vaccinations. The procedure costs about \$180. Sweden’s largest train company has started allowing commuters to use chips instead of tickets, and there’s talk that the chips could soon be used to make payments in shops and restaurants. Jowan Osterlund of Biohax International, one of the companies inserting the microchips, stated “I have a hard time seeing the rest of the world following anytime soon. But at least all of Europe — I mean one continent — it’s a good beginning”

VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHRISTIANS ESCALATE IN SRI LANKA

(Morning Star News) – Attacks and other actions against Christians in Sri Lanka have escalated this

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year, with Hindu extremism beginning to take root along with long-time Buddhist aggression, according to rights advocates. Sri Lanka's population is about 70 percent Buddhist and 13 percent Hindu. "Last month there have been more incidents that have been documented than previous months," an attorney with the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka (NCEASL) who requested anonymity told Morning Star News. "We are witnessing that communities are being mobilized in an increasing manner against Christians," the attorney said. "The incidents are not anymore only led by extremist groups, but we are seeing that the extremist elements are able to influence communities as a whole and lead violent mob attacks against places of worship and people." Among recent cases, a large mob in Southern Province gathered to protest against a church in their community, which was followed by a violent attack, and then discrimination. In Beliatta in Hambantota district, a mob of about 100 people from nearby villages on Sept. 12 vandalized the Assemblies of God Church building. They harassed women in the congregation and spewed obscenities, and a Buddhist monk later joined them and further aggravated matters. When three police officers arrived at 12 p.m., they had to call for back-up because the crowd had grown out of control and was not allowing the pastor or anyone else to leave – the mob assaulted a member of the congregation who tried to leave. After 10 more officers arrived, only then were police able to carry the pastor safely to the Beliatta Police Station.

CANADIAN HOSPITAL

REVEALS PARENTS MAY NOT KNOW IF THEIR CHILD CHOOSES ASSISTED SUICIDE UNTIL THEY ARE DEAD

(CH)--A Toronto children's hospital proposed policy says that in some cases for physician-assisted suicide for children, parents may not be notified until after the child has died. "Usually, the family is intimately involved in this (end-of-life) decision-making process," according to the British Medical Journal's J Medical Ethics paper from doctors at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. "If, however, a capable patient explicitly indicates that they do not want their family members involved in their decision-making, although health care providers may encourage the patient to reconsider and involve their family, ultimately the wishes of capable patients with respect to confidentiality must be respected," the doctors said. The province of Ontario does not require parents to sign off if a "capable" minor decides to refuse treatment. The proposed policy says because minors can refuse treatment there is "no legal reason" for parent involvement in assisted suicide. "The fact is medical assistance in dying is now legal, and it's legal in many places around the world," said bioethicist Bridget Campion. "Now that it is legal, many practitioners are saying, 'How do we do this?'" A 2017 survey of more than 1,000 Canadian doctors found that about 33 percent of them believe assisted suicide should be illegal for minors. Half believe "mature" minors should be able to ask for assisted suicide. The pro-life group Live Action said the proposed policy from the hospital is "sickening."

CHINESE TEACHERS FORCE CHILDREN TO REPORT THAT THEY FOLLOW 'NO RELIGION'

(CH)--More than 300 Christian

children in two different schools in China's Zhejiang province were told by their teachers that they had to fill out a form saying they follow "no religion." According to World Watch Monitor, which "tells the stories of Christians under pressure for their faith," a source who wished to remain anonymous said Chinese children have been filling out a form to state their religion for years, but this was the first year there was pushback against children who said they were Christians. The source said that when children filled out the form and indicated they were Christians, their teachers told them to fill out the form again and choose "no religion" instead. The source said these children come from "families of fervent believers who do not compromise their faith," so more than half of the children checked the box indicating they were Christians a second time. The children who said they were Christians were taken aside by their teachers to be "counseled" or warned about the consequences of identifying as a Christian. In the end, the source reported, all but 1 of the 300 children eventually checked "no religion." The Chinese government funds and controls all the schools in the country, so they use them to inculcate communist ideology and dissuade children from exploring Christianity. The source believes one reason for asking the children to not identify as Christian is that they do not want non-Christian students knowing who they can ask about Christianity.

SWITZERLAND CONSIDERS 3 YEAR JAIL SENTENCE FOR HOMOPHOBIA

(CH)--Switzerland's lower house passed a bill in September that would add homophobia and transphobia to the national criminal code and require a fine or up to three years in prison for offenders. The bill passed the National Council, 118-

60, and now goes to the upper house, the Council of States, according to the newspaper Le Temps. Five members abstained. The bill would place sexual orientation and gender identity alongside race, ethnicity and religion in the criminal code and ban "incitement to hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons," according to Le Temps. National Council member Mathias Reynard asserted that "homophobia is not an opinion" but instead a crime. Yves Nidegger, another member of the National Council, expressed concern about the law's "legally problematic and indefinable" terms. He also wondered whether "pedophilia, bisexuality, gerontophilia, necrophilia, fetishism, zoophilia, and so on ... are sexual orientations that must be protected or not protected."

SEARCH CHRISTIAN HEADLINES RUSSIAN REBELS IN UKRAINE SHUT DOWN CHURCHES

(CH)--Rebels in Ukraine's Luhansk region are reportedly raiding Christian churches. According to reports, the group, which controls Luhansk, has demanded that churches re-register as a religious organization, but the rebel group is denying approvals for those registrations. Neither Baptist nor Seventh-day Adventist churches have been allowed to re-register. There are also reports that Protestant churches have been raided in the past few months. In September, rebels raided a Baptist church in Brianka and the pastor of the church is facing possible punishment for allowing worship without registration. Luhansk authorities say churches need to re-register as part of the 2015 decree that bans mass gatherings and events under martial law.



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parents must “want” the child. In our day and age, it does not seem that there are many who even want children, or who see children as a blessing; rather, babies are often seen as a curse, an unwanted change, or an inconvenience to the mother or father’s life. Therefore, babies are slaughtered by the millions. And, the babies who are tolerated at birth, and allowed to exist in the lives of the parent or parents, may find themselves later to be a hindrance; may find that they have become a difficulty to the parents and they will be raised only through the assistance of others; or, may even find themselves abandoned entirely.

This American method of bringing up children (or murdering or abandoning them) is not the Biblical method of bringing up children! I believe that the “family,” as an institution, finds its origin in the beginning of Creation, there in the garden of Eden, when Eve is brought to Adam and they become one flesh. The institution of marriage, and by continuation, the institution of the family, is more ancient than men will normally allow – and more essential to the proper, happy, and successful existence of mankind, than humanity would ever admit. I submit to you, that “marriage” and “family” are more ancient than sin itself. Adam and Eve existed in this happy condition, before sin ever entered into their lives. So, today when we speak of the sanctity of marriage, we are not just embellishing a state of affairs that we would like to exalt in the sight of men. Rather, we are making use of an institution that, in its original condition, was untainted by sin, was perfect in its intent, and holy in its application. I believe that marriage

(and the family which results from marriage) is the highest and best institution in this world, this side of the church of Jesus Christ. Consider that when you and I lay claim to this holy covenant of marriage, we are reaching back into the furthest limits of human history, and we are bringing to our selves a holy and sanctified institution, and uniting ourselves in a holy bond that retains the holiness and sanctity of that first union between Adam and Eve.

The family is a marvelous thing! In this world of chaos and wickedness, I believe that the family is the major means by which the spirit of God has restrained the wickedness of men. When men and women come together in marriage; and when children are born to those united men and women; then, a family unit comes into existence that makes us, together, better than what we are or were separately. Do you see what I mean? A wicked and depraved people can still be made better than what they are (humanly speaking) through the bond of marriage, and the mortal love that exists between members of a family. I submit to you today that, without the family, and the bonds of love that exist between husband, wife, father, mother, and children, this world would be an unbearable place to live. In this way, an institution that is higher and better than us, is utilized by God to instill some measure of sanity, or even peace, in this world ruled by Satan and by ungodly men.

In the beginning, there in the garden of Eden, the Lord set up a holy institution, that, even today, retains the elements of Eden, and the ability to raise up men above their natural inclinations of only evil always. Of course, no doubt, after men and women are married, and after children are born, our natural depravity will easily and

often destroy even such noble and holy bonds which, at first, bound us together. But, when first entered into, the bonds of marriage are an occasion where a man and a woman will reach back through time, across the ages of sin, and will lay hold on something that is, at its core, holy and sanctified. Now, what men and women do with such a holy bond of marriage can be awful to behold. But, in each new marriage there is the potential (humanly speaking) to rise above, to grow and be better than what we are or were, to taste, just a little, the love that ought to be shared between a man and a woman – as the Lord designed, there in the garden of Eden. I know that we are depraved and we, as humans, have done terrible things even after we are married, and the bonds of marriage do not seem to be very strong in the lives of very many. I know that the children that are the product of marriage, and which are a blessing and a grace from God delivered to those couples, are not often brought up in the ways of God. And yet, imagine how much more awful this world would be without the family? Is it any wonder that Satan so vigorously attacks the family? Is it any wonder that Satan has found such great success – time after time, place after place – as he tears down the family and the frail familial ties which hold back the madness of sin, disorder, and even chaos?

In fact, this institution of family is only rivaled (and, I believe, exceeded) by the church of Jesus Christ. If marriage, and by continuation, the family, are a remnant of that happy bliss that Adam and Eve enjoyed in Eden; then, the church of Jesus Christ is like a lightning strike from Heaven itself, striking the earth and bringing Heaven to men. At the occasion of the establishment of the church of

Jesus Christ, during the time of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, the course of history was changed; the fate of men was altered; God came to dwell amongst men, in a spiritual fashion, as never before. This institution of the church will even continue into Heaven itself. What marriage and the family attempts to do, in the restraint of sin, the church endeavors to do in a more full fashion through an utter rebuke of sin. What love and charity the family may demonstrate, and which tempers the behaviors of men, suffices as only the best human picture of the love and charity that exist in the body of Jesus Christ, which binds men to God and His Son and His people. However, I digress.

Now, I want to talk about the family, and, in particular, the godly way of bringing up the children which God blesses us with.

In consideration of the importance of the family, I want us to think about the obligation and the duty that men and women – husband and wife, father and mother – have in bringing up the children which are so wonderfully delivered unto them. Of course, it seems that as the world grows more and more wicked, and as the attitudes and actions of grown-ups become more and more selfish and self-centered, the atmosphere and environment that our children are subjected to becomes more difficult, and more of a hindrance to good and honest living. However, I submit to you that there is always hope. Even as children are a heritage of the Lord, and even as each child brought into this world is a miracle of God; even so, it seems to me that each new generation of children presents to us – and to our society – an opportunity to improve, and an opportunity to be more of what the Lord God Creator

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would expect of mankind. Sadly, though, I believe that our wicked society – under the leadership of Satan, himself – has taken the opposite position: they see each new generation of children as an opportunity to spread their hatred of God, to inspire their madness to do evil, and to deny and resist the teachings and precepts found in the Word of God.

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). I believe that it is our duty as parents, to raise up our children in a manner that is in opposition to the pattern that the world has set. It is our duty – despite the evil teachings of the education system and the secular world in which we live – to teach our children the “right and wrong” which is presented to us in Scripture; to instill in our children a fear and respect for God; and to produce a generation of children who respect and honor their parents and the godliness which we as a people have once generally stood for. There is a God that all men will give answer to! There is a Creator to Whom the world of men owes their obedience and worship! There are certain things which ought not be done, and certain things which ought to certainly be done! God has given us the rules by which we must live – we are not without witness – and our children must be reminded of these things, for the good of our families, and for the good of our society.

THE WAY OF OBEDIENCE

I would first like to consider the need that we have to teach our children obedience. If you are a parent, then you know (as I have learned) that you do not have to

teach children disobedience – they will learn this on their own, and from others. Children are rebels by nature, as are we all. Much of modern parenting is centered around the ridiculous notion that we need to let our children determine their own course; or, we need to let our children decide for themselves what is right or wrong. In the end (the world of wisdom and the educated teachers say), children can function best when they are allowed to go their own way, regardless of the consequences.

Despite what the world of men might say, and despite what the learned leaders of our society might say, I believe that God would have us to teach our children to be obedient unto their parents, and to know and understand the concept of submitting to the authority of God and parents. **“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged”** (Col. 3:18-21). God is a God of order. Order implies some measure of submission. Obedience may be considered an extension or a product of submission. God has established an order in the family. Christ is the head of the man. The man (husband and father) is set over the wife and is therefore responsible for the household. The wife and mother is the homemaker and the one who deals mostly with the children as they are brought up. The children are expected to honor their parents, and to obey them. This is the godly pattern which has been established by God, and in the Scriptures. We do not have room or liberty to alter this pattern of the family! I know that families are broken up – sometimes by an

early death, sometimes by divorce, sometimes for other reasons. But, the design as has been described, is the best and the approved pattern as God has ordained it.

The world, of course, rebels against such order in the family. Satan reigns in this realm through chaos, destruction, hatred, lies, and deception. These all stand in stark contrast to order – especially a God-given system of order, such as the family. The world of men – depraved as we are, and under Satan’s thumb as we are (naturally speaking) – wants to re-organize or even utterly tear down the family unit. They want single parents, who will depend upon the government or society for help in raising the children. They want wives and mothers who are overbearing or who are caught up in a pursuit of their own importance so that they will usurp the authority of the husbands and fathers. They want children who are rebellious and who believe themselves in the right when they reject the leadership of their parents. In reality, the tearing down of the family is the means by which our society and our Nation is being brought low! It has happened in other societies, and it is happening in ours. Generally speaking, there is no longer any respect for authority, because it has been ignored at the family level.

If we are going to do our children any good, we need to teach them to be obedient to their parents, and we need to teach them to be obedient unto God. I know that we can not save our children – but we can tell them about God. I know that we can not make our children love the Lord Jesus Christ – but we can impress upon them the fear of God. Hopefully, if God is gracious, this fear will serve as a restraint upon their behavior. And one day, if God is willing, that fear will be turned into a godly sorrow

and repentance, with faith in Jesus Christ! **“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”** (Prov. 22:6). The world, it seems, is full of people who do not want to take responsibility for their actions. The world, it seems, is full of people who are possessed of the mistaken belief that there is no one to whom they must give an account. I suppose this is the goal of Satan – to deliver the world, even the religious world, out from under the idea that there is a Creator to Whom we shall all give an account. In this manner the devil and his minions are able to tear down the prohibitions of men and societies and put in place heathen and wicked ideals that permit the lewdest and most wicked of behaviors. A society of disobedient children will one day become a society of grown-ups who are answerable to no one and to no god, and who have no respect for authority of any kind.

I pray to God that He would give us grace and wisdom to raise obedient children, even in the face of great wickedness and rebellion against authority in our society. I hope and pray that you and I will be strict with our children, in the sense that we will be involved in their lives – always reminding them of the omniscient God Whom we serve, and ready to chastise and instruct our children as necessary in order to obtain their obedience.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

If we want to bring up children in God’s way, then we need to give children the Truth as it is found in the Word of God. Moses said, **“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and**

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when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:6-7). These words and commandments of God need to be the backbone of our set of rules to which we adhere, and to which we hold our children (and our society) accountable. These true words of God are the ideals to which men (and children) ought to be obedient.

Of course, we know that God's way is the truth. Jesus Christ once said, **"...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"** (John 14:6). The greatest truth that we can tell our children is the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we teach them obedience (as we have already noticed), then the next thing that we can do for our children is to give them the Word of God as it pertains to the salvation of men. Do not deceive your children, let them know that all men are sinners and that we need a Saviour. Do not fill their minds with the foolishness of the world which would have them believe that men are basically good, and that good lives will lead to a good fate – maybe even Heaven. These are the lies of the world and of religion. Rather, we should tell our children about the Saviour Who came to die for the sins of His people. And, without this Saviour, none will ever be saved. **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief"** (I Tim. 1:15). This is a faithful saying. We demonstrate faithfulness towards God, when we proclaim men to be sinners, and Christ to be the Saviour. We demonstrate faithfulness towards ourselves and towards our children when we tell the world of men that God is Holy, men are not,

and Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners who come to Him. This is a simple, yet God-exalting and man-abasing, truth. We aren't doing our children any favors if we spend our time and effort just trying to make them feel good about themselves, and we hold back from them the truth of the sinfulness of man, the holiness of God, and the redeeming power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Again, we can not save our children eternally – that is in the hand of God. However, we can prepare them and set them up for lives of usefulness, if it is the will of God to save them according to His time and purpose.

The truth is necessary, also, in physical and practical things. We need to teach our children to be different from the world – tell the truth, always. The world that we live in is full of liars, cheaters, and thieves. Of course, for the most part they are not recognized as such but are rather known as "successful." It is nothing for men and women to tell lies – even blatant lies that cause trouble and mayhem for others – in order for them to advance their own cause, or in order for them to defend their own selves. It is no wonder, then, that our children are prone to tell lies. Indeed, we do not have to teach our children to lie – this they know on their own, or they learn from others. It is the parent's duty to teach the children to tell the truth.

I would to God that more of God's people, even in the churches of Jesus Christ, would pay more heed to the truth, and would be more offended by lies! It is a pet peeve of mine, that lies – maybe sometimes we consider them little lies or white lies – are so commonplace and accepted in our midst. **"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of**

devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Tim. 4:1-2). God is a God of truth! Any lie is an offense to Him! We need to guard our mouths, and our lives, so that we speak no evil and tell no lies.

THE WAY OF DILIGENCE

Thirdly, I believe that, as parents, we are obligated to teach our children to be diligent. Now, this diligence could be applied a lot of ways – we could speak of physical or mortal diligence, as in not being lazy; or, we could speak of spiritual diligence, as in being faithful and willing to serve God, once He has saved us. I suppose that both of these are noble ambitions of godly parents – to inspire diligence in all things in the lives of their children. The Lord said of Abraham, **"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him"** (Gen. 18:19). Teach our children to **"do justice"** and to do **"judgment."** Do something for good. Do good, and do it well and heartily. Do righteousness, and do it diligently.

Again, the world is a poor example for our children. The way of God is to be diligent, just, righteous, and even industrious. But, the way of the world is to look for the easy path, to shirk our duties, and to seek out the pleasures of the world that are freely given. It is incumbent upon us to take up our duties, and to fulfill them in a diligent and godly fashion, especially as we set an example for our children. A lazy generation of Americans has produced a lazy generation of children – both in human endeavors, and in Christianity as it pertains to spiritual labors! **"Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and**

we have borne their iniquities" (Lam. 5:7). Paul instructed the Colossians, **"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men"** (Col. 3:22-23). Our lives are lived out before God, and in the sight of men. We should seek to please God rather than men – and this includes applying ourselves diligently to the cause and the labor wherein we are placed.

We must remember, as we live our lives as the parents of our children, we are an example unto them, and (hopefully) a testimony of the grace and providence of God. Look back on the time when you were a child. Recall to your mind the lives of your own parents and family members. Were not they an example to you? Did you not pick up some good habits from them? Maybe, you picked up some bad habits from them as well? Now, as a parent or family member with children in your midst, you must take up the task of being a good example to the children, and a part of this example is to show forth a life of diligence. Do not delay. Do not procrastinate. Do not diminish the importance of the work that has been given you. Certainly, in the mortal realm, your employer or customer is not going to be happy if you display laziness or a lax attitude as you fulfill your duties! Do you expect that God would expect anything less than your best? **"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God"** (Micah 6:8)? We read the words of the Preacher, **"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole**

♦ (Continued on page 23)

Bringing Up

(Continued from page 22) ♦

matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:13-14). These are the things that we should teach our children, as we bring them up in the way of God. Do good; love mercy; walk humbly with God; fear God; obey His commandments; and remind our children that God is the judge, and nothing – and no one – is hidden from Him. This will inspire diligence and a sense of duty in our lives and in the lives of our children.

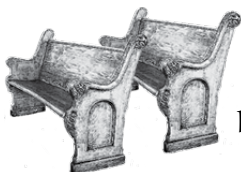
CONCLUSION

Surely, the world is a wicked place. Many times, you hear parents or grandparents saying something like this: "Oh, I feel sorry for the children that grow up in the world that we live in. It seems that they are in for a lot of trouble, and a lot of difficulties." However, I imagine that every generation that has gone before us has been certain that their particular generation was more wicked than the one before. And all parents are probably convinced that the next generation of children will have it more difficult – at least from the perspective of living in evil and wicked times – than the generation before. It seems that the more affluent we become, the more distractions and sins there are to separate us from God. And yet, I want you to know that there is still hope for our children, if we, as parents fulfill our duties, and if we call upon the God Who has saved us, and if we set the example for our children as we should. One time the Psalmist said, **"Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a**

parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God" (Ps. 78:1-8). Let us do our part and pray for our children and seek God's favor upon this next generation. It seems that, in America, we are a few generations removed from the fear of God which once held some sway upon our nation and in our society. But, who knows? Perhaps, if we are faithful, God may give us a generation of children that will manifest obedience, will love the truth, and will be diligent in their service unto God and others.



The Short Pews



Brief Articles
by Curtis Pugh
(1944 - 2018)

**WHY ARE YOU A
BELIEVER?**

Some will try to tell us that people who believe on Christ are cripples: that they are gullible. They maintain that religion is a crutch needed by unstable people. We would agree that some who call themselves Christians are gullible. Some are false professors who do not actually possess spiritual life. These and others like them only have a man-made religion.

But we address the question "Why Are You A Believer" to those who have genuinely been given faith in Christ. Faith is a gift because Ephesians 2:8-9 says, **"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."** Saving faith is **"the gift of God."** So we may ask, why were you given faith? Why are you a believer?

The Bible is absolutely clear as to why you are a believer if indeed you are a genuine one: if your total reliance is on Christ and His finished work for your salvation. Acts 13:48 says, **"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."**

The context of that verse is this: the Jews had rejected the preaching of Paul and Barnabas when they brought the Gospel of Christ to them in Antioch, Pisidia. Because of this the two apostles turned to the Gentiles – those who were not Jews ethnically. This caused great rejoicing among these non-Jews and **"as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."** Why did they believe? The same reason that you believed, if you truly have believed on Christ. You, like those who believed back then, believed because you **"were ordained to eternal life."**

Many people do not like
♦ (Continued on page 24)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 9-1-2018 to 9-30-2018

Beginning Balance	\$996.60
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Temperance, MI	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	22.00
Anonymous	1,210.00
Dividing checks	0.00
Sub Total	\$2,749.50
TOTAL	\$3,746.10
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	527.66
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Supplies	0.00
Dividing checks	0.00
Bank Charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,506.62
ENDING BALANCE	\$239.48

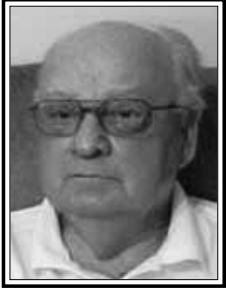


BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 9-1-2018 to 9-30-2018

Beginning Balance	\$1,482.21
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Calvary B. C., Everson, WA	200.00
.....	425.00
TOTAL	1,907.21
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	363.98
Program production	195.00
Bank charge	10.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	568.98
Interest	+0.01
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,338.24

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder William Doyal Thomas 85, of Hartselle, AL, passed away Saturday, September 29, 2018 at his residence.



Elder Matthew Stepp officiated the funeral services. Graveside service with Military Honors followed at Burningtree Cemetery.

Elder Thomas was born November 28, 1932 in Bear Creek, Alabama. The Lord saved him at the age of seventeen and later called him to preach in April 1950. He was privileged to serve as the undershepherd of some of the Lord's churches in Alabama, West Virginia, and Texas. At his death he was the pastor of the Philadelphia Baptist Church in Decatur, Alabama. He was also a retired Master Sergeant in the Air Force after 20 years of service.

He is survived by his wife Corene, and one son Terry Thomas (Jackie), two daughters Rhonda Gilbreath (Glenn) and Regina Jones (David), six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

For many years he was the editor of and chief contributor for the monthly publication *The Baptist Herald*.

Elder Thomas had several articles published in the pages of the *Banner*, as well as appearing as a guest forum writer in the November 1984 issue. He was a friend to the editor as well as the previous editors of this paper.

Please remember the family and church in your prayers.

"and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty" (I Sam. 20:18).

The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, Alabama is seeking the Lord's guidance in calling His eternally appointed man to fill the vacancy left when He called His faithful servant Elder Wm. Doyal Thomas unto his everlasting home September 29, 2018.

If any brother of like faith and order would like to be considered for that pastorate or would like information on the church please call or text Brother Mike Gibson at 256 303-7747 or email Brother James Reynolds at admin@pbcofdecaturalabama.org. or text (ONLY) 931 452-1158.

The Lord's Baptist Church in Tacoma Washington is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Gaylen Russell at 360-879-5565 (home) or 253-495-4567 (cell) or by Email: gaylenr@rainierconnect.com.

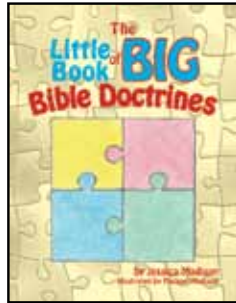
The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact the church in writing at SGBC, 400 N. Main St., Caldwell, KS 67022, or by phone Brother Darin Wiley 620-863-2431.

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested

brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

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

The Little Book of Big Bible Doctrines written by Sister Jessica Madison is available for purchase. In the book the author has presented fundamental doctrines such as the Inspiration of Scripture, Sovereign Grace, Baptist Immersion, and a Pre-Tribulation Rapture in a way that is simple enough for a child to understand. Included are "error alerts," "history notes," and original poems and illustrations. The book was illustrated by Brother Michael Madison, Spanish translation by Sister Sylvia Tweet, and graphic design by Sister Lee Anne Zuhars Edwards.



The book is available from the author for multiple copies at cost (\$3.65 plus tax/shipping,

approximately \$4.33 each in the US). Or through Amazon.com (\$6.08 paperback/\$2.99 ebook).

For more information please contact the Madisons at PO Box 451, Annville, KY 40402 or Email: jessica.madison@eku.edu, or phone: Home: (606) 364-6839, Cell: (541) 602-2821.

The Short Pews

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the fact that the Bible teaches predestination and God's **"determinate counsel"** spoken of in Acts 2:23. They reject the idea that even sinners do **"...whatsoever thy [God's] hand and thy counsel determined before to be done"** (Acts 4:28). But when men reject God's Word they are left to their own error. Sinners boastfully think that they do as they please when actually they do exactly what God determined before to allow sinners to do. In this way they accomplish God's plan.

Paul makes this clear in his letter to the congregation at Ephesus when he wrote: **"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved"** (Eph. 1:5-6). And again he said, **"In whom [Christ] also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"** (Eph. 1:11).

So then give God all the praise and glory if you are a genuine believer. If you are trusting the finished work of Christ for your salvation you do so because God ordained it.



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