

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

The Church of God

By Nathaniel Hille
of Plant City, Florida

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

The Lord spoke unto Simon Peter stating that He would build His **"my church."** Now we know that the church is not the building, which is to say, it is not the brick and mortar, the wood and the stucco, the plaster and paint. No, that is the church-house, or the structure which houses the church. A shelter where the church may assemble and hold worship services to her Lord



and Savior. The church is the members. Those who comprise the church are the building of which Christ spoke of. Several times in the

Scriptures the church is referred to as a "building." Simon Peter stated, **"Ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"** (I Peter 2:5). Paul wrote of the **"...the house of God, which is the church of the living God,**

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An Idol America

By Joseph Sidders
of Pemberville, Ohio

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priest-hood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as



evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Peter 2:9-12).

America is a great and blessed nation. With her birth and rise to power being so recent in world history many have marveled as surely the hand of God has been with this country and her people. The nation was founded on a constitution unheard of as the forefathers were led to learn from the history of other failures in leadership and

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Learn To Do Well

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

My text verses are found in Isaiah 1:16-17: **"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil. Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless,**



plead for the widow."

I want us to think, for just a little while, about the teaching that is presented to us here in these two verses, primarily

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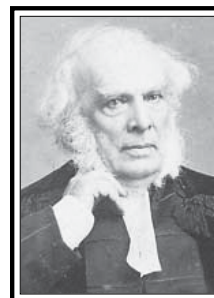
The Holy Life of the Justified

By Horatius Bonar
(1803 - 1889)

"To him that worketh not, but believeth," says the apostle, speaking of the way in which we are reckoned just before God.

Does he by this speech make light of good works? Does he encourage an unholy walk? Does he use a rash word, which had better been left unspoken?

No, truly. He is laying the foundation of good works. He is removing the great obstacle to a holy life, viz. the bondage of an unforgiven state. He is speaking, by the power of the Holy Ghost,



the words of truth and soberness. The difference between working and believing is that which God would have us learn,

lest we confound these two things, and so destroy them both. The order and relation of these two things are here very explicitly laid down, so as to anticipate the error of many who mix up working and believing together, or who make believing the result of working,

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

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WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	95.9	3,000 FM
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WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	101.9	3,000 FM
KARL, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.	550	5,000 AM

The Church of God

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the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). Also, Paul described the church as "God's building" (I Cor. 3:9). So it is quite clear that the church of God is referred to as a building.

Now, when you have a building there are many things that are essential. In this lesson, we want to note three essentials: 1) There must be a builder, 2) There must be a foundation, 3) There must be a time when it began to be built, when the builder "broke ground" as the expression is used. In our present day, there are a multitude of "churches." Yet, only one of them is the church of God, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we search the Scriptures, when we compare Scripture with Scripture, we will be able to find landmarks, bulwarks, characteristics of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we have those characteristics, we will be able to examine all of the churches in our modern day by them and see which church is the "my church" of which "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

THE BUILDER OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

As we said, one of the essentials of a building is it must have a builder. Such is the case with the church of the Lord Jesus. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus Christ is the builder of His own "my church."

Christ Jesus is the builder of His "my church" in every sense. He is the one who laid the foundation (I Cor. 3:11). He is the one who

took material and built it into His "my church." The Lord is the one who purchased His "my church"—"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Whenever a builder goes about to erect a building he takes materials that are already prepared by another. He will get lumber from a lumber yard. He does not go to the woods and cut down the tree and process the tree. No, the builder gets materials that are already processed and prepared. If the builder needs bricks he buys them already made by another. He does not make his own bricks with clay and shale. The builder takes the prepared materials and begins to arrange them according to His own plan. So, too, did Christ Jesus build His "my church." John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. He went before Him to prepare the way (John 1:23; Matt. 3:1-3). John preached repentance and people repented. John had authority to baptize and those whom repented at his preaching, he baptized. Christ Jesus came and took some of those individuals of whom had repented and received scriptural baptism at the hands of John the Baptist and built His "my church." The Lord prayed all night before "...he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles: Simon (whom he also named Peter) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot,

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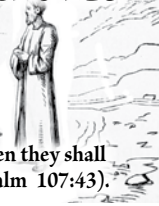
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Light Contemplations

By Luke Austin
of Cadillac, Michigan

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD" (Psalm 107:43).



LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD WEARY CHRISTIAN

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13).

Too many of God's people carry a tremendous burden today. They are full of worry and anxiety over politics and the condition of our country. But what is your calling? Are you not a wandering pilgrim, a sojourner in the earth? You are a stranger in this earth like Abraham. If you dwelled in tents, and were just passing through, you would pack light. Why do you insist on carrying the troubles of this world? This world that is reserved unto fire. **"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"** (II Peter 3:7). Why strive to save a world that is temporal?

Yes, things are getting bad, I honestly do not see them getting better. And yes, if we keep moving in the direction of socialism, we will soon be enemy number one. Christian liberty must be snuffed out under a Marxist government. It is coming. But again, why do you worry and fret? Do you know Him? Let them take your life and what have they accomplished? They sent you home. It is not a pleasant thought to the flesh,

but it is our calling to suffer for Christ's sake. And is not your mortal life but a vapor? Again why do you labor to save that which temporal? **"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"** (James 4:14).

In Paul's day he suffered much for Christ's sake. He was beaten numerous times, stoned, and left for dead. He suffered shipwreck, hunger, cold, and imprisonment. Yet from his own pen he writes these words in Romans, **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"** (Rom. 8:18).

How did the song writer say it? "Just one glimpse of Him in glory will the toils of life repay." Drop a few worries and cares dear Christian. This life is short, this earth will pass, then fly to the face of Christ at last.

(Luke Austin is a member of the Cadillac Baptist Church of Cadillac, Michigan.)



The Church of God

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who also was the traitor" (Luke 6:12-15). And these apostles did God first set in the church (I Cor. 12:28). And everyone of these apostles had been baptized by John the Baptist (Acts 1:21-26).¹ These individuals were materials that had been prepared

at the preaching, baptizing, and teaching of John the Baptist. We also know that Jesus Himself was baptized by John the Baptist (Mark 1:9-11).

Now, when Christ Jesus began to build His **"my church"** He would first lay the foundation. Then atop that foundation, Jesus placed what is commonly referred to as the "chief-cornerstone." Now a chief-cornerstone is "The stone which lies at the corner of two walls, and unites them; the principal stone, and especially the stone which forms the corner of the foundation of an edifice" (*Webster's 1828 Dictionary*). The chief-cornerstone is laid in its place before all others. It is the model stone. All other stones are to be fashioned after it in length, breadth, and depth. All stones are made to conform to this "chief-cornerstone." In the edifice of the church, the chief-cornerstone is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. **"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners [sojourners], but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"** (Eph. 2:19-22); **"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of**

the corner" (I Peter 2:6,7). Now this chief-cornerstone was one that had been prepared by John the Baptist. Jesus had received scriptural baptism at the hand of John the Baptist. He would then, as the builder of His **"my church,"** set Himself as the chief-cornerstone. He would then begin to set others in the church who had also been prepared, first being those apostles (Luke 6:12-15; I Cor. 12:28). Simon Peter referred to those who were saved as **"lively stones"** or "living stones" (I Peter 2:5). The idea conveyed here is that you and I who are saved are no longer dead, but alive spiritually and we are stones in the hands in the builder of His **"my church."** He adds us, and builds us together with others who have been saved as a **"...spiritual house...to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"** (I Peter 2:5).

Every **"my church"** has been built the same way down through history. Jesus Christ takes materials that have been prepared by the preaching of repentance and scriptural baptism and adds them unto His **"my church."** We read of that happening in Acts 2:1-41. Simon Peter preached the gospel and instructed those who were pricked in their hearts to **"...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."** (Acts 2:38). And on that day **"...they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls"** (Acts 2:41). Today, Christ Jesus continues to build His **"my church."** The message of repentance is declared and those who are pricked in their heart repent and believe the gospel.

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The believer then submits to scriptural baptism and is added unto the church of the living God another **“lively stone”** (I Peter 2:5), fashioned like unto the chief-corner stone, is added unto the **“my church”** in that location.

The Lord Jesus is still building His **“my church”** today. He does so by those who are co-laborers with Christ (I Cor. 3:9). God is building His **“my church”** through the evangelistic endeavors of His people. Jesus Christ sent forth His church into all the world to make disciples, baptize them, and then teach them to observe all that He commanded (Matt. 28:18-20). Every church member, every pastor, every evangelist is to be laboring together with God to build His **“my church.”** We are but instruments in His hands. One of us will plant; another will water, but it is God who gives the increase (I Cor. 3:6,7). It is God who does the building—**“Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it...”** (Ps. 127:1).

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

Every building must have a foundation. If a building is built without a foundation it will not stand. The foundation must also be strong and sure. For if it has a weak foundation, whatever is built upon the foundation will give way...for the foundation is weak (Matt. 7:24-29). The Scripture tells us that the wise man built his house upon a rock. The foolish man build his house upon the sand. And when the storm came only one of the houses stood. The one that was built upon the rock stood. Christ Jesus is not a foolish man. In fact,

He is referred to as wisdom in Proverbs 8. Christ Jesus is the wisest man there ever was, is, or shall be. He most assuredly built His **“my church”**—the house of God upon a rock. **“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”** (Matt. 16:18). It is clear that Christ Jesus built His church upon a rock. The question that needs to be answered is who is “this rock” that Christ would build His **“my church”** upon? Remember, this house that Christ would build must stand against the storms down through time. It must prevail against the gates of hell (Matthew 16:18).

Some claim that the church was built upon Simon Peter. The Lord Jesus is addressing Simon Peter in Matthew 16:17-18. Jesus calls Simon **“Peter”** in Matthew 16:18. **“Peter”** means a piece of a rock, a detached fragment of a rock. The Lord Jesus tells Simon that he is a piece of a rock, a detached fragment. **“And I say also unto thee (Simon), That thou art Peter”**...Simon thou art a piece of a rock, a detached fragment. Simon was one of those **“lively stones”** (I Peter 2:5). Simon Peter is not the rock upon which the church is built. So who is the rock? It is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, **“...That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church...”** (Matt. 16:18). The word **“rock”** means a cliff, or a ledge. Quite a difference between “Peter” and “rock.” The imagery is that Peter is a small stone, but Christ, the foundation is a massive cliff. Never in Scripture is Peter referred to as a rock. But the Lord Jesus is! **“And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that**

spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (I Cor. 10:4). **“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ”** (I Cor. 3:11). In the Old Testament Jesus was typified as a rock multiple times. He was the rock Moses smote one time and water came forth (Ex. 17:1-7); He was the rock Moses was instructed to speak to that it might bring forth water (Num. 20:2-13); Jesus was the rock Moses was instructed to hide in the cleft of (Ex. 33:22); David ascribed the Lord Jesus as being His rock (Ps. 18:1-3) and Jesus was the rock that was higher than David (Ps. 61:2). And, so it is clear that Christ Jesus is Himself the foundation of the church. He is the **“this rock”** upon which His **“my church”** is being built. It is upon this foundation, that Christ adds **“lively stones”** and builds Himself a **“...spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God.”**

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

There must be a time when Jesus began to build His **“my church,”** when as the builder “broke ground.” It is our contention and belief that He began to build His **“my church”** before the day of Pentecost during His earthly ministry. There are many who claim and have taught that the church was formed on the day of Pentecost. They further lay claim that those who are saved are added to the “universal church” by Holy Spirit baptism. We deny all of these heresies. Scriptures clearly teach that the church of Jesus Christ existed before Pentecost. The Word of God declares that sometime during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ He took

the material prepared by John the Baptist and began to build His **“my church.”** In Scripture, we find that the church of God was operating the same after the day of Pentecost as it was before the day of Pentecost. If the church was not established until the day of Pentecost, then how could it operate the same before and after Pentecost? The reality is that the church existed before the day of Pentecost.

WHAT IS PENTECOST?

Acts 2:1-41—Pentecost was a Jewish festival that happened annually. It was called “feast of weeks” in the Old Testament. The males were to present themselves before the Lord in the place which He chose and there they were to offer unto Him (Deut. 16:9-12, 16-17).

On the day of Pentecost, they (the church) was in one accord, in one place (Acts 2:1; Luke 24:52-53). There were around one hundred and twenty (120) disciples that were in the church (Acts 1:15). Based upon the Scriptures, we believe that the church was in existence before the day of Pentecost. What took place upon the day of Pentecost was that the church was empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry on the work of which Christ had given them to do.

PROOFS THAT THE CHURCH EXISTED BEFORE PENTECOST²:

1. Had a business meeting: Acts 1:13-16—Here we see that the church was assembling. They **“...continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...”** The word “continue” implies that this was done before and is currently being carried on like as before. Here we note that the church conducted a business meeting wherein they elected Matthias

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Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of
Clendenin, West Virginia

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

IN THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES...

"In these uncertain times..." Did something happen to change "certain times" to "uncertain"? No, I have not been asleep for the last six months, but what is the difference between this year and last year? All that has changed is last year, we were certain about the times. The times are not uncertain today, but what most put their faith in is uncertain. We are not in uncertain times, we trust in uncertain things.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (I Tim. 6:17). The affluent are tempted by pride in their possessions. They live in "certain times" because their life is relatively stable. Houses are certain. Jobs are certain. March madness, college football, vacations at the beach, family traditions, the "certainty" of the American way of life. God has shown you they are not certain at all.

Advertisements about these "uncertain times" are selling you something other than toilet paper. News outlets are preaching to you when they talk about uncertain times. They want to be the "rock" to keep you on point. Trust in your car insurance company, a big box store, the government, or favorite news channel and they will see you through these uncertain times, because when it gets bad, they are the anchor.

Thanks, but I will pass.

We put faith in uncertain things and when they fail, we get troubled. We put our hopes in uncertain people and are disheartened when they can not deliver. We put our faith in uncertain ways of life, then are distraught when they change. Rather than trust in the uncertain ways of life, we must put our faith in the LIVING God. Malachi 3:6 says, **"For I am the LORD, I change not."** The times change, situations change, but the living God never changes and the times are sure (Isaiah 46:9-11). By believing our way of life was certain exposes the idolatry of our hearts. It is the living God, not the dead idol, that is certain and unchanging. It is the living God who gives us all things to enjoy who never waivers and is faithful to trust, but we have things backwards. We trust in the good things God gives for us to enjoy and ignore the God who gives them.

When you build your life upon uncertain things, you are building your house on sand. In 2020, for a lot of people, the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house and great was the fall (Matthew 7:27). But here is a certainty—Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Turn your heart from your idols and trust in Christ Jesus, who is the Lord of time, and is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Are the times uncertain because of a virus? **"Seeing his days are determined, the number of his**

months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass" (Job 14:5). Our days are numbered by the living God. That is a certainty. It is also a certainty that our time here is short (Psalm 89:47). The government wants you to be afraid. The news media wants you to be afraid. Then they want you to look to them for guidance and help because of the "uncertain times."

The Bible says, because our times are short, the days are evil, and our Holy Father judges our hearts and works, we should pass our sojourn here in fear. Not the fear of viruses or riots, but the fear of God (I Peter 1:17-25). The world wants to live forever and fears death. The Bible will tell you the truth. You are going to die, therefore fear the Lord, because He alone can give everlasting life. He gives life through Christ, when in the fullness and certainty of the ordained time, the Lamb of God entered into this world. There is hope because in the certainty of the times, he **"...was manifest in these last times for you, Who by Him do believe in God..."** (I Peter 1:20-21). The times are certain. Your times are certain.

We live in stupid times. We live in dishonest times. We live in perilous times (Jeremiah 4:4; II Timothy 3:1). But we do not live in uncertain times.

(Doug Newell IV is pastor of the Buffalo Valley Baptist Church of Clay, West Virginia.)



The Church of God

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to take the place of Judas Iscariot as a witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; one who had been baptized by John and had continued with them since that time (Acts 1:22). I find it quite

difficult to believe that a business meeting was conducted by a non-existent church.

2. They met together for prayer: Acts 1:12-14; Luke 24:49-53—Here we see that prayer meeting(s)/service(s) were held prior to the day of Pentecost. The time in which the business meeting and prayer service(s) occurred was from day 40-50 after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We know that Christ Jesus was on the earth for 40 days teaching and meeting with His disciples/church. And that He ascended after 40 days. That leaves just 10 days before Pentecost.

3. The church already had the Great Commission: Luke 24:46-48; Matt. 28:16-20. The Lord Jesus met with His disciples on a mount that He had appointed unto them in Galilee. There He charged them with the duty of the church: to make disciples, to baptize them, to teach them to observe all things that He commanded them.

4. They had the ordinance of the supper of our Lord: Matt. 26:26-29—If the church of the Lord did not exist before Pentecost then we should not be observing the Lord's Supper. If there was no church in Matthew 26, then the supper was given to individuals and not to the church of God. When those individuals died, so, too, did the ordinance. Yet, we know that the Lord gave it to the disciples, not as individuals, but collectively as an assembly, as His **"my church."** Clearly Jesus understood that He gave the ordinance to His **"my church."** in that the Holy Spirit had Paul write that we are to observe the Lord's supper, shewing forth the Lord's death **"till he come"** (I Cor. 11:26).

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5. They had the ordinance of baptism: John 4:2—Here we see that the disciples of the Lord were baptized by His disciples. This is obviously the church baptizing others at the direction of the Lord.

6. The church had instructions for handling issues: Matt. 18:15-20. Here we see the instructions that the Lord Jesus gave His **“my church”** for handling disputes between two brethren. We read of no questions by the disciples, saying, “What is this church you speak of?” For they knew---they were the church.

7. Christ singing praises in the midst of the church: Heb. 2:12; Ps. 22:22—In this messianic Psalm, the psalm of the Cross, we are told that Christ would sing in the midst of the congregation, in the midst of the brethren. We find the author of Hebrews quotes it. When did this take place? Matthew 26:30—**“And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.”** When the Lord Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper in His **“my church”** He sang a hymn in the midst of the congregation, in the midst of the brethren, in the midst of the church.

8. Christ purchased His church with His blood: Acts 20:28—Here we are told that the church was purchased with the blood of Christ. The same blood that was shed at Calvary. If the church did not exist before Pentecost, or even Calvary, I am not sure how you purchase something that does not exist to purchase.

Christ established His **“my church”** during His earthly ministry (Matt. 16:18). The church existed prior to Pentecost. Jesus Christ took

the disciples of John the Baptist. John had been preaching repentance. Those who had repented and evidenced it, John the Baptist immersed in water. Jesus took those individuals and began to build His **“my church.”** According to I Corinthians 12:28 the apostles were first set in the church. Jesus had prayed all night and then He called from the disciples twelve men whom were appointed to the office of an apostle (Luke 6:12-19).

Some say that “His disciples” already constituted His church and that the apostles were the first officers in the church. Others tend to believe that the disciples were saved, yet Christ chose from the disciples the apostles and established His **“my church.”** Either way, what is clear, is that the church was established, was founded before the day of Pentecost, during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

CLOSING

The Lord Jesus Christ has His very own **“my church.”** There are many other churches, but only one is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only one kind of church is Jesus the builder, the foundation. And only one kind of church did the Lord Jesus establish during His earthly ministry. It is very important for you and me to know and be assured of which church is the church of the living God. For it is the place where we are to glorify His name (Eph. 3:21), worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24), the church is where we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices (I Peter 2:5), the church where Jesus meets with His people and edifies them (Matt. 18:20; Eph. 5:26). And by these landmarks, these bulwarks, these characteristics

it is our privilege and duty to search out and find which of the many churches upon this earth are that which Christ Jesus is the Builder. Maran-atha. Amen.

NOTES

1. Acts 1:21-26—Simon Peter brings up the need to replace Judas Iscariot. One of the requirements was that the individual had to have been baptized by John the Baptist, just as they had been. This clearly shows that John had baptized all of those original apostles.

2. I am indebted unto many brethren, most particularly my own Pastor (Timothy B. Hille) who have taught me these many proofs of the existence of The Church of God before the Day of Pentecost. However, in this instance, I used many points out of *The Church That Jesus Built* by Roy Mason.



Learn To Do Well

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the teaching that we ought to learn to do well.

Is it not rather interesting that the Lord speaks to the children of Israel, through Isaiah, and He instructs them that they have a need to learn to do well? It seems to me, that if we take these Scriptures and apply them to ourselves, that both the lost and the saved are included in this instruction. The lost have a need to repent and to obey the gospel. The saved have a need to learn to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Once again, here in the Old Testament, we have an example of the human responsibility that we hear referred to so often. The men of this earth are responsible for their own actions, and there are responsibilities that are laid upon every man. I could spend much time speaking of the responsibilities of the lost, but instead I want to spend my time speaking about the responsibilities

of the saved children of God, that faithfully seek to serve the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Indeed, every child of God should have a desire to learn to do well. This is what I want us to consider.

CEASE TO DO EVIL

If any child of God would desire to learn to do well, we find in our text verses that that person must, first of all, cease to do evil. **“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil”** (Isa. 1:16).

This seems like a simple thing, but in reality it is very difficult to separate ourselves from the evil of this world. Remember, the Lord told the Israelites to **“.. put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes..”** Now, obviously, our God is omniscient and sees and knows all things. Therefore, any evil doings that we take part in are going to be noticed by our God. So, in order for us to comply with this verse, we must separate ourselves at all times, and in all places from every evil deed. To do this is very difficult and will, of course, require some learning and growth on our part.

The psalmist, David, instructed his listeners to, **“Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil”** (Ps. 37:8). And then in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul reminds us to, **“Abstain from all appearance of evil”** (I Thess. 5:22).

PRACTICAL GODLINESS

Next, we can notice in our text verse that there are certain practical things that the children of Israel are instructed to do.

First, we see that the children of Judah are instructed to seek judgment. I think we can take each of these practical items which the Lord mentions here in our text

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Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of
Pemberville, Ohio

"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).



A KNOW-SO SALVATION
"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly

into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:1-11).

We see Brother Peter using the word "**wherefore**" here to make a comparison to what the born-again believer should labor to do rather than experience the blindness other believers experience who distance themselves from God and fail to pursue Him. Verses 1 and 9 confirm that he is writing to the born-again believer, not the lost. Peter is NOT referring to believers who will lose their salvation (as that is not possible with Christ), but rather charging each believer to pursue with "**all diligence**" (x2) to be complete in Christ. In verse 8 he exclaims how our very fruitfulness, perhaps even the impact of our witnessing and sharing of the Gospel but also our ability to stand before our own families pleading the truth of God's Word, can and will be impacted by our lack of interest in pursuing after Him.

Matthew Henry wrote, "Faith unites the weak believer to Christ, as really as it does the strong one, and purifies the heart of one as truly as of another; and every sincere believer is by his faith justified in the sight of God. Faith worketh godliness, and produces effects which no other grace in the soul can do. In Christ all fullness dwells, and pardon, peace, grace, and knowledge, and new principles, are thus given through the Holy Spirit. The promises to those who are partakers of a Divine nature, [should] cause us

to inquire whether we are really renewed in the spirit of our minds; let us turn all these promises into prayers for the transforming and purifying grace of the Holy Spirit. The believer must add knowledge to his virtue [also translated as 'praise'], increasing acquaintance with the whole truth and will of God. We must add temperance to knowledge; moderation about worldly things; and add to temperance, patience, or cheerful submission to the will of God. Tribulation worketh patience, whereby we bear all calamities and crosses with silence and submission. To patience we must add godliness: this includes the holy affections and dispositions found in the true worshipper of God; with tender affection to all fellow Christians, who are children of the same Father, servants of the same Master, members of the same family, travellers to the same country, heirs of the same inheritance. Wherefore let Christians labor to attain assurance of their calling, and of their election; this is a firm argument of the grace and mercy of God, upholding them so that they shall not utterly fall."

Elder Milburn Cockrell once said in a sermon that his desire was for the hearer to be sure they had a "know-so" salvation and not a "hope-so" or "think-so" salvation. I want to take that thought a bit further so that today's reader fully understands the difference between each.

THINK-SO SALVATION

The "think-so" salvation is one that is claimed by the high-minded thinkers of our day. In this modern era we have a great deal of prideful 'thinkers' do we not? The Agnostics, which is translated to mean the ignoramus, claims he believes nothing. Imagine that with me for a moment. What

vanity there is to truly labor to keep one's mind empty at all times. You could claim today to be an Agnostic and accidentally make up your mind on something later and lose your own religion.

We also have the severely arrogant "thinkers" who claim that the Sovereign Creator of the universe made a mistake in forming them. Some claiming to be gay, transsexual, pedophilic and so on claim they "have a form of godliness" but strive to only deny the very power that gave them life. Paul wrote the following to Timothy: "**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, trucebreakers, 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. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was"** (II Tim. 3:1-9). These are those who would claim to not need a savior for they have nothing to be saved from. They claim self-deliverance but their very actions proclaim self-damnation. "**They shall proceed no further**" for this

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Small Drops

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life is as good as it will ever get.

HOPE-SO SALVATION

The “hope-so” salvation represents those trusting in the preacher or the “church” to get them and most times to keep them saved. This, too, is an extremely sad state as many of us know those “faking-it-until-they-make-it believers” who attempt to say all the “right things” and be at all the “right functions,” but alas it is but empty worship. It is a vain attempt to fellowship with the Father but their heart has never been called to it. Jesus told the woman at the well in John chapter four that true worshipers would do so in Spirit and in truth. Furthermore, I assure you that each of us who delivers the Sunday sermons needs Jesus. We cannot save you. Trust in God beloved, therein lies the power to save!

As I referenced before, true worship is done in Spirit and in truth but how many today have abandoned truth? I wonder how many more have truth but never go further, pleading for the aid and guidance of the Holy Spirit? He is the One who leads us in how we should pray. He is the One who seals in our hearts the very promises of God. He is the same One who can bring about regeneration in the lost we hope to witness to.

Peter tells us in our text that it takes labor and diligence, intentionality and beseeching, for us to make our calling and election sure. What does that mean to you, dear reader? Is it simply finding the right church and trusting the pastor to get you there to confirm for you that you are indeed saved? God’s Word says the only way one can tell

another’s salvation is by his fruit, and without diligence you will be left blind and unfruitful and the rest of us are only left with our opinions. I have been to many funerals where even the preacher could not confidently close the casket with his eulogy knowing full well that the deceased was saved. Put yourself in your pastor’s place for a moment, will he in full confidence be able to tell your loved ones that you have departed this world for the Kingdom? Will he be able to say that it is indeed a glad day for the Kingdom has received you?

Here is what is most important for you today as you read this. A “hope-so” salvation will not spare you an eternity in hell. **“..Ye must be born again”** (John 3:7). And it is most definitely possible for you to know-so!

KNOW-SO SALVATION

The “know-so” salvation is my final point for you today, and I rejoice that the Lord has provided for it to be delivered. **“..Ye must be born again”** (John 3:7). So many memorize John 3:16, but we should really dwell longer on the three times Jesus tells Nicodemus that, **“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”** (John 3:3). Jesus goes on there in John chapter three to tell Nicodemus that even with his title as a teacher he can do nothing apart from Christ. He could not receive their witnessing, his head knowledge would not allow for him to accept it. He could not even accept the earthly things that might be presented unto him, let alone the heavenly. Jesus came to die on the cross that, being lifted up **“whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life”** (John 3:15). Praise the Lord! With salvation we can know that our eternity is secure in Him, that we shall never utterly

fall from His grace.

In our reading from Matthew Henry he mentioned a “silence and cheerful submission” and beloved this is the death nail to Christian whining and complaining, which always is a result of doubt. Beloved, what are we to do with murmuring? If we have a “know-so” salvation we have nothing to be jealous of. If we have a “know-so” salvation we have nothing to be fearful of but God Himself. Nothing can harm your soul, dear friend, if your salvation is of God.

Is it truly possible to exercise a cheerful submission? So often times we allow the world to turn the word “submission” into a painstaking and evil endeavor but it is our reasonable service. **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”** (Rom. 12:1). Not only is it reasonable but the Lord’s Holy Writ gives us many examples for our own edification. We see cheerful giving in II Corinthians 9:7, **“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”** We see cheerful witnessing, as illustrated by Paul in Acts 24:10, **“Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself...”** Back in Romans 12:8 we see examples of cheerful mercy and loving: **“...he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.”** And in Romans 12:9-10, **“Let love be without**

dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another”.

Turn the promises of God’s Word into sincere heartfelt prayers for you and your household, beloved, by giving all diligence to having a “know-so” salvation.” May God add His blessings to His Word!



Learn To Do Well

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verses, and we can apply them to even our day and time. For instance, when the Lord says that the children of Judah should seek judgment, I think we can apply this to our day and time this way. Those of us who are the children of God ought to deal fairly with all men. Elsewhere, we are told, **“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”** (Micah 6:8). And then, Paul said something similar about his own life: **“Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe”** (I Thess. 2:10). A more clearly, practical application of this teaching is found in the famous Sermon on the Mount: **“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets”** (Matt. 7:12). This last reference is the basis for the so-called “golden rule.” Well, to my mind, what this verse teaches us is that at least we ought to treat one another fairly and justly.

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Brief Truths

By Randy Johnson of
Texarkana, Texas

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13).



GOD HAS SOVEREIGN CONTROL

"Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee" (Deut. 23:5).

As Christians we all need to understand that our life will have up's and down's. Sometimes we feel blessed and sometimes we feel cursed. However, we never need to forget to thank God for the good as well as the bad. We are the children of God. Before the foundation of the world God elected us to be His and in time God sent the Holy Spirit to bring us to Jesus Christ. God sent His Beloved Son into this world and allowed Him to surrender Himself to Satan and the lost heathen to have His heel bruised (Gen. 3:15), to die and be buried and to raise on the third day, shed His glorious blood to cleanse us from our sins. God loves us and therefore God has done this for us, God will never let His children down, EVER!

We know that God has ordained or predestinated our life, we do not live on chance, nothing is chance with God's children. Here in our text we see God turn a curse into a blessing, why, **"... because the LORD thy God loved thee."** It did not matter that Balaam was hired to curse them, all that mattered was that they were loved of God. God's love never expires, **"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying,**

Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3).

But what about the curse, how did God turn the curse into a blessing? Because God is all powerful, God is the only source of sovereign, independent power. All powers are given from God, even to Satan and all demons. However, we can also narrow all powers in all creation down to two beings, Deity and Satanic. God proved to us His power and authority over Satan with His prophet Job. **"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life"** (Job 2:6). Here we see Satan ask God for the power to take everything Job had in his life, but Satan could not take Job's life because God limited Satan's power. This is why Balaam's curse would not harm God's people, God turned it into a blessing.

As Christians we need never fear the powers that be, Satan, the haters, our governments, nor the world. We live every moment of our earthly life under the power and authority of God. God has given us this promise, **"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (Rom. 8:38-39). Therefore, we must be content with our life,

with what we have in life, and to everything that happens in life. Everyday is a blessing from God, therefore we should never just praise God for the good times, but for every event and happening in our life good or bad. God has set your entire life before you and you will live it to whatever God has decreed.

A lot of Christians throughout time have died at the hands of Satan's people, including Jesus Christ. We who are so blessed never need to feel less blessed than anyone else because, as Paul put it, "I am what I am by God's grace," therefore God can allow a curse on us to fulfill its purpose, or God can turn a curse into a blessing. God taught us in Romans 9:21, **"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"** God controls the clay; the clay does not control the Potter. Everyone and everything created are instruments in God's hands, therefore if Satan can curse us God has allowed it, to bless Him. Just as it was with Job, God allowed this event to show His power in Job. While Satan and heathenism have great powers, God is the ultimate power.

(Randy Johnson is pastor of the Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Texarkana, Texas.)



Learn To Do Well

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Second, we notice that the children of Judah are told to relieve the oppressed. In this portion of this verse I believe we can look to ourselves and understand that the Lord would have us to help the weak and the persecuted. We read the words of the Apostle Paul in Acts 20:35, **"I have shewed you all things,**

how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is the duty of the children of God, and the churches of Jesus Christ, to be more inclined to give than to receive. And then, later on, we read these words that the Apostle Paul had for the church in Thessalonica: **"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men"** (I Thess. 5:14). Those that are weak, and those that have received less material blessings in this life – these ought to be succored by the strong and blessed. When the Apostle Paul was teaching the Corinthian church about giving and supporting one another, and the other churches of Jesus Christ, he told them, **"For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack"** (II Cor. 8:13-15).

Third, we can see that the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem are reminded that they should judge the fatherless. Again, the practical application of this passage requires that, even today, we as the people of God need to seek fairness and God's favor for the fatherless (orphans). We ought to make sure that those orphans in our midst are not cheated, and that they are properly cared for. Later on, the Lord God would have another man of God

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Learn To Do Well

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(Jeremiah) deliver an almost identical message as what is found in our text verses, to these same children of Judah, and to their king in particular: **“Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place”** (Jer. 22:3). In the New Testament, James reminds us that, **“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world”** (James 1:27). Here in this verse, we are reminded of our responsibilities to both the fatherless and the widows. Of course, we are also reminded of our responsibilities for our own selves also—to keep ourselves unspotted from the world which complements those things which I discussed in my first point. Now it might seem that our opportunities to provide and care for the fatherless in our midst are rather limited today, because, as it happens, there seem to be not many orphans in our midst today. But, this has not always been the case. Surely down through the centuries of terrible death and persecution, there have been countless opportunities for the churches of Jesus Christ to take care of the fatherless. And whenever we have this opportunity (or we might say responsibility) presented to us, we must be willing to care for these children that are in need.

Fourth, and finally, we read that the people of God ought to plead for the widow. Now, this has

already been mentioned in James 1:27, which I will read again: **“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”** Of course, it is again obvious that the words which the Lord God had for Judah; and the words that James had for the churches in New Testament times are words that are still applicable to us who are alive, and seeking to serve the Lord God today. Again, perhaps in times past, the churches of Jesus Christ have had more opportunity to serve widows than what we do today. Surely there are many widows, but it seems that, at least in this country and in many ways, we have allowed the government to intercede, and we rely on the government to supply the needs of the widows. Maybe we do this more than we should? I do not know. But, I believe that we have the sacred duty of making sure that the widows (and the fatherless) in our midst are well taken care of. Let us not let them struggle to make ends meet; but as the Lord enables us, let us seek to help them and make them comfortable—and I mean this in a physical, and financial, and practical sense. Elsewhere, the Lord God spoke to the children of Israel through Zechariah the prophet: **“And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart”** (Zech. 7:8-10). In I Timothy 5:3, the Apostle Paul told Timothy, **“Honour widows**

that are widows indeed.”

My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us seek to take these aspects of practical godliness, and let us apply them to our lives today. I pray God that He would help us to see how important it is for us to live Godly lives, especially as we live our lives before men. May others behold in us a divine attitude of service and kindness and humility and faithfulness in all things practical.

SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE

If we take the title of this message and we apply it in a broader and more spiritual manner, we find that, in fact, all of the children of God have some “learning” to do. If we would desire to do well, then our text verses indicate to us that we have some learning to do.

Truly, if we would learn to do well, then we must cease from evil. And if we would learn to do well, then we must observe all of the necessary practical implications that follow. But, also, if we would learn to do well in our service to God, then we must submit ourselves to Him, and seek to grow in the most holy faith.

Along these lines we read what Paul had to say to Timothy: **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”** (II Tim. 2:15). My dear brothers and sisters, there are so many things we need to learn. When we are first saved, we do not “know it all.” Nor do we “know enough,” as so many folks seem to believe. But, in fact when we are first saved (and probably for some time thereafter) we really do not even “know much.” There is a reason why the Apostle Paul, and other New Testament writers, refer to the newly saved as babes (I Cor. 3:1; I Peter 2:2) and children (II Cor. 6:13; Gal.

4:19; Eph. 4:14; I Thess. 2:7, 11; I John 2:1, 12-13, 18, 28; II John 1:1; III John 1:4) – are not these terms used because of the need for growth and maturity in the lives of those who are first saved by the grace of God?

And, when we think about it what better way is there for us to grow, than that we would do so in the Word of God. We read in I Peter 2:2, **“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”** It is the responsibility of all of those who are the children of God, that we would grow unto maturity in the Word of God, and in the love of Him and His name.

CONCLUSION

Oh, how much there is that we need to learn. Oh, how much room we have to grow. I only hope and pray that I, myself, will learn to do well in the most basic and sensible manner.

(Paul Stepp is pastor of the Indore Baptist Church of Indore, West Virginia.)



An Idol America

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to construct a system of laws that would balance against itself; keeping the power in the hands of the people rather than their government. At her conception America was most appealing to the early settler because of the abundance of land. Even the right to vote was tied to land ownership and those trying to get here were many times coming from overcrowded lands, short in supply of their basic needs, and some even oppressed in the way they sought to honor God. This does not, of course, describe every early migrant's journey, but it is no doubt what is most familiar to us.

Though certainly God has

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Little Valleys

By Timothy J. Hille of
Ashland, Illinois

"He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills." (Psalms 104:10).



shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

(Timothy J. Hille is pastor of the Pleasant Plains Baptist Church of Pleasant Plains, Illinois.)



An Idol America

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blessed this nation, let us take caution in our relating America to this particular text I chose from the Bible.

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them

which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto

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BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). Jesus set the requirements of entrance into God's heavenly, spiritual kingdom as being that of conversion and childlike faith. Conversion means to turn, and over and over in the Scriptures men, women, boys, and girls are admonished to turn from their sins unto God and God's ways. There is a change required if people would be right with God, a change of mind and behavior. A person who has been rebellious and disobedient toward God does not merely need to apologize, following the practice of this modern hour: "if I have offended anyone, I am sorry," and then continue on in the same or similar sins. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). The Biblical teaching of repentance is missing from the majority of modern religion. There will not be forgiveness when there is no repentance, no turning from sin to God.

Jesus also stated that childlike faith is essential for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. A child's faith is filled with humility. A child comes home from his first days at school reporting all the "new" knowledge he has learned. The knowledge, of course, is

not new, and the child's parents already knew about the alphabet and primary colors. The child, at that early stage, as a rule automatically accepts what he is told the very first time he hears it; and it is generally very difficult to convince a young, healthy child that something he has heard is not true (even though many adults like to fill children's heads with nonsense as a form of entertainment). Many adults who would think themselves wise are skeptical of the Bible. They accept the words of man, but reject the words of God. Upon last inspection, man was found a habitual liar. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Num. 23:19). You must believe God like a child. You must hear and believe what He says unto you through His Son Jesus Christ: "...this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). "God ... Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1-2). He requires that you "become as little children" in humble faith.

The theme of the Bible is the same throughout—the sinner must be converted from the error of his way, and trust in Jehovah. Whether it is a nation of sinners, such as ours, or an individual sinner, such as you and me, God is only approached by converted and believing hearts. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17). There are no exceptions or extenuating circumstances. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What is the work of the soul?" -California

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"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen 2:7).

I believe the above Scripture pretty much answers the question! But I know that will not satisfy most, so I will try to explain a little further. Without the soul, you would be dead. Since the next question this month is "What is the work of the Spirit?" I will hold off speaking of it (Spirit) except to say, the Spirit in man is dead at birth, where on the other hand the soul is alive and will remain that way for eternity.

So, the work of the soul if you want to word it that way is life, plain and simply put! Soul gives us our intellectual and moral abilities. The five senses that we have are instilled in the soul. The soul allows us to love (Matt. 22:37), hate (II Sam. 5:8), and is vexed (II Kings 4:27). Also, the soul can be troubled (Job 3:20), it can experience grief (Matt. 26:38), and experience joy (Isa. 61:10). There are many more Scriptures that could be shown here, but an in-depth search of the word soul would be encouraged.

Let me add to the list, that you, dear reader, can meditate on it. Do you hunger? That is

because of the soul. Do you have desire and lust? That is because of the soul. Our ability to think is because of the soul. Plainly, do you sin? That is the act of the soul. **"Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul" (Micah 6:7)? "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul" (Prov. 6:32).**

We will next answer the "work of the Spirit" which is the next question but before I do, I would like to quote the late Elder Milburn Cockrell from his book *Death and the Hereafter*: "The spirit cannot sin in the unregenerate because it is dead and dormant, and the spirit in the regenerate is not capable of sinning (I John 3:9; II Pet. 1:4). Sin is a moral act and the seat of morality is the soul of man. This is why conscience has its seat in the soul. Even in the case of the unsaved, conscience excuses and accuses (Rom. 2:15). If conscience is in the spirit as some say, and man's spirit is dead, then no unsaved person would have a conscience, but the Bible says that they do (John 8:9; I Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:15; Heb. 10:22)."

The main reason I wanted to quote Elder Cockrell here is because this should answer the question anyone would have in the belief that the soul and the spirit are one in the same, before I move on to answering the next question. God Bless!

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"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). "I think, therefore I am!" goes the philosophy lecturer, and certainly there is obviously something that elevates man above the beast that even the (pre-Darwinian?) honest scientist can tell. I remember teaching that to my daughter, Miriam, when she was learning seven-year-old philosophy. "Where is Miriam?" I would ask, pretending I could not see her. She would point at her arm, so I could find her. I would say, "No! That is Miriam's arm! Where is Miriam?" As we zeroed in, she finally pointed at her heart and said, "I am in here!" How marvelous! Even a child can figure out that the crux of our essential being and existence is found in the priceless soul. Selah! Think about it!

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul" (Matt. 16:26)? Why is the soul so priceless in the estimation of God's Holy Word and man's bitter experiences? Because where the soul goes, so go we. Consider the consequences, beloved reader. The body we may abandon at the funeral parlor will not so cheerfully answer the questions of life and existence. What would you give in exchange for your soul, my friend?

God created Adam with body,

soul, and spirit (cf: I Thess. 5:23). The supernatural "Spirit" is the everlasting energy that escapes the entropy of this universe, so when sin separated (killed) that hopeful marriage, the ensuing death of the spirit at the fall of Adam's mankind (cf: Gen. 2:17) left the soul in a very perilous union with only a physical body. **"Wherefore, as by one (first) man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).**

There is no ability within the soul to save us, after our spirit has perished and with it, the precious ability to communicate with God. As the seat of our consciousness and will, our soul determines our daily choices. But crippled and fallen man, now only has the physical truths to evaluate and make decisions with. **"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:19).** As we read our Bibles, the doctrine of total depravity reveals an inability to do good. **"..there is none that doeth good, no, not one." "And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God" (Rom. 3:12; Mark 10:18).** Preachers call this predicament the "bondage of the will" and as well ask pigs to fly (against natural laws) as to ask broken dichotomous men (two, instead of three) to do good spiritual deeds (against natural laws!). **"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What is the work of the spirit? -California

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I take it to mean that the question has to do with man's spirit. After the fall of Adam all men are dead spiritually (Eph. 2:1) rendering them incapable of responding to God in a spiritual way. Man in his natural, sinful, fleshly state has no spiritual connection to God. He can not understand or receive the things of God (I Cor. 2:14) and is incapable of any spiritual affection or desire for God. As such the fallen, fleshly, unspiritual, natural man is wholly incapable of honoring or pleasing God in any way. Romans 8:6-8 reveals: **"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."** Thus, every work that proceeds from the dead, fleshly nature of the fallen man is rejected by God as unprofitable and unholy. In fact, only the precious blood of Jesus Christ is able to purge us from dead works as Hebrews 9:14 states: **"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"**

In the new birth the Holy Spirit creates a new spiritual life and nature within God's elect, enabling them to respond to God in repentance of sin, faith in Christ, love, and obedience. It is this new nature that is said to be a partaker of God's Divine nature as stated in II Peter 1:3-7 declares: **"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."** This new spiritual nature is a direct creation of God, the Holy Spirit in the sovereign work of regeneration. It is from this spiritual nature all spiritual desire, spiritual fruit, and good works proceed. Paul made this crystal clear in his Epistle to the Ephesians: **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them... That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the**

new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 2:10; 4:22-24). The work of man's spiritual nature is to agree with and follow after the directives, instructions, and commands issued by the Holy Spirit in the Holy Scriptures which He Divinely inspired. Spiritual work that is good and acceptable to God would be broadly characterized by worship, witnessing to the lost, service, love to the brethren, and an overall holy testimony that is being conformed to the life and example of the Lord Jesus Christ. **"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased"** (Heb. 13:15-16).

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"But the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee" (I Sam. 16:14-15).

The spirit is the supernatural element of the trichotomous nature of men. **"...I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless..."** (I Thess. 5:23). The spirit is the aspect of man that died in the day of the cursed fall of our father Adam: **"...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"** (Gen. 2:17). The death of the spirit of man imposed a funeral

room parlor in Heaven, where there was a dead spirit visible to the angelic host that was as empty of function as the lifeless bodies in the funeral parlor rooms here in Wayne, West Virginia. The soul of man was left in a tenuous bond with the body in a temporary limbo, until the day of judgment for the soul's choices. Selah! Think about it!

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The first work of the spirit is to worship God, but fallen man (without a living spirit) is now devoid of any means of communicating with God. With a dead spirit, we are as unable to speak to God or act in any "spiritual" manner, even as our dead body will be incapable to physically animate when it, too, is separated from our deathless and everlasting soul. Until our spirit is regenerated, in the act of salvation by sovereign grace, no man will ever be able to fulfill this first and greatest work. **"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters"** (Rev. 14:6-7).

The second work of the spirit is found in Galatians 5:22-25: **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also**

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Forum Question #1

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land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:15). So what will we do? Selah! Think about it!

The honest truth will always be: we will do what our soul determines to do. The body may lust, the spirit may desire, but the soul does choose this or choose that. That is the soul's job, also called the "will" or "mind." The brain is the physical manifestation of the seat of our will. The brain (mind/soul) sorts the input of information and knowledge (whether faith or deceit) and sends out instructions to our arms, hands, and legs. And Miriam and Matt Stepp will do what our souls desire to do. I pray that the children of God will walk (do) after our godly (Spirit) influenced souls. **"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace"** (Rom. 8:4-6).

"...Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive" (Ezek. 18:25-27). May your soul CHOOSE well, by the grace of God! Selah! Think about it!

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The soul is the immortal part of the nature of man derived from God (Gen. 2:17). The Hebrew word for soul is *nephesh* and often refers to the entirety of a man's personal being in the Old Testament (Ex. 4:19). There are other instances where the soul is referred to as the immaterial part of man as when Rachel's soul left her body at death (Gen. 35:18). The soul is the part of man that will live on after the body dies for all eternity, either to be punished in the Lake of Fire, or to rejoice in the glory of God in the eternal ages.

In the New Testament the Greek word for soul is *psyche* and is used approximately 110 times, translated as soul, life, and I. The term soul may refer to (1) the whole person (Acts 2:41); the seat of personal identity especially in relation to God and salvation (Matt. 10:28-soul, 39- translated life). The soul also has to do with man's inner being, his intellect, will, emotions, and his moral and spiritual life.

Since the soul of man has to do with the inner being and personal identity of an individual we may concur that the work of the soul has to do with his mind (intellect), his heart (desires, emotions, and affections), and his will (determinate course of action). Thus, the best use of man's soul is to be in complete submission in mind, heart, and will to the Word of God. This is what constitutes the sanctification of the soul by the work of the Spirit and the

instrumentality of the Word, to set apart and consecrate a child of God to the work and will of God. I Peter 2:11-12 declares: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

TOM ROSS



Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

walk in the Spirit." Again, lost folk have no part in this spiritual life. The supernatural hope of Christ Jesus results in **"Spirit"** life with enjoyable and blessed fruits. Love, joy, peace, etc., are integral and eternal aspects of the now-saved, now-restored, now-regenerated, now-spiritual saint of God. As for the unregenerate dichotomous abomination of God's created humanity (which I once was!), they can only experience physical love (lust?), physical joy (happiness?), physical peace (stasis?), etc... a litany of temporal and fleeting pleasures that will only last as long as our natural bodies can propagate physical life. How terrible and meager! **"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"** (I Cor. 15:19). Selah! Think about it!

The ultimate work of the spirit is to bridge the gap into eternal life. Therefore! Remember the story of Lazarus and the rich man? What hindered the rich man from partaking of the pleasures of the afterlife of Lazarus? **"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in**

thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16:25-26). Certainly, there is no exit from Hell, but there is access to the paradise of Abraham and his God. That entrance must come from this Earth and the route is upward, where ONLY the Spirit can lead to that glorious rest. **"Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth"** (Eccl. 3:21)?

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but (walk) after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:1-2). **"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him"** (Gen. 5:24). The Lord will also bring our spirit home to Him for His eternal glory! **"...I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless..."** Selah! Think about it!

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"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of

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Forum Question #2

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the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17).

I believe if mankind does not understand the above Scripture then they are hopelessly lost and will remain that way until they are **"born again,"** if God so pleases, **"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"** (John 3:3).

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1-3).

When Adam sinned, he died like God said he would. He basically had two deaths. The first one, of course, was the Spiritual death, which happened immediately. **"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons"** (Gen. 3:7). Before this their nakedness was never an issue. **"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed"** (Gen 2:25). The second death occurred when Adam eventually died physically. **"And all the days that Adam lived were**

nine hundred and thirty years: and he died" (Gen. 5:5). If Adam had not sinned, he would not have ever died, physically or spiritually. But that did not happen so there is no if!

Since then, every human born into this life has a dead spirit. But the Scripture says in John 4:24, **"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."** So, how can a man that has a dead spirit worship God? Well, he can not. **"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual"** (I Cor. 2:13). Also, read (Colossians 1:7-17).

So, to answer the question, the work of the spirit is to discern those things that are spiritual. If you have not been born again (John 3:3), if you have not been quickened in the spirit by God (Eph. 2:1), then it is impossible to understand God or anything else that is spiritual. That is why there is such religious confusion, because people who are not saved (born again) are trying to tell us things about God that they can not possibly understand. **"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"** (I Cor. 2:14).

For further study on this subject I would encourage you, dear reader, to read the first three chapters of Ephesians and get a copy of *Death and the Hereafter* by the late Milburn Cockrell. God Bless!

ROGER REED



END

An Idol America

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were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not

hindered" (I Peter 1:23-3:7).

As we now see our text in the context it was written we see that this generation or "holy nation" is not speaking of everyone, nor is it speaking of one nation or country, but rather the born-again believer (Note the **"wherefore"** in 2:1 as it directs us back to 1:23... remember chapter breaks came after translation.). America has been blessed, much like salvation, she has been blessed for God's purposes and plans and not by man's merits. She has not been blessed in that she is a nation full of saved people, nor in that she is, in her entirety, a Christian nation. In fact I am convinced this will likely be that final battleground for which the Lord's churches will make a final stand for the truth.

Who could question that it was God's providence that during the attack at Pearl Harbor the opposing forces, though they caused great damage, only managed to stop one ship from returning to battle? The other ships were repaired and still served in World War II. Not only that, but they missed our aircraft carriers completely as they were not in the harbor at the time. Who could question God's hand through the cold war and even through elected officials as spies waited in the wings to lead America into Russian hands? These miracles were not granted to this nation because she would do great things, but because God shows mercy on whom He sees fit.

When we truly understand what mercy and compassion mean as God defines it we can start to understand just how desperately we need Him today, beloved. This nation of ours has taken some dark turns toward the wicked hearts of man and we need our God to cause a revival today.

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An Idol America

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We must return to God, beloved, and it starts with the born-again believer praying and beseeching Him for deliverance.

Peter's writing here has the key thought of submission, something America no longer desires today, but the holy nation spoken of here in 2:9 must do.

We used to be led by conviction, not political campaign ideas.

Hindsight would cause for us to think that previous generations were perfect, but a brief study of history shows that indeed every generation was totally depraved. We must become better historians so that we can see the truth. The generation before us today has earned a reputation for sure, but how did we get here? The sins of the past always determine the future if the sinner goes on without repentance.

As this nation was first founded, rights were fought for based on strong convictions, not wants and desires. George Washington's original aspirations were to be a high ranking official in the British army. Due to his loyalty to the colonies he served faithfully holding back nothing, for historians note he led with integrity (See I Peter 2:13-25 referenced above).

Abraham Lincoln was turned on by the very states that first supported him in the Midwest. He was slandered against in the papers and ridiculed by his peers. He was mocked at every turn yet it was with great conviction that he pressed on. "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great

civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." This message was not delivered at a political rally, hoping to gain favor and votes, but at the dedication of the Soldier's National Cemetery just four and a half months after the Union armies won the Battle of Gettysburg.

Imagine following these great leaders. We are all following something today, too, beloved, what leads this nation now? If the conviction of the Christian is not enough to lead us to stand or even vote in a Godly manner, then what are we really being led

by?

Great God verses great showmen (entertainment).

More than 100 million people went to see "Marvel's Avengers: End Game" opening weekend. That weekend less than 50% of our Church membership were in attendance here in Temperance MI and we had no visitors. Census in 2017 said there were 325,145,963 people in the US, so this would be as if 1/3 of our populace dropped what they were doing and went to the movies that weekend. This movie went on to bring in \$1.2 billion that weekend. Here in Temperance there was no deposit for our treasurer that weekend. What excuses will we have for God?

This nation used to have such things as "Blue Laws" that would prevent her citizens from spoiling the Lord's day by treating it as just another day of the week. When the states began to drop these laws, why did the born-again believer do the same?

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics the average person spends just about 10% of his/her income on entertainment (not just movies and TV options, but eating out and so on). We are called to bring tithes into the storehouse, which the Bible defines as being 10% (literally what the word "tithe" means) and the storehouse is the local visible Church. If the average income is \$35,000 that means the statistics are telling us that each US citizen is spending \$3,500 of that on entertainment. When you add in the average mortgage or rental payment of \$12,500 a year and start putting gas in the car and food on the table, what are the odds you will be willing to write that \$3,500 over to the storehouse as you should? **"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But**

ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 3:8-12).

When we recognize and serve a great God rather than entertainment, we joyfully tithe and give love offerings above and beyond and then excitedly wait to see how the Lord will work. We do this first, before we would dare think of using this money, which is the Lord's provisions, on anything else. If revival starts with me, a Christian, am I seeking it from God or the latest sitcom? We attend to, pray for, and think about most that which we are invested in. If you are not bringing your tithe to the local storehouse, then what is it you are investing in? Will it bring everlasting life an hour or two of excitement?

Media meals rather than devotional diets.

17 Million people watched the Game of Thrones season 8 premiere. According to christiantoday.com 1,500 were surveyed in 2014 on their daily devotion and prayer time: 90% said they read the Bible regularly but only 31% set aside time to pray each day. 87% of those polled

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An Idol America

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agreed that every Christian needs to spend time alone with God on a daily basis but 42% said that they find it difficult to “find the time on a regular disciplined basis to pray or read their Bible.” 18% of those polled said they do not have a fixed plan or pattern for worship and devotion and rather pray “when the need arises.” This number went up to 29% among those born after 1980, a generation that seems to be missing from many of our churches. 63% confessed they had trouble staying focused on God during their prayer time. Of these statistics we should note it was a small sample size and assuredly it was not just Baptists that were surveyed. It does seem to paint a relatively accurate picture even amongst our own groups.

When Moses was called to service, God spoke from the fiery/thorny bush in Exodus 3 to remove the world (his shoes) before drawing nigh. This was a picture for us today, leave all distractions at the door so that you can pray and study with God and not the world. Why is it today that we can spend hours “binge-watching” or even “binge-re-watching” our favorite shows, but not sit in a quiet room and meditate on the Word of God? Why do we, even in our time of devotion, find it so hard to focus our thoughts and our concerns for others, yet we can sit in a noisy room and read a novel, or play a video game or scroll through social media? Why do we struggle to pray longer than a minute or two, or struggle to even stay awake for a sermon, or yet we will attend midnight movie premieres, stay up to see who the Bachelor/Bachelorette will pick, text in our votes for the next

American Idol/Top Model/Top Chef/Top Voice/ Top Talent and so on?

The concern here is not for the lost to live better, more morally responsible lives but rather that the saved would submit themselves to God first, and then to the worldly authorities. I Peter 2 illustrates the importance of us submitting to ordinances. As **“strangers and pilgrims,”** aliens and exiles, we might not think we have any responsibilities toward human government, but Peter tells us we have an even greater obligation to obey the laws. The unsaved world watches the Christian; therefore, we must abstain from sins by the power of the Spirit. Our behavior (**“conversation”**--v. 12) must be honest (seemly, suitable), for this is the only way to silence their evil talk. Verse 12 teaches that our good works can help lead the lost to Christ, and they will praise God on the day that He visits and saves them. Though we may not respect the men and women who hold office, we must respect the offices and obey the laws. Yes, the Christian is free, but his freedom is not a license (Gal. 5:18).

President Ronald Reagan once said “you can tell a lot about a fellow by his way of eating jelly beans.” You can work with someone every day for 30 years and have a great understanding of their work ethic and how they serve others, but do you know how they personally care for themselves or their families? What they allow in their homes? What convictions they might have? What we allow ourselves to digest, take our money, take our time and so on tells the world an awful lot about us. May the Lord be honored in how we live our lives!



The Holy Life of

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instead of working the result of believing.

We carefully distinguish, yet we as carefully connect the two. We do not put asunder what God has joined together; yet we would not reverse the divine order, nor disturb the divine relation, nor place that last which God has set first.

It was not to depreciate or discourage good works that the apostle spoke of “not working, but believing;” or of a man being **“justified by faith without the deeds of the law”** (Rom. 3:28); or of God “imputing righteousness without works” (Rom. 4:6). It was to distinguish things that differ; it was to show the true use of faith, in connecting us, for justification, with what another has done; it was to stay us from doing anything in order to be justified. In this view, then, faith is truly a ceasing from work, and not a working; it is not the doing of anything in order to be justified, but the simple reception of the justifying work of Him who “finished transgression and made an end of sin;” for was completed eighteen hundred years ago, and any attempt on our part to repeat or imitate this is vain. The one cross suffices.

Nor was it to undervalue good works that our Lord gave, what many may deem such a singular answer to the question of the Jews, **“What shall we do, that we may work the works of God”** (John 6:28)? **“This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent”** (John 4:29). They wanted to work their way into the favour of God. The Lord tells them that they may have that favour without waiting or working; by accepting at once His testimony to His only-begotten

Son. Till then, they were not in a condition for working. They were as trees without a root ; as stars whose motions, however regular, would be useless, if they themselves were unlighted.

To say to a groping, troubled spirit, You must first believe before you can work, is no more to encourage ungodliness or laxity of walk, than to say to an imprisoned soldier, You must first get out of your dungeon before you can fight; or to a swimmer, You must throw off that millstone before you can attempt to swim ; or to a racer, You must get quit of these fetters before you can run the race.

Yet these expressions of the apostle have often been shrunk from; dreaded as dangerous; quoted with a guarding clause, or rather cited as seldom as possible, under the secret feeling that, unless greatly diluted or properly qualified, they had better not be cited at all. But why are these bold utterances there, if they are perilous, if they are not meant to be as fearlessly proclaimed now as they were fearlessly written eighteen centuries ago? What did the Holy Spirit mean by the promulgation of such “unguarded” statements, as some seem disposed to reckon them? It was not for nothing that they were so boldly spoken. Timid words would not have served the purpose. The glorious gospel needed statements such as these to disentangle the great question of acceptance; to relieve troubled consciences, and purge them from dead works, yet at the same time to give to works their proper place.

Perhaps some of Luther’s statements are too unqualified; yet their very strength shows how much he felt the necessity of so speaking of works, as absolutely

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and peremptorily to exclude them from the office of justifying the sinner. He saw and testified how the Papacy, by mixing the two things together, had troubled and terrified men's consciences, and had truly become a "slaughter house of souls."

In another's righteousness we stand; and by another's righteousness are we justified. All accusations against us, founded upon our unrighteousness, we answer by pointing to the perfection of the righteousness which covers us from head to foot, and in virtue of which we are unassailable by law, as well as shielded from wrath.

Protected by this perfection, we have no fear of wrath, either now or hereafter. It is a buckler to us, and we cry, "**Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed**" (Ps. 84:9); as if to say, Look not on me, but on my substitute; deal not with me for sin, but with my sin-bearer; challenge not me for my guilt, but challenge Him; He will answer for me. Thus we are safe beneath the shield of His righteousness. No arrow, either from the enemy or from conscience, can reach us there.

Covered by this perfection, we are at peace. The enemy cannot invade us; or if he tries to do so, we can triumphantly repel him. It is a refuge from the storm, a covert from the tempest, a river of water in a dry place, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The work of righteousness is peace; and in the Lord we have righteousness and strength.

Beautified with this perfection, which is the perfection of God, we find favour in His sight. His eye rests on the comeliness which

He has put upon us; and as He did at viewing the first creation, so now, in looking at us as clothed with this divine excellency, He pronounces it "very good." He sees "no iniquity in Jacob, and no transgression in Israel." "The iniquity of Jacob may be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found" (Num. 23:21). "This righteousness suffices to cover, to comfort, and to beautify."

Every time we say "**for Thy name's sake,**" or "**for Christ's sake,**" we are making use of another's claim, another's merit, and conceding or accepting the whole doctrine of imputed righteousness. Every man is daily getting, in some way or other, what he personally has no title to. When a son gets an inheritance from his father, he gets what does not belong to him, and what could easily and legally be diverted from him. When one who is not a son gets an estate by will, he gets what he has no claim to, simply by a legal deed. Human jurisprudence recognizes these transferences as competent and proper, not fictitious or absurd. Man daily acts on these principles of getting what he has no right to, simply because a fellow-man wills it, and law acknowledges that will. Why then should he speak of fictitious transferences in spiritual blessings, proceeding on precisely the same principle? Why should he deny the law or process of the divine jurisprudence, by which forgiveness of sin is conferred on him according to the will of another, and secured to him by the claims of another? If earthly law deals thus with him in earthly things, why should not heavenly law deal thus with him in heavenly things?

But there is more than this. We are justified that we may be

holy. The possession of this legal righteousness is the beginning of a holy life. We do not live a holy life in order to be justified; but we are justified that we may live a holy life. That which man calls holiness may be found in almost any circumstances, of dread, or darkness, or bondage, or self-righteous toil and suffering; but that which God calls holiness can only be developed under conditions of liberty and light, and pardon and peace with God. Forgiveness is the mainspring of holiness. Love, as a motive, is far stronger than law; far more influential than fear of wrath or peril of hell. Terror may make a man crouch like a slave and obey a hard master, lest a worse thing come upon him; but only a sense of forgiving love can bring either heart or conscience into that state in which obedience is either pleasant to the soul or acceptable to God.

False ideas of holiness are common, not only among those who profess false religions, but among those who profess the true. For holiness is a thing of which man by nature has no more idea than a blind man has of the beauty of a flower or the light of the sun. All false religions have had their "holy men," whose holiness often consisted merely in the amount of pain they could inflict upon their bodies, or of food which they could abstain from, or of hard labour which they could undergo. But with God, a saint or holy man is a very different being. It is in filial, full-hearted love to God that much of true holiness consists. And this cannot even begin to be until the sinner has found forgiveness and tasted liberty, and has confidence towards God. The spirit of holiness is incompatible with the spirit of bondage. There must be the spirit of liberty, the

spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. When the fountain of holiness begins to well up in the human heart, and to fill the whole being with its transforming, purifying power, "**We have known and believed the love that God has to us**" (I John 4:16), is the first note of the holy Song, which, commenced on earth, is to be perpetuated through eternity.

We are bought with a price, that we may be new creatures in Christ Jesus. We are forgiven, that we may be like Him who forgives us. We are set at liberty and brought out of prison, that we may be holy. The free, boundless love of God, pouring itself into us, expands and elevates our whole being; and we serve Him, not in order to win His favour, but because we have already won it in simply believing His record concerning His Son. If the root is holy, so are the branches. We have become connected with the holy root, and by the necessity of this connection are made holy, too.

Forgiveness relaxes no law, nor interferes with the highest justice. Human pardons may often do so; God's pardons never. Forgiveness doubles all our bonds to a holy life; only they are no longer bonds of iron, but of gold. It takes off the heavy yoke, in order to give us the light and easy.

Love is stronger than law. Whatever connects our obedience with love, must be far more influential than what connects us with law.

The love of God to us, and our love to God, work together for producing holiness in us. Terror accomplishes no real obedience. Suspense brings forth no fruit unto holiness. Only the certainty of love, forgiving love, can do this. It is this certainty that melts

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the heart, dissolves our chains, disburdens our shoulders, so that we stand erect, and makes us to run in the way of the divine commandments.

Condemnation is that which binds sin and us together. Forgiveness looses this fearful tie, and separates us from sin. The power of condemnation which the law possesses is that which makes it so strong and terrible. Cancel this power, and the liberated spirit rises into the region of love, and in that region finds both will and strength for the keeping of the law, a law which is at once old and new: old as to substance ("Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart..." (Matt. 22:37)); new as to mode and motive. **"For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"** (Rom. 8:2); that is, The law of the life giving spirit which we have in Christ Jesus hath severed the condemning connection of that law which leads only to sin and death. **"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh** (i.e. unable to carry out its commandments in our old nature), **God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"** (Rom. 8:3-4).

The removal of condemnation is the dissolution of legal bondage, and of that awful pressure upon the conscience which at once enslaved and irritated; disabling as well as disinclining us from all obedience; making holiness both distasteful and dreadful, to be submitted to only through fear of

future woe.

Sin, when unforgiven, oppresses the conscience and tyrannizes over the sinner. Sin forgiven in an unrighteous way, would be but a slight and uncertain as well as imperfect relief. Sin righteously and judicially forgiven, loses its dominion. The conscience rises up from its long oppression, and expands into joyous liberty. Our whole being becomes bright and buoyant under the benign influence of this forgiving love of God. **"The winter is past, the rain is over and gone, The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come"** (S. of S. 2:11-12).

Condemnation is the dark cloud that obscures our heavens. Forgiveness is the sunshine dissolving the cloud, and by its brilliance making all good things to grow and ripen in us.

Condemnation makes sin strike its roots deeper and deeper. No amount of terror can extirpate evil. No fear of wrath can make us holy. No gloomy uncertainty as to God's favour can subdue one's lust, or correct our crookedness of will. But the free pardon of the cross uproots sin, and withers all its branches. The "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" is the only effectual remedy for the deadly disease of an alienated heart and stubborn will.

The want of forgiveness, or uncertainty as to it, are barriers in the way of the removal of the heart's deep enmity to a righteous God. For enmity will only give way to love; and no suspense, however terrible, will overcome the stout-hearted rebelliousness of man. Threats do not conquer hearts; nor does austerity win either confidence or affection. They who would trust the law to awaken trust, know nothing either of law or love; nor do they

understand how the suspicions of the human heart are to be removed, and its confidence won. The knowledge of God simply as Judge or Lawgiver will be of no power to attract, of no avail to remove distrust and dread.

But the message, "God is love," is like the sun bursting through the clouds of a long tempest. The good news, **"...through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins,"** is like the opening of the prisoner's dungeon-gate. Bondage departs, and liberty comes. Suspicion is gone, and the heart is won. **"Perfect love has cast out fear"** (I John 4:18). We hasten to the embrace of Him who loved us; we hate that which has estranged us; we put away all that caused the distance between us and Him; we long to be like one so perfect, and to partake of His holiness. To be **"partakers of the divine nature"** (II Peter 1:4), once so distasteful, is henceforth most grateful and pleasant; and nothing seems now so desirable as to escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust.

We undergo many false changes, which look like holiness, but which are not really so. The poison tree drops its leaves, yet remains the same. The sea of Sodom glistens in the Sunshine with surpassing splendour, yet remains salt and bitter as before. Time changes us, yet does not make us holy. The decays of age change us, but do not break the power of evil. One lust expels another; frailty succeeds to frailty; error drives out error; one vanity palls, another comes freshly in its room; one evil habit is exchanged for a second, but our old man remains the same. The cross has not touched us with its regenerating power; the Holy Spirit has not purified the inner sources of our being and life. ("All divine life, and all the precious

fruits of it, pardon, peace, and holiness, spring from the cross. . . . Holiness as well as pardon is to be had from the blood of the cross. . . . All fancied sanctification which does not arise wholly from the blood of the cross is nothing better than Pharisaism. . . . If we would be holy, we must get to the cross, and dwell there; else, notwithstanding all our labour and diligence, and fasting, and praying, and good works, we shall be yet void of real sanctification, destitute of those humble, gracious tempers which accompany a clear view of the cross."—Berridge's *Letters*).

Fashion changes us; the example of friends changes us; society changes us; excitement changes us; business changes us; affection changes us; sorrow changes us; dread of coming evil changes us; yet the heart is just what it was. Of the numerous changes in our character or deportment, how many are deceitful, how few are real and deep!

Only that which can go down into the very depths of our spiritual being can produce any change that is worthy of the name.

The one spell that can really transform us is THE CROSS. The one potent watchword is, **"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"** (John 12:32). The one physician for all our maladies is He who died for us, and the one remedy which He applies is the blood that cleanseth from all sin. The one arm of power that can draw us out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, is "the Spirit of holiness."

"For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19). Christ presents Himself as the Holy One, the Consecrated One, to God, that His people may partake of His

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sanctification, and be like Himself, saints, consecrated ones, men set apart for God by the sprinkling of the blood. Through the truth they are sanctified, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

“By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14); so that the perfection of His Saints, both as to the conscience and as to personal holiness, is connected with the one offering, and springs out of the one work finished upon Calvary. **“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”** (Heb. 10:10). Here again the sanctification is connected with the offering of the body of Christ. Whatever place “the power of His resurrection” may hold in our spiritual history, it is the cross that is the source of all that varied fullness by which we are justified and purified. The secret of a believer’s holy walk is his continual recurrence to the blood of the Surety, and his daily intercourse with a crucified and risen Lord.

Nowhere does Scripture, either in its statements of doctrine or lives of the Saints, teach us that here we get beyond our need of the blood, or may safely cast off the divine raiment that covers our deformity. Even should we say at any time, “I am free from sin,” this would be no proof of our being really holy: for the heart is deceitful above all things, and there may be ten thousand sins lurking in us; seen by God, though unseen by ourselves. “I know nothing of myself,” says the apostle; i.e. I am not conscious of any failure; but, he adds, “I am not hereby justified;” i.e. this my own consciousness is no proof of my

sinlessness: for “He that judgeth me is the Lord;” and the Lord may condemn me in many things in which I do not condemn myself.

Let me say to one who thinks he has reached sinlessness, “My friend, are you sure that you are perfectly holy?” For nothing but absolute certainty should lead you to make so bold an affirmation regarding your freedom from all sin. Are you sure that you love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul? For unless you are absolutely sure of this, you have no right to say, I am perfectly holy; and it will be a perilous thing for you to affirm, I have no longer any need of the blood, and I refuse to go to the fountain for cleansing, seeing my going thither would be mockery. For the cross, the blood, the fountain, are for the imperfect, not for the perfect; for the unrighteous, not for the righteous; and if your self-consciousness is correct, you are no longer among the imperfect or the unrighteous. My friend, do you never sin, in thought, or in word, or in desire, or in deed? Have you never a wandering thought! Is your heart as warm and are your affections as heavenly as you could possibly desire them to be? What not one stray thought from morn to night, from night to morn? Not one wrong word, nor look, nor tone What no coldness, no want of fervour, no flagging of zeal, no momentary indulgence of self and sloth? What no error (for error is sin), no false judgment, no failure of temper, no improper step, no imperfect plan ; nothing to regret, nothing to wish unsaid or undone in the midst of a world like ours, with all its provocations, its crosses, its worries, its oppositions, its heated atmosphere of infectious evil? And art thou Sure, quite sure, that all this is the case; and

that thy conscience is so perfectly alive, so divinely sensitive, that the faintest expressions of evil in the remotest corner of thy heart would be detected ? If so, thou art an extraordinary man, far above him who was less than the least of all saints; above him who said, **“The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do”** (Rom. 7:19); and one whose history will require to be written by some immortal pen, as that of the man who, after a few years’ believing, ceased to require any application to the cross, or to be indebted to the blood for cleansing, who could look at altar, and laver, and mercy seat as one who had no longer any interest in their provisions; nay, as one to whom a crucified Christ was a thing of the past, of whom he had now no need as a Sin-bearer, or High Priest, or Advocate, or Intercessor, but only as a companion and friend.

God’s processes are not always rapid. His greatest works rise slowly. Swiftmess of growth has been one of man’s tests of greatness; not so is it with God. His trees grow slowly; the stateliest are the slowest. His flowers grow slowly; the brightest are the slowest. His creatures grow slowly, year by year; man, the noblest, grows the most slowly of all. God can afford to take His time. Man cannot. He is hasty and impatient. He will have everything to be like Jonah’s gourd, or like one of those fabled oriental palaces, which magicians are said to call up by a word or a stamp, out of the sand. He forgets how slowly the palm tree and the cedar grow. They neither spring up in a night nor perish in a night. He forgets the history of the temple: **“Forty and six years was this temple in building”** (John 2:20). He insists that, because it is God’s purpose that His saints

should be holy, therefore they ought to be holy at once.

It is true that our standard is, and must be, perfection. For our model is the Perfect One. But the question is, Has God in Scripture anywhere led us to expect the rapidity of growth, the quick development of perfection in which some glory, and because of the confessed lack of which in others they look down on these others as babes or loiterers?

Is there in Scripture any instance of a perfect man, excepting Him who was always and absolutely without sin? If Christians were perfect, where is the warfare, and the adversary, and the sword, and the shield? Are angels exposed to this warfare when they visit earth? Or is it not our imperfection that in great measure produces this? And are we anywhere in Scripture led to believe that we are delivered from the body of this death, from the battle of flesh and spirit, from the wrestling with principalities and powers, till death sets us free, or Our Lord shall come?

Yet we are called with a holy calling (II Tim. 1:9); and as so called, are bound to take the highest standard for our model of life. The slowness or swiftness of the progress does not alter the standard, nor affect our aiming at conformity to it.

This progress, rapid or gradual, springs from the forgiveness we have received, and the new life imparted by the Holy Spirit. Our life is to be fruit bearing; and the fruitfulness comes from our ascertained acceptance, our being **“rooted and grounded in love”** (Eph. 3:17). We taste and see that the Lord is good; that in His favour is life; that the joy of the Lord is our strength; and so we move on and up, rising from one level to another. “We know and

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believe the love that God hath to us;" and we find in this the source of goodness, no less than that of gladness and liberty.

The life of the justified should be a peaceful one. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, the God of peace, and the God of all grace. The world's storms have not been stilled, nor our way smoothed, nor our skies brightened, nor our enemies swept away; but the peace of God has come in and taken possession of the soul. We are cheered and comforted. God is for us, and who can be against us? The name of the Lord is our strong tower; we run into it, and are safe. No evil can happen to us; no weapon that is formed against us can prosper.

The life of the justified should be a holy one, all the more because of the extent of previous unholiness. **"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"** (I Cor. 6:11). All that these marvelous and mysterious words "holy" and "holiness" imply, is to be found in the life of one who has been "much forgiven." There is no spring of holiness so powerful as that which our Lord assumes: **"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more"** (John 8:11). Free and warm reception into the divine favour is the strongest of all motives in leading a man to seek conformity to Him who has thus freely forgiven him all trespasses. A cold admission into the paternal house by the father might have repelled the prodigal, and sent him back to his lusts; but the fervent kiss, the dear embrace, the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, the festal song, all

without one moment's suspense or delay, as well as without one upbraiding word, could not but awaken shame for the past, and true-hearted resolution to walk worthy of such a father, and of such a generous pardon. "Revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries," come to be the abhorrence of him round whom the holy arms of renewed fatherhood have been so lovingly thrown. Sensuality, luxury, and the gaities of the flesh have lost their relish to one who has tasted the fruit of the tree of life.

The life of the justified should be a loving one. It is love that has made him what he is, and shall he not love in return? Shall he not love Him that begat, and him also that is begotten of Him? The deep true spring of love is thus revealed to us by the Lord Himself: "A certain creditor had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most" (Luke 7:41-42)? Thus love produces love. The life of one on whom the fullness of the free love of God is ever shining must be a life of love. Suspense, doubt, terror, darkness, must straiten and freeze; but the certainty of free and immediate love dissolves the ice, and kindles the coldest spirit into the warmth of love. **"We love him, because he first loved us"** (I John 4:19). Love to God, love to the brethren, love to the world, spring up within us as the heavenly love flows in. Malevolence, anger, envy, jealousy, receive their death-blow. The nails of the cross have gone through all these, and their deadly wound cannot be healed. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts. Sternness, coldness, distance, depart; and are

succeeded by gentleness, mildness, guilelessness, meekness, ardour, long-suffering. The tempers of the old man quit us, we know not how; and in their place comes the "charity which suffereth long, and is kind, which envieth not, which vaunteth not itself, which is not puffed up, which doth not behave itself unseemly, which seeketh not her own, which is not easily provoked, which thinketh no evil, which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, which beareth all things, which believeth all things, which never faileth" (I Cor. 13:4-8). Gentle and loving and simple should be the life of the justified; meek and lowly should they be, who have been loved with such a love.

The life of the justified should be an earnest one. For everything connected with his acceptance has been earnest on the part of God; and the free forgiveness on which he has entered, in believing, nerves, and cheers, and animates. It is a spring of courage, and hardihood, and perseverance. It makes the coward brave; it says to the weak, Be strong; to the indolent, Arise; making the forgiving man ready to face danger, and toil, and loss; arming him with a new-found energy, and crowning him with sure success. "Ready to spend and to be spent" is his motto now. "I am debtor" is his watchword, debtor first of all to Him who forgave me; after that, to the church of God, redeemed with the same blood, and filled with the same Spirit; and then after that to the world around, still sunk in sin and struggling with a thousand sorrows, under which it has no comforter, and of whose termination it has no hope. How thoroughly in earnest should be the life of one thus pardoned;—pardoned so freely, yet at such a cost to Him who "gave His life a

ransom for many!"

The life of the justified should be a generous one. All connected with his justification has been boundless generosity on the part of God. He spared not His own Son, and will He not with Him also freely give us all things? The love of God has been of the largest, freest kind; and shall this not make us generous? The gifts of God have been all of them on the most unlimited scale; and shall not this boundless liberality make us liberal in the highest and truest sense? Can a justified man be covetous, or slow to part with his gold? God has given His Son; He has given His Spirit; He has given us eternal life; He has given us an everlasting kingdom. And shall these gifts not tell upon us? shall they not expand and elevate us? or shall they leave us narrow and shrivelled as before? Surely we are called to a noble life; a life far above the common walk of humanity; a life far above that of those who, disbelieving the liberality of God, are trying to merit His favour, or to purchase His kingdom by moral goodnesses or ceremonial performances of their own. Not unselfish merely, but self-denying men, we are called to be; not self-pleasers, nor man pleasers, nor flesh-pleasers, nor world-pleasers; but pleasers of God, like Enoch (Heb. 11:5), or like a greater than Enoch, as it is written, **"Even Christ pleased not himself"** (Rom. 15:3). **"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."** i.e. to the edification or building up of the body of Christ (Rom. 15:1). Selfishness, self-love, self seeking, have been in all ages the scandal of the church of God. "All seek their

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own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2: 21), was the sad testimony of the apostle to the Philippian church, even in early days: so little had God's marvelous love told even upon those who believed it; so obstinate was the contraction of the human heart, and so unwilling to yield to the enlarging pressure of an influence which men in common things deem irresistible. To love warmly, to give largely, to sympathize sincerely, to help unselfishly; these are some of the noble fruits to be expected from the belief of a love that passeth knowledge. Self-sacrifice ought not to seem much to those for whom Christ has died, and whom He now represents upon the throne. Generous deeds and gifts and words ought to be as natural as they are becoming in those who have been so freely loved, so abundantly pardoned, and so eternally blest. Narrow hearts are the fruits of a narrow pardon, and of an uncertain favour; poor gifts are the produce of stinted and grudging giving; but large-heartedness and open handedness may surely be looked for from those whom the boundless liberality of God has made partakers of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and heirs of the kingdom which cannot be moved.

The life of the justified should be a lofty one. Littleness, and meanness, and earthliness, do not become the pardoned. They must mount up on wings as eagles, setting their affection on things above. Having died with Christ and risen with Him, they sit with Him in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). In the world, and yet not of it, they rise above it; possessed of a heavenly citizenship (Phil.

3:20), and expecting an unearthly recompense at the return of Him who has gone to prepare a place for them. High thoughts, high aims, high longings, become them of whom Christ was not merely the substitute upon the cross, but the representative upon the throne,—the forerunner, who has entered within the veil, and ever liveth to intercede for us. Shall he who has been freely justified grovel in the dust, or creep along the polluted soil of earth? Shall such a justification as he has received not be the source of superhuman elevation of character, making him unworldly in his hopes, in his tastes, in his works, in the discharge of his daily calling? Shall not such a justification act upon his whole being, and pervade his life; making him a thoroughly consistent man in all things; each part of his course becoming his name and prospects; and his whole man symmetrical, his whole Christianity harmonious?

The life of the justified is a decided one. It does not oscillate between goodness and evil, between Christ and the world. The justifying cross has come between him and all evil things; and that which released him from the burden of guilt has, in so doing, broken the bondage of sin. Even if at any time he feels as if he could return to that country from which he set out, the cross stands in front, and arrests his backward step. Between him and Egypt rolls the Red Sea, now flowing in its strength, so that he cannot pass. At the door of the theatre, or the ball-room, or the revel-hall, stands the cross, and forbids his entrance. The world is crucified to him, and he unto the world, by the saving cross. His first look to the cross committed him. He began, and he cannot go back. It would be mean as well as perilous to do so. There

is henceforth to be no mistake about him. His heart is no longer divided, and his eye no longer roams. He has taken up his cross, and he is following the Lamb. He has gone in at the strait gate, and is walking along the narrow way; and at the entrance thereof stands the cross barring his return. Over his entrance there was joy in heaven; and shall he at any time turn that joy into sorrow by even seeming to go back?

The life of the justified is a useful one. He has become a witness for Him who has thrown over him the shadow of His cross. He can tell what the bitterness of sin is, and what is the burden of guilt. He can speak of the rolling away of the stone from the sepulcher of his once dead soul, and of the angel sitting on that stone clothed in light. He can make known the righteousness which he has found, and in finding which he has been brought into liberty and gladness. Out of the abundance of his heart, and in the fullness of his liberated spirit, his mouth speaketh. He cannot but speak of the things which he now possesses, that he may induce others to come and share the fullness. He is bent on doing good. He has no hours to throw away. He knows that the time is short, and he resolves to redeem it. He will not waste a life that has been redeemed at such a cost. It is not his own, and he must keep in mind the daily responsibilities of a life thus bought for another. As one of the world's lights, in the absence of the true light, he must be always shining, to lessen in some degree the darkness of earth, and to kindle heavenly light in souls who are now excluding it. As one of the sowers of the heavenly seed, he must never be idle, but watching opportunities,—making opportunities for sowing it as

he goes out and in; it may be in weakness, it may be in tears.

The life of the justified is the life of wisdom and truth. He has become "wise in Christ;" nay, "Christ has been made unto him wisdom" as well as righteousness. It is thus that he has become "wise unto salvation," and he feels that he must hold fast the truth that saves. To trifle with that truth, to tamper with error, would be to deny the cross. He by whom he is justified is Himself THE TRUTH, and every man who receives that truth becomes a witness for it. By THE TRUTH he is saved; by THE TRUTH he is made free; by THE TRUTH he is made clean; by THE TRUTH he is sanctified; and therefore it is precious to him, in every jot and tittle. Each fragment broken off is so much lost to his spiritual well-being; and each new discovery made in the rich field of truth is so much eternal gain. He has bought the truth, and he will not sell it. It is his life; it is his heritage; it is his kingdom. He counts all truth precious, and all error hateful. He dreads the unbelief that is undermining the foundations of truth, and turning its spacious palaces into a chaos of human speculations. He calls no truth obsolete or out of date; for he knows that the truths on which he rests for eternity are the oldest of the old, and yet the surest of the sure. To introduce doubts as to the one sacrifice on which he builds, is to shake the cross of Calvary. To lay another foundation than that already laid, is to destroy his one hope. To take the sacrificial element out of the blood, is to make peace with God impossible, because unrighteous. To substitute the church for Christ, or the priest for the herald of pardon, or the rite for the

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precious blood, or the sacrament for the living Christ upon the throne, or the teachings of the church for the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost,—this is to turn light into darkness, and then to call that darkness light. Thus taught by that Spirit who has led him to the cross, the justified man knows how to discern truth from error. He has the unction from the Holy One, and knows all things (I John 2:20); he has the anointing which is truth, and is no lie (I John 2:27); and he can try the spirits, whether they are of God (I John 4:1).

Want of sensitiveness to the difference between truth and error is one of the evil features of modern Protestantism. Sounding words, well-executed pictures, pretentious logic, carry away multitudes. The distinction between Gospel and no Gospel is very decided and very momentous; yet many will come away from a sermon in which the free gospel has been overlaid, not sensible of the want, and praising the preacher. The conversions of recent years have not the depth of other days. Consciences are half-awakened and half-pacified; the wound is slightly laid open, and slightly healed. Hence the want of spiritual discernment as to truth and error. The conscience is not sensitive, else it would at once refuse and resent any statement, however well argued or painted, which encroached in the slightest degree upon the free gospel of God's love in Christ; which interposed any obstacle between the sinner and the cross; or which merely declaimed about the cross, without telling us especially how it saves and how it purifies. We need sensitive but not morbid consciences to keep us steadfast

in the faith, to preserve our spiritual eyesight unimpaired, remembering the apostle's words, **"He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins"** (II Peter 1:9). Censoriousness is one thing, and spiritual discernment is quite another. To avoid the first we do not need to give up the second: though the "liberality" of modern times would recommend us to be charitable to error, and not very tenacious of any Bible truth, seeing that nothing in an age of culture can be received but that which has been pronounced credible by philosophy or science, and which the "verifying faculty" has adjudged to be true!

The life of the justified must be one of praise and prayer. His justification has drawn him near to God. It has opened his lips and enlarged his heart. He cannot but praise; he cannot but pray. He has ten thousand things to ask for; he has ten thousand things for which to give thanks. He knows what it is to speak in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in his heart to the Lord (Col. 3:16).

The life of the justified is one of watchfulness. Forgiveness has altered all his circumstances and hopes. It has brought him into a new world, from which are shut out things he was formerly familiar with, and into which are introduced things which he knew not. He sees and hears what he never saw nor heard before; and he ceases to see and hear what but lately he delighted in. He is no longer satisfied with things as they are. He expects changes, and wishes that they were come. The present has become less to him, the future more; and in that future the one absorbing object is the reappearing of Him, whom

not having seen he loves. That the future should be a mere repetition of the present, with a few scientific and political improvements, is quite enough for the worldly man. But the man who, by his new connection with the cross, has been transported into a new region, is not content that it should be so. He wants a better future, and a more congenial world; he desires a state of things in which the new object of his love shall be all. And learning from Scripture that such a new condition of things is to be expected, and that of that new state Christ is Himself to be the first and last, he looks eagerly out for the fulfillment of these hopes. Learning, moreover, that the arrival of this King and of His kingdom is to be sudden, he is led to wait and watch; all the more because everything here, in the world's daily history of change, and noise and revelry, is fitted to throw him off his guard. His justification does not lull him asleep. His faith does not make him heedless of the future. It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It says, Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober: watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh. Many a trial of her watchfulness has the church had, many a disappointment has her faith sustained; but she does not despond nor give way, remembering the promise, **"He that shall come will come, and will not tarry"** (Heb. 10:37). Her faith keeps up her vigilance, and her vigilance invigorates her faith. In the darkest hour faith says, **"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine"** (SoS. 6:3); and hope adds, "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices"

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BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

8-1-2020 to 8-31-2020

Beginning Balance \$1,833.81

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL 60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX 50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV 200.00
Bruce E. Allen, Pooler, GA 25.00
Carol Willett, Cottonwood Shores, TX 70.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Grace B. C., Gladwin, MI 50.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC 50.00
Grace Missionary B. C. Tulsa, OK 50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV 100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC 50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY 35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH 100.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR 100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL 100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR 50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS 25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX 30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wellington, KS 100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA 25.00
Subscriptions 21.00
Anonymous 200.00
Dividing checks 0.00
Sub Total \$1,891.00
TOTAL \$3,724.81

EXPENDITURES:

Printing 490.00
Postage 573.04
Supplies 0.00
Wages 2,300.00
FICA 175.96
Dividing checks 0.00
Bank charge 13.00
Total Expenditures \$3,552.00
ENDING BALANCE \$172.81



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

8-1-2020 to 8-31-2020

Beginning Balance \$3,496.30

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 225.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
..... 325.00
TOTAL 3,821.30

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time 363.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 363.98
..... 3,457.32
Interest +0.03
ENDING BALANCE \$3,457.35

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(SoS. 8:14).

The church watches because of present evil, and coming good; that she may be kept undefiled from the one, and may attain unto the other. Danger from enemies, and the prospect of speedy victory over them, keep her awake. Fear of losing sight of the cross, and so again walking in darkness; suspicion both of the good and the evil things of earth, its flatteries and its menaces, its toils, its cares, its amusements, its pleasures; anxiety about keeping her garments unspotted and her conscience clean; the sight of the sleeping millions around, and the knowledge that it is upon a sleeping world that the Lord is to come—these things act powerfully as stimulants, and bid her be watchful. To be among the foolish virgins, without oil and with a dying lamp, when the midnight cry goes forth; to be near the door, and yet shut out; to hear the announcement, “The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready,” and yet not be ready; to be summoned to the festival, and yet to be without the bridal and the festal dress; to love, and then to fall from love; to draw the sword, and then in faintheartedness to sheathe it; to run well for a while, and then to slacken speed; to war against Satan as the prince of darkness, and yield to him as an angel of light; to set out with condemning the world, and then to mingle with it; to cleave like Demas to the saints, and then to forsake them; to be among the twelve for a season, then to be a traitor at the last; to be lifted up, like Capernaum, to heaven, and then to be thrust down to hell; to be among the sons of light,

and then to fall from heaven like Lucifer, son of the morning; to sit down in the upper chamber with the Lord, and then to betray the Son of man with a kiss; to put on a goodly garment of fair profession, and then to walk naked in shame;—these are the solemn thoughts that crowd in upon the justified man, and keep him watchful. They who know not what it is to be “accepted in the Beloved,” and to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” may fall asleep. He dare not; he knows what he is risking, and what one hour of slumber may cost him; and he must be wakeful. He does not make election his opiate, and say, I am safe, I may sleep or wake as I please. He says, I am safe; but this only makes me doubly vigilant, that I may not dishonour Him who has saved me; and even though I may not finally fall away, I know not how much I may lose by one day’s slothfulness, or how much I may gain by maintaining that watchful attitude to which, as the expectant of an absent Lord, I am called. “Blessed is he that watcheth;” and even though I could not see the reason for this, I will act upon it, that I may realize the promised blessedness. He who has called me to vigilance can make me partaker of its joy.

He can make my watch-tower, lonely and dark as it may seem, none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven. (*The Everlasting Righteousness; How Shall Man Be Just With God?*, 1873).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS has called Elder Joseph Sidders as pastor, and he has accepted the call.

Elder Samaroo Sookraj would like to make known the need for help in completing the meeting place of the Landmark Grace Baptist Church in Trinidad. Please prayerfully consider this need to be met.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Elder Samaroo through Facebook Messenger, Facetime, or telephone: 1-868-338-5339, or

Email: ssookraj@hotmail.com.

The Grace Landmark Baptist Church of Buckhannon, WV, is seeking a pastor. The church is Sovereign Grace and Landmark in doctrine and practice. Any interested called pastor of like faith may contact Brother Brad Butcher at (304) 669-4738 or (304) 745-6226.

The Stephens Branch Baptist Church of Martin, Kentucky is in need of a pastor. They are an Independent, Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Missionary Baptist church holding to the doctrines of grace and the King James Bible. If you are interested in being considered or would like more information on the church you can call Brother Lonnie Edwards at (859) 629-1413 or write the church at: Stephens Branch Baptist Church, 1025 Stephens Branch Road, Martin, Kentucky 41649.

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.

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