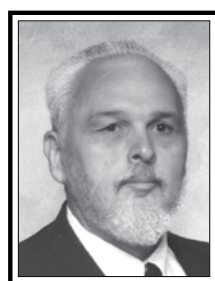


Are You Sure You Like Jesus?

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma



Spurgeon?" It is this: "Are You Sure You Like Jesus?" If you like Jesus - more importantly, if you love Him - you will love His words. His teaching will be of paramount importance to you. But we do not see that importance reflected in the beliefs of most professing Christians and their churches. Is it possible that most professing Christians are ignorant of what Jesus really taught? Is it possible that denominational literature, popular "Christian" books, and success-

◊ (Continued on page 182)

The Banner of Truth organization has on their website an article entitled "Are You Sure You Like Spurgeon?". It is a worthwhile article even though it ignores what Spurgeon preached about the Baptists and church succession. Many preachers and others quote Charles Spurgeon without understanding what he believed about salvation. This online article has quotes from that famous preacher demonstrating that he believed in the absolute sovereignty of God in all things - including salvation. However, here is a more important question than "Are You Sure You Like

◊ (Continued on page 182)

Be Careful

By Tom Ross
of South Point, Ohio

(Titus 3:8-15)

Paul closes his inspired letter to Titus with some important admonitions that are essential to the well being of any church. He once again emphasizes the absolute necessity and profitability of constantly maintaining good works which is a theme that runs throughout the entire epistle. He then cautions Titus not to get caught up or sidetracked concerning things of little importance. He also explains the manner in which heretics are to be handled and dealt with. He closes with some personal instructions, as



well as his usual benediction of grace upon the saints of God.

**BE CAREFUL
TO MAINTAIN
GOOD WORKS
V. 8 AND 14**

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. . . And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."

◊ (Continued on page 184)

The Smitten Rock

By Christmas Evans
(1766 - 1838)



displayed His power in preserving their lives between the watery ramparts which shut them in like the solid walls of the sepulchre, while the cloud rested upon them through the deep night, like the marble covering of the tomb; of their safe emerging on the other side of the flood, a type of the resurrection, leaving Pharaoh and his host to sleep in the waters till the morning of the last day, when they shall rise without their chariots and their horses; of their

◊ (Continued on page 186)

"For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ" (I Cor. 10:4).

In this chapter the apostle solemnly cautions his brethren against apostasy, and consequent shipwreck of their spiritual privileges. His admonitions are educed from important events in the history of the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to the land of Canaan. He speaks of the march of the twelve tribes out of the scene, of their bondage, under the uplifted banner of God; of their baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, when Jehovah gloriously

The Figurative Use of Wind

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The word "wind" in the Bible has a figurative meaning as well as a literal meaning. We must never lose sight of the literal meaning for to do so is to rob the Bible of its historical truth. But we must not hesitate to yield to a figurative meaning if such is suggested by the context. The Bible contains literal truth and spiritual truth. There is a danger in saying that every verse contains some deep spiritual meaning known only to the most learned expositors of Scriptures which cannot be understood by the common man. Such an idea smells with Roman Catholic foolishness

that only the priests can understand the Bible.

Wind in the Scripture often has a figurative meaning. In these verses we must seek the meaning and the lessons taught to us there. Wind is the image of man's created immaterial spirit. In the Hebrew and Greek languages wind is the secondary meaning of the words often translated spirit. Not only is wind the image of man's created immaterial spirit, but it is also an image of God's uncreated presence. Wind is used as a

◊ (Continued on page 185)

A bird is known by the song it sings,
and a man by the words he speaks.

"By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned"
(Matthew 12:37).

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

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Are You Sure You

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oriented "preachers" have ignored and even downplayed much of what Jesus said? Let us look briefly at one area of the Lord's teaching. What we propose to examine in this brief article has to do with salvation. He evidently thought it was important for men and women to understand this matter. We can say that because, unpopular as it is, He taught plainly the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation during His earthly ministry. He opposed free-will-ism while proclaiming human responsibility. Because of this, He suffered loss of popularity and eventually open hatred. We submit that those who love Jesus will like what He had to say. We submit that those who like what He had to say will obey His words for He said, **"What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops"** (Matt. 10:27). The teachings of Jesus ought to be continually in our conversations, our witnessing, our preaching and must be outlived in our daily lives. Contrary to what some people seem to think, God's people do not have "family secret doctrines" that they are to preach and teach only among saved people. And so we shall consider one short sentence uttered by Jesus - a sentence seldom preached about.

Consider, please, the following words of Jesus: **"...Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up"** (Matt. 15:13). Jesus is speaking about the Pharisees who were religious fundamentalists. These people had correct doctrine, especially in comparison with the Sadducees, but were hypocrites. This we know because of these words, **"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will**

not move them with one of their fingers" (Matt. 23:1-4). So it is clear that Jesus spoke of religious people. He spoke of those whose religion was handcrafted by themselves in order to please themselves. He spoke of people who were humanistic in their beliefs. He spoke of those who were confident in their own human ability. In short he was speaking of those who thought they were acceptable to God because of what they had done. Stated another way, they thought they were saved because of the things that they had done.

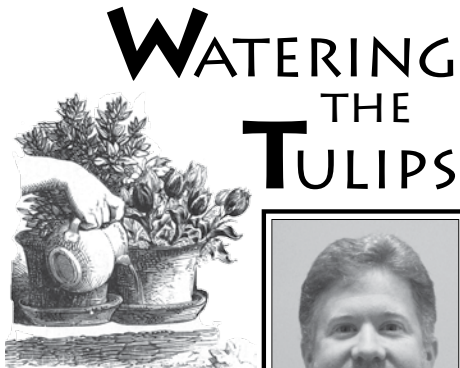
But let us consider the words of Christ. There are two kinds of plants according to the teaching of Jesus. One kind is planted by God the Father. There are others who are not planted by God. Obviously Jesus is not speaking here of vegetation. Rather, He is speaking of individuals. Each authentic church or congregation is spoken of as God's farm or tillage. In Tyndale's New Testament, the Bishop's Bible and our King James Bibles, God's churches are said to be **"God's husbandry"** (1 Cor. 3:9). But in our text Jesus speaks of individuals as plants. He is not here speaking of churches. Some of these plants (individuals) are God's. This speaks of possession. While all things are God's by right of creation, these are His in a special sense. He planted them. One encyclopedia says that there are "volunteer plants" and gives this definition: "...a volunteer is a plant that grows on its own, rather than being deliberately planted by a farmer or gardener..." Other plants that may grow in a garden are weeds which also spring up without being wanted. All those plants not planted by God the Father shall be rooted up: those who "volunteer" as well as those classed as weeds.

Like all good gardeners, God plants His plants according to His plan. All good gardeners give thought to what they shall plant and in what place and in what amounts. Ground is prepared in advance of planting. Seeds or seedlings are purchased and readied for planting. The good gardener envisions (plans) just what shall be planted here and there throughout his garden plot. This is true of God for the Bible says: **"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning**

of the world" (Acts 15:18). The plant does not determine where it shall be planted - or even if it shall be planted at all. That is the work of the good gardener who places plants according to his will or plan. The Bible reveals that God always acts according to His pleasure - He does what He pleases. Isaiah quoted God as saying, **"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure"** (Isa. 46:9-10). Now then, if God always does all His pleasure and if all His works are known unto Him from the beginning of the world, then we must conclude that God is planting His plants according to His eternal plan and pleasure.

Immediately someone rises up with "But what about man's free will?" First of all, we ask this question: "Where did you read in the Bible that man has a free will?" We agree that the word "freewill" (not free will - two words) appears in our Bibles. It is there 17 times. The word only appears in the Old Testament. In all but one instance it is used to designate sacrificial offerings. It is used every time in the sense of voluntary and can rightly be translated with that word. Voluntary offerings or "freewill" offerings were those not required by the law. Three times each year qualified Jewish men were commanded to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem. But there was nothing prohibiting qualified Jewish men from going to Jerusalem at other times - that is voluntarily. These offerings and trips were optional rather than mandatory. The plain fact of the matter is that while the Bible teaches human responsibility, it does not teach that man's will is free to make choices apart from the fallen nature of the individual. Thus man's will is not free, but rather is inextricably bound to or interwoven with his sinful nature. We observe this in ourselves and in others. People make wrong - even sinful - decisions. Even the children of God at times may make decisions that result in sinful

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By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama



The End of A Sinful Nation

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Ps. 9:17).

One will search the Old Testament far and wide to find where God punished the nation of Israel due to bad economic policy. Surely, we see the chastening hand of God on His chosen earthly people numerous times in the Bible. And yet, in each and every instance, their punishment was due to their refusal to acknowledge Him and His holy Law. Israel forgot God. As a result, they were continually facing judgment in the form of plagues, famines, captivity and numerous other ways.

It is with great sadness that I listen to the debates on the floor of the House and Senate in Washington. Though both sides may present well thought out, logical answers to this nation's problems, one thing is missing from the platform of both political parties today. Often we, as believers, have even put aside faith for politics. Many in Christendom today seem far more concerned about high taxes or national healthcare than they do about God and His values in the leaders they vote for. Let this be stated plainly – no matter how conservative our approach to the economy and the national debt may be, **“all the nations that forget God”** will fall. America is no exception.

Psalms 33:12 says unmistakably, **“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.”** The harmony between this verse and our text could not be more apparent. God is going to bless the nation that is spiritually sound. God is going to judge the nation

that forgets Him. There are no other factors listed here. There is nothing about national healthcare. There is nothing about taxes. There is nothing about social security. Obviously, these policies are affected by the spirituality of those in office. But the bottom line is, if we are faithful to God, He will bless us. If we are not, He will judge us.

Can a nation really expect to be blessed by economic policy despite its spiritual wickedness? The Antichrist will take this world over in such a way. “Through his cunning, he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule” (Dan. 8:25 NKJV). Seemingly, the world will prosper under the Antichristian regime despite having the most corrupt, wicked leader it has ever known. And yet, Bible believing Christians know that his empire will be short lived. Jesus will return and destroy it less than 7 years after the Antichrist comes to power.

This article does not mean to dismiss the importance of good, sound policies. However, these must be the outpouring of a spiritually strong people...a thing which America simply is not today. Christians, wake up. The words in our text verse are as true today as they were when they were penned. The nation that forgets God will be turned into hell. If America continues down this road, despite whatever conservative fiscal policy of the leaders, we will fall. Pray for your leaders. Cast your vote for spiritually sound men. Do not waste your vote for a candidate who denies the Lord in all that he does.



Are You Sure You

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actions. In plain words we all choose, at times, to sin. Why do we not consistently choose to live sinlessly? The reason is because our wills are not free from our sin natures. The prophet Jeremiah pointed out the impossibility of an individual using his will to cease from sinning. He wrote: **“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil”** (Jer. 13:23). And so we say to those who insist

there is such a thing as a “free will” - show us. Demonstrate to us that you have a free will. Cease from sinning! You cannot do that anymore than you can fly! It is not in your nature to do so.

And neither is it in the power of man's will to come in a saving way to Christ. Jesus spoke of this human inability in John 6:44 where we read: **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”** Jeremiah 10:23 says, **“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”** You cannot “plant” yourself! And if you could and did “plant” yourself you would be included in those who shall be “rooted up.” Remember: **“Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.”**

Contrary to human thinking, there is absolutely nothing that you can do in and of yourself that will cause God to “plant” you. Consider as an example the usual things involved in planting tomato plants. Generally a person will select and make ready the place he or she intends on growing tomatoes whether a pot, a portion of a flower bed, or in a larger vegetable garden. Then they will often go to a garden center of one sort or another where they will select and purchase plants. Their selection may be based upon the appearance of the plant, the hardiness of the variety, the size, color and acidity of the expected produce, etc. In other words, the good qualities of the tomato seedlings will be the determining factor in the choice of the plants purchased and planted. Jesus spoke otherwise of God's choices. He said, **“For many are called, but few are chosen”** in a parable recorded in Matthew 22:1-14. In another place Jesus said, **“But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first”** (Matt. 19:30). Paul further elaborated on those whom God calls with these words: **“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things**

of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence” (I Cor. 1:26-29). God does not choose His plants because of anything good in them! And so it is that if you could cease from sinning or do anything to improve your condition, God would not choose you. He has already chosen whom He will save. His choices were of the base things - of sinners. Jesus said, you may remember, **“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”** (Luke 5:32). If you do not understand this principle, you do not understand God's grace in salvation.

And so it is that God does the choosing and planting. All plants other than the ones He has planted shall be rooted up - destroyed. Neither their appearance, their stout looks, their verdant color, their self-produced fruit of human achievement and so-called goodness - nothing shall save them. In the plants whom God plants He shall have all the glory! Only His planting - His work - shall endure. After all, only His work is truly and everlastingly good.

And so we raise the question and ask that you seriously meditate upon it: Are you a plant that the Father has planted? Someone said that God's plants are planted upside down. Their roots are not in the soil. Their roots reach heavenward from whence their life and sustenance comes. They hang, as it were, upside down in the earth to bear fruit here. They were planted by God who alone has access to the soil of Heaven if we may use the term. They are watered by the **“...pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb”** (Rev. 22:1). It is this that sustains them in the harshest environment possible - amongst their three enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil.

While others that seem to be planted are sustained by religious entertainment, church activities, feel-good sermons, prestige within the denomination, and pride in numbers, God's plants - the ones planted by

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Are You Sure You

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Him - are sustained by Him. They recognize that there was not nor now is anything good in them in which to have confidence. Paul describes these plants in this way though he speaks of them as ones who have been circumcised with a circumcision made without hands: **"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh"** (Phil. 3:3). He could as well have said for we are the plants of God, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. We say that because neither the circumcision of which he wrote nor the planting of God's plants is accomplished by human ability. Perhaps these three characteristics will aid you in examining yourself. Do you worship God in the spirit or in fleshly enthusiasm? Do you rejoice or glory in what you perceive to be human achievements or only in Christ Jesus? Do you have confidence that you are saved and pleasing God because of what you have done in coming to Christ as a lost sinner? Are you confident that lost men and women have the ability to plant themselves or to come to Christ in a saving way apart from God drawing them effectively? "Oh beware of trust ill-grounded" the song says.

To those who are truly God's plants, rejoice! Neither the hot winds of drought nor the cold winds of winter can uproot you! Underneath are the everlasting arms! (see Deuteronomy 32:37). **"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand"** (Ps. 37:23-24). God sustains His own!

And to you who do not like the words of Jesus when He said, **"Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up,"** we urge you to repent of your wickedness and presumptuous self-confidence. Before there comes that day when all plants not planted by the Father shall be rooted up, turn in unfeigned contrition to God. Repent

toward God and trust in Christ alone. May God give you grace to do so.



Be Careful

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1. Verse eight begins with a reference back to what was written in verses four through seven, affirming the truths of sovereign grace including the unconditional love of God, the freeness of salvation, the necessity of regeneration, justification by grace through faith, the believer's position of eternal life, and the hope of an eternal inheritance that has been secured for him. The entire machinery of salvation from beginning to end is connected to the free grace of God and forms a faithful saying that is to be affirmed, preached, and contended for constantly. The reason why these truths are to be proclaimed constantly is because the heresy of works salvation has been a constant enemy to true Christianity. In every century false teachers have arisen seeking to pervert the Gospel of Christ and the teachings of sovereign grace. Man made systems of salvation have been formulated teaching that man is somehow made acceptable to God on the basis of his own merit and works. True preachers and believers must constantly combat these errors by earnestly contending for the faith once delivered (Jude 3).

2. Not only must the doctrines of grace be constantly taught and affirmed, a gracious life evidenced by good works must also be carefully maintained. An individual may crow about the doctrines of grace with all his might, but if his life is not filled with grace and good works he will do more harm than good. Perhaps the greatest hindrance to Christianity is the testimony of those who say they are saved by grace whose immoral

lifestyle betrays and contradicts their profession of faith. It is not enough to believe right doctrines, a true follower of Christ must also live right if his testimony is to be acceptable and fruitful in the sight of God and men. Believers who have truly been changed by the power of God's grace will endeavor to walk in the path of good works and follow the example of Jesus Christ. This is a principle truth that is constantly emphasized in the Word of God. Ephesians 2:10 declares: **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."** Colossians 1:10 states: **"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."** I John 2:3-4 and 6 declare: **"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. . . He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."** All of these Scriptures prove the necessity of maintaining a life marked by good works and obedience to the commands of Christ flowing from a heart that has been changed by the grace of God. Those who deny the importance of good works in the Christian life through false teaching or an immoral lifestyle are to be regarded as enemies of true Christianity.

3. The reason why good works are to be carefully maintained is clearly stated in verses 8 and 15. They are good, profitable, necessary, and fruitful because they are used by God to show forth a testimony of righteousness and holiness before men. Good works are good in the sense that they commend the grace

of God to others. They are profitable in the sense that they show forth the power of a changed life to an unbelieving and skeptical world. They are necessary in order to prove the authenticity and validity of one's profession of faith. They are fruitful in the sense that they are produced and cultivated by the Spirit of God and give evidence to others that the grace of God is operating within our hearts prompting us to love and obey Him. Above all, good works are to be considered good, profitable, necessary, and fruitful because they glorify the God who has saved us as Jesus taught in John 15:8-10: **"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."**

BE CAREFUL NOT TO GET SIDETRACKED v. 9

"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain."

1. In contrast to Paul's insistence on maintaining good works that are fruitful and profitable, he warns Titus not to allow himself to be sidetracked by issues and arguments that were unprofitable. The Judaizers and other false teachers in Paul's day sought to weaken the focus and emphasis of genuine Christianity by diverting the attention of believers to things that were controversial and divisive, especially among the newly converted Jews. Paul makes it clear that Titus must avoid, shun, and turn away from false teachings and unscriptural notions that were being raised by the Judaizers.

2. Believers must not allow themselves to get sidetracked by **"foolish questions"** involving unscriptural philosophies, myths, and speculation. Much time and effort has been wasted by Christians through the centuries by contemplating foolish questions that will not amount to a hill of beans in eternity. There is too much work to be done to allow oneself to get tangled up with

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Be Careful

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frivolous and novel questions that are unprofitable and vain.

3. Believers are to avoid the contemplation and mystical interpretation of “genealogies.” Paul was not condemning the study of the genealogies of the Old and New Testament, but rather the false interpretation of the names in the genealogical lists. Many of the Jews were assigning allegorical and fanciful meanings to the names of the genealogies to fit their own doctrines and traditions. In effect, they were twisting Scripture, a practice which is heartily condemned in the Word of God.

4. Paul warned Titus not to get sidetracked by those who sought to stir up strife and contention over the civil and ceremonial laws given to Israel. The Judaizers were insisting that the Gentile converts to Christianity be circumcised and follow the civil and ceremonial laws of Israel. The entire Epistle to the Galatians was written to refute the error of any form of justification by the law. When Christ died on the cross the civil and ceremonial laws of the Old Testament were abrogated. No man has ever been saved by law-keeping or the observance of ceremonies and rituals. Therefore all such strivings and contention over these issues are to be shunned.

5. Just as Paul warned Titus not to get sidetracked by issues and arguments that were fruitless, we face the same dilemma in modern-day Christianity. It seems as though more and more people are wasting their time majoring on things of little importance, contemplating questions that are futile, and stirring up strife about some obtuse point of doctrine. We would do well to spend less time arguing and more time witnessing to the lost. We would probably get a lot more accomplished for the glory of God if we would diligently obey the precepts outlined in Ecclesiastes 12:13 and Micah 6:8 which state: **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. . . 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?”

BE CAREFUL IN DEALING WITH HERETICS v. 10-11

“A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

1. A heretic may be defined as an individual who is not only false in doctrine, but also factious in spirit and conduct, one that stirs up strife and division within the church by spreading error or immortality. Such an individual is to be admonished to repent of their heresy and to stop stirring up strife. If they refuse to accept the admonition and warning they are to be excluded from church fellowship, and their teachings and practices rejected. The process for dealing with heretics in the church is very similar to the way in which the church is to handle church discipline concerning matters of personal offenses as taught by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-18. Paul issued a similar command in Romans 16:17 which states: **“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned;**

and avoid them.”

2. Those who are guilty of heresy and strife manifest and condemn themselves by their false teachings and practice. They are said to be subverted, turned out of the true way, and beyond hope of restoration because of their stubbornness and rebellion against the principle doctrines of the Christian faith. Not all people who are in error or who fail to understand a particular doctrine or practice are to be considered as heretics. All of us are subject to error and misunderstanding because of the old sinful nature that we have. However, when a person blatantly, persistently, and knowingly spreads error and strife within a church they must be dealt with as a heretic in order to preserve the harmony and well-being of the church.

CLOSING DIRECTIONS, SALUTATIONS, AND BENEDICTION v. 12-13; 15

“When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. . . All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.”

1. Artemas is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, but Tychicus is mentioned a number of times, always in a favorable light (Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7). It is clear that Tychicus was a missionary companion of Paul and one whom he had a high regard for in spiritual things. It is important that God's people develop testimonies that are commendable and useful in the service of the Lord. Paul was going to send one of these men to the island of Crete to relieve Titus of his missionary and pastoral duties there.

2. Once Titus' replacement arrived in Crete, he was instructed by Paul to bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos with him to the city of Nicopolis where Paul intended to spend the winter. Though it is not recorded, it is probable that Paul intended to prepare and train these men for further missionary endeavors.

3. Paul closes the letter by sending Christian greetings to the believers

on the island of Crete who shared a mutual love and faith in Christ. He then closes with his usual benediction of grace to all the believers.



Figurative Use of

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figure of the Holy Spirit in Scripture as we shall see later.

A SYMBOL OF MAN'S LIFE

“O remember that my life is wind” (Job 7:7). Man's life on earth is in his breath in his nostrils. His life is very precarious and uncertain. Like a breeze which blows upon us and passes by, so is human existence. Its end is sure and speedy, and our return is not expected. Our life on this planet is blustering and noisy like the wind, but vain and empty and soon gone beyond recall.

A SYMBOL OF HUMAN FEAR

“Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud” (Job 30:15). Wherever Job looked, frightful things pursued his soul as swiftly and violently as the wind. Terrors came one after another and persecuted him on all sides. New evils might come upon him at any moment even as the wind might suddenly blow without any previous warning.

A SYMBOL OF DIVINE JUDGMENT

“The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away” (Ps. 1:4). In Oriental countries the wheat was winnowed in the open fields where there was a strong wind. When the grain was threshed it was thrown up in the air and the wind scattered the chaff while the grain fell to the ground. When compared to the righteous, the wicked are like chaff for lightness, vain in their imaginations, light in their principles and unstable in their ways. Like chaff before the wind, their ruin is sure and sudden (Matt. 3:12; Jer. 22:22; Hos. 13:15).

The believer has in Christ a hiding place from the winds of God's wrath: **“And a man shall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a**

♦ (Continued on page 186)

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Figurative Use of

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great rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32:2). To the traveler in the desert it was precious to find a hiding place. Likewise, the Lord Jesus Christ is a safe hiding place from death, damnation, and the storms of Divine judgment. He shelters sinners from the wrath of God, the temptations of Satan, and the rage of the world, having sustained the storm Himself.

A SYMBOL OF THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN REGENERATION

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whiter it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). This verse is much debated. Some even deny that the Lord intended to use the wind here as an illustration of regeneration. They say that the part of the verse which says the wind blows where it pleases can only be applied to the person. But this idea is untenable. It would compare the Spirit to the Spirit, giving us no comparison at all. It is wrong to set the Spirit forth as blowing and to call Him a sound. It is common in the Bible to personify unintelligent things and to speak of them as having mind and will (Ps. 104:19; Luke 19:40). Also in other Scriptures the Spirit is compared to wind (Ezek. 37:9; Acts 2:2). I firmly believe that wind in John 3:8 is a symbol of the Spirit's work in regeneration.

The wind is a very mysterious thing, and so is the regeneration of the soul of man by the Holy Spirit. We cannot account for the direction in which the wind blows, or for the beginning and extent of its influence. This shows how the Holy Spirit is a free agent in regeneration. He works now, and where, and when He pleases. He acts freely in the first operation of His grace on the heart of a man. His work is powerful and irresistible like the wind. The wind moves all before it and nothing can withstand it. Even so the Holy Spirit pulls down Satan's strong hold, closes the gates of Hell, demolishes the fortifications of sin, and uproots the corruption of a man's heart.

The sound of the wind can be heard and its force felt, but it cannot

be seen with the natural eye. When you see the trees move, or the waters of the ocean pile upon heaps, or feel the cool effects of the summer breeze, we know the wind has caused this to happen. The reality of the Spirit's operation is to be judged by its effects upon individuals. When we see sinful men become holy, the immoral moral, the thoughtless thoughtful, the prayerless prayerful, and the proud humble, we see the effects of the Holy Spirit's work in the regeneration of a soul.

The proper evidence of regeneration is seen in a godly life. God has the power to change the most hardened sinner even as He can bring down the loftiest oak by one blast of wind. Just as the wind sometimes sweeps with a mighty tempest, and at other times breathes a mild evening zephyr, so is the operation of the Spirit. Sometimes the sinner trembles before the gospel of grace, and at other times he is sweetly and gently drawn to the cross of Christ. Every one that is born of the Spirit is in some respects, like the effect of the wind. You cannot see the wind, you cannot discern its laws, but you can see its effects and know that it does exist and operate. How true this is of the work of the Spirit in regeneration.

A SYMBOL OF HERESY

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14). In Christendom there arises conflicting and ever-changing forms of doctrine or teaching. These heresies toss and carry about, like sea billows of a storm, immature and unstable souls. They have no fixed views and principles. They hold no doctrines that are settled in their minds by careful and patient examination. They go after every new opinion and submit to the guidance of every new teacher. Jude compares these heretics to **"clouds they are without water, carried about of winds"** (Jude 12).

Christians should have settled religious opinions. We should discover truth and hold it fast. We must not yield to the coming of every new teacher. The first desire of every new convert should be to acquire

settled views of truth and to be firmly grounded in the doctrines of the gospel.

We live in a time when religious people do not know what they believe. Leaders in the major denominations debate the doctrines of the Bible. Some Baptists debate whether or not the Bible is the Word of God. Church members doubt and question their church creed. Even our own preachers do not know what they believe about the endtime. Many stormy winds are moving our people from pillar to pole and this instability is just beginning to show itself in our camp.

A SYMBOL OF THE RUINOUS POWER OF SIN

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rages; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isa. 64:6). As a strong wind sweeps away the leaves of the forest, so our sins sweep us away to the judgment of God. Sin carried the Jews to Babylon. It will carry every impenitent sinner into the jaws of the second death. I tell you that this evil we call sin is **"a destroying wind"** (Jer. 51:1). Hosea said: **"For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind"** (Hos. 8:7). Solomon wrote: **"When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you"** (Prov. 1:27).

A SYMBOL OF THE ADVENT OF THE SPIRIT

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:2-4).

This verse does not say there was a wind, but that the sound they heard was like a sweeping tempest. The word translated "wind" here is not the ordinary one. It occurs again in the New Testament only in Acts 17:25 where it is rendered "breath." It means a blowing, a blast, a breath. Like the wind, the Holy Spirit is invisible but

mighty. In the upper room there was no motion in the air, and yet the sound was as though a hurricane was raging. Wind here is a clear symbol of the Spirit.



The Smitten Rock

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miraculous supply in the wilderness, with bread from Heaven, and water from the smitten rock, which he calls spiritual meat and spiritual drink, because of their typical reference to the sacrificial death of Christ, which is the spiritual life of the world; and of their subsequent ingratitude and forgetfulness of God, notwithstanding these great deliverances and mercies, their murmurings, idolatries, fornications, and tempting of Christ, for which they were destroyed by the plague, slain by fiery serpents, smitten by the angel of the Lord, and fell to the number of three and twenty thousand in one day. **"Now all these things,"** he adds, **"happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"** (I Cor. 10:11). Thus he opens the graves of ancient sinners, and brings before his brethren the carcasses of those **"who fell in the wilderness,"** brings them into our solemn assemblies, and hangs them up over the pulpit, the baptistry, and the communion-table, terrible warnings against departing from the living God; even as the censers of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were beaten up, and made a covering for the altar, for a perpetual sign and memorial to Israel, to keep them from the sin of those men, that they might not share their fate.

In speaking of the smitten rock, which the apostle authorizes us to regard as a type of Christ, we shall consider: *First*, Its smiting by Moses; and *Secondly*, The consequent flowing of the waters.

I. The smitten rock was a type of Christ. Messiah is the "Rock of Ages" to His church. He is the foundation of her hope, sure and steadfast, and

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her protection in times of danger and of dread. The armor and the prowess of Egypt constituted no rock like this rock. Edom, and Moab, and Philistia, and the seven nations of Canaan, had their gods and their heroes; but their rock was not able to shelter them from the wrath of Jehovah, when it came upon them like a tempest of hail. The gods that made not the heavens are far off in the day of trouble; but the God of Israel is **"nigh at hand,"** and His arm is strong to deliver. He is the rock that stood firm and immovable, for the defense of His people, amid the ragings of the Red Sea. Messiah is the man, who is predicted as **"a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; . . . as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land"** (Isa. 32:2). He can shield, not only from the scorching sun and the scathing simoom of the desert; but also from the fiery torments of remorse, and the ruinous judgments of Heaven. Our Lord is a rock, also, on account of the blessings which flow from Him, for the refreshment of His Israel; as "the droppings of honey from the rock," as "springs of water in a dry place;" as "living streams in the desert," and "rivers from the mountains of Lebanon."

There are two accounts of the smiting of the rock; one in the seventeenth chapter of Exodus, and the other in the twentieth chapter of Numbers. From a comparison of these two accounts, it appears that the rock was smitten at two different times; the first, as is supposed, about a year after the egress from Egypt, and the other about a year before the entrance into Canaan; making an intervening period of about thirty-eight years. The war with Amalek succeeded the first; the embassy to Edom followed the second. At the first, Miriam was alive; just before the second is the record of her death.

It seems that the people murmured bitterly against Moses, spoke of their superior fare in Egypt, and accused him of bringing them out into the wilderness to kill them with thirst. This is ever the spirit of backsliding. Those who are under its

influence are apt to complain of the burdens imposed upon them by their religion, and the injuries occasioned to them by their brethren; and to speak uncharitably of their spiritual leaders, instead of crying to God for help. To ask, **"Is the Lord among us?"** (Ex. 17:7) when His Word and His works, indicating either His pleasure or displeasure, testify that He is, is tempting God, with dreadful presumption.

It does not appear that Moses sinned the first time he smote the rock; but the second time, the servant of God was evidently off his guard, and the meekest of men **"spoke unadvisedly with his lips"** (Ps. 106:33), on account of which, both he and Aaron were shut out of the promised land. His sin consisted in entering into a quarrel with the people, instead of asking God to quench their thirst. It appears that their chidings had provoked him to anger, and he had lost the spirit of sympathy for their sufferings, and his hard feelings stood like a thick wall between him and the miracle which God was about to work for His own

glory and His people's relief. Neither did He as God command him; for instead of simply speaking to the rock, as he was bidden, he smote it twice, with evident agitation of mind; and at the same time, bitterly reproached the people with their rebellion.

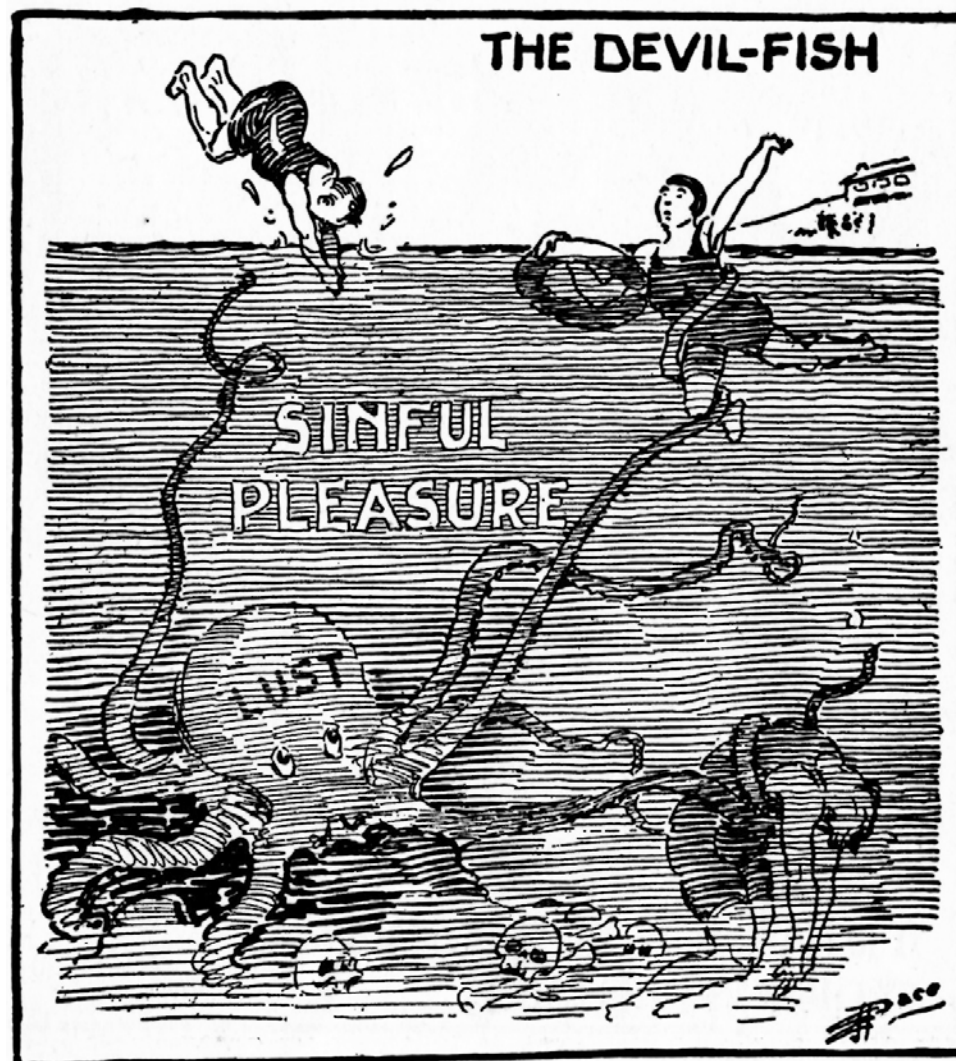
Every minister of the gospel is a "drawer of water," to his congregation, from the "Spiritual Rock" which follows the church. He must be clothed with meekness from Heaven, or the provocations of the people will be apt to embitter his spirit. God would have us minister mercy. **"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle toward all men. . . In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they might recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will"** (II Tim. 2:24-26).

The smiting of the rock was intended to open it, that the water might flow. This prefigured the

smiting of Christ, "the Rock of Ages," and **"the Shepherd of the sheep"** (John 10:2). The shedding of the blood of lambs, and goats, and bullocks, for the space of four thousand years, faintly shadowed forth the sacrificial passion of our blessed Lord. Their groans and struggles under the slaughtering knife; the sound of the blood, falling into the golden basins, and poured into the flames upon the altar; the noise occasioned in cutting up the victim, and piling the pieces upon the fire; and the smoke and vapor ascending from the consuming sacrifice to Heaven; all, all, in their own way, foreshadowed the necessity of mangling the body and shedding the blood of Messiah, that pardoning mercy might have an open way to flow to sinners, like the water from the smitten rock; and the agonies of those slaughtered victims were an imperfect type of the agonies of the soul of Jesus, in the garden and on the cross.

The smiting of a flinty rock, for the purpose of obtaining water, was a scheme of the Divine Mind, whose ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts. It was certainly the last place to which Moses would have gone for water; and he might have expected the stroke to elicit sparks of fire, rather than cool refreshing streams. What eye had not seen and ear had not heard, either of men or of angels - what had not entered into the heart of any created being to conceive, terrestrial or celestial - was, that the smiting of the Shepherd should save the sheep; that the condemnation of the just should bring the unjust to God; that the making of Messiah a curse should secure infinite blessings to mankind; that the poverty of Jesus should enrich us, and His death raise us to life eternal. Consuming flames of Divine indignation might have been expected to flash upon the guilty world from every wound of the thorns, the nails and the spear, in the sacred person of Emmanuel, but, to the astonishment of men and angels, a tide of love and mercy ran freely from every bleeding vein, to wash away the guilt and pollution of human crimes, according to the

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The Smitten Rock

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determinate counsel and immutable promise of our God.

The rock must be smitten by a rod. Had Moses been left to choose his own instrument, he would probably have taken a hammer, or perhaps a lever; but God commands him to take the rod. The rock would not have yielded water to any other instrument than the rod that smote the waters of Egypt, and turned them into blood. This rod was an emblem of the sovereignty of God over Israel and is therefore exalted "the rod of God, which the Lord gave unto Moses" - as his deputy governor - "to lead Israel, and to work miracles before their eyes." It was also a symbol of the royal law of Heaven; which, prior to the fall, was a rod of life; but afterward became a rod of iron, to break in pieces the offender - an angry serpent, to sting the transgressor with dreadful torments; and finally, when Christ endured the curse, and honored the violated mandate, by His death upon the tree, it was transformed again into a guiding and correcting rod. As the rock would have yielded water under no other stroke than that of **"the rod of God"** (Ex. 4:21), so the sufferings of Christ would have been ineffectual, had they not happened under the law of the Father, and according to the counsel of Infinite Wisdom. When Isaac was about to be offered up on mount Moriah, the wood, the fire, and the knife, must all come from his father's house, and the dreadful deed must be done by his father's hand. So Jesus must die in no ordinary or accidental way. He must not suffer Himself, to be slain by the sword of Herod, nor cast over the brow of the hill by the people. He must receive the mortal cup from no other hand than that of the Father. He must die the appointed death; at the appointed time; in the appointed place, without the camp; and in the appointed manner, by hanging on a tree. The wreath of thorns, the scarlet robe, the nails, the cross, the spear, and even the vinegar offered Him in His agony, were all according to His Father's counsel. He knew the necessity, and said - **"Thy will be**

done!" The Shepherd of Israel would bow under no other stroke than that of the Lord of Hosts. A cradle, a cross, and a grave, all of His Father's appointing must Jesus have, in order to open a fountain of living water to the world.

The rock must be smitten in a public manner, in the sight of the sun, and before all the elders of Israel, that God might be sanctified in the eyes of His people. This was intended to foreshadow the publicity of the death of Christ, which took place during one of the great public festivals of the Jews, in the presence of nearly the whole nation, and on the hill Calvary; and to denote the proclamation of Christ crucified throughout the world, as the true propitiation and object of faith, to be looked upon by Jews and Gentiles, to the softening of the heart, and the flowing of repentant tears, according to the prophecy. "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son." The Spirit of grace directs the eyes of men to the cross, upon which the prophet Isaiah, with transcendent sublimity of language, describes the Savior as passing from Calvary to the grave, from the grave to the empyrean, and thence back again to earth, crying - "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and beside me there is no Savior!"

The rock must be smitten in the presence of God. "Behold, I will stand before thee there on the rock in Horeb" (Ex. 17:6). He stood upon the rock in Horeb, though invisible, in the glory of His loving-kindness and His power, to guide the hand of His servant Moses, and open a source of timely succour to His perishing people. But when the curse fell upon the sinner's Substitute and Surety, then God stood forth before the world upon the rock of Calvary, and the darkened heavens, the trembling earth, and the opening sepulchres, as if all the machinery of nature had been suddenly disordered and disorganized- stood forth in the plentitude of His power, His wisdom, His justice, His mercy, and His truth, to prosper the work of man's redemption, and open a channel through which the river of life might

flow out to a famishing race. On Calvary still He stands, with the cup of salvation in His hand, and streams of living water rolling at His feet, and cries - **"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters"** (Isa. 55:1).

According to the command of God, the rock was to be smitten but once. Once smitten, it needed only be spoken to; and, though it was more than thirty years afterwards, it would yield forth its water. But Moses, provoked to anger by the murmurings and complainings of the people, transcended the Divine injunction, and though he had once smitten the rock, smote it again; yea, when he should have spoken to it only, smote it twice with his rod. This was his sin, for which God would not permit him to enter the promised land. Christ has been once smitten, and woe to those who smite Him again! He has once offered Himself a sacrifice, and once entered into the holy place, having finished His work of atonement, and made an end of sin, and superseded the sacrifices of the law. Henceforth, ye Jews, relinquish your burnt-offerings, your meat-offerings, your drink-offerings, your peace-offerings; and trust no longer in beasts, and birds, and flour, and oil; but in "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Crucify Him afresh no more, O ye backsliders; for "there remaineth no other sacrifice for sin!" Smite Him not again, lest He swear unto you His wrath, as unto Moses, that ye shall not enter into His rest!

II. Having spoken of the smiting, let us now look at the result, the flowing of the waters; a timely mercy to **"the many thousands of Israel"** (Num. 10:36), on the point of perishing in the desert; shadowing forth a far greater mercy, the flowing of living waters from the **"spiritual Rock"** (I Cor. 10:4), which is Christ. In the death of our redeemer, we see three infinite depths moved for the relief of human misery; the love of the Father, the merit of the Son, and the energy of the Holy Spirit. These are the depths of wonder whence arise the rivers of salvation.

The waters flowed in the presence of the whole assembly. The agent was invisible, but His work was manifest.

The river flowed in great

abundance, filling the whole camp, and supplying all the people. Notwithstanding the immense number, and the greatness of their thirst, there was enough for each and for all. The streams run in every direction to meet the sufferers, and their ripping murmur seemed to say - "open thy mouth, and I will fill it." Look to the cross! See there the gracious fountain opened, and streams of pardoning and purifying mercy flowing down the rock of Calvary, sweeping over the mount of Olives, and cleaving it asunder, to make a channel for the living waters to go out over the whole world, that God may be glorified among the Gentiles, and all the ends of the earth may see His salvation!

The water flowed from the rock, not pumped by human labor, but drawn by the hand of God. It was the same power, that opened the springs of mercy upon the cross. It was the wisdom of God that devised the plan, and the mercy of God that furnished the victim. His was the truth and love that gave the promise by the prophet - **"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness"** (Zech. 13:1). His was the unchanging faithfulness that fulfilled it in his Son - **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour"** (Titus 3:5). Our salvation is wholly of God; and we have no other agency in the matter, than the mere acceptance of his proffered grace.

The water in twelve different channels; and, according to Dr. Pococke, of Scotland, who visited the place, the deep traces in the rock are visible to this day. But the twelve streams, one for each tribe, all issued from the same fountain, in the same rock. So the great salvation flowed out through the ministry of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and went abroad over all the earth. But the fountain is one. All the apostles preached the same Savior, and pointed to the same cross. **"Neither**

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is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). We must come to this spring, or perish.

The flowing of the waters was irresistible by human power. Who can close the fountain which God hath opened? Can Edom, or Moab, or Sihon, or Og, dam up the current which Jehovah hath drawn from the rock? Can Caiaphas, and all the Jews, aided by the Prince of this world - can all the powers of earth and hell combined - arrest the work of redemption, and dry up the fountain of mercy that Christ is opening on Calvary? As soon might they dry up the Atlantic, and stop the revolutions of the globe. It is written, and must be fulfilled. Christ must suffer, and enter into His glory - must be lifted up, and draw all men unto Him - and repentance and remission of sins must be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The water flowing from the rock was like a river of life to the children of Israel. Who can describe the distress throughout the camp; and the appearance of the people, when they were invited to approach the flinty rock, instead of a fountain or a stream, to quench their thirst? What angry countenances were there, what bitter censures, and ungrateful murmurings, as Moses went up to the rock, with nothing in his hand but a rod! "Where is he going," said they, "with that dry stick? What is he going to do to that rock? Does he mean to make fools of us all? Is it not enough that he has brought us into this wilderness to die of thirst? Will he mock us now by pretending to seek water in these sands, or open fountains in solid granite?" But see! he lifts the rod; he mites the rock; and lo, it bursts into a fountain; and twelve crystal streams roll down before the people! Hear the shout of joy ringing through the camp, and rolling back in tumultuous echoes from the crags and cliffs of Horeb! "Water! water! A miracle! a miracle! Glory to the God of Israel! Glory to His servant Moses!" It was a resurrection day to Israel, the morning light bursting

upon the shadow of death. New life and joy are seen throughout the camp. The maidens are running with cups and pitchers, to the rock. They fill and drink; then fill again, and haste away to their respective tents, with water for the sick, the aged, and the little ones, joyfully exclaiming - "Drink, father! Drink, mother! Drink, children! Drink, all of you! Drink abundantly! Plenty of water now! Rivers flowing from the rock!" Now the oxen are coming, the asses, the camels, the sheep, and the goats - coming in crowds to quench their thirst, and plunging into the streams before them. And the feathered tribes are coming, the turtle-dove, the pigeon, the swallow, the sparrow, the raven, and the wren; while the croaking raven and the fierce-eyed eagle, scenting the water from afar, mingle with them around the rock.

Brethren, this is but a faint emblem of the joy of the church, in drinking the waters that descend from Calvary, the streams that gladden the city of our God. Go back to the day of Pentecost for an instance. O what a revolution of thought, and feeling, and character! What a change of countenance, and conscience, and heart! Three thousand men, that morning full of ignorance, and corruption, and guilt - idolaters, sensualists, blasphemers, persecutors - before night were perfectly transformed - the lions converted to lambs - the hard heart melted, the dead conscience quickened, and the whole man became a new creature in Christ Jesus! They thirsted, they found the "Spiritual rock," tasted its living waters, and suddenly leaped into new life, like Lazarus from the inanity of the grave!

This is the blessing which follows the church through all her wanderings in the wilderness; accompanies her through the scorching desert of affliction, and the valley of the shadow of death; and when at last she shall come up out of great tribulation, her garments shall be found washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; and the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall lead her to everlasting fountains, and she shall thirst no more!



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Christian and War

No one likes to discuss the subject of war. During the time of war humanity suffers a horror no words can express. Man butchers his fellow man. Children are slaughtered, women raped and property destroyed. The sea and the land are stained with human blood by human hands. Man turns the mighty powers of nature into engines of torture and destruction. Truly did General Sherman remark: "War is Hell." War does give to earth the semblance of Hell.

Since the dawn of history men have fought against other men. There have been many kinds of wars. Families have fought against families, tribes against tribes, followers of one religion against followers of another. In more modern times wars have been fought between nations or groups of nations. The world of today is blighted and blasted by war in the East and the Falklands. Every nation on earth knows that one mis-pressed button in a war room of a great nation could plunge the whole world in to a devastated atomic war.

The ever-present threat of war raises important questions in the minds of Christians. Is it right for a so-called Christian nation to have a war-department? Can a believer in Christ be a draft-dodger? Does a nation have a Divine right to exercise sword-government? Can a Christian endorse pacifism? Should a born-again person work for universal disarmament?

No small number of real Christians are troubled over these questions. The thinking of believers has been greatly confused by false cults and religious liberals who are governed by personal feelings rather than the Word of God. In our land some who profess Christ oppose the draft and plea for amnesty for all cowards who refuse to defend the country in which they live. Pacifists cry out for peace at any price. Communists tell the free

world, "Better Red than dead." Liberal college professors have brainwashed our youth with the idea that the military should be abolished.

In this message I will not answer questions about war according to human opinions or human desires. I will make no appeal to the views of Communists or Fifth Columnist. Neither will I answer questions by the desires of conscientious objectors. Nor can I even consider the sentiment of parents who have loved ones who might be called upon to serve in the armed services of our country. The Bible, and the Bible alone, will be the standard by which I shall settle all questions. May the Holy Spirit help me to rightly divide the Word of truth.

WHAT CAUSES WAR?

It has been said by some that if it were not for men like Hitler, Castro and Brezhnev there would be peace on earth. This is not true. Daniel the prophet wrote centuries ago; **"Even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined"** (Dan. 9:26 ASV). Christ said that until the end of the times of the nations there would be **"wars and rumours of wars"** (Matt. 24:6), and then He added: **"For all these things must come to pass."** The first man born into the world was a murderer, and ever since the days of Cain the feet of men have been swift to shed blood. As long as men despise blood redemption by Christ as did Cain, human blood will flow in national conflicts.

Wars are caused by sin. They are the consequence of man having a sinful nature. As long as sin continues to exist in the human race war is sure to continue. In James 4:1 I read: **"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?"** The same thing

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Can a person be saved during Jesus's thousand-year reign? -Mississippi

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"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:27).

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15).

First let us say that we believe that those that go into the Millennium where Christ will rule for a thousand years, are saved individuals, there will be no lost people alive when Christ rules for a thousand years. As the Scriptures above reveal Jesus Christ, The King of kings, and Lord of lords will rule His kingdom with a **"rod of iron."** At this time Satan will be bound for a thousand years, **"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"** (Rev. 20:2-3).

During these thousand years children will be born with the same depraved nature that we are born with today but the influence will be Jesus the King of Kings. We look at it in the same way as when Jesus started His earthly ministry when He was born as the God Man to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins. But now He will be the Supreme Ruler of the world, and there will be perfect judgment upon all.

To answer the question, YES we

believe there will be people saved during the thousand-year reign. The very fact that Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations shows that many are not saved (Revelation 20:8) **"And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."**

We believe, to say that there would be none saved during this time would be foolish considering again who will have the main influence during these thousand-years.

One of my favorite Scriptures is when Jesus walked down by the Sea of Galilee after He had been tempted of Satan in the wilderness forty days and forty nights, He came forth and started His earthly ministry and called His first disciples, **"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them"** (Matt. 4:18-21). What did they see? He was not this handsome man that the artists portray Him as, He was not someone that they said "wow," if we follow this guy we will have some clout and be important and highly looked upon. No, He was the meek and lowly Jesus that came to do the will of His Father and to die and shed His blood for God's elect. It was what flowed out from what was within Him that they followed.

Yes, The King of kings and The Lord of lords will have such an influence on many in the Millennium that they will be saved. But it is a shame that so many will perish in the end and be cast into the lake of fire when they

had such an opportunity, but so is the election of God! God Bless!

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Yes, people will be saved during the thousand year reign of Christ upon the earth, otherwise known as the Millennial Kingdom. When Christ comes again with His saints to the earth to rule and reign, He will judge the nations (Matt. 25:31-46). At that time Christ will remove all unbelievers from the earth, so at the beginning of the Millennium only the saved (sheep) will enter into the kingdom (Matt. 25:34 cf. Psa. 37:28-29; Prov. 2:20-21; 10:30; 11:31). The unsaved (goats) will be cast into Hell (Matt. 25:46) to await the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). However, there will be saved survivors of the Tribulation Period who will enter into the Millennium with their natural bodies, thus capable of procreation. Much of the curse will be lifted on the earth during the Millennium (Isa. 11:5-10; Isa. 35), so childbirth will not be as difficult and there will be no abortions. Children will be born with depraved natures, thus needing to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Psalm 67 is definitely a description of the Millennial reign of Christ upon the earth with His saints, and verse 2 declares: **"That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations"**, thus implying that folks will be saved during the time that Christ shall **"... govern the nations upon earth... God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him"** (Psa. 67:4, 7). Psalm 72 is another Millennial Psalm that describes the 1000 year reign of Christ upon the earth as a time of unsurpassed spirituality, righteousness, peace, and complete dominion as verses 7-8 indicate: **"In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon**

endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." All the inhabitants of the earth shall pay homage to King Jesus, and kings shall bow before Him as verse 11 indicates: **"Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."** The conditions described in Psalm 72 are prophecies that have never been literally fulfilled on the earth, but will come to complete fruition during the Millennial reign. What is interesting is what is stated in Psalm 72:12-14: **"For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall SAVE THE SOULS (emphasis mine, TWR) of the needy. He shall REDEEM THEIR SOUL from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight."** In light of these verses, I have no doubt that people will definitely be saved during the Millennial reign of Christ upon the earth.

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There are two great changes yet to come in the near future of this world. The next great end times event we are looking forward to is the Rapture. The Bible declares that we are to be looking for Him to come back as was prophesied. **"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"** (Acts 1:9-11).

Christ Jesus will come "in the clouds" to "snatch away" His people at any moment. **"For this we say**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Are there different levels of membership in a Baptist church or is everyone equal? - Mississippi

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We are not sure what the questioner is asking but we will make an attempt to answer the question just the same. Before we go further we will answer Yes, there are different levels of membership but we also want to state that when it comes to the participation as in such things as voting and taking of the Lord's Supper, as long as a member is in good standing and not under discipline then each member is equal to partake in those areas. And just for the record, we know that there are some of our churches that do not allow their women to vote, and that is their right to do so. Each church is an autonomous body and we have no right to tell them what they can and cannot do, **"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"** (Matt. 16:19). Though there have been, and probably will continually be, those who think they can tell another sister church to do it their way, we are not one of them. The Lord is judge over His churches, not man.

We suppose one of the best Scriptures to prove that there are different levels is Paul's opening salutations to a couple of the churches he wrote too.

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:1).

"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the

Lord Jesus Christ" (Col. 1:2).

As you can see, Paul says "to the saints and to the faithful." We have read that some believe there is no distinction given between the two, but over the years we have come to see that there are the saints but then there are the those saints that are more faithful than others, especially those saints in the church at Galatia. Paul wrote, **"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel"** (Gal. 1:6), and **"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you"** (Gal. 3:1)? Also he said he was afraid of them, **"I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain"** (Gal. 4:11). They surely were not all corrupted but many were; this shows that there were different levels of spirituality. We believe this can be found in every church today, there are just some that are more faithful than others, so in that sense they are not all equal. But again we are struggling with what the questioner is truly asking here.

Then we have I Corinthians 12, that shows there were put into the church different ones with different abilities by God and we can see that the eye can not be the hand and the head can not be the feet. We will not take the space here but encourage you dear reader to read I Corinthians 12 and see that there are those that are the eye, the hearing, and the smelling. They are of the same body but all the members can not be the eye, each member is a member in particular, **"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular"** (I Cor. 12:27). In other words, we all function differently but all are important to have a church that is unified, which brings up another point. If the membership is not in unity, then how can they be equal?

We hope this answers the question

satisfactorily, and if not, we are confident that at least one of the four, if not all three, will have an answer that will be acceptable! God Bless!

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The Lord's church is made up of saved people who are scripturally baptized and have covenanted together to carry out the terms of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). The church is likened to a human body made up of many parts, each essential to the proper functioning of the whole. Thus each and every member is deemed important as I Corinthians 12 declares: **"For the body is not one member, but many... But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to the part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another** (I Cor. 12:14, 18-25). There are many different personalities and a variety of gifts within a church body, but there are not levels of membership. Every member in good standing who has not been disciplined by the church has a vote in the business meetings of the church. In that sense, every member is definitely equal. With that said, there is no doubt that there are

differing levels of Christian maturity within a church (I John 2:12-14). It is only natural that the more spiritually mature and scripturally wise will have a greater influence as they serve as examples to the new born babes in Christ (Titus 2:1-8).

There are not levels of membership, but there are two definite offices of pastor and deacon who must meet certain qualifications to fill the office in order to minister and serve the church (Eph. 4:11-16; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9). These are men that God has called and the church has recognized by way of ordination, who carry out various responsibilities within the church. Pastors and deacons are not to be exalted over the other members of the church or looked upon as a higher level of membership. They are simply sinners saved by sovereign grace, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and indwelt by the Spirit just like every other member. The only difference is that they have been called of God and separated to a specific work within the church.

The Roman Catholic Church and many Protestant sects have various levels of hierarchy within their church structure. They exalt one class over another. God hates this doctrine as Revelation 2:14-15: **"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."**

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Yes, there are different levels of membership in the Lord's Baptist churches! One can be an active member, or one can choose to be a passive member. One could be a positive member, or we could end up

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Forum #1

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unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (snatched up/seized-Latin "raptura") **together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"** (I Thess. 4:15-17).

At this point in time, there will not be one single saved person left on the earth to preach the outward call of the gospel. All are raptured. So the question first begs to be asked, "Will any be saved in the seven-year Great Tribulation to follow the Rapture?" Selah! Think about it!

Yes, God is merciful! Although II Thessalonians 2:12 seems pretty definite that no adult Gentile that had heard the gospel before the Rapture will ever believe the truth, the Lord will send two witnesses that will preach the gospel (particularly) unto the children of Israel and 144,000 more preachers will canvass the globe with the precious gospel unto the believing of souls! This is Daniel's 70th week and God will once again deal directly with His chosen nation and many Jews will be saved. Just as this is the time of the Gentiles and yet still God mercifully saves a portion of Jews, so, too, will God likely save a portion of Gentiles in that time of Jacob's trouble (perhaps the children of the unbelievers?). Selah! Think about it!

Now we get to the second great change! At the end of the Great Tribulation, when Satan and his armies have besieged and taken Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus Christ will appear once again, this time to set precious foot upon the Mount of Olives with the mission to slaughter the enemy completely. The progression in the book of Revelation culminates in the judgment of the nations, where EVERY goat will be sent to "everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46/Isaiah 65:12). Then

the King of kings and Lord of lords will set up His millennial kingdom to reign with His bride and the nation of Israel for 1000 literal years.

Here again, we cross into a unique time stream where every living lost person has been executed by the Holy God. So again the question is begged, "Will there be anyone saved in the Millennial Reign?" Will there even be a NEED for the gospel to be preached anymore? The answer is "Yes!" Because there are 3 types of folk entering the Millennial Reign!

1) The raptured, resurrected saints that have already received their immortal bodies and cannot sin, nor reproduce (as the angels!). 2) Mortal saints (primarily Israel, but also some blessed Gentiles) saved during the Great Tribulation. 3) Babies and ingenuous that somehow also survive the seals, trumpets and vials of God's judgment. Selah! Think about it!

These in the last category will need the gospel immediately. As Jesus Christ reigns many of these will be converted, but due to the total depravity of man, many of these will also reject the gospel. Also those of the second category will continue to reproduce throughout the thousand years and many generations of mankind will again need the salvation that only comes from the preaching of the purifying blood of the Saviour, now reigning as King of kings! How marvelous is that! Just like Peter, James, and Matthew preached the gospel of the kingdom of God is at hand! So, too, will we all in that blessed era be able to point with John the Baptist, "**The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29). And folk will be saved during the Millennial Reign!

One last somber note. Those that are not saved, but continue to reject the commandment of their Sovereign, will find themselves prey to Satan when he is released from the bottomless pit at the conclusion of the 1000 literal years. They will be swept up into Armageddon II, the Battle of Gog and Magog, and will find themselves ultimately along with all the other God-haters of eternity at the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15. What a horrible

end! Oh sinner! Repent today of your sins and trust in the cleansing blood of the Perfect One, our Saviour Jesus Christ! Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum #2

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being a negative member- all based upon what level of membership we desire. I often encourage my flock (and myself!) to become deeper Christians and not to remain a shallow Christian. To reach those higher levels requires much zeal, diligence, study and sacrifice! Dare to be a Daniel! Selah! Think about it!

An important chapter on this subject is I Corinthians 12. In the first part of the chapter there is an awareness that the levels of membership begin from "The Top", our God, the Holy Spirit! "**Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. ... For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues**" (I Cor. 12:1, 8-10). Even in the parable of the talents, our Lord Jesus makes a difference in His servants: "**And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey**" (Matt. 25:15).

Constantly, the Lord is assessing our level of growth and giving the diligent more and more responsibilities. The inner circle of apostles (Peter, James, and John) were not higher in rank or more specially loved, they were simply given more and more was expected of them! "**...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more**" (Luke 12:48).

As we further study the matter of equality in the Lord's church, we must come to the conclusion that

the modern American concept of equality is not exactly God's notion of equality. Certainly there is an equality in value and worth among the members. That is held up as we continue thru I Corinthians 12:12-19, "**For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; ...If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.**" Again we see the different levels of membership in that some are the hands, some the feet (pictorially, of course!); some are eyes, some are ears. Not to tie us down to these particular senses, but Scripture clearly shows that we all have different jobs to do! Is one person more important than the other? Certainly not! We all must do what the Lord has placed us here to do, or the well-oiled machinery of teamwork will break down the entire unit! Often we tell the congregation that if ONE member is missing, we can not do what we need to do efficiently. Sometimes we can not do it at all! "**And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary**" (I Cor. 12:21-22). Selah! Think about it!

But to say that we are all EQUALLY important, does not mean that our memberships are equal in every way. There are INEQUALITIES in disposition and talent. Some sing better, some pray more fervently, some have more knowledge, some more zeal!

I guess the reason I feel like this point needs to be made is that in the end, it really depends on each of

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Forum #2

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us as to what level of membership we have. There is no inequality with God, certainly! He can call the most miserable sinner and make of him a preacher and pastor! But He can also make that same sinner a door-keeper in the Lord's house! It is what we DO with what we have been given that will determine our ultimate level of membership. The pastor is no more important than the door-keeper, either to God or the rest of the membership. We should more desire to be a faithful janitor than an unfaithful deacon.

Our country is based upon the freedoms, liberties and democratic policies of the Lord's church. The FACT that "all men are created equal" and "endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights" comes from church polity in Colossians 3:10-11 & Galatians 3:28, **"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. ... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."** There is no discrimination inside the Baptist churches. Every member is equally important and valuable regardless of their status, station or ministry. Each is equally able to advance to higher levels of membership and God can use them as He pleases and as they would fervently desire.

But the last point we would like to make, is that there is also order in the Lord's Baptist churches. And here is where much of the modern American idealization of equality might be checked at the door. **"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men"** (Phil. 2:5-7). Christ knew it was not "robbery" when He compared Himself as an equal with God the

Father, but **"made himself of no reputation"** willingly and joyously.

Even so are Baptist Christians today. Obviously in our democratic congregations all should have an equal voice and all the adult male members are given a vote. There are no BIG members and LITTLE members, as our Bible teacher Deacon Pete Chadwick often says, except in pounds and inches. The fact that women do not speak or vote does not diminish their membership in the slightest! God's order is what is important to each of us. Just as Christ submitted Himself to the will of God, so, too, do we... Selah! Think about it!

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, ...ye have not so learned Christ" (Eph. 4:17, 20). Christians do not walk (have lifestyles) like they are still Gentiles! They are not looking for power, status or worldly gain anymore- they just want to serve their Master and Head with the worship and honor that He deserves... ..and as the Bible dictates.

Equally? Nah! We just want to give Him OUR BEST! **"And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory"** (Mark 10:35-37). Do you not want to sit beside the Lord? Then give Him your BEST! Will your best be equally the same as everybody else? No it will not Peter, but **"..what is that to thee? follow thou me"** (John 21:22). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Christian and War

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which causes wars among people is the causes of wars among nations. The fighting usually starts when a nation wants something so badly it is willing to go to war to get it. They wage war because of their insatiable desire for more land, wealth, or power.

DOES GOD APPROVE OF WAR?

To this question I believe the Bible

answers yes in some cases and no in other cases. When a nation must fight a war to protect its national interest from godless enemies who invade their peaceful shores, I believe God is favorable to such a war. The Bible does not forbid us to have true zeal for our country's well being. An all-wise God knows better than we do that the crushing of an oppressive nation is essential to restoring peace in a country. He knows there can be no peace in a nation so long as blood-thirsty tyrants roam the earth attacking at their pleasure.

Listen to the words of the psalmist: **"It is God that girdeth me with strength. . .He teacheth my hands to war. . .I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me"** (Ps. 18:32, 34, 37-39).

But what about a country which invades another country to conquer its people, to set up a puppet government and to enslave the conquered people? Does God approve of such aggressive actions on the part of a nation? Does the Almighty condone rape, torture, and mass murder? No! God does not approve of such violations of human rights and national sovereignty. This kind of war is repugnant to a Holy God. God commanded Israel: **"Scatter thou the people that delight in war"** (Ps. 68:30). A righteous God has decreed: **"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword"** (Rev. 13:10). Jesus Christ said: **"For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword"** (Matt. 26:52).

I think all would agree the ideal condition in any nation is peace. Every citizen of a nation should be able to say with the psalmist: **"I am for peace"** (Ps. 120:7). But in some cases peace can only be achieved through resorting to war against those who would deprive us of peace and prosperity. King David constantly engaged in war during his reign over the United Kingdom of Israel. God said of David: **"Thou hast shed blood**

abundantly, and hast made great wars" (I Chron. 22:8). Nevertheless, the wars under the reign of David made possible the peaceful reign of Solomon his son.

Today many of us live in a nation which enjoys peace and safety and are able to do so because two World Wars were fought by the former generation. These courageous fighting men gave up their lives rather than see their children live in slavery. What a debt of gratitude we owe these dear ones. Green grow the grass over the graves of these heroes slain in battle, grieving that they had but one life to give for their country. Long be the memory of their mighty deeds.

IS IT WRONG FOR A NATION TO DECLARE WAR?

The Bible teaches that it is right in some cases for a nation to declare war on another nation. The first war ever mentioned in the Bible is found in Genesis 14. In a time of war Chedorlaomer took Lot captive. Upon hearing of this, Abram armed his 300 trained servants and made war on Chedorlaomer. In this defensive conflict Abram rescued Lot and returned **"from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer"** (Gen. 14:17). The 14th chapter of Genesis shows that God approved of Abram's declaration of war against his enemies.

Jehovah commanded Israel to make war on Og, the king of Bashan, and promised victory to Israel for engaging in this conflict. Numbers 21:31-35 tells us: **"Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there. And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei. And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land."** Had Israel failed to engage in this war against Og, they would have

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defied God.

The God of Israel told Jeshua to make war on Ai: **"And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land"** (Josh. 8:1). How can some say God never wants a nation to declare war in the light of such a plain passage from the Holy Book? Countless Scriptures of equal weight could be cited from the Old Testament, but time would not allow me to do so.

A nation has a Biblical right to have a war-department. She has a God-given obligation to protect her national interest. She must declare war on all foreign invaders to her shores. Christ approves of such actions. When the kingdom of Christ is threatened by Antichrist, the King of the saints will **"in righteousness. . . make war"** (Rev. 19:11). Surely if it is right for Christ to protect the interest of His kingdom, a nation does no wrong in defending itself against its enemies.

But should a country be a war-monger? Is it right for a nation to seek to dominate the whole world? The Bible answers no. Nations should engage in war only after all peaceful means are exhausted. There is great wisdom in avoiding war if at all possible (Josh. 22:11-34). Nevertheless, in the affairs of nations there must often be **"a time of war"** as well as **"a time of peace"** (Eccl. 3:8). But whenever a country goes to war there must be a just cause for that war, for an unjust war may be expected to bring Divine judgment upon a nation (Prov. 14:34).

IS WAR A MEANS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON NATIONS?

To this question the Bible answers yes. God does not delight in war but He uses it as one form of judgment upon a sinful people: **"For thus saith the Lord God; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast"** (Ezek. 14:21). Here

it is seen that **"the sword"** is the first in God's program of sore judgments. God does use war to chastise a sinful nation.

In 1491 B.C. God threatened Israel with war for ungodliness. Jehovah warned in Leviticus 26: **"And if you walk contrary unto me. . . I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste"** (vv. 21, 33).

In 594 B.C. God spoke of war as a judgment for Israel's idolatry. He moved the Prophet Ezekiel to speak for Him this message: **"I, even I, will bring a sword upon you. . . And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. . . And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD"** (Ezek. 6:3-4, 7).

The same teaching is found in Judges 2:14: **"And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies."** The saddest day in the history of any nation is when they rebel against God, and thus cause God **"to be their enemy"** and to "fight against them" (Isa. 63:10).

IS IT RIGHT TO KILL IN TIME OF WAR?

The Bible's answer to this question is yes. God told Israel concerning the Canaanitish nations: **"Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them"** (Deut. 7:2). The Lord told Gideon: **"I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man"** (Jud. 6:16). The Bible recognizes a man's right to defend his person, his property, his dear ones and his country (Ex. 22:2-3). To kill in defense of one's country is killing, but not murder.

Throughout the Bible killing by an individual is prohibited: **"Thou shalt do no murder"** (Ex. 20:13) (improved translation). But killing by a nation is permitted. All murder is killing, but not all killing is murder. In Judges 1:4 Judah fought against the Canaanites and the Perizzites and killed 10,000 of their soldiers. According to verse

2, of chapter 1, God directed them to engage in this killing as a nation. Then in Judges 9:5 Abimelech slew 70 persons upon a stone. This was killing as an individual. God pronounced Abimelech's deed as **"wickedness"** (Jud. 9:56) and judged him with death (Jud. 9:55).

The New Testament is in agreement with the Old Testament. Personal killing is forbidden. In Matthew 19:18 Jesus said: **"Thou shalt do no murder."** Then in Matthew 26:52 Christ spoke out in favor of the use of the sword by a nation. He told Peter: **"Put up again thy sword into his place."** Christ did not tell Peter to throw away his sword, but to put it up. It must be kept in its proper place. It belongs to the state. In John 18:36 Christ referred to a future time when His servants would fight. In Matthew 22:21 Christ said: **"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's."** His language here would include rendering military service to Caesar when called upon to do so.

The epistles of the New Testament give forth the same sound. In 1 Timothy 1:9 and Galatians 5:21 **"murderers"** are condemned to the fires of Hell by the Apostle Paul. This shows he believed it was wrong to engage in personal vengeance or retaliation. Yet this same writer on another occasion said: **"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinances of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation"** (Rom. 13:1-2). To be subject to civil powers would in some cases involve going to war and killing an enemy of your country.

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN BEAR ARMS?

The Bible answers yes to this question. Jesus told His disciples: **"But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one"** (Luke 22:36). This passage can mean no less than Jesus wanted His disciples armed with a sword because the countryside in which they lived was infested with robbers and wild beasts.

But some objector will say, "Christ

meant only the sword of the Spirit, the Bible." It is very poor exegesis to literalize the purse, and scrip and then spiritualize the sword. We can be sure that Christ meant a literal sword because in a following verse in this chapter of Luke the disciples said, **"Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough"** (Luke 22:38).

The objector would go on to say, "Yes, the apostles did have two literal swords but they were merely for self-defense." I admit this is true. However, I point out to the objector that this overthrows the theory of non-resistance held by pacifists, conscientious objectors, Quakers and other religious sects. Christ did approve of people bearing arms and defending themselves against their enemies. The pacifists do not know their Bible, the lessons of history, nor the elementary traits of human nature.

DO NOT SOME SCRIPTURES TEACH OTHERWISE?

The Bible no place contradicts itself. The verses that some appeal to, to establish non-resistance (Matt. 5:39; Rom. 12:19) are personal and belong to individual experience. They are talking about the law of retaliation between men, not about their relationship to government.

Some religionists contend we ought to disarm ourselves and surrender unconditionally to the mercy of brutes and butchers of godless nations. They say this must be done if we are going to live up to the Sermon on the Mount. Hogwash! This is not what we ought to do. God forbid that religious people read into the Sermon on the Mount something which is not there. Some people seem to forget that in a part of that Sermon Christ said: **"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil"** (Matt. 5:17). The law and the prophets plainly teach that a nation is to have armies and navies, for such things have to do with the magisterial functions of human government.

WILL THERE EVER BE A WARLESS WORLD?

The Bible answers yes to this question. The ultimate object of God is the peace of the world. In the final

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The Rantings and Ravings of Brother Ritechus N. Dignation by Joseph Harris



How to Slay A Dragon

Some uninformed folks think dragons don't exist or that they did at one time, but are now extinct. As every Baptist preacher knows, dragons are alive and well and lurk around every church. They imitate their father, that ole dragon known as Satan. They breathe fire and cause destruction, smashin' things with their tails, trying to strike fear in the heart of anyone who would dare to stand for truth and righteousness. There are many dragons for pastors and leaders to face in churches and ministries today. Some of the most common are the power dragon, the gossip dragon, the slander dragon, the jealous dragon and the worldly dragon, just to name a few of the more well known ones.

So how do you slay a dragon? You don't. You turn him or her over to God. I know it sounds too easy, but there's really no other way. Preacher, if you insist on takin' on dragons personally, you are going to get burned, or singed at the least, and you just might get gobbled up. Taking on a dragon personally will lead to it becoming your fight, and brother, the battle is the Lord's, not yours. Be reminded, vengeance belongs to God, not the preacher. This doesn't mean you don't sometimes have to face them and enforce truth and righteousness, but just remember, you are the enforcer and not the giver of truth; God is the giver and it is His truth. Keep in mind who and what the battle is all about.

And don't take it personally. The only reason a dragon attacks you is because it can't attack God directly, so you become the target. Also remember that sometimes God doesn't slay and remove the dragon; He leaves it around to occasionally come out of the lair. Then you have to live with it, enduring' small and

occasional outbursts of fire and smoke. When God leaves the dragon, it's sometimes God's schooling to prepare you for bigger dragons down the road. On the bright side, every once in a while, a dragon gets tamed through the soul savin' all powerful blood of Jesus.

So just remember the Pauline prayer for justice (not revenge) when this wise apostle was givin' sound pastoral advice to young Timothy: **"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works"** (II Tim. 4:14).



Christian and War

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conflict Christ will **"judge and make war"** (Rev. 19:11) in a successful effort to end all wars. The armies of the war-mongers led by Antichrist are destined to suffer a crushing defeat on the plains of Megiddo. Following World War III, there will arise the peaceful kingdom of the Prince of Peace. Of the King of kings it shall be said: **"He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth: he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire"** (Ps. 46:9). Of Christ it is written: **"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"** (Isa. 2:4).

There is a great day coming for this war-weary world! The return of Christ to earth and the establishment of the kingdom of Heaven on earth is going to bring about universal and lasting peace. What a contrast to the ever-recurring wars and rumors of wars that have characterized the history of man in all dispensations! By a strong hand Christ is to put down all opposition to His righteous rule. All the implements of war used to destroy life are to be turned into instruments of peaceful service to mankind. All military academies for learning war will be closed forever. The nations of earth **"Ain't Gwine Study War No More."**

CONCLUSION

The world has not yet entered this wonderful Millennial Age to come. There can never be a warless world until the return of our Savior from the clouds of Heaven. Today nations are self-willed and ambitious, jealous and cruel. A Christian should actively work to improve human government on earth until the return of Christ. He must also be willing to bear arms and fight to defend his

country against foreign invaders. God ordained human government in the days of Noah, and it is his duty to obey them who have the rule over him. A Christian cannot Scripturally be a conscientious objector to military service. Draft-dodgers and pacifists are in rebellion against God and in disobedience to the teachings of the Bible.



THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

SECDEF HAGEL SUPPORTS HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE IN MILITARY

(WNS)--The Pentagon announced plans to extend benefits to same-sex couples in the military starting on Sept. 3. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel sent a memo to top military officials in August stating, "The Department will construe the words spouse and marriage to include same-sex spouses and marriages." He called for "expeditious implementation" of this decision. The decision mandates that same-sex couples' claims for benefits, such as healthcare and housing, will be accepted dating from the Supreme Court's June 26 decision that weakened DOMA. Entitlement claims predating the court ruling will be denied. The Pentagon also announced that same-sex couples stationed at bases in states where homosexual marriage is not allowed would be granted non-chargeable leave so they can travel to another state that permits same-sex marriage. "This will provide accelerated access to the full range of benefits offered to married military couples throughout the department, and help level the playing field between opposite-sex and same-sex couples seeking to be married," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen, a Pentagon spokesman.

SCHOOL CLERK CREDITS GOD WITH PREVENTING

SHOOTOUT

(WNS)--On Tuesday, Aug. 20, Antoinette Tuff, a clerk at Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Atlanta, persuaded 20-year-old Michael Hill not to fire the 500 rounds of ammunition he brought into the school in his duffel bag. Officials credit her with helping save 870 elementary students from what could have been another school massacre. But she points to God as the hero. Tuff met Hill when he entered the building carrying an AK-47. "He had a look on him that he was willing to kill," she said. "He said that he didn't have any reason to live." Tuff managed to prevent Hill from entering the main hallways and called 9-1-1. She stalled him by striking up conversation. Hill shot into the floor and exchanged gunfire with officers who surrounded the building, but no one was injured. Tuff eventually convinced him to surrender his gun and ammunition. The transcript recorded Tuff breaking into tears and prayers as the ordeal ended. "I was terrified," she said. "I give it all to God," she told The Washington Post. "I'm not the hero."

WASHINGTON MIGHT FORCE PRIVATE HOSPITALS TO PROVIDE ABORTIONS

(WNS)--Will some religious hospitals in Washington be required to provide contraceptive and abortion

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services? That's the question lingering in the air in the Evergreen State, where Attorney General Robert Ferguson on Aug. 21 issued a legal opinion saying every publicly funded hospital district must provide contraceptives, abortions, or "substantially equivalent benefits, services, or information" to women. Washington has more than 50 "public hospital districts," in which a local community pays taxes to help fund healthcare services for the area. The districts are allowed to contract with private hospitals to provide services. A 1991 state law requires any public hospital district providing maternity care to also provide women with "substantially equivalent benefits, services, or information to permit them to voluntarily terminate their pregnancies," or gain access to birth control. Ferguson said this applies to the districts even if they hire out healthcare services to private, religious hospitals that may object to abortions or contraception.

CHRISTIAN COUNSELORS FIGHT BACK AGAINST NJ BAN

(WNS)--On Aug. 19, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie signed a law banning therapy that attempts to help minors overcome their same sex attractions. But a group of Christian counselors are suing to practice according to the dictates of their conscience. They've filed a federal lawsuit saying the new law violates a licensed therapist's obligation to "respect the rights of clients to make decisions." The current law bars any licensed therapist, psychologist, social worker or counselor from using therapies to change sexual orientation of children under age 18. Offenders jeopardize their state license. The law does not apply to clergy. Liberty Counsel represents Tara King, a therapist in Brick, N.J.; Ronald Newman, a therapist in Linwood, N.J., the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, and the American Association for of Christian Counselors. Garden State Equality, a pro-homosexual group, says it will defend the law.

N.M. COURT: CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE DISCRIMINATES AGAINST GAYS

(WNS)--The New Mexico Supreme Court ruled in August that a Christian photographer discriminated against a homosexual couple when she refused to take photos of their "commitment" ceremony. Elaine Huguenin, who operates Elane Photography with her husband, Jonathan, cited her belief in the biblical definition of marriage when she declined to work with Vanessa Willock and her lesbian partner. Although Willock hired another photographer, she filed a complaint against Huguenin with the New Mexico Human Rights Commission. In 2008, the commission ruled Huguenin discriminated against Willock on the basis of her sexual orientation and ordered the photographer to pay \$6,637.94 in attorneys' fees, even though New Mexico does not recognize same-sex marriage or civil unions. The state's high court sided with the court of appeals, which upheld the commission's decision. In its opinion, the high court concluded that because Elane Photography offers its services to the public, it must abide by the New Mexico Human Rights Act (NMHRA), which forbids businesses from discriminating against people based on their sexual orientation.

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS SET BOUNDARIES

(WNS)--The Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board (NAMB) said last week that Southern Baptist military chaplains could not offer "any kind of relationship training or retreat, on or off of a military installation, that would give the appearance of accepting the homosexual lifestyle or sexual wrongdoing." Mike Ebert, spokesman for NAMB, told Religion News Service, "A lot of our chaplains were asking for clarification. We wanted to clearly articulate in writing for the Department of Defense that these are our expectations." Also last week: the Pentagon issued the convoluted guideline of allowing homosexuals who plan to wed the possibility of a travel leave of up to 10 days. However, to get the 10-day leave, you must live at least 100 miles from one of the 13 states that allow same-sex marriages.

NORTH CAROLINA RESTRICTS SHARIAH LAW

(WNS)--In late August, the Tarheel

State became the seventh state to prohibit its judges from considering Islamic law after Gov. Pat McCrory allowed the bill to become law without formally signing it. McCrory, a Republican, called the law "unnecessary," but declined to veto it. North Carolina joins Arizona, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Tennessee. Muslim leaders condemned the new law. "These bogus attempts to defile Islam have a negative effect on Muslim youth who feel marginalized and discriminated against," said Khalilah Sabra, executive director of the Immigrant Justice Clinic at the Muslim American Foundation in Raleigh, N.C. "It's being used to intimidate Muslims." The North Carolina ban is limited to family law; bans in other states are broader, applying to commercial law, contract law and other types of laws.

SCOUTS MAY LOSE TAX EXEMPT STATUS IN CALIFORNIA

(WNS)--The Boy Scouts already allow homosexual youth in the program. That's not enough for homosexual activists and their advocates in California. They want to force the Scouts to accept openly homosexual adults or lose their tax-exempt status. Ricardo Lara, a Democratic state senator from Los Angeles County, told NPR he finds the current Boy Scout policy unacceptable. "It's all, in my opinion, based on this homophobic sentiment that [if] you're an LGBT adult...you pose a threat to children," he said. If the Scouts lose their tax-exempt status in California, it will have to pay sales and use taxes, and that will cost the organization about \$250,000 a year. A spokesman for the Scouts issued a statement: "The State of California needs Scouting, which gives young people the opportunity to develop skills and take responsibility while inspiring a lifetime of character and service." One of the ironies of this situation is that in the past, conservatives might have rallied to the defense of the Scouts, but given recent actions by the Scouts, they are likely going to have to face this challenge on their own.

SAN ANTONIO ADOPTS ANTI- CHRISTIAN BIAS POLICY

(WNS)--The San Antonio City Council on Sept. 5 approved changes

to the city's nondiscrimination policy, making it illegal to show bias "in word or deed" against anyone in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered community. Opponents say the ordinance criminalizes any disagreement with homosexuality. Despite the religious community's widespread opposition to the policy, which already banned discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, or national origin, Mayor Julian Castro called the change necessary and long overdue. But prominent Texas Republicans, including U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz and Attorney General Greg Abbott, denounced the ordinance as an attack on religious liberty. Abbott hinted at likely lawsuits but stopped short of saying the state would take the city to court.

MAN CONVICTED FOR SLIPPING GIRLFRIEND ABORTION PILL

(WNS)--John Andrew Welden, 28, admitted he tricked his girlfriend Reme Jo Lee the abortion pill, resulting in the loss of the couple's unborn child. Welden avoided a murder charge by pleading guilty to lesser charges that will still likely result in a 13-year prison term. According to the plea agreement, Lee was six to seven weeks pregnant when Welden removed identifying marks from the abortion drug misoprostol, marketed as Cytotec, and gave it to his girlfriend. She thought she was taking amoxicillin for an infection.

"MAFIA TACTICS" FORCE OREGON BAKERY TO CLOSE

(WNS)--An Oregon bakery fighting a discrimination complaint because it wouldn't make a wedding cake for a homosexual couple closed its doors on Aug. 31. In a note taped to the bakery's front door, owners Aaron and Melissa Klein wrote, "This fight is not over. We will continue to stand strong. ... The LORD is good and we will continue to serve HIM with all our heart." In an interview on the Fox News Channel, Aaron Klein blamed the shutdown on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activists who urged customers to boycott the bakery and threatened other vendors who did business with the couple. On the Sweet Cakes by Melissa Facebook page, the couple said they would continue to operate the business

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out of their home. It is not immediately clear what effect that will have on the complaint pending against them.

FED JUDGE DECLARES ANTI-GAY SERMON A "CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY"

As reported by *The New American*, a federal judge ruled that a biblically based denunciation of homosexuality was a "crime against humanity."

In his decision in the case of *Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) v. Lively*, U.S. District Court Judge Michael Ponsor held that Scott Lively, an evangelical pastor, was "aiding and abetting a crime against humanity" when Lively spoke in Uganda and in America against homosexual behavior.

Ponsor says that Lively, by publishing tracts and delivering discourses condemning same-sex relationships, was acting as "an upper-level manager or leader of a criminal enterprise."

Reading between the lines, it becomes apparent that the "criminal enterprise" in which Ponsor found Lively engaged was that of believing, preaching, and promoting Judeo-Christian morality in an age that glorifies ungodliness and exalts satisfaction of appetites above the sacrifice of self to the will of God.

Ponsor, a 1994 Clinton appointee, calls Lively's Ugandan hosts "co-conspirators" in Lively's violations of "international norms."

There are serious First Amendment implications in Ponsor's ruling, should it be upheld on appeal.

Among other protections, the First Amendment forbids the federal government from making any law "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion. Ponsor's comparison of the expression of religious beliefs with terrorism would convert federal tort statutes (in this case, the Alien Tort Statute) into forceful fetters on the right of Americans to share their faith.

Furthermore, beyond the obliterations of all barriers to belief provided by the First Amendment, Ponsor's ruling would welcome into the federal courts groups determined to subject Christianity and Christians to the will of progressive and irreligious judges.

IRS EXTENDS TAX BENEFITS TO MARRIED GAY COUPLES

As reported by *Fox News*, legally married same-sex couples will now be allowed to file federal joint tax returns, the IRS and Treasury Department announced Thursday. The ruling allows homosexual couples to receive the same tax benefits that heterosexual couples do when filing jointly.

This announcement comes on the heels of a historic decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which overturned a part of the Defense of Marriage Act earlier this year.

Questions were raised following the high court's decision on how the federal government would treat same-sex couples whose home states don't recognize gay marriage.

The rules issued said the policies would affect all legally married gay couples regardless of where they live. The rules, though, would not apply to domestic partnerships and civil unions.

"Today's ruling provides certainty and clear, coherent tax filing guidance for all legally married same-sex couples nationwide. It provides access to benefits, responsibilities and protections under federal tax law that all Americans deserve," Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew said in a written statement. He added, "These families finally have access to crucial tax benefits and protections previously denied to them under the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act."



**Quotes
from
Brother
Ritechus
N.
Dignation
by Joseph Harris**

Folks are always sayin' live and let live, accept people and their lifestyle without judging them. Well, there's too much lettin' and allowin' going on today. What you condone, you endorse, and what you endorse, you promote. Just remember, the next time you let wickedness prevail without raising a fuss, you just promoted it.

John 12:46-50

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)



the Old Testament awaits fulfillment in the future. Isaiah in that 53rd chapter of his prophecy did not stop with foretelling of the humiliation of Christ, as He should

be despised and rejected of men. No, he leaped on into the distant future, a time yet in the future, and he foretold the glory of Christ. He foretold His coming back to this earth as a conqueror. Thank God for the insight into the future that he has given us. The people of the world out here do not know what is coming, but we know, if we are familiar with the Bible. We know that the brightest days are yet ahead. We know that there is a future for this old earth. We know that there is something for us to live for as Christians, and to expect and to anticipate.

In the second place, there were some among the Jewish ecclesiastics who believed on Christ. Listen to what it says in verses 42 and 43 here in this same chapter, "**Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.**" What sort of belief did these men have? Was it merely the belief that Jesus was the Messiah? Surely it must not have been that personal belief in Him as Savior and Lord that brought salvation. It must have been a mere head belief. You know there are a lot of people who believe in that way. I talk to people who say, "I believe in Christ, I believe that He was the Savior, I believe that He was the Messiah sent into the world." But I say to you that it takes more than intellectual belief to bring salvation to a human life. I suppose that most of you, maybe all of you, in my audience believe in Jesus in the intellectual sense, and yet some of you are just as lost as lost can be. Why? Because there has been no personal trust in Christ exercised by you.

I have seen those big, four-motored planes come into the Air Port time and

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Coming to the message for today, I want to read from the 12th chapter of the Gospel of John, beginning at verse 46, "**I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I come not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as he Father said unto me, so I speak.**"

Now in considering this Scripture, I call your attention first of all to the fact that Jesus placed a stamp of His approval on the prophets. He plainly claimed that the prophets foresaw and foreknew His coming back centuries before He spoke about it, and that is a very interesting thing. We have men who are called religious liberals today, teaching many of them in colleges and seminaries, who do not believe what the prophets had to say, and do not believe that they had the power to foretell the future at all.

Now in the verses just preceding these that I read a few moments ago, Jesus quoted from the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, one of the greatest prophetic passages in all the Bible. Hundreds of the prophecies have been fulfilled, minutely, accurately, and to the very letter, and many of the prophecies are, as yet, unfulfilled. Many, many of the Old Testament prophecies await fulfillment. I have talked with people who seem to think that the Old Testament is a back number, that it all belongs in the past, and that there is little reason for our reading and studying the Old Testament today. The person who takes such an attitude is just plain ignorant, that is all. The greatest and most glorious portion of

John 12:46-50

(Continued from page 197) ♦

again. I watched them swoop down out of the sky like huge birds, and I saw them take off so smoothly, and I believed that they were fine, substantial planes. That was just believing about the planes, do not you see, and there was no element of truth in that. And then one afternoon I packed up grip, went out to the Air Port, bought me a ticket across the Gulf to New Orleans, and when that big plane rushed down the runway and took to the air, I was on the inside of it. I had believed about the plane when I saw it flying with other people inside, but now I believed on the plane, as I trusted my own life to it. And that is what it means to trust Christ in a saving way. To really come to depend on Him for the salvation of your own soul. Have you ever reached such a place as that? Is He your dependence and your only dependence for salvation, for Heaven and future glory? And can it be that I am speaking to some just now who are trusting in Christ for salvation, yet who have not made any public confession of your faith in Him? If so, you are in pretty rotten company, I will tell you, for you are in the company of those people mentioned in our text, about whom it says, **“for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”** I want to tell you that in this God-hating, hostile world, every true believer in Christ ought to be willing to stand up and be counted. If you are a Christian, if you know that you are trusting Christ to save you, then come out and say so publicly, and do it as soon as you possibly can.

A woman wrote about hearing the messages that I brought one Sunday, and she turned to the Lord as we sang the invitation song, and then what happened? Well, she went to church that night and made a public profession of her faith. That is exactly what she ought to have done. No person ought to put that off for even one single day. I think just here of a man I visited who was very sick. He had become a Christian during a previous period of illness, but he never made a public profession of faith, and never followed the Lord in baptism. He said to me, “That is the biggest regret I have. I do not think I will ever get off this bed, I do

not think I will ever have the privilege now of confessing Christ, or of being baptized. I just did not do the right thing. I realize it now. I realize it when it is too late for me to remedy it.” That man did not get well and in a few days he was dead. Let me pass his words on to you. If you are a saved person, do not make the mistake that he made, and regret it. Take the opportunity to confess Christ, and arrange to do it right away.

I call your attention to the third place to what belief in Jesus really amounts to, and I go back and read verse 44 and 45. **“Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.”** We have an idea abroad in the world today that it does not matter so much what one believes about Jesus. Just so they believe in God. There never was a greater mistake than that. You can not believe in God with a belief that amounts to a row of pins in His sight, and at the same time reject Jesus Christ. I think of a story that has come down to us from ancient times, of the King who did not believe in Jesus as Divine. That King had made this son coregent with himself, equal ruler in his kingdom. A noted Bishop, a man who fully believed in the Deity of Christ, gained audience with him to speak concerning some matter, and this Bishop completely ignored the King’s son who was present. This made the King furious, and he said, “Do you presume to ignore my son, whom I have made equal ruler with myself?” The Bishop said to him, “I did this to teach you a lesson. You grow angry when I ignore “your” son, and yet you ignore Him whom God, the Almighty Ruler, has set forth as co-equal with Himself. God has ordained that the way of approach to Him is the way of faith in His Divine Son. As Jesus said, **“No man cometh unto the Father but my Me.”** You can not leave Jesus out and get anywhere with God. To believe in Jesus is really to believe in the One Who sent Him into the world. The whole question of spiritual relationship to Heaven is the Son question. What will you do with Jesus, which is called the Christ becomes the most important question that confronts the human race. Let me ask you, “What have you done with Him?” Have you up to

this time rejected Him? There is ruin beyond all recovery in that thing if it is continued in, and I warn you against it with all the earnestness that I possess.

In the next place, I call your attention to what Jesus said about Himself as the light that dispels darkness. Verse 46 says, **“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”** I am come a light into the world. Oh, I think I could talk from that statement for an hour. Jesus gives light on so many different things. What is God really like? I read of Him in Genesis as the One who spoke the things of Heaven and earth into existence. I see His power and might manifested all around in the things of creation. But there is not anything to satisfy the love and longing of my heart in God’s mighty power. I think just here of the Roman General who was suddenly called to leave Rome in command of his army. The call came suddenly, and he told his wife to take their young son and to be outside one of the city gates at such and such an hour, that he might see them and bid them good-bye. The wife took the small son and with him, she stood outside the gate as the troops filed past. Suddenly, a gigantic figure detached himself from the rest, a figure clad in armour with magnificent head dress, and he stalked over to where they were standing, swooped down, picked up the little boy in his arms. That little boy let out a scream of fear which turned to shouts of joy when the officer pushed back his head dress, revealing his father. Oh, in Jesus Christ, God the Almighty ruler and Maker of this universe, pushes back His head dress, revealing Himself to me as Father. Jesus said, **“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”** In Jesus we see not the austerity, not the might, not the power of God, but the love of God, the Father heart of God.

And, likewise, Jesus throws light on death and the tomb. Death apart from the light that Jesus throws on it is a dreadful, dreadful thing, and the tomb, apart from the light that Jesus throws on it, is a horrible place. But when Jesus walked out of the garden tomb, and to the disciples and the women said **“All Hail,”** that changed everything. That means that death has a conqueror, that means that the grave has a victor, that

means that there is One Who is able to come out of the tomb, and Who is pledged to bring everyone who believes in Him out of the tomb. Death and the grave is no longer what it once was, for the light of Heaven streams down illuminating and driving away the blackness and the shadows. Jesus is light, revealing Who and What God is. Jesus is light, revealing that the tomb has no horrors for us. Jesus is light on the eternal Word, showing us that there is a future worthwhile for every believer in Him. Jesus is light that leads to God, to Heaven, to Home, I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness. Do you believe on Him? Oh, that there might be born in your heart a living faith in Him this day that will manifest itself in an open profession.

But note with me that expression, **“abide in darkness.”** That is the state that unsaved people are in. They abide in darkness. Multitudes, millions, this day all over the world mill about in spiritual darkness, and with every passing minute, with every tick of the clock, they edge nearer and nearer to the brink of an eternity of darkness. We are all of a hurrying on toward eternity. Of course, that is true. We are nearer eternity than we were when we got out of bed this morning, but what a difference between the outlook of saved and unsaved! I think of two persons. One sits in the death cell. Just a week hence, he will be taken and placed in the electric chair. Every passing second brings that horror nearer and nearer and nearer. But the other person just one week from now and his vacation will begin. He is tired and worn out and his vacation is to be a time of rest and relaxation. He can hardly wait for the time to pass, can hardly wait for the moments to pass. What a difference between those two men! The passage of time brings horror to one man, for it brings him nearer to execution. The passage of time brings a sense of pleasure to the other man, for there is pleasure awaiting him out there. Do you see the force of my illustration? The unsaved stumbling through the darkness of this world hurrying on, hurrying on to a blacker darkness in the eternity that is ahead. The Christian walks a path that is illuminated by the Son of God, the light of this world, and on he goes,

♦ (Continued on page 199)

John 12:46-50

(Continued from page 198) ♦

traveling the path that groweth more and more unto the perfect day. Abiding in darkness! The unsaved person has no light on the reason for his existence here. What are we here for? What is the reason and purpose of human life, anyhow? Apart from God's revelation made in and through His Son, there is not any answer to that. I think of a man who had lived a long life. He was on his death bed, and he said to me, "What is the meaning of all this?" He meant what is the significance of my life. Here I have lived through the years, here I am now down at the end, what is the purpose of existence, anyhow? Leave Christ out, and there is not any answer to that question.

But in the fifth place, I call your attention to another and most solemn fact, and that fact is the fact of future judgment. I go back and read verse 48, **"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."** I do not think life would be very attractive and very meaningful if the few years we spend here were all. Some people die in babyhood, some die in their teens, just as they are getting ready for life, some die in middle age, and a few number reach what we call old age. But what is old age? If a person lives to be 80 years old, that just means the very briefest time, for as the Bible says, it is soon cut off and we fly away. Life would be a trifling trivial thing if everything ended at the grave. Yet even that would not be so awful if everything ended at the grave, things would just be over for you, and you would not know anything from then on. But it does not. Your life does not stop when your body is dead, for the spirit that animated the body, that lived in the body, that found a home in the body, moves out and goes elsewhere to live. And there is the judgment to face out yonder that concerns how we lived while we inhabited the flesh. We know perfectly well that judgment is not perfect in this world. People do not get what is coming to them. A lot of people get more than they deserve, and a lot of others get a bad deal. The inequalities of life make necessary a future judgment, and this judgment is not to be before a fallible,

biased human judge, but before the Great Judge of Heaven and earth. And here is a thing that I want to impress upon you, you who reject Christ are going to be judged for that rejection. Oh, the fearful responsibility of those who hear the words of Christ, and who ignore or reject those words. He says that those words shall judge you when you stand before God. I will tell you, I would rather be a poor old South Sea Islander, a fuzzy-headed savage who never heard about Christ, than to stand before God in the judgment, having heard the Gospel, having heard of God's love in Christ, having heard of God's offer of free salvation, yet having rejected it. There have been people who have heard me preach over the radio for years, and I never close a radio sermon, or seldom do, at least, without urging sinners to turn to Christ, yet they died without Him. Every sermon, every appeal they ever heard, will face them in the judgment one day.

Time is hurrying by, so let me hasten to call your attention to one last thing, and that thing is life everlasting. I read verse 50, **"And I know that his commandment is life everlasting."** Is life everlasting! What is the commandment of God that Jesus talks about here? There is only one answer to that. It is His Word, His commandment concerning His Son. **"This is my beloved Son,"** He says, **"hear ye Him."** Believe on Him, receive Him, and in Christ, there is life everlasting. Do you want to live forever, do you want life when the life of the flesh fails you, do you want to live out there in the never-ending future, with everything that hinders and harms and renders unhappy, banished forever? That is exactly what is offered you in Christ. Oh, I urge that you receive Him as yours today, that eternal life, eternal happiness, may be yours, and there is no way in which eternal life can be had save through a living faith in the Son of God.

Our Heavenly Father, we pray for all of those out of Christ that we have been speaking to. We pray that there may be those today in this class who shall receive Christ as Savior so definitely and certainly that they know that He is theirs, for we earnestly ask it in His name. Amen.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, Kansas will be hosting their Annual Bible Conference November 1st -Nov 3rd. This year they will be having a "Missions Conference." Expected speakers are: Jerry Dodson, Jim Duke, Timothy B. Hille, Timothy J. Hille, Jimmy Nelson, David O'Neal, & Larry Wilson.

If you haven any questions please contact Pastor Nathaniel R. Hille: nhille@gmail.com or visit their website: www.sgbccaldwell.org or by phone: (620) 845-3624.

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Hazard, Kentucky will be having a Bible Conference October 5th thru 6th. The will be various speakers on the program.

For more information call Fred Mink at (606) 476-2941 or Elder Jim Walters at (770) 775-3294 or cell (404) 468-8503.

The Calvary Baptist Church of Piqua, Ohio, is in need of a pastor. Any interested party may contact Terry Allen at (937) 773-9272.

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

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

The Liverpool Independent Baptist Church of Liverpool, New York (north of Syracuse) is searching for a sovereign grace pastor. The church believes in the doctrines of grace, the local church, and is pre-trib and pre-mil. Interested brethren should contact Bro. Greg Sigworth at (315) 677-3819.

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

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

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

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

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 8-1-2013 to 8-31-2013

Beginning Balance \$7,010.96

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 100.00
Calvary B. C., Everson, WA 200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
..... 625.00
TOTAL 7,635.96

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time 363.98
Tape Production 390.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$753.98
..... \$6,881.98
interest (May & August) +.06
..... 6,882.04
Less Corbin, KY des. -123.72
ENDING BALANCE \$6,758.32

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance \$283.72

RECEIPTS:

TOTAL 283.72

EXPENDITURES:

WCTT 160.00
ENDING BALANCE \$123.72

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 8-1-2013 to 8-31-2013

Beginning Balance \$2,347.55

RECEIPTS:

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Berea B. C., Stonington, IL 60.00
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Victory B. C., Courtland, VA 25.00
Subscriptions 224.00
Anonymous 1,200.00
Dividing checks 150.00
Sub Total \$3,868.95
TOTAL \$6,216.50

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Postage 640.72
Wages 2,300.00
FICA 175.96
Supplies 81.50
Dividing checks 150.00
Total Expenditures \$3,883.18
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Bank charge -13.00
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A Biographical Sketch

By James Whitsitt

Elder Isaac Totevine, (I suppose) was born and raised on the eastern shore of Virginia. I think him to have been a converted man, but from his oddities, he never was converted. He often, when preaching, would describe his conversion as follows: "I wore a patched coat for thirteen years, but a little man named Elijah Baker, in crossing the Potomac, while the ice was running, was drifted down into the neighborhood where I lived, and I heard him preach, and he tore my old coat all to pieces, so that I never could put it on any more." When he removed to North Carolina, I am not advised, but when there, he was a co-worker with the celebrated Lewis Whitfield, and was successful in the ministry, and popular with the people. He was put in the nomination for the pastorate with Elder Whitefield, but lost it by a few votes, which was well enough, for his talent did not run in that line. He was better qualified to travel among the churches, and whip up lukewarm and lazy professors; to these he gave no quarters. He preached once at a place where he was a stranger, and the people were late in coming, when he closed, he told them his name, and said "When you hear of my appointment at this place again, come at twelve o'clock, I begin to preach then, whether the people have come or not."

He removed to Tennessee in 1796 in company with the families of the Taylors, and they had to leave one of their wagons at Kingston, and he remained with it, and while waiting there he saw a family moving back, he asked them why they did so, they told him that they did not like the country, that the devil could not live on Cumberland. Said he "that is the very country I want to go to, I want to go where the devil can't live."

On my first hearing him preach (which was in Robertson county, at the Meroe district association in 1797,) I

formed an unfavorable opinion, but in becoming acquainted with him my opinion changed, for with all his oddities about him, he appeared to be truly pious.

When we traveled together preaching, which was considerable, and when he had the opportunity to retire he would do so, which was generally about an hour before sun set, and I suspected that this hour was spent in private meditation and prayer. On his first visiting my house, he was asked whether he had ever had a family, yes said he. "I lived with a wife eleven years, but the Lord killed her." Why do you think so? "She was not willing for me to preach." He told us at the same time that he would marry if he could find an agreeable companion, and he thought if it was the Lord's will, that he should marry again, that He had chosen a wife for him, and he was willing to leave the matter with Him.

He frequented a house not twenty miles north of Nashville, in the neighborhood of which there then lived a widow, "a noted scold" and one of the young men of the house wishing to have some amusement at his expense, proposed to him to go to see the widow. "No, I will not." Why, would you not have her if she was elected for you? "No, I won't have her no how."

He was unwavering in his doctrinal sentiments. He would tell his auditors that God had ordained both the end and the means leading to the end. That the end were the salvation of His people, that the end is first in purpose, but the means first in use, and both certain. As to his own acceptance in Christ, he never appeared to doubt, a cloud never seemed to hang over him, his sky was clear.

Tekel. This word was a favorite text with him, the interpretation of which is, "thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." And here there were two sorts of people that could not escape him---"hypocrites and

unbelievers." These he would hunt in every hole and corner; he seemed to know all their lurking places. The hypocrite: he would give him a long chase, would catch and expose him, and would say to his audience, that "the hypocrite is like a summer fox, hard to catch and good for nothing." I would sometimes say to him, that I thought it not best, to divert the passions of the people, that they ought to be serious under preaching. But he would reply, "If I make no person laugh nor no person cry, nor no person mad when I preach, I think I have done no good." And indeed sometimes he did all three, at the same time, for he excelled in plain dealing, and did not spare feelings, but would send home his words to the conscience of his hearers sometimes with great effect.

The particulars of his death I have from hearsay, and cannot vouch for them, though I suppose them to be correct, and if so, his death was as singular as his life. I do not know that he had any relation living, at the time of his death. Two of his cousins died in this country. I heard him preach the funeral of one of them, he told the congregation that his cousin had gone to hell. He chose to live by himself, he had some stock, and household furniture.

He came to the house of his patron, and said he did not wish to die by himself, that he had come there to die. This family, said he, has been very kind to me, and all that I have is yours, to dispose of as you please. "This was his will." His next business was to tell them how they were to get to Heaven, and delivered them a warm and animating exhortation, and when he closed, he seemed to be much exhausted, and lay down on the bed and died. Which I believe to have been in the year 1821---which took place in Montgomery county, Tennessee.

(The Baptist, Sept. 21, 1844)



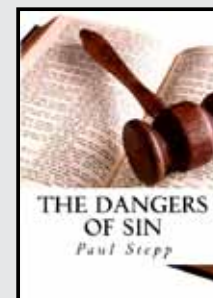
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NEW BOOK AVAILABLE

The Dangers of Sin

by Paul Stepp



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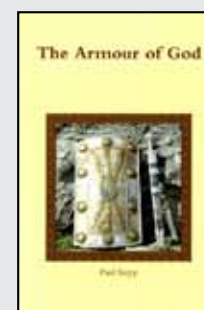
In this book, the author discusses some of the dangers that can be associated with an indulgence in sin.

Most people are oblivious to these dangers; or, perhaps they are willingly ignorant of these dangers; or, perhaps they have no fear of God or judgment, or the impending wrath of God. What should we tell others about sin? What should we ourselves do in response to sin? The answer is that we should fear God and His justice, and we must turn back to the Word of God. This world needs to hear the unadulterated truth about "The Dangers of Sin." The book contains 142 pages. Please see postage chart on page 199.

...other books by Paul Stepp

The Armour of God

by Paul Stepp

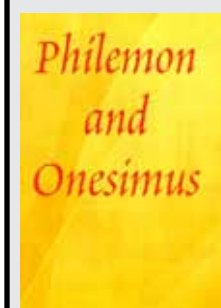


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This book is a commentary on Ephesians 6:10-20. The book expounds on Paul's teachings concerning the armour that the soldiers of Jesus Christ must wear in order to fight in the cause of Christ. The book contains 150 pages. See postage chart on page 199.

Philemon and Onesimus

by Paul Stepp



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\$9.95

Much meaning and knowledge that is to be discovered in the Epistle to Philemon can be uncovered through an examination of the relationship that existed between Philemon and Onesimus (and also the relationships of these two men with the Apostle Paul). See postage chart on page 199.