

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

Perilous Times of the Last Days, and the Only Antidote

By William Wileman
(1848 - 1944)

In the third chapter of his second epistle to Timothy, the last letter he penned, the aged Paul is inspired to portray the features of the last days, with a plainness and an emphasis that demand our closest attention. Written during his second imprisonment in Rome, under more rigorous conditions than those of his first (Acts 28:30) and with the certainty of death ever present, we read these farewell words to the young evangelist with a special sympathy and personal interest.

The letter covers a very wide range of subjects. There are affectionate memories and counsels, with solemn warnings of coming perils and tests, as concerning Timothy himself. There are faithful repetitions of the great foundation truth of our

◊ (Continued on page 3)

Human Ego, Our Greatest Enemy A Baptist Fable

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

With most of us, Christ has no bigger enemy than SELF. That is why He said, **"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me"** (Matt. 16:24). A careful analysis will reveal to many people that their Christian service is more motivated by self than it is by real love for Christ and unselfish devotion to His cause. Many who suppose that they are mighty



good, devoted, servants of Christ, are in reality egotists who would throw the Lord over if the test came, in order to preserve their egotism. Paul saw the situation and he said with reference to a whole group of people, **"For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's"** (Phil. 2:21).

◊ (Continued on page 15)

By Curtis Pugh
(1944 - 2018)

Let me tell you a Baptist fable. It has to do with the ideas of giving and receiving. It is not exclusively the property of the Baptists since many people of other persuasions also tell it, but it is extremely popular among most of the Baptist people. Let us begin with our fable as follows. There is something wonderful that happens to every person born upon this earth. At some moment during the months before the birth of each and every baby born in this world God sends an angel to that little unborn child. The angel talks to the child telling him or her about all the gifts that God has stored up in Heaven. The angel tells about the gift of music: both the ability to sing and the ability to play beautifully upon various

◊ (Continued on page 19)

The Glory of God's People

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jer.



9:23-24.)

What is it that is important to you? What is it that is important to the world?

Are they one and the same? Are your desires and your pleasures the same as, or similar to, the desires and the pleasures of the world?

I want to talk about the "Glory of God's People." What I want us to consider begins with what is important to you, to me, and to the people of God. I know this is only part of what the Lord intends, when He speaks to Judah through the prophet Jeremiah; but, I believe it is important for us

◊ (Continued on page 17)



October 5, 2018
Volume XXXVIII, Number 10

Whole Number 471
Editor: Christopher Cockrell
Staff: Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Kiser, Virginia Cockrell

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

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

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

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - U.S.

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - FOREIGN One Year \$45

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

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

CHURCH PHONE: 1-662-282-7794.

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to 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.



Cockrell's Corner

By the Editor

WHEN THE ROOSTER CROWED

In the night that our Lord was betrayed, He was abandoned by all of His disciples except one, Peter; for a time.

Earlier that night Peter had been bold in speaking. **"Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended"** (Matt. 26:33). **"I will lay down my life for thy sake"** (John 13:37). **"I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death"** (Luke 22:33).

Yet our Lord replied, **"And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice"** (Mark 14:30).

Later that night Peter denied his Lord three times. **"Now Peter sat without in the palace ("warming himself," Mark 14:67): and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch ("and the cock crew," Mark 14:68), another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man..."** (Matt. 26:69-74). **"And immediately, while he yet spake, (the second time the cock crew" Mark 14:72). And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word**

of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:60-62).



In these short passages of Scripture we see that the simple crowing of a rooster had a bitter lasting effect on the Apostle Peter. For we are told he **"wept bitterly"** or exceedingly, after **"he thought thereon"** (Mark 14:72).

When you next hear the crow of a rooster, stop and think if you might be guilty of the same thing that Peter was; denying our Lord.

In what ways can and do we deny (refuse; withhold; disown; disavow; or repudiate) our Lord? In many ways we have denied our Lord in failing to live a life that reflects that of our Saviour, in refusing to witness to those around us, in failing to study His Word, in failing to show compassion for others, in failing to help those that are less fortunate, in failing to pray as we ought, in failing to spend more of our time in service to Him than service to self, etc. This list could go on much further if we took time to list all the commandments of our Lord, both in word and actions. It is easy to say "I haven't denied my Lord," but it is much harder to live it. Oh, if only we could be as Peter and **"wept bitterly"** over our sins.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10 32-33).



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Perilous Times

(Continued from page 1) ♦

“most holy faith” (Jude 1:20), with an important stress on the necessity for holiness of life and conduct; **“...let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity”** (II Tim. 2:19). And there are intensely solemn calls to steadfastness in faith, confession, and service.

The opening of the third chapter is of immense importance for ourselves today. We have here presented to us, with Divine precision and accuracy, nineteen marks of defection and decadence within the professing church, clear in outline, and minute in detail. It is very true that the marks and evidences of decay here given have been visible in measure in every age, and even existed in the time of the apostle: but it must not be overlooked that they are specially predicted of the last days. And when **“...the Spirit speaketh expressly”** (I Tim. 4:1), as in the first epistle, and as in Ezekiel 1:3, we ought to give the most earnest heed to what is spoken by Him. How far the description is especially applicable to the days in which we are living, it is the purpose of our present study to inquire and to suggest.

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away” (II Tim.

3:1-5).

It will be observed that we have here nineteen descriptive features of the perilous times of the last days. In this connection it may be desirable to extend the appalling portrait by way of emphasizing the peril.

In Matthew 15:19, the Lord Jesus names seven evil things that flow from the heart of man, as from a fountain. But in Mark 7:21-22, the list is extended to thirteen. These evils have been prevalent since men fell: and the description applies to all of us by nature. In Romans 1:29-31, Paul gives a vivid and black portrait of the old heathen world: and enumerates twenty-three distinctive features of its condition. There can be no question as to the accuracy of this inspired description of the Roman world of that period: and alas, the present age may use it as a faithful mirror.

In Romans 3:9-18, we have from the pen of Paul, God's own estimate and judgment of all mankind, Jew and Gentile alike, taken by quotations from the Old Testament, in fourteen particulars. All the world is thus declared guilty before God.

In Galatians 5:19-21, the same pen gives us a catalog of the works of the flesh, enumerating seventeen; and these evil things exist in the old fallen nature of every child of Adam.

In the first epistle to Timothy (1:9-10) we have a further list of fourteen fruits of sin, given in language so plain as to cause us to tremble while we read them.

We have thus in these seven lists ONE HUNDRED AND SEVEN evil things flowing from the fountain of sin: and without further extension we may perceive in the subject now before us here in the second epistle to Timothy the progressive

downward tendency of evil. In the first quotation the Lord Jesus speaks of the heart as the source and fountain of sin: and then the apostle traces the streams in their downward flow. But when we arrive at this epistle we find that the evil principles and works here named in detail are spoken of as attached to a profession of religion. The fruits of ungodliness are veiled by the leaves of a form of godliness.

And is not this universal downward tendency manifest throughout Scripture? Since the Fall, everything merely human, left to itself, has deteriorated. That which is good tends to decay: that which is evil, as this chapter teaches, grows worse and worse.

It is therefore very plain that in the perilous times of the last days there will be the consummation of all that is evil. What in the Second Thessalonians is predicted as THE APOSTASY, that is, the great falling away, is here set forth in all the ripeness of evil awaiting the judgment of Christ.

PERILOUS

We have in the first verse of our chapter a remarkable word that is used only twice in the New Testament – ‘chalepos.’ It occurs elsewhere in Matthew 8:28, as descriptive of the demoniac, and is there translated ‘fierce.’ I have consulted many lexicons as to the exact meaning of this expressive word, and here record the result.

Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, which refers to secular Greek authors, gives the meaning of the word as used by secular writers: ‘hard to bear, painful, sore, grievous, difficult, troublesome, irksome, dangerous, rugged.’

Blomfield's Lexicon: ‘of things, dangerous, hard to bear; of person, fierce, furious.’ Robinson's Lexicon: ‘heavy, difficult, hard, burdensome, perilous; connected

with toil, suffering, peril.’

Bagster's Lexicon: ‘hard, rugged, furious, ferocious, trying.’

Bullinger's Lexicon: ‘heavy, difficult, hard to bear, dangerous: connected with toil and suffering; of things, perilous; of persons, fierce, furious.’

Young's Analytical Concordance: ‘hard, difficult, perilous, fierce.’

Alford translates it ‘grievous.’

We have therefore in all, twenty-two words expressive of the meaning of this one Greek word. Herein we see the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in His selection of a word of remarkable force by which to delineate the characteristics of the last days: and for this reason our closest attention is demanded.

To this end I now desire to give a very brief and concise view of each of the nineteen features in this black list. Some have attempted to classify them, by placing them in groups: but this seems artificial, and is not necessary.

1. “Lovers of their own selves.”

This one word goes at once to the heart of the peril, and thus reveals its Divine origin. In the Decalogue God claims in the very first commandment worship of Himself alone; and if this were observed, all the other commands would be obeyed. So here: the worship of self is the root from which all other evils grow and bear fruit. The love of self is the exact opposite of the love of God; the root-principle of all that arrays itself against His authority. And is not this self-love rampantly manifest today? Has it ever been more prevalent than it is today? Every class of society manifests it: and the certain result will be the overturning of social order, class-war, civil strife, anarchy, and revolution.

♦ (Continued on page 4)

Perilous Times

(Continued from page 3) ♦

2. **"Covetous."** Literally, lovers of money (silver). It is striking that this should be placed second, for it inevitably grows out of the first. And the same writer tells us that **"...the love of money is a root of all evil."** Men love money because they love themselves: and desire the possession of money in order to gratify self-love. This also, while existing in every age, is a special characteristic of the present age: and is certainly one of the things that make the present age dangerous, difficult, fierce. The very expression 'fierce competition' was never so prevalent as now in commerce: and the present tendencies of all commercial life are increasingly in the same direction.

3. **"Boasters."** In every age such persons have flourished. The root of boasting is love of self: the fruit is the praise of self. And as the days advance other conditions will arise to furnish newer opportunities for the exercise of boasting.

4. **"Proud."** That is, haughty, arrogant, literally 'showing above.' The sequence of these features is so suggestive as to evoke our admiration of the wisdom that inspired them and thus arranged them. Pride is a prominent evil of the unrenewed heart: pride is a prominent evil of the present age. Pride is a parent evil, and one of the earliest to show itself in the history of man and in the transactions of daily life. And its ruinous influence and operations are manifested in every class of society.

5. **"Blasphemers."** The word thus translated here does not in this connection mean speaking against God: but railers, calumniators of good men and

good things. We have thus an unveiling of the atheism that will prevail in the last days, and that verily flourishes in these days. Our daily literature is steeped in it: and our schools, both secular and religious, are in large measure under its control.

6. **"Disobedient to parents."** Those of us who can look back over the past half century have witnessed the changes that have taken place in the domestic sphere, not all of them for the better. This phrase is evidently inclusive: the root being named to include the branches and the fruit. While it is literally exact to state that children disobey their parents, there is also the fact of a lamentable decay of reverence for parents and the aged, visible in social life universally. It has even invaded the sanctuary.

There is not the attachment to pastors and teachers in the house of God that was the rule in former days, still not remote. It must also be admitted that there has been a decay of parental control, of a wise and loving discipline, so that a decay of subjectness is a natural result.

7. **"Unthankful."** This is one of the sins enumerated in Romans 1. It is a sin against the Giver of all our daily mercies: and where it exists it is only just on His part to limit their supply.

8. **"Unholy,"** regardless of duty to God and man. It is very possible, in the view of much social progress, to overlook the fact that each age has its own features of prevailing forms of sinfulness. It is better for thankful acknowledgment that there is less open outward profanity, drunkenness, and some other sins than formerly. But will any who observe the signs of the times argue that there is less unholiness? If sin be less open and bold, is it less what sin

ever is in its essence? It may be more under the surface: is it less unholy? Let the pages of our daily papers supply the answer. It is not necessary, and would be unwise, to give details here: but it is certain that the publication of the details of sordid crime by the daily press has resulted in a lowering of the standard of national righteousness and a toleration of iniquity through familiarity with its terms.

9. **"Without natural affection."** Inhuman. It is beyond all denial that sin has invaded the sanctities of home life, and marred the bloom of human affections in the domestic sphere. The decay of natural affection permeates every relationship of life, and inverts the order of Divine provisions and sanctions.

10. **"Trucebreakers."** Violators of promises and covenants. The word indicates persons who are untrue to any compact, and is translated 'implacable' in Romans 1:31.

This evil exists in various forms. It is shown (a) in the unrest and anarchy in the commercial world: and the symptoms are likely to become more pronounced and fierce in the future. (b) The sacred promises connected with marriage are lightly made and easily broken. God's order is ever full of joy and blessing: and every evasion of God's order, whether in the responsibilities of married life or in any other sphere, is certain to lead to confusion, unhappiness, and judgment. Another form of truce-breaking is that adopted by those bishops who at their consecration take a solemn oath that they are 'ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word: and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage

others to the same.' It is manifest that some make this declaration with the deliberate intention of violating it.

11. **"False accusers."** Slanderers, revilers. The word is that from which we have the word 'devil,' and means one who casts a dart at another. Would to God that this evil were everywhere less prevalent. Pollock calls slander 'the foulest whelp of sin;' God calls the slanderer a fool.

12. **"Incontinent."** Without self-control, not capable of self-government. This certainly foretells the weakening of the moral fibre in every department of human life. It is self-love and self-will running wild without restraint.

13. **"Fierce."** Untamed, ungovernable. The steps are still progressive and downward. Authority is becoming increasingly inefficient. The iron is so mixed with clay that government is brittle. All prophecy tells us that this will be a certain distinctive feature of the last days, making them perilous and difficult. And when nations despise the government of God by casting Him out of their counsels, they must become less governable by men.

14. **"Despisers of those that are good."** Hostile alike to good things and to good men. Thus the next step will naturally be to hate and despise loyal citizens, and place them under social disabilities: and especially to hate and despise the godly. And now that the professing 'church' is dominated by the world, the godly remnant will have to stand without the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ.

15. **"Traitors."** That is, betrayers. The man who betrays a trust is justly a man to be despised.

♦ (Continued on page 6)

Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



Acquaint Now Thyself With Him #7

The Back of the Lord

Exodus 33:18-23

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

In our text, Israel has left Egypt through the deliverance of the Lord. They have been on their journey to the Promise Land. They are at Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments had been given; Israel had worshiped the golden calf that Aaron had made for them. The journey was to be resumed. **"And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou has brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it"** (Ex. 33:1). Moses met with the Lord in/at the Tabernacle (Vv. 7-11). Moses made some requests of the Lord (Vv. 12-17). Moses final request and God's answer is the subject of our text verses (Vv. 18).

TO SEE THE GLORY OF GOD—VV. 18

Observe the desire Moses asks for, **"And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory."** Moses desired to see the visible manifestation of His presence (Ex. 24:16-17). The first time that

God manifested His glory to Israel was when the people murmured and complained against Moses and the Lord in asking for meat (Ex. 16:1-13 (Vv. 7-13)). Israel saw the glory of the Lord when the daily sacrifices were made (Ex. 29:38-43). The glory of God would fill the newly build tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35). The occasion of sin at Kadesh-barnea when Israel was about to stone Aaron, Moses, Joshua, and Caleb (Num. 14:10-12). We also read in Leviticus 9:5-6 and 9:22-24, that the glory of the Lord would appear as a result of obedience to God, when Israel sacrificed unto the Lord as they ought to do.

It seems from these passages that God's glory is manifested either by God's response to man's sin, or by God's response to the sacrifices He commanded. Remember this!

Observe, God's response to Moses' beseeching, **"shew me thy glory"** was, **"...and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen"** (Ex. 33:23). We, you and I, probably have never given this much thought. The back parts are often considered that which is not necessarily good. Yet, when Moses asked, **"...shew me thy glory,"** what did God show him? **"...and thou shalt see my back parts..."** (Ex. 33:18, 23). Thus we might conclude in this statement, that God's back bears out the glory of God.

The word "glory" (Strong's # 3519) properly means "weight, or weighty." Holman's Bible Dictionary defines it as "The

weighty importance and shining majesty which accompany God's presence...that which gives Him importance and weight in relationship to people...that side of God which humans recognize and to which humans respond in confession, worship, and praise"¹

Now, if that is what "glory" means; and when Moses asked the Lord to show him His glory; and the Lord showing Moses His back was the reply to that request; what correlation does God's glory and His back have?

THE OBEDIENCE OF THE CHRIST

"The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back" (Isa. 50:5). The opening of the ear is not the ability to hear, but rather the boring of a hole into the ear. This was done, signifying that one had become a perpetual servant to one's master. **"And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my msater, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever"** (Ex. 21:5-6). This was a sign that one was a perpetual servant. So the Christ is spoken of as having His Master (the Lord GOD) opening His ear. The Lord Jesus was not rebellious to the command of His Master, the Lord GOD the Father. Neither did the Lord Jesus turn away back—He did not show the Lord His back in rebellion refusing to do the will of the Father, but submitted to it. Observe, Philippians 2:5-8. Now, what was this that Christ **"...was not rebellious, neither turned away back"** referring to?

THE SALVATION OF HIS OWN

Isaiah 50:6-7—Vv. 6—**"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."** Cp. With Matthew 26:67—**"Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands"** (Matthew 27:26)—**"Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."** The word "scourged" means "to whip." Which was done upon the back. John 19:1—**"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him."**

The Lord Jesus gave not His back to the Lord, but gave it unto the smiters! There we see the glory of God revealed. The whole scene of His humiliation before the Jewish council, then in the judgment hall with Pilate, then to Golgatha's Hill, Mt. Calvary to be crucified. The whole time we find the Lord Jesus, trusting in the Father saying, **"For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed"** (Isa. 50:7).

His back was employed in my redemption! There at Calvary do we not see "The weighty importance and shining majesty which accompany God's presence...that which gives Him importance and weight in relationship to people...that side of God which humans recognize and to which humans respond in confession, worship, and praise," which is to say, The Glory of God?! Most assuredly we do!

THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS

I am sure you have heard and

◊ (Continued on page 6)

Little Hills

(Continued from page 5) ♦

perhaps even uttered the phrase, "Well, I forgive you, but I will never forget what you did to me." Praise the Lord that is not how our God forgives. Observe what the Bible tells us that the Lord has done with our sins: **"Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back"** (Isa. 38:17). These are the words of king Hezekiah when the Lord recovered him from his illness.

What has God done with the sins of those whom He has saved? They are said to be cast behind His back. What does this mean? John Gill states, "The phrase is expressive of the full forgiveness of sins, even of all sins." Our sins are loathsome and abominable. The Scripture states, **"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity..."** (Hab. 1:13). The Lord GOD sees all the sins of His people through His eyes of omniscience and in His providence takes notice of them, and chastens them for it. Yet, He does not behold it with the eye of "avenging justice." Why? Because Christ has taken them upon Himself, particularly upon His back and shoulders, for Scripture declares this in Isaiah 53:4-6. No more will our sins be set before His face! He shall never bring them to remembrance again, for He has cast them, yea all of my sins, behind His back.

Is this not glorious? Does not the holiness of God, the justice of God cry out that we should be cast behind His back, but in grace and love, in putting our iniquities upon Christ Jesus, our sins, all of them have been cast behind His back, never to be seen. "Out

of sight and out of mind" as the expression goes. What great glory this is!

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH INCREASE OF OUR FAITH

Beloved, we see this glorious Being, the Lord GOD who employed His entire person in our salvation and redemption. Beloved, as we see how glorious God is, we ought to say, **"Is anything too hard for the LORD"** (Gen. 18:14)? If God can redeem and deliver us from our sins, then nothing is impossible with Him.

NOTES

1. Holman Bible Dictionary, "Glory," copyright; 1991.



Perilious Times

(Continued from page 4) ♦

The unfaithful minister incurs the displeasure of God and the contempt of honest men. The disciple who betrays his Master is abhorred by God and man. The man who is unfaithful in a position of trust is looked upon as a criminal. And it may be that the present constitution of the commercial world lends greater facilities than formerly for betrayal of trust. But the greatest traitor is he who is unfaithful to God. O may He keep writer and reader faithful to our Trust, and our Trust Deed.

16. **"Heady."** Headstrong, precipitate. Each generation moves with greater speed than that which preceded it: and this tendency will increase in the perilous and fierce times of the latter days. Each event of today occurs with a suddenness unknown in former days. Disintegration, unrest, and rapid change are heading the nations to a crisis from which they will never

recover.

17. **"High-minded."** Inflated, lifted up with pride. In another epistle Paul recommends another mind with a fourfold beauty. **"Be like-minded ... of one mind ... in lowliness of mind ... let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."** That is, be like-minded, one-minded, lowly-minded, Christ-minded. This means peace, joy, fruitfulness, prosperity. High-mindedness is ruinous to a Christian, fatal to a world-ling. Haman's pride brought him to the gallows, fifty cubits high.

18. **"Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."** We now arrive at the final features of the last days, in which it is not possible to err as to their applicability to the times in which we live. And moreover, we have in these last two features a plain indication that they describe persons who make a profession of religion. A love of pleasures is joined to a profession of love of God: and the former prevails over the latter. That the present mad love of pleasures far exceeds any former display of it is beyond denial; we witness it every day. We use it in the facilities provided for its pursuit in present-day forms of travel. We see it in the crowds of persons rushing to seek for what they call pleasure on the day of Rest.

But when we view what the many call pleasure, we do so with a longing pity. Their pleasures are poor, empty, unsatisfying; ours are rich, full, satisfying. We are not willing to propose an exchange for ourselves; but we would rejoice to see our fellow-sinners choosing our joys and sharing our happiness.

And what is the effect of this increasing love of pleasures? A growing laxity in the standards

of morality, a weakening of the national fiber, a decrease in the value of the national labor.

And what is to be expected from the attempted union of this love of pleasures with professed love of God? Will the 'church' thereby convert the world, or will the world convert the 'church'? Those who promote dancing-parties, whist-drives, billiard-clubs, under the roof of a building set apart for the worship of God, are traitors to God, to themselves, to their profession: and enemies of common morality and decency. They are serving the devil; and **"the wages of sin is death."**

19. **"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."** This is the consummation, the logical end of the solemn indictment. Most of the former features were outwardly worldly and evil; this crowning feature is religious in its nature and aspect. Herein consists its peril, difficulty, danger. The Lexicons have not by any means exhausted the meaning of the word. It would require a volume to analyze the form of godliness indicated by the apostle. Only a brief view is intended here.

(a) The truth is that there is now little else than the form of godliness. Go into many a place of worship, and what is found? The form, and very little besides. Flimsy preaching, which is not preaching, on a secular or national subject, a mere moral essay, with nothing in it of Christ, the Gospel message, God's way of salvation for sinners. A general sense of empty unreality pervades the service. I am speaking from accurate personal knowledge; and speaking of buildings wherein in days past the Gospel was faithfully preached by men of God.

(b) What is there but the form without the power in modern

♦ (Continued on page 8)

Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of
Temperance, Michigan

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



PRIDE COMETH BEFORE THE FALL

When I was a much younger man I watched my best friend fall out of the back of a pickup truck. I should add the disclaimer that "No friends were seriously hurt in the making of this story," at least physically!

My grandfather had a set of bunk beds he needed help moving, so my friends Brandon and Andy joined in to help my little brother and me transport them in the back of a pickup. My brother was only about eight years old at the time, and as we were getting ready to head out, he climbed up on the tailgate with the teenagers. Andy, who was the shortest of the group, walked up to us and lectured my brother about moving further up into the back of the truck to "be safe." In reality, Andy really just wanted the seat between his best friends on the tailgate.

The drive was less than a half mile to my grandfather's house, and consisted of only one turn. Just after the turn, the truck hit a slight dip in the road. As the back of the truck bounced, the pavement caught Andy's heel and pulled him right out of the back of the truck. I can see it as if it were yesterday; Andy rolling backwards in slow motion, with the pop he was holding spilling in a steady stream across the front of him. It was nothing short of amazing. Before we stopped the truck, Andy was back on his feet. He was now dirty, wet and limping. This was the price he

paid to have the seat he wanted.

As the years have passed, I have run that moment through my mind over and over again, usually at parties or get-togethers. I could not understand why my friend with the shortest legs would have his heel caught, but not Brandon or me. Alas, I have found understanding in Proverbs 16:18-19, **"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty (prideful) spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud."** For Brandon and me, this was just a seat. For Andy though, this was the spoil. He had manipulated this prized seat away from a child, and he did it by convincing my little brother that he did not deserve it. By insisting that my brother move, Andy was implying that he was the only person fit to sit there, that his reasons were most important.

How often do we do that in life? We want to be the first in line at the DMV or McDonalds, and we even rush for the "best seat" in the movie theatre because we want it now. In our minds, our reasons for being first are better than anyone else's. We are deserving of the spoil. What gives us the right to be impatient, frustrated, or deserving of something better, faster, or more comfortable?

Here is the better choice: Be lowly and humble in this life and in these situations. Show the world what the love of Jesus looks like in your patience. Show compassion

and understanding. Show others you care through humility and putting them first. **"When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom"** (Prov. 11:2). **"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit"** (Prov. 29:23).

WHAT WE STAND FOR

I was having a conversation with a man who was doing some work for our church building the other day. He was admiring our sanctuary area and made light conversation about how easy it must be to decorate for the holidays. I politely pointed out, in line with my convictions, that we don't celebrate Christmas and Easter as the world does with trees, bunnies and decorations. While stunned at the awkward turn our conversation had taken, he immediately backtracked his comment to support why people should not take part in those festivities. The more I talked, the more he agreed haphazardly to my points.

Why do we do that? Why is our instinct to cave on our beliefs when they do not line up with someone else's? I use the word "we" intentionally as I have found myself in this position from time to time. It is a shame to have researched something for yourself and proven it to be true, yet not stand for it when given the opportunity to share your findings. I have had to pray over my own ability to improve in this area.

I was impressed that as our conversation continued, this man possessed the knowledge of lesser known facts of historical context, pagan infusion, and ritualistic ideals. Why, then, were his initial comments not consistent with the beliefs he ultimately poured

out? Did he feel he needed to make polite conversation because he was in a church building? Was the initial topic of Christmas considered a "safe" one? Was he testing to see my knowledge on the subject? I find myself in these situations often when proclaiming unpopular truths and am left now wondering where his convictions actually lie.

In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians he wrote to them of how they should live, now that they have received Christ. He said in Ephesians 4:14, **"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."** He was speaking directly to our hustle to change our mind about the truth depending on who we are in the company of.

Jesus said in John 14:6, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."** Imagine yourself in a room full of strangers. You play it cool at first, hanging to the corners politely eavesdropping to see if you have any common interests with the crowd. You quickly discover that they all seem to have the same idea about life after death and that is the topic on their lips. You know that what they are saying does not jive with the Bible verse above, and you know that by Jesus saying He was the only way to the Father, the truth you have in this room is very precious. Do you share it with them or do you keep it to yourself and continue to look for the exits?

Titus 2:14 tells us that Jesus gave Himself up to redeem for Himself a **"peculiar people, zealous of good works."** It says in that same verse that He redeemed them of

◊ (Continued on page 8)

Small Drops

(Continued from page 7) ♦

all iniquity or sin. He went to such a great length to give you the truth. How would He have you to handle the topics that arise in a room of strangers?

Our world needs to see more Christians living as though worshiping God were a priority, not a habit. Our children, mine and yours, need to see and hear what God has done for His people. Our neighbors need to see us unashamed of the hope we have been given, rather than hiding our knowledge, looking for the exits.



Perilous Times

(Continued from page 6) ♦

theology? What is called the 'new theology' is not theology, for it is godless: it is not new, for Satan is its author. Denial of God began in Eden. I do not hesitate to say that a very large proportion of the preaching and of the religious literature of today is destitute of the life and power of God. The vital and fundamental truth of our most holy faith is denied. The inspiration of Scripture is denied. The Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ is denied. The Godhead of our glorious Lord is denied. Is not this denying the power? Is it not literally fulfilling II Peter 3:3: **"...there shall come in the last days scoffers?"** And are not religious scoffers worse than all other scoffers?

(c) And there is further, and as a natural consequence, the denial of the power of godliness in the life and conduct of those who profess it. Of very many it may now be said that they are no longer **"a peculiar people, zealous of good works:"** no longer **"a royal priesthood, an holy nation."** The outward form

may exist, and does exist without the energy of a gracious animating influential power.

THE ANTIDOTE

What then is the one infallible remedy for the evils thus predicted and enumerated by the Spirit of Truth? The question may be stated thus: What must be the attitude of the faithful men of God – men who have **"understanding of the times"** (I Chron. 12:32) – men who are placed by God to declare His mind and will? The answer is given in the context, with a Divine emphasis that plainly evidences its source and its intention.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:14-17).

It is idle and criminal to ignore or attempt to deny that the apostasy has come to pass through the denial of the Word of God; and equally futile to expect any abatement of the evils excepting by a sincere return to the Word.

It is remarkable that in each of the four chapters of this epistle there are mentioned the names of two enemies of the truth of God. In the first chapter we have Phygellus and Hermogenes, who had **"turned away."** In the second chapter we find Hymenaeus and Philetus, **"who concerning the truth have erred."** In the third chapter we have Jannes

and Jambres, who **"withstood"** by imitation – a very suggestive thought for these perilous days. Imitation of the true is one of the most fatal forms of **"resisting the truth,"** because more certain to deceive. And in the fourth chapter are named Demas, who **"loved the present age,"** and Alexander, who **"greatly withstood our words."**

In these four couples we have presented to us with unerring accuracy the prominent features of apostasy: turning away, going astray, withstanding, resisting, world-loving.

How necessary therefore for the **"man of God"** to stand to his post, even should he have to stand alone! Faithful definite testimony is the urgent and essential requirement of the present time, **"in season, out of season:"** bearing our steady consistent witness against the wicked and lying fables of the 'higher criticism' and every other form of denial of God, holding forth the Word of Life. The rationalism that profanely dares to judge the Word of God is simply atheism in its inception and its operations. It may be disguised as 'freedom of thought and enquiry:' but it is most miserable bondage and slavery. The evil principle in its root is manifest in each of its assumed features.

We have a well-known object-lesson for our instruction and warning in the record of the act of Jehoiakim in first mutilating and then burning the roll written by Baruch from the lips of God's faithful servant Jeremiah. This king, in his blindness and folly, thought that by destroying the message he could escape the judgment it threatened. He also thought that by venting his anger on the prophet he could silence the prophecy. But God has His own methods of preserving His truth and His servants. A new

roll was written, with many words added; and the prophet and the scribe were preserved from all danger. But what became of the mutilator and burner of the words of God? Unloved and unlamented, on his death he had **"the burial of an ass"** (Jer. 22:19) – a fate very appropriate now for all who mutilate, or deny, or seek to tamper in any way with the Word and words of God.

Paul, when writing to the church at Philippi, exhorts them to **"...stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel"** (Phil. 1:27). There is only one Gospel; there cannot be another. The Gospel is described by various phrases; it is called the Gospel of God, the Gospel of His Son, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of the grace of God, the Gospel of the glory of Christ, our Gospel, my Gospel; but the good news is unchangeable and everlastingly the same.

There was no semblance of compromise about Paul's message, no modification to suit his various hearers, as now practiced by some who would be thought more wise. He did indeed become 'all things to all men, that he might by any means save some;' but this refers to his 'means' or methods, and does not imply any desire to change or modify the testimony that had been entrusted to him by his Great Master.

I visited recently the beautiful little village of Brinkworth, in Wiltshire, and entered the parish church. There stands the carved oaken pulpit formerly occupied by Tobias Crisp: at the back of which is an oaken tablet, inscribed: 'Woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel; Anno Domini, 1630.' Yet we are informed by some who yet desire to be called 'evangelical'

♦ (Continued on page 10)



Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of
Clendenin, West Virginia

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

THE MARRED KING

"As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isa. 52:14).

Isaiah directs our attention to the Servant of Jehovah, the high and exalted One (Isa. 52:13), but not as we might expect. The onlookers are **"astonied"** or dazed when looking at this man and were filled with dismay. He was not sitting upon a throne, nor honored by prestigious men. He did not impress you with His dignity and strength as you might expect from the extolled One, but He was scourged and blooded. His face, marred and disfigured almost past the point of looking like a human man. Beaten, whipped, spat upon, even ripping the beard from His face (Isa. 50:6). The same Messiah who will be exalted and who will deal with wisdom and prudence, will be marred beyond recognition (Psa. 22:6; Matt. 26:67).

"So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider" (Isa. 52: 15). This same Suffering Servant, in the very next verse, will sprinkle the nations with His grace and mercy and kings of the earth will hush their mouth in quiet submission to His power and glory. The deep truths of His

glory will be opened up and explained and the truth of His glorious Person will be revealed and proclaimed. In the same Person, you see a man who will rule the nations, be praised and honored, will rule in power as God's anointed, and quiets the kings of every nation -- will also suffer beyond imagination. How can Messiah be both? How could one man be so exalted and yet brought so low? The Jews in the gospels were looking for the exalted King, but they cared nothing for a Messiah who would suffer.

The Suffering Servant was mysterious for the Old Testament saints. However, we have the mystery revealed in the Lord Jesus who offered Himself a sin sacrifice -- the Lamb of God. We have two views of the same man at different times. It is because Jesus came and suffered that He is lifted up and exalted (Phil. 2:5-11). Isaiah prophesied of the crucified Saviour and the glorified King. We still wait the day for the Lord to return in glory and to hush the mouths of the nations (Psa. 2). **"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."** Isaiah shows us a King who is exalted, but One who suffers beyond comprehension. One who subdues the kings of the world and also who astonishes those who looked upon Him at His suffering. I wonder how you see the Lord? Do you see Jesus as revealed in Scripture or as revealed in your imagination?

Do you know the Jesus of the Bible? Do you know the King who gave His life's blood to save His people from their own sins?

NO SPIN

"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him" (Prov. 18:17).

If you are like me, you are a 6'2" Baptist preacher writing a column for the "free press." But you also might be like me and listen to political radio from time to time. I hear political pundits talk about "setting the narrative" or "getting ahead of the story" which is a nice way of saying whoever spills the beans first gets to twist the truth to favor their side and put their opponent on the defensive. Anytime you have a controversy between people, whoever gets their side of the story out first has the advantage. To borrow a thought from William Buckley, if someone comes to you and says I am a scoundrel because they saw me push an old lady to the ground, you might get righteously angry. But if you ask me, you might find out that I pushed her out of the way of an oncoming logging truck speeding down the street. The man who spoke first gave the facts, but colored the context. Speaking of context, I will address the run of the mill, everyday sort of slander. I still believe this principle applies to criminal charges, but if someone is accused of breaking the law, then you must get the authorities involved. Then, the authorities and the press need to apply this principle.

When entangled in controversy, you need to do everything in your power to accurately represent your

opponent. I know you want to be right and win the day, but be right in a truthful and honorable way. If you have to lie to make your enemy look worse than he is, that is a good indication that your case is weak-sauce. It's like the preacher who dropped his outline coming out of the pulpit and someone picked up the paper and saw in the margins, "weak point -- bang pulpit here." You need to check your motives. Are you fighting for truth or fighting for yourself and looking for revenge by vanquishing your enemy by any means necessary?

It is foolish to believe the accuser is right without even asking the accused. The Bible even tells us to not rush to judgment with men who have a proven record of godliness (I Tim. 5:19). The goal is sincerely and seriously hearing the accusation and getting to the truth. While you listen, you need to hold a few things in your mind at once. The accuser may be telling you the truth. They may be telling you part of the truth and leaving out key information. They may be telling you what they remember, filtered through a whole lot of emotions and a whole lot of distortion. Or they could be a dirty, filthy, liar. If you listen to the accuser and make a judgment without investigation, you are committing sin. Get the facts before grabbing the pitchforks and torches.



Perilous Times

(Continued from page 8) ♦

that they have advanced beyond Paul, and that therefore they must adapt their messages to the level of human conceptions, to commend them to modern minds and needs. Then they complain that preachers of the good old Gospel will not work in a brotherly way with them: which means that faithful men refuse to walk and labor amicably with traitors.

Then the apostolic exhortation here given to Timothy is that while **"...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived,"** he is to continue in the things which he had learned and had been assured of. This is the inevitable order of the two principles – error and truth. The man who adopts error goes from one degree of corruption to another. The man of truth makes sure progress to success and victory. And even the afflictions and persecutions at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, shall help the man of God now, as they did the apostle, to press forward to final victory.

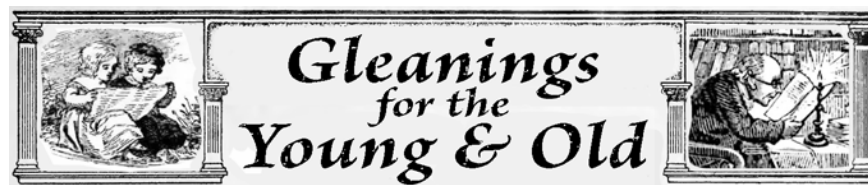
We must remember, and never forget, that as all truth centers in the person of Christ, so every error is aimed against Him and His glory.

These days are not days for any compromise with departure from God and His Holy Word. Let us never forget that any rejection of the principles of truth is the certain path to decay and judgment. Any national dishonor offered to God and His Bible must in the nature of things lead to national disaster, however mercifully delayed. Any public departure from Holy Scripture on the part of preachers and of churches must inevitably bring corruption and rejection. And

every personal defection from God and truth must bring upon us as Christians chastisement and sorrow. Whether nations, or churches, or persons, the unalterable law is still operative: **"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"** (Gal. 6:7).

The present duty therefore of all who know and love the truth of God by Divine teaching is to continue in those things that we have learned and have been assured of. It is, at all cost and sacrifice, to **"hold"** and to **"hold fast"** and to **"hold forth"** the living Word of God to the utmost of our energy and our love. We must remember that, although the victory is

assured, it is only assured to those who fight. To every faithful warrior, however varying the successes and defeats incident to the warfare, final victory is determined and certain. It is in fact already won. Gethsemane, and Calvary, and Bethany have made the issue sure: and the gates of heaven have been opened to receive the triumphant and crowned Conqueror. The supremely important thing therefore now is to be under the banner that already has victory inscribed upon it, and to **STAND FAST**. (*Watching and Waiting*, April-June, 2018).



ELSIE GREY'S QUESTION; OR, THE RICH POOR

In a very narrow street of an old town lived little Elsie Grey. The house in which she resided was an old building. The windows, with their many small panes of glass, were pushed out beyond the front wall, so as to give more space in the rooms, but seemed intended to let in as little light or air as possible, and the street was so darkened by the tall houses on each side, that the poor children whose home was there generally grew up pale and sad, for want of the cheerful sunbeams.

But every one in that narrow street was not sad, though there seemed enough to make one so. It is not the house we live in that makes us happy, but the heart that lives in us. A merry heart makes a cheerful face, and Elsie Grey had both.

A quiet, contented little face was Elsie's as she came home from school late one afternoon,

picking her steps along the paved foot-path, that those well patched shoes might not take on much of the mud of that winter day. Her frock was made of black stuff; but you might guess that this color was chosen for convenience, and not for mourning, as her little pink calico bonnet contrasted pleasantly with it, and threw a rosy tint on her cheeks.

About the middle of the street a flight of stone steps led to a hall-door, which lay open as if to invite passers by to enter; and the reason was explained by a board nailed to the front of the house. The weather-beaten face of this board was ornamented by a very smart shoe and boot, the name of its owner, and the following lines:

---"Here lives a man who won't refuse

To mend all sorts of boots and shoes."

Up these steps Elsie ran, for John Grey, the cobbler, was her father. What had been in other

times a parlor, was now a shop; and before there was time for anything else to be done, the little girl had her arms round the neck of that poor man, as, with leather apron on, he sat upon a low stool, in the midst of scraps of leather of all sizes. This was not to be wondered at, for Elsie Grey had every reason to love her father very dearly. He worked all day long, and often late at night too, in order that he might have what he called "an honest bit" to give his children and their sickly-looking mother. Though there seemed little outward comfort in that dingy room, with its small counter, empty grate, and littered floor, where tools and threads, and pegs and patches, formed the only carpet, still there was happiness in that humble abode. You might hear it in the very tap, tap of the cobbler's hammer, or read it in the look of that calm brow, where trust in God and contentment were plainly to be seen. The secret of all was, there was peace within.

"Well, Elsie, my child, home again!" said her father, as he stopped a moment to stroke back her dark hair and kiss her forehead. "Yes, father, and I want to ask you about something." "I shall be glad to hear all by and by, dear; but run now to see if you can help mother: she is sadly worn out, I fear, for Jessie is so ill today."

"But, father, please let me talk to you before I go."

"Duty now, my Elsie."

Away the little girl ran, and the noise of the hammer went on again. Elsie found that her mother was indeed sadly worn out, for she had only recovered from a long illness, and was not yet strong. Poor little Jessie had never been well from her birth; she had never learned to walk, or even to sit up

♦ (Continued on page 11)

Young & Old

(Continued from page 10) ♦

straight. Some disease in her back obliged her to lie on her bed all day long; and though she was not much younger than Elsie, she was treated by every one as a baby. In general she was quiet and patient, but sometimes when the pain was very bad she grew restless and fretful. On such days she wished to be moved very often from place to place, and longed to be carried in arms up and down the room. There was one strong pair of arms which often bore the little invalid, and they belonged to Jem her brother, the errand-boy at Mr. Johnson's grocery.

Jem got an hour every day for dinner, and was always careful to be back at his post before two o'clock struck. But a small dinner does not take a hungry boy an hour to finish; and when the day was fine, he often ate a bit of bread and cheese without even sitting down to rest, and, wrapping up little Jessie in an old shawl, set out with her for a walk. How Jessie loved those walks; for though she had never gone so far as to see a green field, she saw the sunshine and felt the pleasant breeze. How tender and firm was the grasp that held the sick child. A brother's arm is a strong and steady support, and a brother's loving heart a warm pillow. Nobly, too, that kind boy bore the taunts of ill-natured boys as they laughed and pointed at him, calling him, "Nurse Grey," and other rude names. Perhaps his step did become a little quicker, and his eye sometimes flash with anger, at these cold-hearted remarks; but love suffers long, and is not easily provoked.

But Jessie had not been out this day. She had cried with pain, and after having tired both her mother and herself, had at last fallen

asleep on a queer little couch Jem had settled for her at dinner-time, by drawing a stool near an old arm-chair and putting a pillow on it. The change was pleasant to the child, and here she slept with a cloak thrown over her. The tears stood in Elsie's eyes as she looked at her little sister. Noiselessly she stepped across the floor to where her mother sat, pale and weary-looking, at some fine sewing, trying to catch the last ray of light.

"I must put it away after all," said the poor woman with a sigh; "I did hope to have this shirt finished before dark, but could not do a stitch today with poor Jessie. It is the last of the set, and we want the money so such."

"Oh, mother, I wish I could help you," said Elsie in a whisper; "every day at school I try to learn to sew well, but still my stitching and button-holes look frightful by the side of yours."

"You do help me in many ways; 'tis time enough for you to begin your troubles when you are older."

"But, mother, you look so tired; do let me make a cup of tea for you---just one little cup." And Elsie drew together a few coals that lay at the bottom of a large grate, filled a small kettle with water, and placed it on the fire, which she coaxed into a flame by repeated efforts. She then took, from a cupboard in the corner, a cracked brown ware teapot, and placed it ready for use on the table. "Now, mother; see, the water is boiling: let me wet the tea for you."

"No, child, you cannot, for there is none in the house."

"Then, may I ask father for sixpence and run for some?"

"There is no use, Elsie, father has no money to give; all we had saved was spent in my illness, and what father and Jem earn is little enough for bread, without buying

tea. I must do without it, though it is hard enough to think that even work, work from morning till night will scarcely get one a bit to eat. People are in a great hurry to get their jobs done, but in no hurry at all about paying. But the poor must always be miserable, I suppose."

"Miserable, mother! sure we are not miserable. I learned the contrary in the Bible today; the girls in my class had a great talk among themselves about happy people. Mary Baker said she was quite sure all the rich people were very happy, for they had fine houses, and smart dresses, and beautiful carriages. Then Susan Smith told us her mother worked for a rich lady, who was so unhappy that she cried all day long. I said some poor people were happy, at least that we were, but some of the girls pointed at my old black frock and laughed. This made me feel rather bad, and I was going to ask father all about it when he sent me up stairs to you."

"What was my Elsie going to ask her father about?" said a kind voice at the door.

"Oh, father, I am so glad you are come up; do just sit down by the fire for a minute. We want to talk to you."

"Well, I am not altogether against that either," said her father, "for my fingers are so cold they almost refuse to put a stitch in the leather; and as the little shop is now shut I may as well work here as there." So Mr. Grey sat on a low stool by the fire, while his wife lighted an end of candle and placed it near him; and soon the gentle tap of the shoemaker's tools began again, but so softly that there was no fear of Jessie being wakened by the noise.

"Father, I wanted to ask you the meaning of our verse at school

today, '**Blessed be ye poor.**' Are the poor really happy?"

"Christ's poor are, my child," replied the pious man, and he bent silently over his work again.

"But who are Christ's poor, father?"

"Oh, Christ's poor are rich people," answered her father, as if he wished to puzzle the little girl. But Elsie knew that her father had sometimes a strange way of telling great truths, so she waited a moment and then he continued: "They are rich in faith, my child; all things are their if they believe in Jesus. They can trust His love, and be quite sure He shall give them all they really want, and only keep away those things which would harm them."

Elsie could not help wondering if they belonged to those happy people, (she felt sure her father did,) and if so, why there was no tea for poor mother, and no money to buy it. "Well, I take it," said Mrs. Grey, "we might be happier if we had a little more of the good things which many worse folks have: it is so pleasant to have something to spend."

"But, wife, if we cannot spend cheerfully, sure we can want cheerfully; and see how many really good things we have. We have a roof to shelter us, and some food to eat; work to do, and some wages for doing it. Is not Jem the best of sons, and have we not one little daughter to make our home here bright, and another to lead us to look up to the better home above, to which she seems fast hastening?" And the cobbler's hand was hastily drawn across his eyes as he glanced at Jessie's wasted little form. Elsie saw this, and gently kissed her father's brow and stroked his cheek, still wet with the falling tear, whispering at the same time, "Yes, dear father,

♦ (Continued on page 11)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

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

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"And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it" (Josh. 6:26).

Ah, the lowly town of Jericho. Always in Scripture, they go down to Jericho. **"And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead" (Luke 10:30).** To even live in this accursed town is to deny the truth of Scripture and defy His blessings. No wonder that the residents of this town are ever the dregs of humanity and the chiefest of Satan's servants. Selah! Think about it!

Immediately after Elisha has taken up the mantle of Elijah, who was taken up in a fiery whirlwind, he returns across Jordan to Jericho. While there he is apprised of the situation of the city. **"And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant (like Lot's Sodom and Gomorrah?-tms), as**

my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren" (II Kings 2:19). The curse of God pronounced by Joshua upon this town after God had destroyed it was evidently still in effect (To live in Jericho, will cost you- your children). Made livable by their proximity to the Jordan river, its own springs were, however, naught, and the ground barren. Like so many folk today that want to live where they choose and only regard their spiritual welfare as an afterthought, so too are these residents of Jericho. Do folk care about God's curses and blessings? Is there a Baptist church nearby? Are their children precious unto them?

However, for some reason (of unknown grace) Elisha cast salt from a new cruse (New Testament?) into the deathly springs and healed the blighted land. The mercy of God was shown upon these people, and certainly it should have been a marvelous time of rejoicing and celebration for this entire town. But as we continue our reading in this passage, we see that it will be far from a veneration of God and His man that occurs. **"And he went up from thence (Jericho-tms) unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two**

children of them" (II Kings 2:23-24).

Why would Elisha's gracious act be treated so terribly? Certainly these Jericho children knew what Elisha had done in healing the waters? As we look at their words, though, we might find a clue. **"Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head..."** Certainly it is a derogatory slur for children to mock Elisha's bald head, but notice as he is leaving the city gates behind, that the man of God is heading up toward Bethel (the House of God). And the children are indeed noting that and telling him to "Go up!" or "Get out of here! Go up, if that is where you are going!" "Are you better than us?"

As our modern countries are turning away from the Bible and the Lord, there is indeed much to be compared with these rebellious children that mock not just Elisha's bald head, but the direction he was going. The world hates righteousness, does it not? It matters not if God's people do good things for the citizens around them (put in a good 40 hours/help those in need/etc). As soon as we try to give them the gospel, warn them of sin and tell them about our great and holy God, they will turn on us as "goody-two-shoes" and spitefully call us names, as we head to the house of God. **"Go up, thou bald head; go up..."**

The children were judged and torn, but I think the parents also must be held accountable. If the parents respect God and His Word, then the children will not be as likely to have these attitudes of irreverence and vicious repartee. The grief and loss of the parents for their children, as they come running onto the scene causes bitter sorrow, I am sure. But is it followed by repentance? That is

the question. Selah! Think about it! A whole generation here in America is seeing their children departing from church and the Bible, in large part because we have not taught them the fear of the Lord. **"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children"** (Hosea 4:6). What an awful price the wicked city of Jericho paid. What an awful price our generation will also pay, as God "forgets our children" and sends in the "she bears" with their bloodthirsty vengeance. Selah! Think about it! Do not delay! Repent! and Believe!

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A few verses of Scripture come to mind after reading the question we have before us.

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

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15).

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15).

We must first ask the question, just how old were these "little children?" Some say they were in their thirties or forties. Others say they were teenagers, or in

◊ (Continued on page 14)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Was faith a necessary requirement for the “miracles of healing” in the New Testament as stated in Acts 14:8-10? And what type of faith was it that Paul perceived the impotent man to have?

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“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

Yes, I believe faith was, and is a necessary requirement for the “miracles of healing.” **“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6).**

“And there sat...” The word sat, however, indicates his usual posture; his helpless condition. Such persons commonly sat at the wayside, or in some public place, to ask for alms. **“And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging” (Mark 10:46).**

Impotent in his feet means without any power. He was entirely deprived of the use of his feet. The key here is that this man was in a helpless condition. Like all lost sinners, he was totally depraved. He could do nothing for himself, zero, absolutely nothing!

In our economy, the dollar is the medium of exchange; but in the Kingdom of Heaven, faith is the medium of exchange. Not only do

we need to possess faith, but we need for faith to possess us. We need a mighty faith because we have a mighty God.

First we have to understand what was being done here for this man to have this healing faith. Was not Paul preaching the gospel? **“And there they preached the gospel” (Acts 14:7).** So it goes to show that this impotent man was a hearer of the gospel message. **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).** This man was not only healed but he was saved as well because the Holy Spirit had prepared his heart to hear and believe the gospel message. **“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).**

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things” (Rom. 10:8-15)!

Paul was sent; the man believed, and was healed. Faith is taking God at His Word, he believed the Word of God, and he obeyed the Word of God.

What good is a miracle if we never surrender to the Lordship of Christ and receive salvation? **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8).**

What good is it to be healed if we eventually die without Jesus? Jesus still performs miracles, but we must never substitute the miracle for the Miracle Worker. God Bless!

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Really interesting question. Thanks so much for this opportunity to analyze the gift of faith. **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8).** An axiom as you study the subject of faith is that “whenever one sees true faith, look for grace as the source.” Selah! Think about it!

I saw a “church sign” not long

ago in West Virginia: “Faith is the Key that Unlocks the Gates of Heaven.” This credo leaves the power of salvation in the lost sinner, as this freewill Baptist church evidently believed. “I Believe” and therefore the arrogant sinner walks up to enter Heaven? Not hardly. What is the truth of the matter? Jesus Christ unlocked the gates of Heaven, did He not? by grace. **“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace” (Rom. 4:16).** Faith cannot go forth of its own merit, but must invariably follow grace. Man will not believe, unless God imparts the gift of faith. **“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Heb. 4:2).** Faith follows grace. Let me repeat that- faith follows grace.

Faith is portrayed as an outlet of glory for actions of God’s grace in Scripture. **“But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. ... And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you” (Matt. 9:22, 28-29).** **“When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (Matt. 8:10).** Faith is never meant to exalt the humble believer. That God would gift a man/woman with such a faith, is the actual marvel of it all. Selah! Think about it!

The question is answered

◊ (Continued on page 14)

Forum #1

(Continued from page 12) ♦

their twenties. But children are still considered children by their parents however old they are. Solomon used the term **"little child"** when talking to God concerning himself, **"And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in"** (I Kings 3:7).

This is what John Gill has to say about these little children, "The word for "children" is used of persons of thirty or forty years of age; and though these are said to be "little," they were so well grown as to be able to go forth out of the city of themselves, without any to guide them, or to take care of them; and were of an age capable not only of taking notice of Elisha's baldness, but knew him to be a prophet, and were able to distinguish between good and evil; and, from a malignant spirit in them, mocked at him as such, and at the assumption of Elisha; which they had knowledge of, and to whom, taught by their idolatrous parents, they had an aversion: some Jewish writers say, they were called "Naarim," which we render "children," because shaken from the commandments, or had shaken off the yoke of the commands; and "little," because they were of little faith."

We live in a society where time outs are given when children are in need of discipline. But I am from the old school, and I still believe what a child needs today more than any time in history is not a time out, but a knock out! But the parents of today do not want to do it God's way, because their little darlings never do anything wrong worth a trip to the wood shed.

Our prisons are full of young men, and women, who probably never saw the inside of a wood shed (the wood shed are my thoughts of what God was saying in Proverbs 22:15).

Regardless of their ages they have parents that tried to raise them. A mother will normally defend her son and daughter, even if in many cases they have been found guilty of murder.

In my senior year of high school I messed up, though it was a minor thing, and I lied to my dad about it. And when he confronted me and got in my face, I made a fist. He said to me, you may be bigger than me (I was six foot three and he was five foot nine) but I will get a ball bat and work you over. Some may say, well, that is just awful! No it was not, I would have used a ball bat on me too, because I deserved it. I was in the wrong; no child should ball up their fist to their parents, it is a sign of disrespect. I was young and dumb, but that is no excuse. **"Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee"** (Deut. 5:16).

To hear parents talk about their children today (regardless of their age, who are far worse and do more destructive things than the children of Elisha's day), they want us to believe their children are innocent and sinless. This is the farthest thing from the truth! I hear children in the store cursing their parents and grandparents. Maybe if a couple of she bears would come out of the woods today and tare at these reprobate children it would put the fear of God in them (but of course, they have no fear anymore, Satan has blinded them).

What comparison can I make with the youth of today compared to those in II Kings 2:23-24? Well, our children of today have no respect for anyone, especially a man of God! So I say they are the same (rebels and reprobates). The same was true in Elisha's day, they despised the prophet of the Lord, and Elisha called upon the Lord to deal with the rebels as the Lord saw fit. We can see the Lord answered Elisha and dealt with 42 of them by using two female bears. The penalty was clearly justified, for to ridicule Elisha was to ridicule the Lord Himself.

Notice, Elisha did not take action himself, he called on the Lord to do it. For all the critics that think this was awful, I say, So?" If you do not like the results of what happened to these children, take it up with God, and see how far you will get with Him. Be careful though He may have a bear or two prepared just for you! God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

then, as "no." Faith is not the (or a) necessary requirement for miraculous healing. Grace is the necessary requirement. That God would deign to heal, is the only requirement of a sovereign God. This is seen clearly in the healing of Malchus' ear, by our Lord: **"And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him"** (Luke 22:50-51). Christ healed his ear, not to satisfy faith's demand, but to sovereignly right a wrong. Selah! Think about it!

I think the question might be more along the lines of: "Was everyone that Christ (and the

Apostles) healed- saved?" 1) Obviously, not everyone that "witnessed" a miracle was saved. **"Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done"** (John 11:45-46). Running in unbelief to the Pharisees, saying, "You are not gonna believe what He did now, He is raising the dead!" 2) Not everyone that participates in a miracle is saved. Christ repudiates any saving faith (grace) in the majority of the fed 5000 in John 6:26-27, **"Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you..."** 3) Saving faith is not always required at the performance of a personal act of healing. In John 9, the blind man was not saved until after the physical healing and a time of separation between himself and the Lord. While being questioned by the leaders, parents and onlookers, he had no real answers of Who healed him, except that **"He is a prophet"** (vs.17), **"Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see"** (John 9:25) and He must be **"of God"** (vs.33). But when Christ comes to him personally in a soul-winning capacity, it has nothing to do with the previous miracle. **"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is**

♦ (Continued on page 15)

Forum #2

(Continued from page 14) ♦

he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.” 4) Will all those healed physically by the power of God be ultimately saved, even as the blind man? Would the Holy Ghost continue to convict Malchus every time he touched his healed ear and remembered the gracious words that emanated from our Saviour? I do not know, beloved reader. Sometimes I want to take that road and see the successful completion of every healing, with a duplicate interior spiritual healing by our inimitable God. But honestly, the Bible does not say that. We can not go beyond Scripture and put God in any boxes not of His own making. Does God answer our prayers and heal family members and friends in our midst, still yet today? Are they all saved, that are healed? Are the miracles of healing in these days, any less miraculous? Any more power of God required to display them openly? A more personal touch? I think we must leave this same immutable God as unchanging in His sovereignty. If He chooses to save Malchus’ ear, but leave him to his natural state and destination of Hell, who on earth could deny that sovereign authority? Likewise, if He chooses to ultimately save every soul that He’s touched personally, then more hallelujah’s to His sovereign grace. Selah! Think about it!

Typically, there is a purpose in the healing. Many times, it is truly the time of salvation, and it is to amplify the glory of God, by showing His power over physical disabilities, as well as spiritual disability. **“Whether is it easier**

to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house” (Mark 2:9-11).

In the account of the blind man already referenced in John 9, Christ Jesus tells the disciples ahead of time, what His purposes were, in not only healing him, but also in allowing him to suffer blindness since birth: **“And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”** God’s glory is again the focus of the story, not faith, except as faith follows His amazing grace.

“And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matt. 13:58). Speaking of Nazareth, the Lord indicates that the lack of faith is what predicates His miracles. But again, and conversely, we must realize that where the Lord intends to perform many miracles of healing, salvation or otherwise (Capernaum and the USA), grace will be the sovereign prelude that prepares the scene for faith and healings. **“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John”** (John 1:6). Where He chooses to bring a revival, none will ever be able to resist and preclude His sovereign will. **“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end**

from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it” (Isa. 46:9-11).

The last part of the question relates to the Apostle Paul’s “perception” of the man’s faith. **“And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother’s womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked”** (Acts 14:8-10). Paul’s perception was through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we commune with God, He will give us answers and abilities in our lives. Paul knew the man believed (enough to be healed), says the Scriptures. At that moment, the Apostle knew what the Lord would have him do, and he spoke as boldly as Elijah on Mt. Carmel in calling down the power of God from Heaven. The one with fire, and the second with healing. Same awesome God. Same awesome power.

But the phrasing of the lame Lystrian’s faith is interesting, also. Two things: 1) The faith came by hearing. **“The same heard Paul speak...” “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Rom. 10:17), 2) The Apostle Paul perceived that he had “faith to be healed.” Not just faith to be saved, which as already proven, is a gift of God through the hearing of the Gospel, but it seems to intimate that his faith went further, in that he

knew God could heal his broken physical condition, as well. **“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened”** (Matt. 7:7-8). Faith needs to be exercised. More of us Christians should be like this Lystra man and expect great things from our great God. Selah! Think about it! Have faith every day in God’s power and blessings and we will not be disappointed. Make faith your personal outlet of glory to your tremendous God.

MATTHEW STEPP



Human Ego

(Continued from page 1) ♦

Old human ego---SELF---played a big part with the disciples of Jesus. At the last supper a quarrel broke out among them as to who was the greatest. “I think I am the greatest ... I think I am the big one of the bunch”---that was the attitude.

WHAT ABOUT OLD EGO TODAY?

It is very pronounced. We see it in the Ministry, and often preachers do not recognize that self is put first. Why do preachers become stooges of their denomination? Why do they put up with things that they know are not right? Why do they go ahead helping to support institutions that are filled with modernism and infidelity? The answer is simple. They know that if they do not cry loyalty to the denomination and to all that is fostered by it, they will be branded as disloyal and will be hindered from rising in the ministry. They will not get the prestige of places on “boards” and “committees,” etc. Also they will be hindered from

♦ (Continued on page 16)

Young & Old

(Continued from page 11) ♦

we are happy; and then I have mother and you."

"But, Elsie, the best of all is yet to be told," and the good man's face lit up with joy; "we have a precious Saviour, just the one for poor people like us. If we put away all thoughts of our own goodness, and cling by faith to Him Who died on the cross, we shall be pardoned for the sake of His merit, made holy by His Spirit, and made happy in His love."

Thus the evening wore away. Mrs. Grey often glanced anxiously at the window, and at length expressed her fears that something must be wrong, or Jem would not be so late; he was generally home to supper an hour before this time. The humble meal had long been spread, but was still untouched, when a loud knock at the street door made every one start, and woke up poor Jessie from her uneasy sleep. Elsie ran and opened. A boy was there with a large basket on his back; but though he asked in a very rough voice, "Does Mr. Grey live here?" Elsie knew in a moment that it was only her brother Jem; and the light of the gas-lamp falling on his merry face made her quite sure that he was unusually well pleased that evening.

Jem and the basket were soon up stairs, and Elsie followed close after. When Jem had loosened his red comforter, and whispered something to little Jessie, which made her smile, he proceeded very slowly to unpack the basket. First, a large loaf was laid on the table, and next a brown paper parcel with a smaller blue one tied to it. Last of all, a paper of candles was produced; and, as if to show that the basket was now really empty, Jem turned it upside

down and took a seat by the fire, while his father and mother both looked at him, to account for this unexpected plenty.

A few words made all plain. Jem had been obliged to carry a large quantity of goods, which had just been ordered at his master's shop, to a late train. When he was about to leave the platform, after having seen his boxes safely into the van, he saw something fall from a gentleman who was hurrying to take his place in one of the carriages. It was a pocket-book. Jem picked it up and handed it to the owner. "You have saved me twenty pounds, my lad," said the gentleman, thanking him; "how much do I owe you?"

"Nothing, sir," was Jem's honest reply, "I have only done my duty."

A five-shilling piece was slipped into Jem's hand, and the rapid train sped on its way. The errand-boy hastened to tell his master the whole story. The silver piece was soon exchanged by the happy boy, for those little comforts he knew were most wanted at home. Three pounds of sugar filled the brown paper parcel, and half a pound of tea the blue. The candles were the kind gift of his employer, and the loaf was bought on his way home, in the baker's shop at the corner. One shilling still remained, which he placed in his mother's hand. How joyfully the little party sat around the table to partake of their evening meal; even Jessie forgot her pain, and Mrs. Grey her unfinished sewing, when the father lifted his hands



in thanksgiving to Him Who has said, **"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."**



Human Ego

(Continued from page 15) ♦

obtaining good pastorates. The interest of self---place---power---honor---prestige---these are at stake, and rather than risk the interests of self, the Lord's interests are betrayed. Denominations have gone infidel because of enough of that sort of thing. Baptists are becoming a servile people, dominated by the denomination, because of that very thing.

EGO THE BIG THING IN CHURCHES

Many church members do not realize how big a place their selfish old ego plays. Everything is okey dokey until something comes up in which they are led to feel slighted, then they suddenly go sour and they are ready to cause a church fuss or else they will pull out and move their membership. Over what? Hurt ego. "My feelings have been hurt!" So what? We have seen people go and join

a church that practiced things they did not believe---that was run unscripturally. We have seen people leave a church in which they believed. Why? Just because their feelings had been wounded about something or other. In other words, they subordinated the truth and the right for the sake of a ruffled and bruised ego.

We have seen church members go along for several years backing the preaching that hit other people and saying "Amen." Then one day the preacher happened to step on their pet sin or failing, and oh boy---! They could not take it. "The very idea of talking about something that I am guilty of!" "Why that singles ME out for rebuke."

We have seen people serve in office, then suddenly they up and resigned. It had come to them that somebody had criticized them about something or other and they could not bear the thought. Of course Jesus was crucified and many of the followers of Christ have been martyred, but oh horror of horrors, how awful that somebody should criticize ME! "Let Jesus bear the cross alone---a pin prick of criticism has nearly killed me!"

The egotists who in reality serve self under the guise of Christians are disgusting. All of us are disgusting when we wilt down before anything that hurts our human pride. It shows that SELF is the big thing---not Christ and His cause and the souls of men and women. Ego---self---human pride---feelings are back behind most church troubles. What is needed is a backyard crucifixion of SELF, such that we can take some criticisms, reproaches, and even kicks and cuffs for the sake of the Lord whom we love.



The Glory of God's

(Continued from page 1) ♦

to separate our joys and pleasures from those of the world. Further, I believe it is important for us to separate our hope, our trust, our service, from that which is rendered by the religious world, or even Christianity at large.

As far as it concerns our salvation, your and my rescue from sin, and our deliverance unto Heaven; your wisdom, or the wisdom of the wise man, matters not at all. As far as it concerns our deliverance from sin or our perseverance in the service of God; your might, or the strength of the strongest man in the world, will not matter at all. As far as it pertains to our repentance and belief in Jesus Christ, or our ability to be faithful, useful, or successful in the service of God; your riches and possessions, or the wealth of the richest man in the world, is not relevant at all. You see, there cannot – there must not – be any measure of glory attributed to you, to me, to any man, or to the abilities, possessions, or worth of any man, when it comes to the salvation that God has delivered unto His people.

This is what I want you to see: God is our glory. God is the glory of His people. God is the only good and the only glorious God. Our glory is not measured in our wisdom, strength, or riches. Rather, our glory is God's glory. To know God. To understand the wisdom and knowledge that He has delivered unto His people. To become acquainted with, and to become the recipient of, His love, His judgment, and His righteousness. These are the thoughts that I want us to consider.

During the sermon we will first notice, from the negative

perspective the attributes or persons wherein our glory and God's glory do not reside.

NOT IN WISDOM

In our text verse we are told that a wise man must not **“glory in his wisdom.”** This is a truth that needs to be shared with the world today! We are not so smart that we can elevate ourselves to deity or to immortality! This is a truth that must be shared with Christianity today! The religious and the conscientious and the wise scholars of Christianity are not so wise that we can add to, or improve God! It seems that the religious world – Christianity included – has elevated wisdom, schooling, education, degrees, and even literacy itself to a position of glory and honor in their attempts to worship God. We read in I Corinthians 1:17-20, **“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”** Much of the world is caught up in its own wisdom. And, much of so-called Christianity is proud – and glories in the wisdom and the knowledge they think they have obtained. We read in Daniel 12:4, **“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.”**

Everyone wants to be considered a scholar today. Everyone seems

to have a new idea, or a new slant on some aspect of religion or religious service – or even a new take on some particular teaching from Scripture.

I believe we live in a time that the people of this world are caught up in learning and knowledge and wisdom – but it is the wrong wisdom! They seek to build up themselves, and seek to magnify their own persons. Mankind wants to think well of himself, and he wants to sit back and admire his own wisdom and his own accomplishments.

However, any inclination to be impressed with mankind's own existence or wisdom or knowledge or accomplishments, is only an attempt to remove from God the glory that is His. A little later in the first chapter of I Corinthians, Paul says this: **“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 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. 1:25-29). No matter how wise men might think they are; and no matter how much man might glorify his own wisdom or abilities or attainments; still, even when the best of these are all congregated together, the entirety of the wisdom of mankind is as nothing when compared to the wisdom of God. None of this mortal wisdom – none of what

has been tainted by man's human nature or intellect – can suffice in the salvation of the souls of men.

NOT IN MIGHT

Our text verse also tells us that the strong man must not **“glory in his might.”** I think a lot of the meaning of our text verses centers on the “trust” that men have in these particular listed characteristics. In other words, a strong man ought not trust in his strength to save him, nor should a wise man place his hope in what wisdom he has, in order to be delivered from the wrath to come. Let me refer you to the words of the Psalmist: **“Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright. Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call”** (Ps. 20:6-9). Surely, King David was a man who was mighty in battle. His deeds are well-known, beginning with the slaying of the lion, the bear, and then even Goliath. Of course, later on he would do further mighty deeds in leading the armies of Israel. The Israelites would sing about how that Saul slew thousands, and David slew ten thousands. And yet, his hope, his trust, his glory was never in his own strength, but in the strength and the might of the Lord. **“And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of**

♦ (Continued on page 18)

The Glory of God's

(Continued from page 17) ♦

hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands" (I Sam. 17:44-47).

To trust in the hand of God, to hope in the strength of Israel, to depend upon God Almighty to save and to deliver – this is the continued theme of the people of God in the Old Testament. Whatever the trouble, whatever the trial, whoever the enemy, it was the Lord God that men must trust in. It has always been a dangerous thing to trust in the might or the strength of men! It has always been a dangerous thing to glory in the might or strength of this world! **"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD"** (Isa. 31:1)!

Let me quote you one more passage of Scripture which elevates God to the position of glory and honor, especially as we compare Him to the paltry abilities and powers of men. **"Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from**

my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:27-31). Today, I recommend to you that you place your trust and hope in the God Who has made all that is. I implore you to set aside your vain glories that are centered around your own abilities or strengths, or the wisdom or might of others. There is no other God to save. There is no other strength to count upon. Only our God, and His strength must be our glory, our hope, our constant source of peace and confidence.

NOT IN RICHES

Thirdly, our text verse tells us that the wealthy person must not **"glory in his riches."** Just consider that all of the riches of this world amounts to nothing in the sight of God Who is the Creator and Ruler of the Universe! Does He need your gifts, your offerings, or even all of your riches, because He lacks in any way? Can any man – with all of his wisdom, strength, or wealth – ever add anything unto our God, or give unto Him something that He stands in need of? It is beyond preposterous to imagine that our riches or the riches of another will suffice in any way, when it comes to appeasing God's wrath, answering the demands of His justice, or in any wise improving our standing

before God!

I want you to be reminded that it is not in our riches that we should boast. Nor is there any salvation for us in our riches (See Ps. 49:1-13). We must not glory in riches or abundance in the material things and possessions of this world. The Lord addressed this issue during His earthly Ministry: **"And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first"** (Mark 10:23-31). The Jews had the mistaken idea that the rich among them, must be rich, because of the blessings of God – which must be owed to them, because of their goodness or

usefulness in the service of God. However, these riches do not guarantee God's favor, much less the salvation that men are in need of. In fact, in the face of riches, and in the pursuit of riches, many men have been lost and undone!

The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to warn the Church at Ephesus of these same things: **"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life"** (I Tim. 6:17-19). Do not put your trust in riches, these cannot save you. In fact, riches will many times serve only to distract you from what is truly important – the glory of God in our lives.

IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

I mentioned previously that if the entirety of the wisdom of mankind were assembled in one place, it still would not even compare to the wisdom of God. I suppose that we could say the same about everything that we have talked about. Jeremiah mentioned the wisdom, the might, and the riches of mankind. And, though these may appear very lofty from time to time, our glory ought to be in God. If all of the wisdom, might, and riches of mankind – from the time of Adam until now – were assembled together in one place, they would not even be worthy of consideration when compared to just a small fraction of the wisdom, might, and riches that are found in God!

♦ (Continued on page 19)

The Glory of God's

(Continued from page 18) ♦

I believe that this is what Jeremiah is telling us when he says, **"But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD"** (Jer. 9:24). The only glory that exists for us, is found in God! The only glory that matters is to know the glories of our God! Do you want to glory? Do you desire to lift someone (or something) up? Do you desire to exalt someone? Then, glory in the understanding that God is God. Glory in the fact that you have been made to know God for Who He is. Glory in the salvation that has been accomplished on your behalf. Glory in the faith that you have in Jesus Christ – that faith which is given to you by the grace of God! Paul told the Galatians, **"As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature"** (Gal. 6:12-15). Our glory is in the attributes and the characteristics of our God and Saviour. Our glory is in the person and work of Jesus Christ. What knowledge we have of Him – which has been granted

unto us – should enthrall us and should capture our attention. Our devotion should be to Him, because of His glory, and what He has done for us.

To sum this up, I believe that you might even say that the glory of God's people is in our association or relationship with God. He is all-glorious – and we are nothing. But, when He comes to us, and makes Himself known to us, just a little of that glory will be associated with us. It is not we that are glorified, but what Christ has done for us. And, the more we seek to understand these things, and the more we seek to grow in this understanding and knowledge of God; then, the more we will be able to display the glory of God in our own lives.

"The glory of God's people" rests in God. The way that God displays that glory amongst mankind, is through His dealings with men, and our interaction with Him. This is where true glory lies. And, every one that is a child of God ought to constantly recognize that our glory is in God alone.



A Baptist Fable

(Continued from page 1) ♦

instruments. He tells the unborn child about the artistic gifts of many sorts including painting, drawing, sculpting, etc. Athletic ability is mentioned as well as superior manual dexterity and coordination skills. The unborn child is informed about the great gifts of a superior intellect, physical beauty and great speaking ability. Along with the information about these various gifts the unborn baby is told about the benefits of each one. He or she is regaled with wonderful things such as popularity, prestige, wealth and high positions of power that come

along with the various gifts. Then the unborn baby is told that he or she must make a decision as to what gift they want, if any. Often they are told that they must pray a special prayer and ask God to give them the gift they desire. Angels are kept quite busy carrying this message to every unborn child. God would not be fair, you know, if He did not give every person in the world an equal opportunity to make this decision and receive His gift: even the people who have never heard of Him. End of fable.

Do you really believe God sends His angels to make such offers to unborn infants? Of course you do not! The reality is this: some people are given very outstanding gifts. From birth they possess intellect and ability superior to others. We call them "gifted" because they have been endowed – they have been freely and naturally provided with a certain ability or abilities far above and beyond what people usually have. They did not earn this ability though they may have since birth improved it and developed it. Gifted persons did nothing to qualify for their gift or gifts. They did not reach out and take them. They did not ask for these gifts. They did not earn them. Neither did they receive them because they would make good use of them for some use their gifts to do wicked things. Some gifted people never develop or make good use of their special abilities. We can say with certainty that gifted people received as a gift whatever special ability or abilities they may have. Such people as we have described are called gifted because God gave and they received this or that ability although they did nothing to receive it.

Do you get the point? A gift is given: bestowed. It is received. The use of the word received does

not imply in any way whatsoever that a gift must be requested. Neither does the word received imply in any way whatsoever any action on the part of the recipient. In plain and simple words you do not have to ask for a gift and you do not have to do anything to receive one. These words do not mean, for example, that your rich uncle must wait until you ask him in order to give you a million dollars. Neither do you have to do anything to receive it since he is able to leave it to you without your knowledge or involvement. On the other hand, if you are unable to go to him to get it he is able to bring it to you or in some other way see that you receive it. Are you getting the point?

So in the Bible when we read: **"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many"** (Rom. 5:14-15). Notice that the above quotation compares and contrasts two things: the act of Adam and its results with the act of Jesus Christ and its results. All died spiritually because of Adam's act of sin. Christ's act of sacrifice has caused the "gift by grace" to abound to many – not to all, but to those for whom He died. Neither those affected by Adam's act nor those affected by the act of Christ were actively involved in what was done. Would you please read that last sentence again! While all men were seminally and positionally in Adam, only

♦ (Continued on page 20)

A Baptist Fable

(Continued from page 19) ♦

some men are in Christ and this by Divine selection. Furthermore those men who are in Christ did not get there because of anything that they did. The Bible says: **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved”** (Eph. 1:3-6). Notice these words: **“he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world”** and **“he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”** God did the choosing! God did the placing of persons in Christ! Being in Christ the Beloved is one of those **“spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”** (See Ephesians 1:3). Those thus blessed; those chosen in Christ; those accepted in the Beloved did not put themselves there. They are not there as a result of having made a choice or a decision or doing any other thing for this was determined **“before the foundation of the world.”** God did not send an angel and ask them if they wanted to be in the Beloved!

So then the Bible is clear: men and women are positionally either in Christ or not and this was determined before the world came into existence. What about repentance and faith? What about the godly sorrow that works repentance? The Bible says: **“And**

when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48). Some people are ordained to eternal life! The Lord Jesus said: **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”** (John 6:37). Some people were given by the Father to the Son! While no man or woman has the ability as natural persons to come to Christ, God works in those given to Christ drawing them to Him. We know this because the Lord Jesus said, **“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”** (John 6:44). God’s chosen ones – lost men and women – are spiritually dead, but are made alive by the new birth. This new birth comes not as a result of man’s exercising his will or making a decision. We know this because God’s Word specifically tells us that those who receive Christ do so because they **“...were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”** (John 1:13).

Why is it then that many Baptists subscribe to the fable that God’s gift of the new birth is not a gift, but is rather an offer that requires an action? They are like the lying telemarketers who plague us telling us that there is a gift waiting for us. If they have a gift for us, why not just send it our way? Of course they require that you participate in a survey or purchase a service or whatever. What they offer is not a gift at all: it is rather a reward for doing something they want you to do. But we would ask of today’s Baptists: where do they find in the Bible that God offers His grace to all men? Does He offer it to

those who never hear of Christ? Give me one verse which teaches such a thing! If God made such an offer it would only be rejected and trodden underfoot by all who are not Christ’s sheep. We know that God operates by grace in some people. We know that others are called **“reprobates”** (2 Corinthians 13:5) and these God passes by.

It is true that God **“...now commandeth all men every where to repent”** (Acts 17:30). He also commands **“be ye holy,”** in Leviticus 20:7. 1 Peter 1:15, 16 reiterates this as follows: **“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written. Be ye holy; for I am holy.”** In Matthew 5:48 the Lord Jesus said, **“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”** We readily admit that most often the word “perfect” carries with it the idea of completeness rather than sinlessness. But here honesty demands that the word means sinlessness in this verse since we are exhorted to the kind of perfection possessed by the Father. The perfection here is **“even as your father which is in heaven is perfect.”** Does God command the impossible? We must answer yes!

But man’s lack of ability to obey is not God’s doing. Traffic laws are intended to produce safe driving, but it is possible for a driver to get into such a state as to be unable to comply with the commands of the laws. He can get drunk, high on dope or even be too exhausted to comply with the demands of the various traffic laws. He cannot blame the lawmakers for his condition. They are still right in what they have commanded drivers to do, are they not? So it is that God is right in commanding

men to do what is right – even sinful men. The fact that man is unable in himself to obey God’s commands – to be perfect to be holy and to repent and believe – is man’s fault – not God’s. For we being seminally and positionally in Adam are responsible for the inability – the awful condition in which we find ourselves. It seems clear that God’s commands to be holy and to be perfect and to repent and to believe, etc., are designed to show us our helplessness and our hopelessness. In a word, they are designed to show us our need of a Savior. God shows the elect individual in this way that he is a sinner and unable to keep God’s holy law. Thus God comes in grace regenerating His elect and thus enabling them to repent, believe and walk in newness of life.

But what happens in contemporary Baptist ranks? Having been repeatedly told this Baptist fable, the average person having been assured of his ability to do something and cause himself to be born again is full of self confidence. He hears average Baptist preaching and thinks that if he or she can produce by human effort the effects of regeneration (repentance, faith and a changed life) then they will be born again by God. They actually think that there is something they can do to bring about their own spiritual birth. Generally it is not their fault. It is the teaching of their preachers that have brought this their hearers to believe this false gospel. Consider the absurdity of what they are thinking. Pardon the crudeness of my illustration but think with me, please. New born babies cry and drink and burp. If a doctor takes a dead baby and somehow forces it to drink and burp and forces air out of its

♦ (Continued on page 21)

A Baptist Fable

(Continued from page 20) ♦

lungs in order to make it cry does that mean that the baby is alive? No, of course not. And so it is with many Baptists. They think if a person does certain things – if he can be talked into admitting that he stole a cookie from his mother's cookie jar or a crayon from another kid in kindergarten – he has confessed that he is a sinner. Whereupon he is told that such sins will keep him out of heaven and keep God's blessings from falling upon him unless he tells God that he is sorry for his sins. Ah, and then the capstone: he is told if he will have enough faith to believe in Christ and reach out and "receive" i.e. take the offer of eternal life he will be saved. All he has to do is pray a prayer inviting Jesus into his heart or asking God to save him or whatever. Then he will probably be told that if he was sincere he is a child of God because God said in His Word. **"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"** (Rom. 10:13). (It does not matter that God did not say that sincerity is a requirement for calling upon the name of the Lord. But it must be a requirement for multitudes have prayed and invited Christ in and are evidently still lost. Such people must have not been sincere enough. They have equated sincerity in praying a onetime "sinners prayer" with calling upon the name of the Lord and the two are not the same. So they add to the Word of God by saying that those who pray the sinner's prayer must be sincere. Then they guarantee salvation based upon a sincere act of a spiritually dead sinner!)

So just what is it that they have done? First of all they have based their whole scheme of salvation

on the ability of man to come to Christ: an ability which does not exist. We quoted the following words of Christ above, but reinsert them here for emphasis: **"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"** (John 6:44). Second: they have failed to understand the difference between a gift and an offer and have made God out to be a super-telemarketer with a gimmick: He will send eternal life as a reward for your cooperation – just do something. That is quite clearly teaching works for salvation and contrary to the Scripture. God's Word says. **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"** (Eph. 2:8-9). Only a prejudiced mind can distort the meaning of those two verses. Third: they have reversed the cause and effect in the matter of salvation: the effects of being born again are godly sorrow, repentance, faith and newness of life. They believe that by producing things similar to the effects of the new birth they have brought it about. If they can persuade someone to "repent" and "believe" and "call" – by producing these effects of salvation or a reasonable facsimile of them, they think the new birth has come about. However. **"that which is born of the flesh is flesh,"** according to Christ in John 3:6. Is it any wonder then that Baptist churches are filled with worldlings who must be entertained with thrills and excitement to keep them coming and to keep them awake when they do come? A nearby Baptist pastor recently boasted "I am proud to be a part of the flock on the block that rocks." And this in the part of the

country referred to as the "buckle on the Bible-belt!" Other Baptist churches which may not resort to such thrilling entertainments as others do are kept busy berating their people and "preaching hard on sin" in order to keep their goat-members in line.

Merriam Webster Dictionary lists the first meaning of fable as "a fictitious narrative or statement." In other words, a fable is not true. Neither is this Baptist fable whether told by them or by others. Can you see the difference between those who have been talked into doing certain things by promises of salvation and those who have been arrested by Christ on their "Damascus Road"? The apostle warned of such a time as ours with these words: **"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables"** (II Tim. 4:3-4). Paul did not say that people would be turned into fables but "unto" fables. People like fables. They are entertaining. Fables often make

folk feel good about themselves. And what better feeling to a fleshly person can there be than to be told that he or she has the ability to be saved by doing something. Their pride can be kept intact after all: going forward is only a brief time of embarrassment and admitting that you stole that cookie and that crayon is not so very bad. There is no mention in the Baptist fable of how God saved either Paul on his way to Damascus, or old Job who cried out, **"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"** (Job 42:5-6). Believing this Baptist fable is not the same as seeing God's holiness and your own sinfulness so that you abhor yourself. Only the Spirit of God operates graciously in men and women in such was as to show them their awful sinfulness and the glorious Savior who, by the sacrifice of Himself, really did atone for sins. Do you have the evidences of the new birth? Or is your pitiful evidence only the fact that one time you did something?



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Path of the Just

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

We all know what a path is. It is a track or way worn by the footsteps of people on foot. The Bible makes known that there is a path in which the wicked walk as well as a trail where the righteous

are found. All paths do not lead to the same place, nor are all travelers of the same character.

My text reveals four truths: First, there is a way of righteousness--- **"the path of the just."** Second, the way of the

♦ (Continued on page 22)

Path of the Just

(Continued from page 21) ♦

righteous is a shining way--- **“is as the shining light.”** Third, it is a growing light--- **“that shineth more and more.”** Fourth, at the end it will arrive at--- **“the perfect day.”**

THE PATH

The path of the just is a path of righteousness. The psalmist said: **“He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake”** (Ps. 23:3). The believer has **“the righteousness which is of God by faith”** (Phil. 3:9). There is in him a hunger and thirst for righteousness. He seeks God’s Kingdom and His righteousness first. He serves God in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life. He is a servant of righteousness and bears the fruit of righteousness. **“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him”** (I John 2:29).

In striving to fulfill all righteousness, the just is often persecuted for righteousness’ sake. In spite of this, he continues to work righteousness, knowing he shall be rewarded according to his righteousness. **“The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness”** said the psalmist (Ps. 18:20). Again he cried: **“Verily there is a reward for the righteous”** (Ps. 58:11).

The path of the just is a path of life. Psalms 16:11 says: **“Thou wilt shew me the path of life.”** He who walks in this path has been given spiritual life by the Holy Spirit. He has been made alive unto God. To him has been granted repentance unto life. He has come to see that his name was in the Book of Life before the foundation of the world. **“He that hath the Son hath life; and**

he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (I John 5:12).

Through faith God has brought him to see he has eternal life. **“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”** (John 3:36). Because he has eternal life he walks in newness of life. He daily feeds upon the bread of life and drinks from the fountain of life and holds forth the Word of Life to unbelievers. There is in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The path of the just is a path of peace. **“Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace”** (Prov. 3:17). The just man has peace and joy through believing on Christ. Jesus told the woman: **“Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace”** (Luke 7:50). The Lord blesses His people with peace. He bestows upon them peace like a river, a peace which is incomprehensible to the human mind. This peace from God rules in the heart of the regenerate man. In the path of the just righteousness and peace kiss each other.

The justified man does good and seeks peace. He is a peace-maker, not a peace breaker. He follows after the things which make for peace, and he strives to live peaceable with all men. He witnesses about the gospel of peace and of the covenant of peace.

The path of the just is the path of God’s commandments. **“Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight”** (Ps. 119:35). The unjust man has a natural aversion to God’s commandments. But free grace causes a justified man to keep God’s law. God promises in Ezekiel 36:27: **“And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and**

do them.”

The just man delights greatly in the commandments of God. He loves them above fine gold. He knows the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep the commandments. **“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”** (I John 5:3). Revelation 14:12 says that the saints **“keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”**

The path of the just is an old path. **“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls”** (Jer. 6:16). It is the path of the old patriarchs and prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the inspired Apostles, and our Baptist forefathers. It is well-beaten by those who have gone on before.

This old path is the good way. It brings rest like you have never enjoyed before. This rest comes not from wealth, health, or earthly things. It flows from the gospel and faith in Jesus Christ. In this path there is rest for the soul in all its faculties. This old trail gives present rest, and it guarantees the future beyond all fears.

THE SHINING WAY

The text says the path of the just is a shining way. Those who walk in this path are **“the children of light.”** They are **“lights in the Lord and walk in the light as God is light.”** They let their light shine before men who see their good works. The just is the only source of light which this dark world has. **“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom**

ye shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15).

The light of the Christian cannot be hid; it is like a city set on a hill. He influences the world for God and good. The Apostle Paul said: **“We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men”** (I Cor. 4:9). We are living epistles known and read of all men (II Cor. 3:2).

The poet has said: “Christ has no hands, but our hands ... To do His work today; ... He has no feet but our feet ... To lead men in His way ... He has no tongue but our tongues ... To tell men how He died ... He has no help but our help ... To bring them to His side ... We are the only Bible ... The careless world will read ... We are the sinner’s gospel ... We are the scoffer’s creed ... We are the Lord’s last message ... Given in deed and word ... What if the type is crooked ... What if the print is blurred ... What if our hands are busy ... With other work than His ... What if our feet are walking ... Where sin’s allurements is ... What if our tongues are speaking ... Of things His lips would spurn ... How can we hope to help Him ... And hasten His return?”

Still another has written: “You are writing a Gospel, a chapter a day ... By deeds that you do, by words that you say ... Men read what you write, whether faithless or true ... Say, what is the Gospel according to you?”

The Lord is the light of the just. **“The LORD is my light and my salvation”** (Ps. 27:1). The children of light follow the One Who said: **“I am the light of the world”** (John 8:12). They have come to see the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, having passed from darkness to light. They are lights to those who sit in darkness whom they reflect the

♦ (Continued on page 23)

Path of the Just

(Continued from page 22) ♦

Father of lights and the Sun of Righteousness.

The righteous walk in the morning light which shines out of obscurity and puts an end to the works of darkness. We go on our way with a holy security and serenity of mind as we walk in the light. God has given to us a light which shines in a dark place. **"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life"** (Prov. 6:25). Our light is the Holy Scriptures.

Heaven be praised for the light of God's Word! The blessed Book reveals much about God and ourselves. It shows what is false and what is true. It is not a light to our eyes to fill our heads with speculations, but a light to our feet to direct us in an orderly walk. **"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"** (Ps. 119:105).

A GROWING LIGHT

The light of the righteous shines more and more. It is not like a meteor which soon burns out. It is not like a candle which burns dim. The light of the justified is like the sun rising and going forth shining brighter and brighter.

Job 17:9 says: **"The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."** Notwithstanding opposition from Satan and men, the just hold on his way with strength never to let go. He may slip, slide, stumble and even fall, yet he gets up again and pursues the way of righteousness. The just not only holds on his way, but he grows stronger and stronger. Trials, experience, and age make him more vigorous and lively in his duty. He will not go from bad

to worse, but he will continually grow better and wiser.

The true believer grows in grace. **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"** (II Pet. 3:18). We are to grow **"unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"** (Eph. 4:13). The little lambs are to grow into sheep. The little children are to become men and women. We are to **"go on unto perfection"** (Heb. 6:1), **"...to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"** (Phil. 3:14). We are to **"run with patience the race that is set before us"** (Heb. 12:1). We must fight a good fight and finish our course (II Tim. 4:7).

Someone may be saying: "I know a person who professed to be justified by faith, and he is living a life of sin. He is certainly not growing in grace. "What about him?"

The answer is simple. Dead men do not grow. A man who has never been saved by God's grace will never grow in grace. **"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"** (I John 2:4). **"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now"** (I John 2:9). The man who professes to know God and lives a life of rebellion against Him has not apostatized. John said **"is in darkness even until now."** He makes no mention of this one ever having the light at all. He was a mere pretender, a hypocrite, a stage player in religion, a man who seemed to be religious, a Judas goat.

THE PERFECT DAY

Solomon said that the just man will in the end arrive at the perfect day. The enlightened soul

will never know perfection till it comes to the perfect world. Of this time Jesus Christ said: **"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"** (Matt. 13:43). The Prophet Daniel declared: **"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever"** (Dan. 12:3).

Now we see through a glass darkly; we only know in part. None of those justified by faith have obtained perfection yet. We have not apprehended even though we reach forth unto the things which are before. In many things we all stumble, even though we are to consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. When we have done our best we are still only unprofitable servants.

There is a better day coming for the children of God. We will not always be tempted, tortured, and tossed by Satan. These mortal eyes will not for ever flow with tears of sorrow. These sinful bodies of flesh are not the permanent dwelling place of these renewed spirits of ours. This persecuting world will not always be at our side persecuting us. There is a glory to be revealed in us at the perfect day. Oh, the wisdom of walking in the path of the just!

THE BROAD WAY

I have only shown one side of the coin so far. There is an entirely different state to the wicked who walk in darkness. **"The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble"** (Prov. 4:19). The unsaved walk in the broad road to eternal night where they shall be **"...wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever"**

♦ (Continued on page 24)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

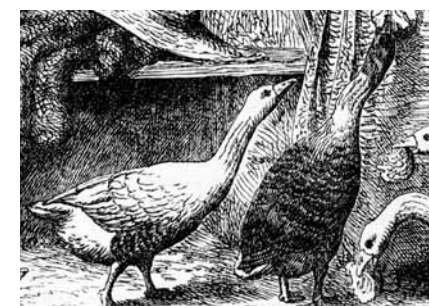
Financial Report

8-1-2018 to 8-31-2018

Beginning Balance	\$294.87
RECEIPTS:	
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	150.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	300.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	100.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	25.00
Anonymous	2,010.00
Dividing checks	300.00
Sub Total	\$4,652.50
TOTAL	\$4,947.37

EXPENDITURES:

Printing	490.00
Postage	572.81
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Supplies	99.00
Dividing checks	300.00
Bank Charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,950.77
ENDING BALANCE	\$996.60



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

8-1-2018 to 8-31-2018

Beginning Balance	\$1,466.18
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
.....	625.00
TOTAL	2,091.18
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	403.98
Program production	195.00
Bank charge	10.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	608.98
Interest	+0.01
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,482.21

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder Roger Reed has written a book titled *My Years as a New Testament Baptist Preacher*. The book was written for young men (not necessarily young in age) called to the gospel ministry. They will be offered free to anyone who emails him at: pstrreed@aol.com or it can be requested by mail at: West Jefferson Baptist Mission, 90 E. Main Street, West Jefferson Ohio 43162-1206. Please include your mailing address with your request.

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

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

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

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



Path of the Just

(Continued from page 23) ♦

(Jude 13).

The lost stumble and fall into sin, and their nature prevents their avoiding it. **"...The wicked.... They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness"** (Ps. 82:4-5). Job said: **"Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him"** (Job 18:5-6). Though the unsaved shines like the sun for a moment, he shall be put out like a candle. His prosperity, like a candle, shall consume itself.

Someone who needs this may be saying by now: "I am not just. I am not walking in the path of the just. I am a mass of wickedness. Hell is my certain home at death."

If the Spirit has shown you that you are a wicked man, then by God's grace forsake your wicked way. Repent of your sins against God. Trust in the blood of the Son of God for salvation from sins. The Lord has said: **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"** (Ezek. 33:11).



The Short Pews
Brief Articles
by Curtis Pugh
(1944 - 2018)

WHY JESUS WAS SILENT
Why, when accused before Pilate, did Jesus keep silent? Could He not have mounted a defense? Could He not have answered those men who falsely accused Him? He was innocent of the charges and Pilate was seeking a way to escape sentencing Him. But the Scripture says of Jesus, **"And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly"** (Matt. 27:12-14).

Christ would have known precisely what words to say – what approach to take – to silence the lies of the Jews against Him. When the temple guards came to arrest Jesus in the garden, He knew exactly what was going to happen to Him for John 18:4 says: **"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?"** He was not surprised into silence, not knowing what to say. There was another

reason: a very important one. When in the garden, Jesus prayed three times that the cup of suffering might pass from Him. He prayed, **"... Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt"** (Matt. 26:39). Was He so fearful of physical pain that He could not face it? Was He a coward? In facing this time of suffering before going into the garden Jesus had said, **"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour"** (John 12:27). Something happened in the garden. What was it? Luke tells us that Christ's agony in the garden was intense. He wrote, **"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"** (Luke 22:44).

Paul tells us exactly what happened in that garden. In II Corinthians 5:21 he wrote: **"For he [God] hath made him [Jesus] to be sin for us, [He] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."** The sins of all the sinless Good Shepherd's sheep were laid upon Him that night. The reason that Christ made no defense before Pilate was this: He had no defense. He had become sin or the sin offering and had His people's sins upon Him. By imputation the sinless One was guilty!

This absence of Christ's defense was prophesied in Isaiah 53:7. There it was predicted: **"He [Christ] was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."** As Hebrews 9:28 says: **"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many..."** The great question is this: did He bear your sins?



ARTICLE INDEX	
A Baptist Fable by Curtis Pugh	p. 1
Cockrell's Corner	p. 2
Forum	pp. 12-13
Gleanings for the Young & Old	p.10
The Glory of God's People by Paul Stepp	p. 1
Human Ego, Our Greatest Enemy by Roy Mason	p. 1
Little Hills by Nathaniel Hille	p. 5
Narrow Paths by Doug Newell IV	p. 9
The Path of the Just by Milburn Cockrell	p. 21
Perilous Times of the Last Days, and the Only Antidote by William Wileman ..	p. 1
Small Drops by Joseph M. Sidders	p. 7
The Short Pews by Curtis Pugh	p. 24