

The Berea Baptist Banner

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Atonement and Reconciliation

By John Lightfoot Waller

(1809 - 1854)

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. 5:11).

I will introduce this subject with an extract from the Baptist confession of faith. This was first put forth about the year 1643, by and in the name of seven congregations then gathered in London. Afterward, in 1689, the ministers and messengers of over one hundred congregations in England and Wales, being met together in



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London, adopted it as containing their faith and practice. Again, in 1742, the Baptist Association, met in Philadelphia, adopted and republished the same as containing the doctrines and practice then held by the members of that body; since which time, it has been known as the Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith: and it has been received and adopted by many, if not most, of the old churches and Associations in Virginia, Kentucky, and many other places; and, until of late years, it was regarded by the Baptists as containing the faith once delivered to the saints. We quote from the ninth edition, published in Philadelphia in 1798, Chapter VIII, as follows:-

"It pleased God, in His eternal

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Matthew 18:20

By Ronnie Wolfe

Harrison, Ohio

Introduction: Some very serious confusion seems to be rampant in our Baptist groups today concerning this passage of Scripture. Who are the "two or three" in Matthew 18:20, and what power or authority do they have? Let's notice the answer under two topics: A Powerful Pretext and The Proper Context.

A POWERFUL PRETEXT

A pretext is "something that is put forward to conceal a true purpose or object; an ostensible reason; excuse;" according to *Webster's Electronic Unabridged Dictionary*. In theology or Bible study, this would include explanations of verses which do not fit the context, which is "the parts of a written or spoken statement that precede or follow a specific word or passage, usually influencing its



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meaning or effect" (*ibid.*).

Matthew 18:20, which reads, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"

is many times taken out of context. The majority of Bible expositors think this verse has to do with the building or starting of a church. They teach that for "two or three" to be gathered together means that a church is born, started, built or otherwise comes into existence. This

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Our Unaccountable God

By Milburn Cockrell

Mantachie, Mississippi

"Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters" (Job 33:12-13).

These are the words of Elihu to Job. They are solemn and serious words. John Mason rendered verse 13: "Why dost thou dispute with him, because he will not account for all his ways" (*The Book of Job*, 1812 edition). Some basic truths are stated here. God is greater than man. This great God is in no way accountable to any of His creatures. Submission and not contention is the wise and proper course on our part.

GOD REPORTS TO NO OTHER BEING

The only moral intelligence in existence that is unaccountable is God. He does not have to report to any being in the entire universe. He

does not have to justify Himself to great theologians or seminary professors. God is absolutely independent, and He is under no

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100 World-Known Witnesses to the Second Coming of Our Lord

Part 2

J. C. M. Dawson, B.A., Belfast, author of "Present Day Problems," etc.

"Our Lord descends to the air at the approaching end of the Present Dispensation of Grace. He comes for

His Church, which will then be complete. He will remove it completely from earth to Heaven. God will revert to what he was doing when Paul made the remarkable declaration in Acts 28. 28. . . . The Great Tribulation will follow. This will try all who dwell on the earth. At the end of seven years the Lord will descend on the Mount of Olives, and the Jews will be converted when they see Him whom they pierced. . . . God works surely, and carries out His purpose."

Capt. W. H. Dawson, well-known Christian worker and liberal donor in the South of England, formerly of the Inniskilling Dragoons.

"Christ has been revealed on earth at His First Coming. He has been revealed, in us, who have received Him (Gal. 1:16). But in fullest sense His revelation is yet to come; we look

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Areas of Spiritual Growth

By Milburn Cockrell

Mantachie, Mississippi

"...let us go on unto perfection..." (Heb. 6:1).

In this article I am concerned with the different areas of Christian growth. Plants, animals, and men are expected to grow in size, height, and beauty. God expect the same of a Christian. As we shall see, there are various areas in which believers must make advancement.

IN THE NUMBER OF GRACES

Simon Peter enjoins us to grow in

the number of Christian graces: "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"(II Pet. 1:5-7).

Seeing we have the very life and

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"THOU HAST GIVEN A BANNER TO THEM THAT FEAR THEE, THAT IT MAY BE DISPLAYED BECAUSE OF THE TRUTH" (PSALMS 60:4).



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purpose, to choose and ordain in the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest and King, Head and Savior of His church; the heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom He did, from all eternity, give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him, in time, redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified. . . . The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up to God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven for all those whom the Father had given unto Him."

From this, we learn that at least one hundred churches in England and Wales, nearly two hundred years ago, and the Association in Philadelphia, more than one hundred years ago,

and many other churches and Associations in times past, believed that the Father, from eternity gave to the Son a people to be His seed,—His companion-bride, and to be by Him redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified, upon condition that He would become their Substitute, suffer the penalty due to the law, and, by satisfying its demands, put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. All this the Son engaged to do, pledging Himself as Surety for the safety of all who were given Him, saying: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, many have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:37-40). For which it was promised Him by the Father, that, when He should give His soul an offering for sin, He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

All the promises of the covenant of redemption were made to Christ, and the children in Him, as they were mystically related to Him, as the body to the Head, bride to the Bridegroom; and, in this relation, they were "reconciled to God by the death of his Son." "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17). "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 are healed" (I Pet. 2:24). For "that he might bring us to God" (I Pet. 3:18). "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

Upon the authority of these Scriptures, it may be justly assumed that Christ, as an atoning victim, suffered and died as a substitute in the room and stead of His elect bride,—the children in whom was His delight; and this suffering and death as an offering was in full satisfaction of the claim of the divine government, as justice could require no more than the sufferings and death of the accepted Substitute: and, by reason of the

dignity of the substituted sacrifice, the law was not only satisfied, but magnified. Then, if Christ was an accepted Substitute for the children given Him, and His sufferings and death satisfied Divine justice; in their room and stead, it may, with emphasis, be asked, in the challenging language of the apostle: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8:33). And again: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34). To this may be added the following by the same apostle: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). If, then, no charge can be made against God's elect because God has justified them because Christ died for them, and now intercedes for them, and if the Father, according to the reasoning of the apostle, "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32).

The Apostle Paul, in his epistle to his Hebrew brethren, runs a parallel between the ceremonial, tabernacle service, in the sacrificial offerings to make atonement for the people under the law by the Jewish high priest, and that of which Christ is the officiating priest in the true holy of holies. He speaks of the first as patterns of things in heavens, and figures of the true, and says: "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these (the blood of beasts); but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die (ceremonially), but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:23-28).

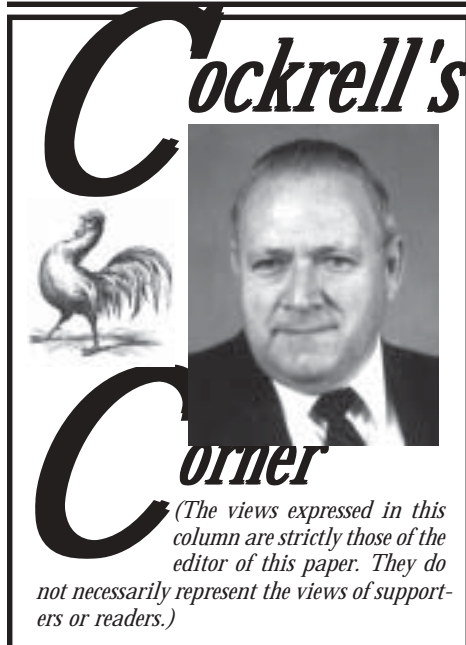
On the great day of atonement, the high priest selected two goats, and cast lots upon them. The one taken for the

sacrifice was slain, and the blood taken by the high priest into the holy place, and with it he made an atonement for the people; then he put off his linen apparel in which he officiated, and put on his glorious garments of gold and scarlet and purple and fine twine linen; then Moses, the mediator, and Aaron, the priest, went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and blessed the people; when the people saw this, they shouted and fell on their faces. Thus, the high priest, serving under the example and shadow of heavenly things, died ceremonially in his substitute,—the sin-bearing victim; and so did the priest, in a figure by substitution, make an offering of his life as an atonement for the sins of the people. And, if the offering is accepted, the priest puts off his official apparel, and puts on his shining garments, all decked with gold and jewels; and, in this attire, comes out to them that look for him, pronounces the judgment and blesses them, when the glory of the Lord appears to all the people.

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to his Hebrew brethren, who understood the shadowy character of the tabernacle service, says: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are for figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. . . . And as it is appointed unto men (priests) once to die (ceremonially), but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

By this, the apostle intended to show, that, as in the type, after the priests have made an atonement by their own lives ceremonially offered, they appear to them that look for them in judgment, pronouncing the blessing of sins put away, the people all shout, and the glory of the Lord, in shekinah brightest, appears to all the people; so Christ, who, as the true victim, was once offered to bear the sins of many, and who is now in the holy of holies in the true tabernacle, not made with hands: and when He shall have finished His mission in the tabernacle, all decked in His glorious apparel as the royal Bridegroom, traveling in the greatness of His strength, and coming to His waiting people, who in their impatience, are crying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," He will proclaim the offering accepted, the trumpet will sound, the people will shout, and the shekinah glory will fill the whole earth. This will be the antitypical fulfillment of the closing

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OBSERVATIONS ON CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Every since my early boyhood days most of the Baptists with whom I have been acquainted seem to know how to organize a new Baptist church. People who were members of an already existing Baptist church secured letters of dismissal from their church to form a new church. Generally, the pastor of the already existing church, as well as some of the members who intended to remain with the old church, would meet on a given day and organize the dismissed members into a New Testament Church. Generally, the people going into the new church would adopt a confession of faith and covenant together to form a church. In my 45 years in the ministry I have been present at such many organizations, sometimes as the organizing pastor, or as a visitor in the services. This practice has served our Baptist people well as many presently existing churches were organized in this fashion.

In the last few years men have arose who say that this practice is unscriptural, for one church cannot organize another church. In fact churches must be self-constituted, for the only scriptural churches are self-constituted. There is no need to secure letters from the church where they are members; yea, it does not matter even if they are properly excluded members. If these brethren are correct (I think they are dead wrong), this is good news for Protestant churches, for they were all self-constituted. This is good news for community churches and Bible churches, for they are all self-constituted. This is good news for all cults, for they are self-constituted. It especially good news to all Campbellites, for they were self-constituted with Baptist baptism, and they meet in the name of Christ. In

fact this is good news for all kinds of would-be-church founders. If two or three people can found a church any time and any place, then they can surely originate baptism, which is a mere ordinance of the church. So let churches be organized anywhere, anyhow, and by anybody. Let the people be believers and let them baptize each other, and start a church.

If this new idea is true, it is only bad news for a church which was lettered out from an older church to found a new church. Since these are not self-constituted in the absolute sense, and since the only scriptural churches are self-constituted, these brethren have bastard churches. They should, if the new doctrine is true, disband and reorganize in order to have scriptural churches. Worst still, some of those who teach that a church must be self-constituted are members of churches which were started by other churches.

To date, so far as I know, not one of them has disbanded and reorganized. Why such brethren find it impractical to practice what they preach I cannot say.

A BRIEF HISTORY

I always look at how a new idea got started. One of our historic Baptist churches excluded some members who left the church. These excluded members joined another church by statement of faith, and then the church, which took them by statement, organized this excluded group into a new church in the same city where the church, which did the excluding, existed. These facts were not so well known when they happened, nor are they very well known to this day.

The problems could have been worked out at the time they happened, if scriptural rules of reconciliation had been practiced. Even at this late hour the matters could easily be corrected, if human pride could be laid aside. But this has not been done, nor are there any plans to do so at present to the best of my knowledge.

Instead of these matters being resolved, a few brethren have introduced a whole new set of rules for organizing new churches out of properly excluded members from another church. I have never cared much for either situation ethics nor circumstantial ecclesiology. I do not believe it is right to organize a new church out of properly excluded members from another church. I grant that a church can be in error in its discipline, and, when it is, other churches should not respect its erroneous discipline. If a church has been organized out of properly excluded members from another

church, I believe that such a church should tell the truth about its origin.

THE CASE HAS NOT BEEN MADE

Despite lengthy articles and quotes from Baptist history (some of which were not documented), I do not think the case has been made to prove properly excluded members can be formed into a new church. So far as I have seen, no New Testament text has been produced to show that properly excluded members in the time of the New Testament went to some other place in the same city and form themselves into a New Testament church. Brethren, if there are some Scriptures which prove this, I, for one, would like to have chapter and verse.

What if some Baptists in the early days in America in remote places did constitute themselves into a church without the consent of another church? Seldom do those who point to these things tell us that some of people did plan to secure letters when it was possible to do so. How does this prove that properly excluded members from one church can go down the road and constitute themselves into a church? What proof do we have that those in the early days who formed themselves into churches were properly excluded members of other Baptist churches? I would be happy to be introduced to some records which prove this was the case. I would also appreciate historical records to prove this was the ordinary practice of the Baptists of days past.

Personally, I would like to see numerous quotes from the old Baptist writers and theologians who state they believed a church could be organized out of properly excluded members from another Baptist church. I would like these documented, and not from mere secondary sources.

The whole idea of self-constitution of churches is built upon the idea that a member may dismiss himself at pleasure from a church without the consent of his church.

I know of no Scripture which says a person may do this in the New Testament. Will some person please give me chapter and verse for this? A few quotes from the old Baptists would also be appreciated as to this practice also.

THINGS WHICH ARE DIFFERENT ARE NOT THE SAME

I do not agree with some brethren who say there exists no problem, for all are saying the same things, but from a different standpoint. The man who believes a church member can dismiss himself at pleasure without the approval of the church where he is a member, and the man who believes that the church only can dismiss a

man who is a member, do not believe one and the same thing. A person who believes that a church is self-constituted, and a person who believes that one church must beget another church, do not believe one and the same thing. A man who believes that five preachers met in Acts 13:1-4 and ordained two of the group to go out as missionaries, and the man who believes the church met and ordained these two men and sent them out as missionaries, do not believe one and the same thing. A man who believes that when a person is ordained (by council or some church) he then has the right to go out and baptize and start churches at pleasure, and the man who believes that a man must baptize by the authority of the church and into a church, do not believe one and the same thing. A person who believes that baptism is a preacher ordinance or a Christian ordinance, and the person who believes it is a church ordinance, do not believe one and the same thing. A person who believes that the call of the church constitutes an ordination for a pastor, and a person who believe there must be a formal ordination service by the church, do not believe one and the same thing.

A person who believes that Landmarkism started with J. R. Graves and J. M. Pendleton in the 1800s, and a person who believes that Landmarkism is as old as the New Testament, do not believe one and the same thing. A person who believes that a church pops up here and there with no organic connection to any other church, and a man who believe that there has been a link-chain of churches (one church starting another church), do not believe one and the same thing.

I HAVE A PROBLEM

I, for one, have a problem with a person who pretends to believe one thing for years and passed among us as one who believes these truths, although he in truth never did believe them. Such a person is either a great pretender, or he has suddenly changed his position. It is incumbent upon such persons to tell us plainly of which they are guilty.

I have no respect for a man who professes to believe one thing while he secretly holds to the opposite. I can respect a man who comes to new conclusions about the Bible or history, if he will be honest and tell the people that he now has come to new light of these matters. If a man is going to say that he always has believed what he now believes about the church, he should be doubly certain that his past writings prove this.

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tabernacle service.

In type the victim was chosen and slain, and the blood, as the life, was taken by the high priest into the place appointed for the offering: and, as the example and shadow of the true, he is, in a figure, both the priest and the victim, and thus, by substitution, he offers his own life a ransom for that of all the people: so Christ, who was both the victim and also the high priest, offered His own life a substituted sacrifice for those He represented. And, as in the type, the atonement put away the sins of those for whom it was made, and reconciled God to them; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and put away their sins by the sacrifice of Himself: and to them that look for Him, He will appear the second time, and without sin unto their salvation.

If it is true, then, as I have supposed, that Christ became, by covenant engagement, an accepted Substitute and Surety for any persons, and did suffer and die for them, and His death was a satisfaction for their sins, and God was reconciled to them by it; then to determine the extent of the atonement, is to determine for whom He became a Substitute. If Christ became a Substitute for all of the race of men indiscriminately, and did bear their sins in His own body on the tree, and they, by His stripes, were healed, the conclusion is legitimate that all the race are, by this hypothesis, safe; especially as He who was their Substitute was also their Surety. And, if Christ was a Substitute for no person, and died for no one in particular, and was not a satisfaction for any person in particular, and was not a satisfaction for all, then no reconciliation was effected by it, and hence there was no atonement; for atonement reconciles. But, if on the other hand, the death of Christ atoned for any persons, and satisfied the demands of divine justice for them, and God is reconciled to them by the death of His Son; those for whom Christ died are justified, and will be saved and glorified.

If the atonement bears the same relation to all the race, and any are saved by it, then are all saved; but, if it relates in its saving efficacy only to the bride-elect,—the children given to the Son, it hath that extent, no more: for **“who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”** And **“who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.”** Then there is no condemnation to those for whom Christ died,—the elect whom God has

justified.

But some will be condemned, therefore for them Christ did not die. To ascertain, therefore, the extent of the atonement, it is only necessary to determine for whom Christ was an accepted Substitute and Surety, and to whom God was reconciled by the death of His Son; or, in other words, who were saved by it; if all, then its extent is limited only by the race; if none were saved by it, then the atonement has no extent: but, if Christ was an accepted Substitute for a part of the race only—God’s elect, to whom there is no condemnation, because for them it was Christ that died, then this limits its extent. If the death of Christ as an atonement had relation only to sin as such, and Christ did **“put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,”** then, with emphasis, we ask, where is the cause for which either men or devils may be condemned? The extent of the atonement is there limited to the number for those whom the Father chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, and whom He adopted as children, and gave to the Son as a bride-companion to be by Him redeemed, exalted and glorified; and for whom the Son became, by covenant engagement, the substituted Head and Representative, and for whom also He gave His own life a ransom to be testified in due time.

That Christ has an elect people for whom He, as Substitute died, rose again, and now intercedes, the Scriptures clearly teach. These are sometimes designated as the church, which He purchased with His own blood. Again, the sheep, which hear His voice and follow Him, and to whom He will give eternal life. They are called the bride, the Lamb’s wife; the body, of which He is the Head; brethren; the children given Him. Are all mankind members of Christ’s church, which He purchased with His own blood? are all His sheep, which hear His voice and follow Him? are all His brethren? are all His elect bride, the Lamb’s wife? To some He said: **“If God were your Father, ye would love me”** (John 8:42). **“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you”** (John 10:26). **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish”** (John 10:27-28). **“All the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise case out”** (John 6:37).

The question whether or not the atonement was definite is the same as whether it was offered and accepted for persons. If for any person at all, it

would be definite, though it should include the whole race. Whether it was general or limited to a number less than the whole involves the question of its sufficiency, the extent of which must be determined by the number chosen in Christ, and given to Him as His mystical bride and companion in His kingdom and glory; and for whom He, in covenant, became the Substitute and Surety, and for whom His death, as a substitute, was an accepted offering and satisfaction. If it was for persons, it was, and is, limited in extent to the number for whom it was offered and accepted. On the other hand, if it was a satisfaction for the person of no one, ransomed no one, by it God was reconciled to no one, and no one was saved by it; it was, and is, neither general nor limited; it has no extent—it is nothing: and hence the question of the extent of the sufficiency of the atonement, according to this view, would be useless.

They who speak of an atonement as sufficient for all, but is limited in its application to the number for whom it was intended, mean, we suppose, that, if it had been offered and accepted for all, it would have been sufficient for all; and, if this were true, of which there can be no doubt, it must be equally true, that, if it was offered and accepted for a part only—God’s elect, it is only sufficient for them. To speak of the sufficiency of a thing for that to which it has no relation, either in purpose or results, is to speak without meaning. **“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”** (Rom. 5:8). **“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”** (Rom. 8:32-34). **“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life”** (Rom. 5:10). From all of which the following, I think, may be regarded as a just conclusion: That all for whom Christ became an accepted Substitute, and in whose room and stead, bearing their sins in His own body on the tree, He suffered and died, are made safe by Him, have eternal life in Him, and will be glorified with Him in that day; when He shall come forth from the true tabernacle in His glorious apparel, traveling in the greatness of

his strength, heralded by the voice of the archangel and a great sound of a trumpet, that wakes the sleeping bride, the Lamb’s wife, from her long night of repose: and then, from the ashes of the myriad martyrs, and the silent cemeteries of all peoples, nations and tongues, and the scattered dust of ages, will leap into life, in glorious forms of symmetrical beauty, arrayed in immortal habiliments, a countless host of God’s elect, who, with the translated living saints, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, coming in clouds with power and great glory to receive His waiting saints, and to set up His everlasting kingdom in the earth, in which, with His mystical bride, He will reign in glorious majesty forever. The signs indicate **“His coming”** is near, therefore watch (*The Baptist*, May 12, 1877).

Matthew 18:20

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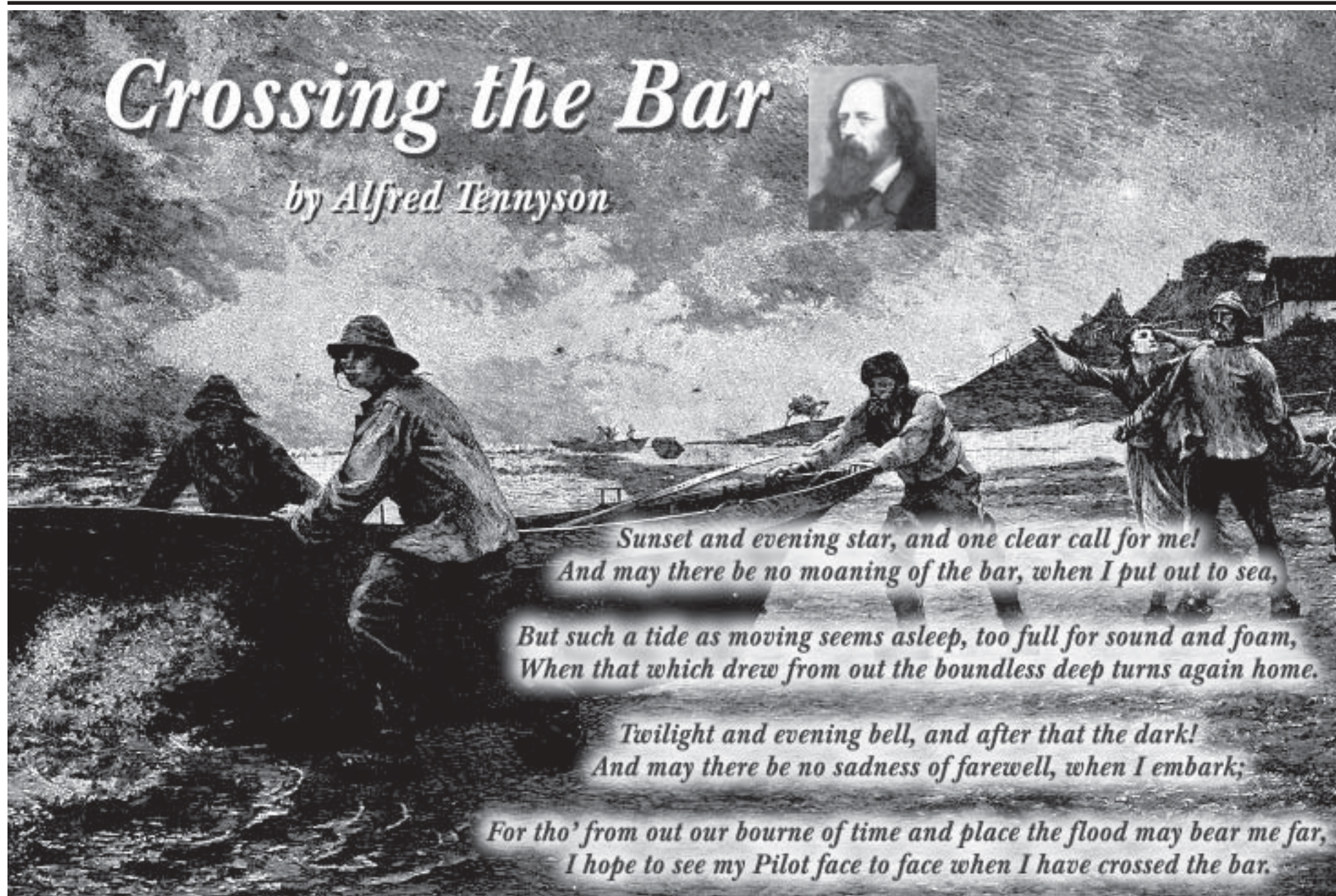
could not be farther from the truth, and we shall consider this in the last point of this article; but now we must consider some implications of this popular interpretation on this verse.

(1) If it is true that **“two or three”** gathering together in his name constitutes a church, then Peter and John were a church in Acts 3:1 when they went up to the temple to pray. Notice that they were baptized, and they were gathering together in the name of the Lord. If they were not gathering together in His name, then what they were doing here was wrong and would not bring glory unto the Lord.

(2) If it is true that **“two or three”** gathering together in His name constitutes a church, then Barnabas and Saul were a church in Acts 13:1-2 and needed not that the Antioch church separate them unto the work whereunto the Lord had called them.

(3) If it is true that **“two or three”** gathering together in His name constitutes a church, then Peter, James, John, and Jesus constituted a church when they were on the mount in Matthew 17:1 where the Bible says, **“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.”** Certainly they were all scripturally baptized, and they were together, **“two or three”** of them in the name of the Lord; so they must have been a church separate and apart from the church at Jerusalem or any other church around the area. The fact of the matter is, there were churches popping up all around Jerusalem when Jesus was

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Crossing the Bar

by Alfred Tennyson



Sunset and evening star, and one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar, when I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep, too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell, and after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell, when I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of time and place the flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face when I have crossed the bar.

Matthew 18:20

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wandering the earth. They were popping in and out as corn in a popper. They would be a church with two or three, then they would be a church with four or five, then they would be a church with twelve or twenty or a hundred and twenty.

(4) If it is true that **“two or three”** gathering together constitutes a church, then two or three people from two or three different churches may gather together to have a Bible study or to do some evangelistic work, and they would constitute a church.

(5) If it is true that **“two or three”** gathering together in His name constitutes a church, then several churches meeting together for a bible conference or revival meeting would constitute one church; and they could carry on church business or baptize people as a single group. There are at least **“two or three”** gathering together, and they certainly are doing so in His name.

(6) If it is true that **“two or three”**

gathering together in His name constitutes a church, then associations and conventions could conceivably be scriptural churches, since they gather together, “in His name.”

Matthew 18:20 is taken completely out of context when applied in this way. I would agree that some of these situations are a stretch of the mind; but when our own Baptist preachers begin to interpret scripture the same way as the universalists do, then we see the danger of this interpretation. Universalists believe that this verse teaches church organization, and many of them stretch the interpretation almost as far as I have done with some of the examples above. But I have done so to show the folly of a wrong interpretation. Even some Baptists of old, such as Charles Spurgeon, have taken the universalist interpretation of this verse; and there is no wonder, since Bro. Spurgeon hob-knobbed with many universalists in his day and even served many of them the Lord's Supper.

THE PROPER CONTEXT

Then, what is the proper contextual

interpretation of this verse? Does it have anything to do with church organization as such? Is this a verse, which gives two people anywhere and at any time, who have scriptural baptism, authority to covenant together and be proclaimed by God a church? I think not! To conclude so is ludicrous. To those who so interpret this passage, the question must be asked, “Is it just sometimes, or is it always that a church is constituted when two or three are gathered together in His name?”

In the context of chapter 18 of Matthew, the Lord is dealing with church discipline, not church organization. He is instructing the disciples on how to deal with a brother who has sinned against them. The individual who has been sinned against must go to that brother and tell him of his wrong. If he listens to that individual, then he has gained his brother back into his fellowship (v. 15).

The second step to discipline is for the person who has been offended to take one or two more people with him so that no doubt will be had as to what is said and that every word will be

established (v. 16).

The third step to discipline is that, if he does not listen to the several who come to him, then tell the church (v. 17). Now at this point we must understand that a church is already in existence. This situation has to do with a church that is already functioning; and the whole ordeal takes place within the bounds of that local church. Nothing is mentioned here that would give us any inclination to believe that a new church is being established, organized, born or built.

Speaking of the church that is already in existence, the Lord speaks about the binding and loosing. This is a continuation of the thought on discipline. A church has the authority under the sovereign God to bind and loose a person into or away from membership in a local church. The Greek tense allows us to realize that the binding should be done as it has already been done in Heaven. Binding a person would be placing him under the discipline of the church; loosing a person would be

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Matthew 18:20

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forgiving him and releasing the restrictions upon him and bringing him back into full fellowship of the church.

If my friends who are going the way of the universalists are telling the truth, then I have been in church many more times than I ever thought; for, while my cousin and I were at the creek praying for God to bless the muddy water we were about to drink, we were in church. When my brother and I were in trouble so many times and in danger numbers of times and asked God to help us, we were in church. When my wife and I are driving in the car and praising God for blessings and singing the songs of God, we are in church. God forgive me, also; for I have given some very bad advice to people who have moved into areas where they cannot find a church to attend. I should have told them not to worry; because when they awake on Sunday morning and go to their kitchen to worship the Lord and have their devotion at home because there is no church nearby, they are a church. If they need a pastor, they can simply call one to be a pastor of this little church. If they want to baptize someone, they can just do it, because they are a church.

Remember, our Lord did not say in Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I start a church." He did not say "for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I build a church." He said, **"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."** He simply means that, when two or three people go about church discipline the way He has just instructed, He will approve their efforts and bless them. He will affirm and confirm their way of conducting this church business.

Although it is becoming less and less popular to believe in church

succession and proper Baptist perpetuity, this preacher still believes as he has his entire ministry. I base my belief in this doctrine, not on the many historians and theologians who have trod the path of ministry in this world, but in the words of our Lord and the apostles who wrote the Bible. I know of a certainty, however, that many old writers referred to "parent" churches as far back as the 1700's. They spoke about getting authority to transfer members from a "parent" church to a "mission" church. This does not make it wrong or right, but it does give some evidence that is has been done for a lot longer than our "almost universalist" friends pretend it to be.

To my friends who still hold these truths to be self-evident, stay with the stuff and stand strong unto the end; for our standing for this truth can make our churches glow and grow to His glory, or our weakness can cause their light to flicker in a dark time which will mirror the times of darkness wherein many of our brethren died for the truth they held. Are we ready and willing to hold up these truths, or will we give in to the "new light" of contemporary doctrine? May God give us the wisdom to put on the armor of God and, when all is done, to stand.

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for His Second. The Second Advent is linked with the entire mediatorial work, which reaches back to the Fall of man, and forward to the final delivering up the Kingdom to God (*i.e.*, at end of personal reign, Rev. 20:4; I Cor. 15:24)."

W. Bell Dawson, M.A., D. Sc., M. Inst. C. E. Author of "The Close of the Present Age," "The Time is at Hand," "The Hope of the Future," etc.

"Many may be inclined to say: Do not speak to us of prophecy; there are too many conflicting views; better keep to something present and practical. But when we read in

Scripture that Christ is to return again, this should not so much be regarded as a prediction of a future event, but rather as a declaration on the part of God of what He intends to do; and we will realize that this has an important bearing on life and conduct. For it has pleased God to place His people between a Redemption in the past, never to be forgotten, and a Hope for the future, always to be kept in view. If we look over the New Testament comprehensively, we find these two themes standing out with almost equal prominence. They are the two pillars or buttresses on which the arch of Christian doctrine rests. A Christian is even defined as one who has **'turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from Heaven'** (I Thess. 1:9).

"The outstanding Christian Sacrament accordingly looks both ways; not only to the Atonement of Christ in the past, but onward 'till He come;' so that 'at Thy table we are witnesses for this,' as Miss Havergal comments in her hymn.

"The saints in Heaven look forward to the Coming of Christ as much as we do; for it is not at their death but then at His appearing, that they receive their reward; as two apostles plainly declare (II Tim. 4:8 and I Peter 5:4).

"The good work which the Lord has begun in us, will culminate when He shall appear the second time, **'unto salvation;'** and will then **'present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.'**"

Dr. J. Northcote Deck. Well-known teacher, who labored for many years in the Solomon Islands. Arthur of "Credentials of the Cross," "Mounting Up with Wings," etc.

"As to Christ's Second Coming personally and Pre-Millennially, what other hope and prospect is there for this distracted world? Thank God, the promised and prospect of this Coming again in Person is so ingrained in the New Testament, that to believe the Scriptures of Truth seems also inevitably to believe also in Christ's *new return*. But I think in the sudden change in attitude of so many Jews in considering the claims of Jesus of Nazareth after 1900 years of hatred of the Name, and in the sudden change in the land to fertility after 1900 years of foretold desolation, we have the surest evidence of that Coming that 'it is near even at the door.' God grant the prospect of soon meeting our Lord in the air may continue to be the purifying hope He intends it to be."

Dr. A. C. Dixon. Well-known American preacher. For some years



A. C. Dixon

Pastor of "Spurgeon's Tabernacle," London.

"As we read the New Testament we should bear in mind God's plan of the ages. This Gospel Age continuing with its mixture of

good and bad, until the Church of Christ shall be gathered out. Then our Lord will appear. The righteous dead will be raised. The righteous will be transfigured into their resurrection bodies and both caught up with the Lord (I Thess. 4:13-18), where will take place the judgment of rewards (II Cor. 5:10). There will on earth then develop a movement of Antichrist and the False Prophet, and will gather the nations at Armageddon. Then Christ will descend *with* His glorified saints, and by the word of His power He will smite the Man of Sin and the False Prophet and all their armies, and make conquest of the world. And for one thousand years he will reign on this earth, the glorified saints occupying positions of authority and honor in all the nations of the world."

Henry Dyer. One of the three Henry's of fame. A Bible teacher well known in Britain in days gone by.

"**'Surely I come quickly.'** Oh, child of God, let our ear catch and keep that thrice-repeated word in this chapter, *'Quickly, 'Quickly.'* As if to give power and permanence to this word in all our waiting hearts, our Lord has not only kept silence since He spoke it, but what a long silence it has been. Why, it is now eighteen hundred years since our blessed Lord Jesus shone through this air His sun-like countenance, and since He showed His all-glorious person. Eighteen hundred years since this undulating air brought upon it the echoes of His dear voice. How long He has, as it were, hid Himself, how long He has kept silence. And what did He last say? for we treasure the last words we can remember of those whom we love: **'Surely I come quickly. Amen.'**"

Charles John Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester; Professor of King's College, London; Author of several well-known Commentaries.

"The resurrection of the Just is the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5), when at Christ's Second Coming the dead in Him shall rise (I Thess. 4:17, *c. l.*, Luke 20:35). The first resurrection will include only the saved and will

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Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WFTA, Tupelo, MS	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	101.9	3,000 FM
WJOR, Saint Joseph, TN	Sunday 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.	101.5	1,000 FM
WVSA, Vernon, AL	Sunday 7:00 - 7:30 a.m.	1380	1,000 AM
WLZA, Starkville, MS	Sunday 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.	710	2,500 AM
WCNA, Myrtle, MS	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	95.9	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	680	5,000 AM
KARI, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m. ..	550	5,000 AM
KORE, Springfield, OR	Sunday 8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	1050	5,000 AM
WDBS, Sutton, WV	Sunday 6:30 - 7:00 a.m.	97.1	50,000 FM
DXRA, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	783 Khz ...	10,000 AM
DWSS, Manila, Philippines .	Sunday 5:30 - 6:00 p.m.	1494	16,000 AM

Napoleon's Testimony of Christ

The strange unearthly vitality of Christianity did not escape the eagle eye of Napoleon. He, turning to Count Montholon, at St. Helena, said: "Can you tell me who Jesus Christ was?" There being no answer given, he proceeded: "Well, then I will tell you. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and myself have founded great empires: but upon what did these creatures of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to something of human nature, and I tell you all of these are men and I am a man—none else is like Him. Jesus Christ was more than a man. I have inspired multitudes with such enthusiastic devotion that they would die for me, but to do this it was necessary that I should be visibly present with the electric influence of my looks, of my words, of my voice. When I saw men and spoke to them, I lighted up the flame of devotion in their hearts. Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man toward the unseen that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space across a chasm of eighteen hundred years. He makes a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy. He asks for that which a philosopher may often ask in vain at the hands of his friends, or a father of his children, or a bride of her spouse, or a man of his brother.



He asks for a human heart. He will have it all to Himself. He demands it unconditionally and forthwith. His demand is granted. Wonderful! In defiance of time and peace, the soul of man with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ. All sincerely believe in Him, experience that remarkable supernatural love to Him. This phenomenon is unaccountable, it is altogether beyond the scope of man's creative powers. Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame; time can neither exhaust its strength, nor put a limit to its range. This is what strikes me most. I have often thought of it. This is what proves to me most convincingly the divinity of Jesus Christ" (*The Baptist*, Nov. 18, 1876).

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precede the second—that of non-believers and non-believers—in point of time by at least one thousand years."

Canon Faussett, joint-author with Brown and Jamieson of a well-known Commentary.

"We have good reason to be looking for the Lord's Coming. Death is carrying away our loved ones, but when Jesus comes death will do so no more."

W. W. Fereday, well known throughout Britain as an able exponent of the Word, and Author of several books and pamphlets.

"The world needs Christ. It does not realize it, but it is true nevertheless. The men of our time are felt to be too small for the great and serious problems which confront the nations everywhere. A *Superman* is called for in no unmistakable terms. The great Deceiver will doubtless

bring forth such an one at no distant date, and many will rejoice at his appearing. But the result will be appalling, as the prophetic Word makes abundantly plain. There is but One competent to meet all needs. That One is the unwanted Christ. Him God will ere long send forth a *second time*, not in lowly grace, but in majesty and might. What a day that will be when the Heavens open, and the Christ of God is seen, accompanied by His Heavenly saint and attended by angelic hosts! But the Blessed Hope precedes that Day of surpassing splendor. He must needs assemble His saints around Himself on High ere His shines forth in glory with them. God help us to be ever on the alert for the moment when we shall for the first time see His blessed face."

Pastor D. J. Findlay, of St. George's Cross Tabernacle, Glasgow.

"From the day of my conversion—now more than 60 years ago—I have had the assurance that the return of our Lord might occur at any moment.

I believe in this as 'the Hope' of the Church—the *whole Church*, not a section of it. This seems to me to be the clear teaching of the New Testament. I suppose I have read the New Testament through not less than 200 times, and I have never found anything in it to contradict this view. My belief is that such theories as a 'partial or graded rapture,' or the intervention of a 'Great Tribulation' before our Lord's return for His people are contrary to the 'Hope' which He has clearly put before His people. My belief is that when He comes His whole Church—'asleep' and 'awake'—will be 'caught up' together to meet Him in the air. "Not a hoof will be left behind." I have often heard D. L. Moody say that from the day his eyes were opened to see this truth, he had done two days' work, for one that he had done before."

Brig.-Gen. F. D. Frost, C.B.E., M.C., Author of "The Appointed Time," of which 25,000 have been sold, and several other popular pamphlets.

"My reasons for believing in the Premillennial Return of our Lord Jesus Christ are:

"1. All the Old Testament prophets are unanimous in foretelling that the Messiah King from Heaven would rule over Israel in glory, and restore peace to the world after Armageddon; that the nations should come up to worship at Jerusalem.

"2. Zechariah foretold that Israel would be converted at the coming of Him whom they had rejected and pierced, and that the Lord should reign over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord and His Name one (Zech. 14:9).

"3. Our Lord Jesus Christ confirmed all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Great Tribulation and Armageddon and His return as the Son of Man (Matt. 24: Mark 13; Luke 17:21).

"4. St. Paul in Romans 11 describes a time of great blessing to the Gentiles after Israel has been restored and converted (see par.2 above).

"5. The Book of Revelation is written in the correct chronological order. Chapter 19 describes the return of Jesus Christ from Heaven with His saints at the battle of Armageddon to execute vengeance on the apostate world. Chapter 20 describes the setting up of the Millennium.

"6. I accept the authority of the Scriptures for two reasons: (1) World events tell me that Premillennial Advent prophecies are being fulfilled now, and that the church has failed her Lord and Master (Luke 18:8; Rev. 3:14-22). (2) The Christ who saved me, convinces me by His Holy Spirit

that He will keep His promises."

Dr. W. Y. Fullerton, friend and biographer of C. H. Spurgeon, Keswick Conference Speaker, Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, etc.

"That we are already on the verge of the *new age* is plain. . . 'Now is the crisis of the world. (1) *The world is known*. There is no unknown land, no unexplored continent: all the earth is explored. The physical realm is exhausted. Future progress must be in another sphere. (2) *All the world is one*. No longer two hemispheres. For the first time in the history of the earth, it is possible for an event to be known over all the world the day it happens; possible for a *voice*, if it be loud enough, to speak to the world at once. (3) *The world is awake*. This has never been until now. Hitherto if the east was awake, the West was sleeping; if the West was awake, the East was sleeping. But now all have aroused! There are no longer passive peoples and active peoples; all are seeking something higher and better—seeking often blindly, but still seeking. The world is one as to its quest; and *Christ Himself is the answer to its cry*."

Dr. Arno C. Gaebelein, New York, Editor of "Our Hope," Author



of the *Annotated Bible*, and many other *volumes*, accepted as a Bible teacher throughout the *American Continent*.

"Over forty years ago I

came into the knowledge of the Pre-Millennial Coming of our ever blessed Lord. In my earlier ministry I took a deep interest in bringing the Gospel to the Jews in our great American Metropolis, New York City. I was then a strong believer in the Post-Millennial theory. But as I came in touch with orthodox Jews and began a study of some of their ancient literature, I discovered their never-dying hope of a future literal restoration of their God-given land. This sent me to the Old Testament. In a short time I discovered the error of spiritualizing the promises which belong to Israel. I found out that prophecy does not permit a spiritual fulfillment, in a spiritual Zion, a spiritual Israel. And so I learned of that great Day of the Lord, the Day of the visible manifestation of Jehovah, the Day preceded by tribulation, judgments, and wrath, the Day followed by Israel's conversion

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and spiritual and national revival. This discovery helped me at once to see what the Church of Christ is according to the New Testament. I found that the Church is not an organization, but an organism. I found that it has a definite beginning and will have a sudden, definite end. I discovered what *the 'Blessed Hope' of the Church, the Body and the Bride of Christ, is and learned to distinguish between 'the Coming of the Lord for His saints' to usher in the Day of Christ, and 'the Coming of the Lord with His saints' to usher in the Day of the Lord. And since that time, not I, but the Grace of God, has enabled me to hear a faithful and unswerving testimony to these blessed and precious truths. For over forty years I have covered the entire American continent, from coast to coast, and thousands have learned from my lips these great and neglected truths, while my many volumes have been read by many more thousands throughout the English-speaking world. And now during these days of confusing prophetic misinterpretations, the days of the Anglo-Israel Cultism, the post-tribulation theory, and other isms, I find it the best path to hold to the old landmarks, knowing that the true prophetic Scriptural interpretation is like a torch, the more it is shaken, the brighter it burns.*

A. Lindsay Glegg, Esq., one of the best known Christian workers in London. Keswick speaker, and chairman of many gatherings.

"Why do I believe in the Personal and Pre-Millennial Coming of the Lord?"

"1. Because the Bible says so. This may be a very old-fashioned reason, but you will never find a greater. 'All that Scripture has to say about any given subject is the truth about that subject.' One verse on the subject would be sufficient, but we have over 300 in the New Testament alone; at least 21 times our Lord refers to His return, and the words He uses are very strong ones, they mean 'to expose to view,' 'a personal return,' etc. Many of His parables concern the going and coming again, and the interval between, and are quite inexplicable apart from His return."

"2. It helps us to understand the things that are happening around us every day. The people who say the Gospel is going to convert the world in this dispensation can get no support from the Bible, and very little from their daily newspaper. But our Lord has told us that the wheat and the tares shall grow together until the Harvest,

and, therefore, we are not surprised when we see the tares flourishing. If the Church is to embrace the whole world, then its very name, "called out," is wrong."

"3. God blesses this truth. All the great soul-winners of the past have loved and proclaimed this doctrine. Look at some of their names: Bunyan, Luther, Knox, Wesley, Rutherford, Spurgeon, Moody, and a countless host of godly men. May you and I follow in their train."

"I believe our Lord is Coming personally as the disciples, on the day of Ascension, saw Him go. I believe He is Coming, first for His own people who shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and then, with His saints, He will return to this earth to set up His Millennial Kingdom and reign in peace and glory for a thousand years."

George Goodman, Solicitor, Teacher, Author of "70 Best Bible Stories," "The Spirit-Led Life," etc., and who writes the "Daily Notes" for the Scripture Union.

"The Coming again of Christ is detailed in I Thess. 4:13-18. Some have sought to spiritualize this passage in order to avoid a *literal and actual Coming* of Christ in the body. But this cannot be done without doing outrage to every principle of true exegesis. Dean Alford says, 'Never was a place where the analogy of symbolic apocalyptic language was less applicable.' Verse 15 is a general statement that the dead (those asleep) are not to be left behind at the Lord's appearance. Then seven details are given: (1) The Lord will descend from Heaven. The angel had said, 'In like manner as ye have seen Him go' (Acts 1:11). There can be no denying a bodily appearance after this. (2) There will be 'a shout,' a rallying cry in the nature of a word of command. (3) The voice of the Archangel, always associated with resurrection. (4) The trump of God, presumably in the angel's hand. (5) The dead in Christ rise first, as described in I Cor. 15:52. (6) Living and raised are then caught up together. And (7) In the clouds of the air they meet their Lord, never to be parted from Him again."

(To be continued)



The Bottomless Pit

By Ford C. Ottman

18?? - 19??

(Editor's note: These are his comments on Revelation 9:1).

The woe-trumpets bring to pass the full and final development of evil introduced by the apostate star of the third. The perversion of truth through embittering the fountains of life culminates in a general apostasy. Men everywhere are given up to **"seducing spirits and doctrines of demons."**

The "star" of the fifth trumpet is seen, not to fall, but as already fallen, and there is given to him **"the key to the abyss."** The Greek word, which in the common version is translated "bottomless," is literally the "abyss." It is the word used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament to express the "deep" of the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis. **"The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the abyss."** The legion of demons, before being cast out of the demoniac of Gadara, besought Jesus, **"that he would not command them to go out into the deep"** (Luke 8:31). The word for "deep" in the Greek is "abyss," and it here seems to indicate a place of torment dreaded by the demons. The same word is used by Paul in the epistle to the Romans: **"Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)"** (Rom. 10:6-7). The word translated "deep" is literally the abyss, and in this passage evidently means the place into which the dead are gone. The king of the demons is called the **"angel of abyss"**: but, before speaking of him, let us, if possible, discover what Scripture intends to convey to us by this word abyss. If, as Paul clearly intimates, this be the place of departed spirits, the question still remains, Is it the same as Hades? It might also be asked, Is it the same place as "tartarus" into which the angels that sinned are cast, and **"delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment"**? (II Pet. 2:4).

In Greek mythology tartarus was the lower part, or the abyss of Hades, where the spirits of wicked men were imprisoned and tormented. Hades, as we have already seen, was a place to which, prior to the resurrection of Christ, the disembodied spirits of all men, good and bad, were alike consigned. The righteous were separated from the evil by a great chasm (Luke 16:26). May not this

chasm suggest that there is, in all reality, lower down than Hades itself, a pit of woe to which the fallen angels are delivered? Is it not also that place of torment from which the demons besought exemption for a time?

The "beast" of the seventeenth chapter is spoken of as ascending **"out of the bottomless pit,"** that is, out of the pit of the abyss. Satan is cast into the abyss and confined there for a thousand years during the Millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 20:3). These passages set before us the New Testament usage of the word. The corresponding Hebrew word is found more frequently, and is usually translated "deep" or "depth." At the time of the deluge, **"the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened"**; and when the flood was over, **"the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped"** (Gen. 7:11; 8:2). Here evidently there is a distinction between **"the fountains of the deep,"** and **"the windows of heaven."**

In Jacob's last prophecy Joseph is given promise of **"blessings of heaven above,"** and **"blessings of the deep that lieth under"** (Gen. 49:25). These blessings of the deep, here spoken of as accruing to Joseph, evidently testify to the acquired glories of Christ, won by His descent into the realms of death.

Of similar import are the last words of Moses concerning Joseph: **"Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath"** (Deut. 33:13). **"The abyss that coucheth beneath"** is again seen to come under the hand of Joseph for blessing. $\text{E}7$: In the song of Moses the word is *depth* (Ex. 15:5-8).

When the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, He said: **"The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen"** (Job 38:30). The revised version gives **"cohereth,"** as alternative of **"frozen."** May not the face of the abyss speak of the frowning doors of this dungeon?

In the thirty-sixth Psalm we read: **"Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep"** (Ps. 36:6). The "deep" again is the abyss, which is nevertheless opened to the searching judgment of God.

In the misery of a soul separated

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Bottomless Pit

Continued from page 408

from God, the Psalmist says in another place: **“Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me”** (Ps. 42:7). It is the same ominous word, –abyss.

In Psalms 135:6 we read:

“Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas, and all deep places” – literally, **“all places of the abyss.”** Here there is evidently a distinction between the sea, and that which lies deeper than the sea.

In Proverbs 3:20; Ps. 78:15; 104:6; 106:9; and 107:26, the sea alone seems to be intended.

In the final summons to praise Jehovah, found in the one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm, response is demanded not only from “the earth”; but from **“the dragons, and all deeps.”**

In the eighth chapter of Proverbs, which manifestly enough refers to Christ, we read: **“I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: When he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of**

men” (Prov. 8:23-31). In this passage we again have the abyss in contrast with the sea.

In two places in Isaiah, (51:10 and 63:13), the prophet appears to use the word exclusively of the sea.

In his prophecy of the fall of Tyrus Ezekiel says: **“Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall**

and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high” (Hab. 3:10). Everything is seen to bow to him, **“of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth”**; even the abyss itself, lifting up its voice, and extending its hands to God.

These appear to be all the Old

Testament passages in which the Hebrew word corresponding to the Greek word “abyss” is found. Taking them together we may assume with reasonable confidence that they speak generally of a dungeon, or prison of God.

Isaiah says: **“The Lord shall punish the host of the high**

ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited” (Isa. 24:21-22). The “pit” is plainly a lower part, or dungeon of the abyss, into which Satan and his allies are to be cast to await their judgment at the close of the Millennium.

“Hades,” or “sheol,” is that compartment of the abyss to which are consigned the disembodied spirits of the wicked dead. The “pit” is apparently a deeper dungeon where the rebel angels are confined. The word “abyss” is the more comprehensive term, indicating the whole region of the lost from which, as already noted, the demons, in the days of our Lord, besought exemption until the fixed time of their torment. The fallen angels, confined somewhere in it, are fettered with **“chains of darkness”**; from which there shall be no escape until the time of their final doom. Satan is not there yet. demons, though not all of them, are there: and the pit in which they are confined is opened by **“the fallen star”** in order to give them temporary freedom.

(The Unfolding Ages in the Revelation of John, pp. 211-216, 1905 edition).



The demons coming out of the bottomless pit in Revelation 9.

bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee; When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living” (Ezek. 26:19-20). Here the abyss, and the “great waters” are in contrast, and the dungeon into which Satan is to be cast is once more before us. Again this same prophet, speaking of the grim figure of the “Assyrian” that is to have so prominent a place in the last days, says: **“The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high”** (Ezek. 31:4). Here again the waters, and the abyss, are not the same. The nations of the earth combine with the dwellers in the abyss to make the Assyrian great. Though thus raised up, he shall be blasted, as the prophet assures us, and **“cast. . .down to hell with them that descend into the pit”** (Ezek. 31:16).

Amos speaks of the fires of judgment devouring the great *deep* (Amos 7:4).

In the glorious vision of Habakkuk, where the coming of the Lord is put before us, the prophet says: **“The mountains saw thee,**

Unaccountable God

Continued from page 401

obligation to any being in the world. He does as He pleases, to whomsoever He pleases, and whenever He pleases. God is God.

In Psalm 115:3 it is written: **“But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”** The Almighty dwells in the highest heavens. He overlooks and overrules all persons and things in the heavens and on earth. He has made all creatures for His pleasure and according to His sovereign will. God has absolute power and absolute freedom. He has no equals and no superiors. He is superior to the limitations, which belong to earth and time. Even when His enemies rage and rave against Him, they unwittingly carry out His designs. God’s decrees are fulfilled and His counsel stands fast. He is bound by no law outside of Himself.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, said: **“...I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”** (Dan. 4:34-35). Here we see that God is an eternal being who knows no change or period of time. His kingdom is forever, and His authority cannot be questioned. In comparison to God, popes, priests, presidents, and potentates are mere nonentities. Both angels and men are accountable to Him, but He is accountable to none. What He wills, He does; whatever He pleases, He performs; whatever He appoints, He brings to pass. **“...For I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it”** (Isa. 46:9-11). None can resist His will or hinder Him. None can question His proceedings, enquire into the meaning of them, nor demand a reason for them. Job said: **“Behold, he taketh away, who can**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

The Berea Baptist Banner

PO Box 39

Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

Should a Sovereign Grace Baptist Church send members by letter to Southern Baptist churches? How do you handle this matter if it arises in your flock? --- Texas



Garner Smith
113 Keith Drive
Clarksville, TN 37043

Pastor
Faith Baptist Church
2590 Madison Ext.
Clarksville, TN 37043

I believe granting and receiving letters for transfer of church membership from other churches should be handled on an individual church basis, each church examined as to their doctrine and practice.

I believe the Bible teaches that the basic criteria for recognizing the authority of a church to grant or receive letters are their doctrine and practices concerning other doctrines that are to be considered but they are related in one way or another to these two cardinal truths. A church that teaches that a sinner is saved by anything the sinner does, including making a decision, baptism, taking the Lord's Supper, praying through, etc., is wrong on the doctrine of salvation and cannot be accepted as a true church. Any church that practices open communion is not practicing scriptural baptism and therefore we could not receive letters from such a church.

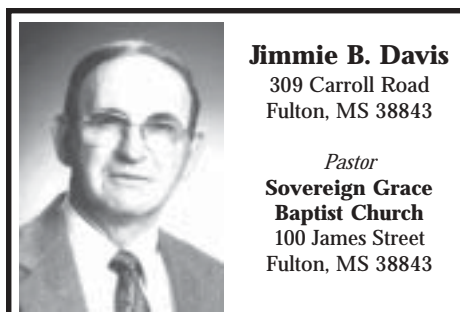
I do believe a church can be in error on some things such as the church at Corinth (I Cor. 5:1-13; 11:1-34), and the churches in Revelation chapters two and three, and yet be a church, and we could receive letters from them.

I believe we have to examine each church before granting and receiving letters. This includes Southern Baptist, American Baptist Assoc. and all Independent Baptist churches. I do not believe because a church belongs in name to the convention etc. of itself causes it not to be a church, but is a church in error, and in some cases we could receive letters from them. I do believe conventions etc. are unscriptural, and that they in some cases usurp authority over the local church, but there could be some Southern Baptist churches, some that I personally know of, that do not submit to the authority of the convention.

There are also many Independent

Baptist churches that we cannot grant or receive letters from because they have doctrines and practices that are contrary to Scripture to the extent that I cannot recognize their authority as a true church. I believe it is a very serious matter to harm a church because of personal reasons, or an arrogant judgmental attitude, without scriptural evidence that a church is not a church (I Cor. 3:17). We must maintain our purity as a scriptural church, but let us leave removing the candlestick of the church to the Lord and be sure we are as true as we should be.

GARNER SMITH



Jimmie B. Davis
309 Carroll Road
Fulton, MS 38843

Pastor
Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
100 James Street
Fulton, MS 38843

No Baptist church or Baptist preacher has any authority to set policy in this or any other church matter except their own. The matter of sending letters to, or receiving letters from other Baptist churches must remain an individual action with Baptist churches who believe in sovereign grace.

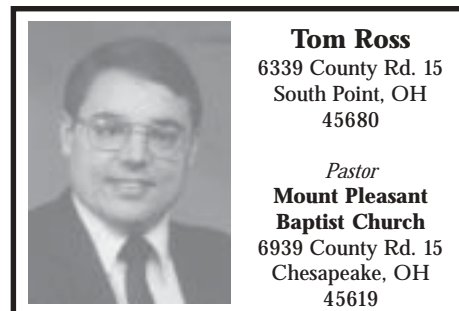
My objections to para-church organizations, such as conventions, associations, etc., does not lead me to adopt a blanket policy in granting or receiving letters from individual churches. The belief and practice of each individual church, whether Southern, BMA, ABA, or Independent Baptists, must be examined very carefully. In fact, some of the Sovereign Grace Baptist churches have gone so far astray on some of their teaching that I would be hesitant to send, or receive a letter from them.

There are churches in all the groups mentioned above who still believe and teach salvation to be wholly of grace, who contend for the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, nor accepting alien immersion or practicing open communion. There are some churches in these groups who believe that our Lord continues

to perpetuate His kind of church in the earth, and has not gone into heresy in a denial of the doctrines of Hell, the reality of Satan as the enemy of God and His people, the Lord's second coming as our blessed hope, etc.

We must keep in mind the fact that many of our able Sovereign Grace preachers were baptized by churches identified with the above mentioned groups of Baptists. The same can be said of numerous people who hold membership in Sovereign Grace Baptist churches of today. Would it be consistent to condemn all groups of Baptists who do not carry the designation "Sovereign Grace," with an all encompassing statement that there is not a true church among them?

JIMMIE B. DAVIS



Tom Ross
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45680

Pastor
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Chesapeake, OH
45619

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:3-5).

Every Baptist church should be judged on its authority to exist, the doctrines which it believes, its protection and maintenance of the ordinances, as well as its practice. Due to the apostasy of Southern Baptist Churches over the last 50-75 years, each church should be carefully examined regarding doctrine, practice, the ordinances, and church authority.

Generally speaking, a majority of Southern Baptist Churches do not measure up with what we hold to be the faith once delivered unto the saints. Consequently, I would not feel comfortable exchanging letters with them. However, each church should be examined on its own merits. You must remember that the Southern Baptist Convention was started in the 1800's in large part due to the influence of Landmark Baptists. If a

Southern Baptist church lined up with everything we believed, I would naturally wonder why they are not independent.

Fortunately, since I have been a Pastor I have never had a church member leave the church I pastor and request a letter to be sent to a Southern Baptist Church. If the matter would arise, we would proceed as outlined in the above paragraph.

TOM ROSS



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Pastor
Grace Missionary Baptist Church
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When a church recommends a member to another church by letter, he or she should be a faithful member and in good standing with the church. The church that is receiving the member should be a Baptist church of like faith and order.

Let us remember that in the beginning of the Southern Baptist Convention most of the churches were Sovereign Grace Baptist Churches. J. P. Boyce, founder and first president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, and president of the Southern Baptist Convention (1872-1879, 1888), was a believer of unconditional election. (*Abstract of Systematic Theology*). J. B. Gambrell, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (1917-1920), in his statement made about "milk-sop, clap-trap evangelism" states; "Great revivals have accompanied the heroic preaching of the doctrines of grace-predestination, election, and that whole lofty mountain range of doctrines upon which Jehovah sits enthroned, sovereign in grace, as in all things else."

§ A great number, if not most, of the Southern Baptist Churches of our time have gone into so much error that we can not consider them churches of like faith and order. Many have never been organized scripturally. This is true in the Convention as well as the independent movement. A sound Baptist church could not recommend a member to their membership. There are churches that believe in Sovereign Grace that are in so much error on other things that we would not grant a letter of membership. The church should be one that teaches all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

In a matter of church letters, I believe that each church must be examined as to whether they can be considered a church of like faith and order.

DAVID O'NEAL

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

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PO Box 39

Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

Must the Lord's Supper be observed only on Sunday or the Lord's Day? Was the first supper instituted on the Lord's Day? --



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I believe the Lord's Supper was instituted on Wednesday the fourteenth of the month of Nisan, the preparation day for the Passover, when the Passover lamb was eaten.

The Passover was eaten early in the evening, the Lord's Supper instituted, Jesus went to the garden, tried through the night by the Jews, tried by Pilate during the day, condemned, then was crucified at 9:00 A.M., died at 3:00 P.M. Thus the Passover, a type of the death of Christ, as given in Exodus 12 was completely fulfilled.

I know it seems that the general practice of the New Testament church in the book of Acts was that it was observed on the First day of the week or Sunday, but I know of no Scripture that demands that it be observed on Sunday, nor that it be observed every Sunday. In I Corinthians 11:23-26 the Holy Spirit by the apostle Paul seems to teach us that there is no set time, or day, nor frequency set aside by divine command to observe the Lord's Supper.

I believe that the best practice is that the church led by the pastor needs to consider the spiritual condition and the condition of unity in the church as to when the church should observe the Lord's Supper.

Personally, my church leaves it up to me as their spiritual leader and overseer to recommend when we observe the Supper.

I believe the Supper was instituted in the evening of Wednesday and could be observed on Wednesday as well as Sunday, if so desired by the church. The whole purpose of the observance of the Supper is not as a sacrament, but quite the contrary. It is to remind us that our salvation is by the death and shed blood of Jesus Christ our Passover Lamb (I Cor. 5:7-8; 11:26; I John 1:7).

GARNER SMITH

The Lord's Supper was instituted shortly after Christ had observed Passover with His disciples who were with Him. We would be hard pressed in any attempt at trying to prove that Passover was at all times observed on (Sunday) the Lord's Day.

The Lord's Day proves to be a convenient time to observe the ordinance since most worship services are conducted on this day, but I know of no Scripture which forbids its observance at any other time. Some may argue that the Supper was observed by churches of the N. T. on the first day of the week and come up with the theory that no day other than Sunday will do. To those who hold this theory I would ask, Where is the proof that Christ instituted the Lord's Supper on a Sunday? Was the Passover which preceded the Lord's Supper held on the same day of the week each year, and was it the day we call Sunday? Is a time of worship on a day other than Sunday of less importance than a Sunday worship service?

It is my personal belief that the Lord's Supper can be observed on any that that the church may choose. When the Bible says, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup. . ." (I Cor. 11:26). I find no stipulation that it be done on a certain day. To those who would be contentious, and say it definitely must be done on the Lord's day, I would ask, Since it is called a "Supper" do you observe it before noon or in the late afternoon? I think most people would connect the word "Supper" with the last meal of the day rather than one near the noon hour. I bring this up to point out that when we become too technical on points such as this we often run into a block-wall.

JIMMIE B. DAVIS

It is customary for Baptist Churches to observe the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day; however, I believe that any time a church assembles it would have the authority to observe the Lord's Supper if it so desired. I Corinthians 14:26 declares: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The key in observing the Lord's Supper is not so much the day, but rather the attitude of the communicant's hearts and the unity of the church.

As far as I can tell, the Lord's Supper was first instituted on a weekday, on the night of the Passover feast.

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After the Lord gave the supper to the church, they sung a hymn, and went out into the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30). Jesus then said, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad" (verse 31). Early the next morning Jesus was betrayed and was crucified and placed in the tomb that same day. After three days and three nights, the Lord arose. "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils" (Mark 16:9). The Lord instituted the Supper the day before He was crucified. This would be four days before the Lord's Day, which is the first day of the week.

Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper when the church comes together into one place (I Cor. 11:20). I can find no reason in the Scriptures to observe the Lord's Supper only on Sunday. It may be observed any time that the church has chosen and has come together for that purpose.

DAVID O'NEAL

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 6-30-2002 to 7-31-2002

Beginning Balance	\$1,038.03
RECEIPTS	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	400.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	75.00
Berea B. C., West Point, TN	297.00
TOTAL	972.00
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	944.00
Tape Production	200.00
Postage	154.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,298.00
Bank charge	- 10.00
BALANCE	\$702.03

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$973.32
RECEIPTS	
Total	973.32
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	160.00
Total Expenditures	160.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$813.32

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 6-30-2002 to 7-31-2002

Beginning Balance	\$3,354.90
RECEIPTS:	
A. D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	36.30
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Berea B. C., Westpoint, TN	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH	50.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	60.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	125.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL	50.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL	25.00
Charity B. C., Midland, TX	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	20.00
Faith B. C., Clarksville, TN	100.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Faith B. C., Seffner, FL	100.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Gerald Price, Johnson City, TN	30.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. M., Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	90.00
Helen J. Sturm, Ashland, KY	50.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Joseph Jurzec, Lake-in-the-Hills, IL	25.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	25.00
Landmark S. G. B. C., Ft. Worth, TX	50.00
Larry J. Ricklefs, Skagway, AK	59.25
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Letson Farrell, Long Beach, MS	150.00
Meadow Branch B. C., Millport, AL	50.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	300.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Aztec, NM	25.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	50.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	100.00
Rose Young, Senatobia, MS	22.00
Solid Rock B. C., Kenedy, TX	20.00
South Park B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Burghill, OH	75.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Fulton, MS	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Raleigh, NC	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	200.00
Subscriptions	400.00
Anonymous	50.00
Dividing checks	325.00
Sub Total	\$4,597.55
TOTAL	\$7,952.45
EXPENDITURES:	
Wages	2,375.00
Printing	502.00
Postage	882.55
FICA taxes	181.63
Supplies	150.95
Dividing checks	325.00
Total Expenditures	4,417.13
Bank charge	- 18.64
Check returned	- 45.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$3,471.68

Unaccountable God

Continued from page 409

hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?" (Job 9:12).

THERE IS NO REASON HE SHOULD GIVE AN ACCOUNT

The power and dominion of God is absolute. The Most High owes no man anything, for He has received nothing from us. When we give Him anything we are in fact merely returning it to its rightful Owner: **"Thine, O LORD, is the greatest, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all....But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee"** (I Chron. 29:11-12,14). We have nothing that we did not receive from God (I Cor. 4:7).

The God of the Bible is infinitely just and holy in all His ways: **"The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works"** (Ps. 145:17). Why should One who can do no wrong be required to account for any of His matters? No angel or man has any authority to call God to explain His conduct. If God were accountable to us, then He would be under our power and not God in any sense. Against whom is it possible for God to sin? Is He amenable to any law above Himself? If so, by what law can He be indicted, and in what court can He be tried and convicted?

PROOF OF THIS TRUTH

God is unaccountable to any creature for what He did in creation, providence, or redemption. He is absolutely sovereign in material things. He bestows riches on some and withholds them from others. On this the Scripture gives no uncertain sound: **"The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up"** (I Sam. 2:7). **"The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all"** (Prov. 22:2). Prosperity and adversity alike are received from God, and the changes from one to the other are beneficial (Ps. 55:19; Jer. 48:11; Jas. 1:9-10).

The Most High in His sovereign pleasure decides how long each man shall live and when he shall die. **"See now that I, even I, am he, and**

there is no god with me: I kill and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever" (Deut. 32:39-40). **"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us: he hath smitten, and he will bind us up"** (Hos. 6:1). In His sovereign good pleasure He takes some in infancy, others in youth, and still others in their old age. Why He gives some a short time on earth and others a long time on earth is something hid in His own heart.

God is pleased to save some to manifest His glorious grace and to leave others to their just condemnation to the praise of His glorious justice. **"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"** (Rom. 9:18-20).

Men do not like to hear about election and reprobation by God. When they do they offer the objection mentioned by Paul, more or less. The objection offered is essentially this: If God bestows grace on some and withholds it from others, how can the sinner be held responsible for his sins against God? This objection suggests that God is inconsistent and unjust. Under the pretence of human reasoning, men bring forward this objection to God's activities, claiming they are competent to judge what God may or may not do. This is a very evil and blasphemous act on the part of objectors.

It is preposterous for any man to question the actions of God. He is absolutely sovereign, and He is under no obligation to give a reason for any thing He does. If God must give man a reason for His proceedings, He would no longer be higher than the Highest. God makes no mistakes, and He is in no way accountable to man. He does not have to explain His conduct to His friends or His enemies. No man or angel has a right to bring God to trial.

Man is not competent to sit in judgment over God. The Lord is infinite, and a finite man cannot grasp the infinity of God. There is always a point at which the power of the finite understanding of the communication of the infinite must cease, for man is not all wise. At that point Divine revelation becomes a mystery. Since man cannot fully understand the Divine Being he is not qualified to sit

in judgment over God. Hence there is in truth no way God ever could or would be accountable to man. There are many secrets about God man can never know being a finite creature (Deut. 29:29). Well did Isaiah say: **"Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour"** (Isa. 45:15).

Can anything be more presumptuous than for the creature to pretend greater wisdom than the Creator? Does a feeble sinful worm of the earth dare to set himself up as competent to judge the Judge of all the earth? Any man who would dare to do so is both a fool and a criminal before the Most High. How can one whose righteousnesses are as filthy rags dare to assert there is unrighteousness in God? The will of the Lord is free, and His will is His law. A finite man cannot judge an infinite God. God is not accountable to man. The Most High does not submit His plans or government to man for review or revision.

When a person complains about God's sovereign right to elect one and reprobate another, he is saying, "There ought not to be such a God with unlimited power." This idea is both impious and blasphemous. Such a person exalts himself above God. He is saying He does not want God to be God. To attempt to sit in judgment on the actions of God's sovereign will is as foolish as it is wicked. Such a critic has made himself a god of his own fancy, who hardens nobody, condemns nobody, and pities everybody.

The idea that God is in some measure accountable to man is all wrong. It is not God's hardening that deprives a man of salvation. Nevertheless, the critic is saying this is the case. He is suggesting that if God did not interpose with election and take some and leave others to be hardened, all men without exception would have an equal chance to be saved. This is unscriptural. If God did not elect some to be saved, none would be saved, for there is **"none that seeketh after God"** (Rom. 3:11). Men are not lost because they

are hardened. They are hardened because they are lost, and they are lost because they are sinners before God.

God is not the Author of sin. Being sovereign, He is under no obligation to a single sinner upon this earth. If God saves any person, it is out of His sovereign grace and the good pleasure of His will. Obligation and sovereignty are incompatible. One excludes the other. God has a perfect right to do what He will with His own. The Supreme Being is incomprehensible to man in His person and actions. **"How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"** (Rom. 11:33). Zophar asked Job: **"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea"** (Job 11:7-9).

DARE A MAN TO STRIVE WITH GOD?

I read in Isaiah 45:9: **"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?"** It is absurd for a puny man to sit in judgment over God. How stupid to engage in an irreverent equalizing of a man with God. To do such is to strive against your Maker.

"To strive against" means "to refuse to submit, to call in question, to contend with." Gamaliel well said regarding the work of the apostles before the council: **"Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God"** (Acts 5:38-39). Men may strive with other men over many matters, but let them never dare to contend with God who is infinitely above them. How idiotic! A creature waging a fight against the Creator! A feeble man attempting to overthrow his Maker! Can the clay dictate to the Potter? Can nothing expect to put down something (Isa. 40:17)? Can weakness put to flight Strength? What is folly when up against wisdom? No one would ever think of doing this unless he was a blooming idiot!

How can a man strive with God? First, there is disobedience to God's commandments. Some reject the Bible and boast that nature teaches us all virtue and religion. This is daring wickedness. It is to strive against God's holiness.

MARK OF THE BEAST

Look at your name on the front page of this month's paper. If you see the mark 9-02, so detestable to a Baptist, wash it out by renewal of green-backs. If not your paper will stop next month. We are not able to credit. It is not a good plan.



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Unaccountable God

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Second, there is distrusting His written Word. In Romans 9:17 Paul ascribed to the Scriptures what was said by God (Ex. 9:16). Hence the words of the Scriptures are the words of God. This is to question the truthfulness of God (Num. 20:12-13).

Third, there is resisting God's providential dealings with us. This is the questioning of His sovereignty. Those who do such strive against their Maker.

Fourth, to fail to yield to the overtures of the gospel is to strive with God. The gospel proclaims amnesty to rebels against God's moral government. But this amnesty is only for those who throw down their weapons and cease to strive and rebel. Those who persist in unbelief are fighting against the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:24).

THE EVIL OF STRIVING AGAINST GOD

First, to strive with your Maker is unreasonable. It is a sign the mind is blinded by the wicked one. There can be no greater madness, or more complete folly, than to fight against God. **"...yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead"** (Eccl. 9:3). **"...but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness"** (Eccl. 10:12-13).

Second, to strive with God is a horrible sin. It dishonors Him and darkens His glory. It calls in question His goodness, wisdom, holiness, and faithfulness. It reveals how much strength that sin has in a person. It discloses he is like the Devil, who is always striving with God.

Third, it is fraught with evil to our own soul. We cannot injure God. We can't give Him a black eye. We can do this to potsherd like ourselves, but never to God. Who can fight against God and win? There is no way to escape the triumphs of His judgments. His prevailing will shall be our woe. **"But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile"** (Rom. 2:8-9).

WE SHOULD SUBMIT TO GOD

We must not question God or arraign Him at our bar of judgment. Instead of striving with our Maker, we

should submit to Him: **"Submit yourselves therefore to God"** (Jas. 4:7). Job lost his possessions and most of his family, but he did not ask God what He was doing. Rather, he said: **"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath take away; blessed be the name of the LORD"** (Job 1:21). He went on to lose his health. Even his wife urged him to curse God and die, but Job retained his integrity. He said to his wife: **"Thou speaketh as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips"** (Job 2:10).

Eli is another good example of submission to God's will. The Lord revealed to young Samuel, who was living with Eli, how God would destroy the family of the old priest. Instead of demanding that God give an account of Himself, the old saint said: **"It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good"** (I Sam. 3:18). Eli submitted to the will of God. He did not question His justice, nor rebel against it, nor seek to have it reversed. He reverently and humbly surrenders to the will of God (Acts 21:14). Eli did not fret and murmur and give himself up to despair.

Here are four characteristics of true submission. First, there is a distinct recognition of the hand of God in all human events. **"It is the LORD."** Eli did not believe in blind fate; he did not look upon events as the working of some immutable laws. Eli saw God in all his troubles. **"It is the LORD,"** whom I have always found to be holy, just, and gracious. He cannot but be Himself. God never errs or does anything wrong to any of His creatures. **"It is the LORD,"** who has pronounced judgment, from whose bar there is no appeal. His power cannot be resisted nor His sovereignty contested.

Second, there was an absence of complaint. **"It is the LORD."** That is all that I need to know (Ps. 39:9). He is too wise to err, too righteous to do wrong. He is too loving to bring evil upon me and my house without good cause and unless it be for good ends (Rom. 8:28). He is too good to be suspected and too great to be quarreled with.

Third, Eli accepted the Divine stroke of judgment: **"Let him do."** Eli's back is bent and bound to the rod. God is holy in all His ways and righteous in all His judgments. Therefore, let His will be done. I trust my case to the Judge of all the earth who can do no wrong. It is a duty as well as a privilege to wish none other

than the execution of God's sovereign will (Isa. 39:8).

Fourth, Eli believed that God could do no wrong: **"Let him do what seemeth him good."** If it seems good to God, it must be for my good. Though He slay my house and me, yet will I trust Him at all times. Chastisement for our failures in child rearing and punishment for wicked offsprings are in the judgment of God good. This may not seem good to man, but God always knows what is best for His people.

CONCLUSION

1. There are many things we are to strive with according to Holy Scripture. We are to strive against the sinful lusts of the flesh (Heb. 12:4; I Pet. 2:11). We are to do battle with the Devil ((Jas. 4:7). We are to wrestle with God in prayer (Rom. 15:30). We must strive for the incorruptible crown (I Cor. 9:25; II Tim. 2:5). We are to exert ourselves in getting out the truth of the Bible (Phil. 1:27). Sinners are told to strive to enter into the straight gate (Luke 13:24). But we are never commanded to strive with our Maker.

2. God is not accountable to us, but we are all accountable to Him. **"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,**

and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:11-12). There are no exceptions. Each person is answerable to God and not to any other. Each individual will give an account of his life and works to God.

3. Great judgment awaits those who strive with God. **"And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD. Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain"** (Jer. 50:24-25).

4. Are you striving with your Maker? If you are guilty of this, you are fighting a losing battle. God is greater than man. If God is against you, no man or angel can come to your aid. Your case is hopeless. Why not lay down the weapons of your warfare and cease this striving with God. Why not say, "I yield, I yield, I can hold out no longer. O Galilean, Thou hast conquered!"



Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read. Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

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CHICAGO (EP)—In the last few years thousands of Hispanics have joined the millions of Muslim's who practice the Islamic faith in the United States. According to the American Muslim Council (AMC), in 1997 there were an estimated 40,000 Hispanic Muslims in the nation. The current estimate, the group says, may be up to 60,000 Hispanic worshipers, out of a total Muslim population the AMC says may be anywhere between two million and seven million.

BROOKHAVEN, Miss. (EP)—Bernard Ebbers, a chief executive at WorldCom, the telecommunications company hit by one of the latest corporate accounting scandals, told the congregation at Easthaven Baptist Church in Brookhaven, Miss., where he teaches Sunday school, that he is innocent of any crimes. In his first public comments since the \$3.8 billion accounting scandal broke

in the news, Ebbers told his fellow parishioners after the Sunday Service June 30, "I just want you to know you aren't going to church with a crook." The Securities and Exchange Commission has brought a fraud charge against WorldCom. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the company's accounting irregularities were six times greater than those faced by Enron, the energy company whose accounting scandal opened the floodgates on revelations of corruption across corporate America. Ebbers told the congregation, "No one will find me to have knowingly committed fraud. More than anything else, I hope that my witness for Jesus Christ will not be jeopardized."

DENVER, Colo. (EP)—The 10th U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled June 27 that Columbine school officials had the right to bar Christian messages from tiles

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on a campus memorial to those killed in the 1999 Columbine High School massacre. Wrote the appellate judges in their 3-0 decision, "By allowing a tile stating 'God is Love,' the (school) district would be obligated to post tiles stating 'God is Hate.'" The parents of Daniel Rohrbough and Kelly Fleming, two students who were killed during the shooting rampage of fellow students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, offered religious messages in memory of their children. But the appeals court said, "We believe that the district's restriction on religious symbols was reasonably related to its legitimate goal of preventing disruptive religious debate on the school's walls."

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—A United Methodist minister who underwent "gender reassignment" surgery resigned his ministerial credentials June 28 during a denominational meeting of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the Methodist church. According to the *Washington Times*, Richard Zomastny—who changed his name to Rebecca Ann Steen following a sex change process that began in 1999—was originally accepted by the Baltimore-Washington Conference in early June for assignment to a local Methodist church. But after a group of local Methodist ministers began an official denominational process of opposition to his assignment in the conference, Zomastny was put on leave by the local bishop. He then resigned his credentials, reportedly to avoid the embarrassing investigation and hearings that would have followed. Barry Hidey, one of the ministers who opposed Zomastny's reappointment told the *Times* that Zomastny's resignation "brings some resolution to this for everyone. But there's still a lot of hurt and pain on both sides. This forced us to deal with an issue that hadn't been addressed in the past."

BOISE, Idaho (EP)—Idaho became the 12th state to criminalize the harming of an unborn child when legislation went into effect July 1 under which a person may be charged with murder, manslaughter or aggravated assault if an unborn "child, fetus or zygote" is killed or injured during the commission of a crime or the violation of a law on Idaho's books. The law was named "Noah's Law," after the unborn child of a woman who was beaten, causing her baby to be stillborn. Said Wendy Wright, senior policy director at Concerned Women for America, "This is a great step forward that Idaho has passed this law and it really is an encouragement for other states to do the same thing." A similar law has passed in the House of Representatives only to be killed in the

Senate.

HANOVER, Germany (EP)—An Internet survey conducted by the Protestant Churches in Germany revealed that one in five Germans say soccer players are their true gods. Europe's Idea News Agency reported that 75 percent of the 2,000 responses to the survey on the church's Web site answered "No" to the question, "Are soccer players our true Gods?" But a troubling 20 percent answered "Yes."

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—In a decision that breathes life into the nationwide campaign for school choice, the Supreme Court ruled June 27 that tax-funded tuition vouchers may be used to pay for religious schools. By a 5-4 margin the Court found that it is constitutional to use government moneys to pay tuition costs at private or parochial schools, as long as parents have a wide variety of both religious and secular school options for their children.

A decade ago, more than half of high school teens had sexual intercourse while they were in high school. Now, according to new federal data, it appears that the tables have turned, and virginal teens outnumber the sexually active ones. In 1990, the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) found that 54.3 percent of teens in grades 9-12 had had sexual intercourse. By 2001, however, 54.4 percent of high schoolers said they had not had sex. The turning point occurred in the mid-1990s, right around the time the federal government started funding abstinence programs teaching teens to save sex for marriage, said Peter Brandt of Focus on the Family, a traditional values group in Colorado Springs, Colo. (*The Washington Times*, July 29-Aug. 4, 2002).

The Bush Administration announced July 22 that it would not disburse this year's \$34 million to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) because the fund supports China's forced abortion policy (*Human Events*, 7-29-02).

The Calvinists and the open theists are debating about God in the Southern Baptist Convention. The open theists say, "God doesn't know exact details of the future, because it will be shaped by human decisions. Thus the future is 'open' rather than predetermined" (*Western Recorder*, July 23, 2002). They contend, "God has freely chosen to limit Himself so that He does not foreordain or cause all that happens. The future is partly open because it depends on what human persons decide to do" (*ibid.*). According to these liberal Arminians, God foreknew not to know some things. Or, do they mean that God foreknew some things and then forgot them? You decide

what they mean if you can. These 'open theists' are Bible rejecters; they are slow of heart to believe all that the Bible teaches about God's omniscience. Most leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention say that there must be no "witch hunt" to root out open theists, but that all good Southern Baptists must make room for these Bible deniers and for dialogue.

Americans' confidence in religious institutions is at a 30-year low, tumbling to just 45 percent, according to an annual Gallup Poll. But while the Protestant confidence rate of 59 percent is about the same as a year ago, Catholic trust plummeted to 42 percent. The last time religion's public image suffered such a free-fall was 1989, when the televangelist scandals regarding sex and money pushed down American confidence in religion to 52 percent. . . . Between 1973 and the mid-1980s, organized religion ranked the highest of all institutions in confidence ratings as the Watergate scandal and Vietnam War wound down and the Reagan era began (*The Washington Times*, July 22-28, 2002).

Glenn Kessler writes (*Washington Post*) that "The Internal Revenue service, handling more than 100,000 tax returns seeking nonexistent slavery tax credits, mistakenly paid out more than \$30 million in erroneous refunds in 2000 and 2001."

\$2.7 Billion To Atone For Slavery During 2001.

While it has been known for years that some fraud artists advertised the false credit and offered to help African Americans get it—for a fee—this is the first indication that the cost to the government was so high" (*Straight Talk*, 8-1-02).

According to INS figures, the 1986 amnesty transformed 2.7 million illegal aliens into legal residents, permanently adding millions of poor to our society. After 10 years in the United States, the average amnestied illegal alien has only a seventh-grade education and an annual slavery of less than \$9,000, \$500 of which was sent to his or her homeland, the INS notes. According to the Center for Immigration Studies (available at www.fairus.org), after 10 years, the direct and indirect costs of services and benefits for such illegal aliens, minus their tax contributions, is over \$78 billion (*ibid.*).

According to 5-02 *Charisma*: Over 70 million Christians over the world have been martyred in the last 20 centuries. *** There are 500 million orphans in the world and 70 million abandoned children and infants. *** Worldwide, 200 million children are exploited for labor. *** Even in the year 2002, 35 million people are still slaves. *** Pedophile racketeers victimize some 5.8 million children.

*** There are 24 million prostitutes. *** Each year, about \$47 billion of cocaine is sold in the world. *** Trusted church workers steal some \$16 billion annually from church funds (via *Calvary Contender*, 6-02).

Many journalists have displayed the one politically correct bigotry still allowed and esteemed—anti-Christian bigotry. America is becoming a country where religious belief is welcome only if it abandons claims to exclusive truth (e.g., "Jesus is the ONLY way to Heaven."). Many secular liberals consider all Bible-believing Christians "fundamentalists." Mean-spirited ones even call us "Christian Taliban," and say anti-abortionists are no different than Osama bin Laden (See 4-27 *World*). Pro-life fundamentalists are not to be tolerated! (*ibid.*).

Dissident Baptists in Missouri are the latest to break away from the Southern Baptist Convention. About 350 Missouri Baptists are forming the Baptist General Convention of Missouri. Moderate (and liberal) Baptists in several states have formed alternative fellowships as a reaction to the SBC's conservative theology. Despite the rifts, the SBC says it grew ever bigger last year. The nation's largest Protestant denomination says it now has more than 16 million members (5-2 *Agape Press*). A Southwest Baptist University (Mo.) Bible professor who led weekend Bible studies for the new BGC of Missouri said some Old Testament stories (including Jonah) cannot be taken literally (4-29 *Chr. News*).

Some hospitals are going bankrupt because they are forced to give FREE treatment to illegal aliens. As a result, costs for paying citizens are skyrocketing, and illegals are taking beds desperately needed by our own citizens.

Since 1946, the cost of running Congress has soared by more than 3,000 percent, while the consumer price index has risen only 500 percent.

The IRS has 82,000 employees and cost U. S. taxpayers \$9 billion a year (*Straight Talk*, 6-27-02).

The people who find, pump, and refine oil, and then bring gasoline to the stations makes money; that's their business. In 2000, the industry earned some \$53 billion—no small change. The government, however, raked in \$85 billion in taxes on oil that year, reports *Investor's Business Daily*. The Energy Information Agency calculates that 25 percent of the cost of a gallon of gasoline goes for refining, distributing, marketing and profits; 41 percent pays for the crude oil; and a hefty 34 percent is sucked up by taxes. So one of the reasons gasoline is so high is because of Big Brother (Adapted

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from *The New American*, 6-17-02).

LOUISVILLE - More than a dozen new lawsuits were filed yesterday against the Archdiocese of Louisville alleging sexual abuse, bring to 169 the total of pending suits against the church. The Archdiocese of Louisville is named as a defendant in all 13 lawsuits filed in Jefferson County Circuit Court. The plaintiffs, 11 men and two women, say they were sexually abused as children by members of the clergy or church employees. The plaintiffs claim that archdiocese officials were aware of the abuse but did not take appropriate disciplinary actions. The officials accused of abuse are named in the suit but are not defendants. Since mid-April, 169 people now have claimed they were sexually abused by 24 priests and four church employees from the 1960s to the 1980s (*Lexington Herald-Leader*, 7-31-02).

The gospel according to Oprah offends no one, promises everything, and asks nothing except that devotees earn their way to a nebulous salvation (5-21 CT). Oprah says, "One of the biggest mistakes humans make is to believe there is only one way. Actually, there are many diverse paths leading to what you call God" (4-02 CC).

China's military provided training for Afghanistan's Taliban militia and its al Qaeda supporters, according to a U.S. intelligence report. . . Evidence of Chinese military backing for the Taliban continues to surface. Last month, U.S. Army Special Forces troops discovered 30 HN-5s, the designation for Chinese-made SA-7s surface-to-air missiles, in southeast Afghanistan. Other intelligence reports indicate the Chinese shipped missiles to the Taliban after September 11 (*The Washington Times*, June 24-30, 2002). *Editor's comment: You can always trust the Communists to be good Communists.*

The U.S. has constructed a society, the first in modern history, in which native-born productive citizens are the tax slaves of the welfare and immigrant lobbies. The 35 million taxpayers who carry the burden of the income tax have no more claims to their income than did medieval serfs or 19th century black slaves (Paul Craig Roberts in *The Washington Times*, July 1-7, 2002).

Despite all we know about the people who are plotting to kill Americans, the United States has issued 50,000 visas since September 11 to non-Israeli visitors from the Middle East (Phyllis Schlafly, *ibid.*).

The Securities and Exchange

Commission has filed a complaint against the Church of God (Anderson, Ind.), accusing its fund-raising arm of defrauding investors out of \$85 million. The SEC filed documents July 22, in U.S. District Court in Indianapolis, detailing a preliminary settlement with Church Extension of the Church of God. The fund-raising entity is accused of artificially inflating income in correspondence with investors and misleading them about investment risk, Associated Press Reported (*Western Recorder*, 7-30-02).

A non-Englishman will lead the Church of England for the first time in 300 years. Rowan Williams, an outspoken archbishop from Wales, will become the 104th archbishop of Canterbury in November, British Prime Minister Tony Blair said Tuesday. He favors church marriages for divorces, which the church frowns upon. He supports female priests and openness to homosexual, issues that have splintered the 73 million-member Anglican Communion. While not a pope in the strict sense of the word, he oversees the Diocese of Canterbury in Kent, England,

and has a seat in the House of Lords. He is also supreme primate and chaplain to the Church of England.

LOUISVILLE - The Rev. Louis Miller, who is accused of sexual abuse of children in lawsuits against the Archdiocese of Louisville, and faces criminal charges, allegedly molested children as frequently as ever other month during the 1960s and 1970s, according to a March psychiatric report. The report, filed Monday in Jefferson Circuit Court, said, "Miller admits to periodically acting out sexual impulses in their manner his entire adult life, " most involving boys 10 to 15 (s:*Lexington Herald-Leader*, 7-25-02).

I believe that the Bush Administration has plans to attack Iraq in the near future. If they do, I expect the Iraqis to attack the Israelis as they did before during the Gulf War. This could bring the whole Arab world (which includes parts of Russia) to the side of Iraq. This would put the U.S. and Israel against the whole Arab world. I freely grant that Saddam Hussein is an evil dictator who would be glad to use chemical, nuclear, or biological weapons against any people who he does not like.

Funnybone

"... A time to laugh..." (Eccl. 3:4).

Little Jimmie Johnson heard about the ruling made by the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth District about the Pledge of Allegiance being unconstitutional because of the words "one nation under God."

A few days after this ruling his teacher asked him at school to say the Pledge of Allegiance. He proudly arose and said the following: "I pledge allegiance to the political correctness in America, one nation of special interest groups, under a godless void, divisible by language differences, with plea bargains for criminals and justice for sale."

Bill Tightwad was asked to introduce Deacon Jones at a farmer's meeting in Possumtrot. Bill said, "Rumor has it that tonight's speaker made straight A's in high school. Rumor has it that he was captain of the football team, the basketball team and the track team for three years in a row. Rumor has it that he's able to leap tall buildings with a single bound. And now, I'd like you to meet the man who started all these rumors."

..



A New York businessman boarded a train in Albany on his way to Buffalo. As it was a night train, he took a sleeper car and gave the porter strict instructions to waken him and put him off in Buffalo. "I'm a very heavy sleeper," the passenger said, "and I may give you a hard time. But whatever you do, be sure to put me off in Buffalo. . . even if you have to put me off in my pajamas."

The next morning the man woke up to find himself in Cleveland. He located the porter and chewed him out with some very abusive language. After the man left, a bystander asked the porter how he could stand there and take that verbal abuse.

"That weren't nothing," the porter replied. "You should've heard the guy I put off in Buffalo."

But I really think the real reason that most nations want the evil man gone is because he opposes the New World Order, and he believes in putting his nation first before all others. I predict that the U.S., Britain, and possibly some others will make war with Saddam Hussein, and that we will win the war, although it may be a bloody one. The first American soldiers to attack Iraqi will be the U.S. Marine Corps' 1st Marine Expeditionary Force from San Diego's Camp Pendleton. Then there will come a new Iraqi leader who will rebuild the ancient city of Babylon and make it the commercial center of the world. In time to come you will know if a wise man or a fool made these predictions (MRC).

OUR BELTWAY BANDITS IN CONGRESS ARE STEALING FROM US:

* \$250,000 to study how to prevent wild pigs in Hawaii from attacking exotic plant (the "pork vs. pork" bill).

* \$6.1 million to search for extraterrestrial life.

* \$3.8 million for the "Poultry Center of Excellence."

* \$450,000 for seedless grape research.

* \$84,000 to study why people fall in love.

* \$3.4 million to study "shrimp aquaculture."

* \$2.7 million for a fish farm in Arkansas.

* \$3.3 million to remove driftwood from New York Harbor.

* \$500,000 to study the effects of cigarette smoking on dogs.

* \$3.06 million in federal tax money to extend one local street in a small California town.

* \$49 million for a rock-and-roll museum (*Straight Talk*, 7-25-02).

Because of the \$3.8-billion WorldCom scandal and a few other corrupt companies, many critics are yelping that capitalism doesn't work and we need more government to fix things. Yet when Uncle Same "mispays" \$100 billion every year, those critics go mum. Washington's multi-billion dollar mismanagement, which dwarfs the problems in the free market, gets a pass year after year. "Reform" to fix the government's pervasive accounting problems went into effect six years ago. Yet today, 83 percent of the federal agencies are not in compliance with the law, reports *Forbes* magazine. That translates into an estimated \$100 billion in erroneous payments every year, according to the U.S. General Accounting Office (*Human Events*, 7-22-02).

A recent Zogby poll concluded that 75% of American college seniors say that their professors teach that there is no such thing as right and wrong. The poll,

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commissioned by the National Association of Scholars, found that professors talk about such issues in the context of "individual values and cultural diversity" (*Human Events*, 7-22-02).

Disregarding any ethical or moral issues, the Washington state Supreme Court ordered two frozen embryos destroyed because the contract signed at their conception expired after five years. Since the embryos' parents are divorced and did not sign an extension of the contract, the court ruled June 13 that the embryos should be thawed and discarded (*National Right to Life News*, 7-02).

The highest court in France, the *Cour de Cassation*, ruled June 25 that unborn babies do not have the legal status of persons, and therefore a doctor or midwife cannot be held responsible for the death of a baby during delivery, according to *Reuters*.

WASHINGTON (July 8, 2002) - Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle (SD), backed by the great majority of Senate Democrats and a small group of Republicans, has blocked legislation to ban human cloning. According to a June 21 *Boston Globe*, because the Senate has failed to pass the ban, "many" biotech labs in U.S. are "quietly preparing" to begin cloning human embryos for research. "Right now, Senator Daschle and his allies are winning the battle to allow human embryo farms to open for business in the U.S.," commented NRLC Legislative Director Douglas Johnson (o:*National Right to Life News*, 7-02).

COLUMBUS, Ohio (RNS) - The nation's largest Presbyterian church sidestepped a nasty battle over salvation on June 20 by approving a statement on salvation theology that appeared to satisfy both liberals and conservatives. The eight-page document, "Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ" passed in a 497-11 vote. While saying all people everywhere should place faith in Christ, in a reference to non-Christians, the document also says: "We neither restrict the grace of God to those who profess explicit faith in Christ nor assume that all people are saved regardless of faith" (Adapted from *Western Recorder*, 6-25-02).

UN-occupied Bosnia, in addition to being an international terrorist haven, has also become notorious for its prominence in the Balkan Sex trade, reported the June 30th *Sunday Herald* of London. "There is absolutely no dispute that the sex traffic market came with the arrival of the peacekeepers," asserts Madeleine Rees, who directs the UN Office for Human

Rights in Bosnia. Rees has accused Denis Landucer, the deputy commissioner of Bosnia's International Police Task Force (IPTF), of being a regular client of a Bosnia brothel where women are forced to serve as prostitutes. . . . According to Rees, the situation in Bosnia mirrors that of other unfortunate countries hosting the UN peacekeepers. "We know it happened in Cambodia, Mozambique . . . and Kosovo," she reports. Agnes Callamard, director to the Humanitarian Accountability Project in Geneva, adds Sierra Leone and East Timor to the list of countries where "stories of abuse following the arrival of peacekeepers" were common (*The New American*, 7-29-02).

Throughout Eastern Europe, reported Brian Mitchell in the June 25th *Investor's Business Daily*, the U.S. and its European allies have worked to defeat popular center-right governments and replace them with left and center governments. The aim is to elect leaders who are gung-ho for NATO and eager to sell public assets to foreign investors." These leaders, Mitchell points out, are invariable "(Communist) Party members, apparatchiks and spies. Ex-Communists today are the preferred rulers of the former Warsaw Pact, Ex-anti-Communists are the new enemy" (*ibid.*).

Our federal government is now borrowing \$440 billion a year to keep afloat. This is \$1,750 for every person in the country, including babies, or \$7,000 for a typical family of four. The simple fact is, to fix our absurd budget problem means reducing the standard of living by \$7,000 a year. That means across the board, excruciating, extreme pain. There is no other cure, and there are very few politicians who have the integrity to tell you the truth (*Straight Talk*, 7-18-02).

Some interesting facts about South Africa:

- * The government supports prayer in schools and religious freedom;
- * Abortion is illegal;
- * Newsstand pornography is illegal;
- * Over 70 percent of the total population claims to be Christians;
- * The South African Airlines (government owned) provides Gospel messages and hymns on its in-flight stereo in both English and Afrikaans, for the benefit of passengers.

"South Africa is the most Christian nation in the world," says David W. Balsinger, who recently headed a fact-finding mission to South Africa. "One is surprised to find prayer in school at all levels, abundant Christian broadcasting, a high level of church attendance; open exercise of religious freedom. Abortion, homosexuality, pornography are outlawed; rapists are put to death" (*ibid.*).

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power of God in us (II Pet. 1:3-4), Peter urges us to press on to possess more Christian virtues. Because we have been thus blessed of God, we must make every effort to develop a strong Christian character. The giving of all diligence means to make haste with all effort and zeal.

The people Peter addressed had faith (II Pet. 1:1). Peter does not tell them to add faith, for this is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9). Faith does not stop at salvation, but it grows into other Christian virtues, and it is the foundation on which all other virtues are built. "Add" in the Greek means "to furnish beside," or that we are to go from one Christian virtue to another. In this word is an allusion to chorus leaders among the Greek. It is as if Peter said, "Let faith lead as at the head of the choir of grace, and let all the others follow in this order."

The first thing to be added to faith is "virtue." The Greek word used here means "manliness, courage, valor, vigor, etc." I would call it active courage in the good fight of faith. Some believers are too cowardly to witness for Christ and to live for Him. It takes real courage to follow Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:28; 4:13). This is something sadly lacking in professed Christians in this generation.

The second item is "knowledge." This is not the saving knowledge of Christ which is included in true faith (John 17:3). It is knowledge of God's Word and will, so we may live to please Him. It is knowledge that can grow and develop into practical wisdom. This knowledge enables us to judge what is right and wrong.

The third virtue is "temperance." This is self-control. Temperance in our day is linked with refraining from drinking intoxicating liquors. The original word used here means self-control, and it forbids excesses of all kinds. True knowledge leads to self-control. Intemperance comes from ignorance.

The fourth is "patience." Out of self-control will naturally flow endurance or patience (Rom. 5:3; Jas. 1:4). Many sorrows, reproaches, and persecutions try our patience, but we must persevere in the Christian life without murmuring and complaining.

The fifth is "godliness." This is a right disposition toward God. It is reverence for God and communion with Him. Godliness is an inward grace, but it manifests itself outwardly by a life of service to Christ. If we would be godly, we must be Christ-like. Godliness is Christ made manifest in the lives of His people.

The sixth item is "brotherly kindness." A right disposition toward God goes hand in hand with true love for the brethren (I John 3:11,14,17, 4:20). We must not let difference of education, or position, or character, or ability, or race, hinder kindness to all Christians.

The seventh thing to be added to faith is "charity." The Greek word here (*agape*) means to love like God does—for no good reason. This is an important grace (I Cor. 13:13), the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), and the proof of salvation (I John 3:14; 4:16; John 13:35).

After we believe in Christ we must give all diligence to develop all these graces. They do not come without effort on our part. Peter promises two blessings to those who add to their faith. First, there is assurance of salvation (II Pet. 1:8-9). The second is a high position in the millennial kingdom (II Pet. 1:10).

INCREASE IN THE STRENGTH OF THESE GRACES

First, according to Holy Scripture, we are not only to add virtues to our faith, but we are to increase the strength of our faith. When we are first saved we are "weak in the faith" (Rom. 14:1), and we have "little faith" (Luke 12:28). In the early stages of our Christian experience much time is devoted to an arrival at the "full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22), or making sure God has really given us saving faith in Christ. Even as the years go by faith can suffer a temporary eclipse like in the case of Peter (Luke 22:32). But our faith should develop and mature until it becomes "great faith" (Luke 7:9).

The disciples said to Christ: "Lord, Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). Those who have faith must pray for more of it, for true faith is of a progressive nature and has different degrees. We need great practical faith; a faith that surmounts stumbling blocks and freely forgives those who sin against us. Let us strive to have mountain-moving faith (I Cor. 13:2). Our Lord said: "...for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:20).

Paul commended the church at Thessalonica for the growth of their faith: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly..." (II Thess. 1:3). The words "groweth exceedingly" (*huperauxano*) means "beyond measure." He also

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commended the Corinthian church for their increase of faith: **“Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men’s labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly”** (II Cor. 10:16). In the light of these verses, we need to ask ourselves the question: Is our faith growing exceedingly?

Second, joy is to grow deeper and stronger: **“The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel”** (Isa. 29:19). The meek man in this verse is not a coward without any courage. Rather, he is a man who relies not on himself but on God, for he possesses a heart changed by the grace of God. Christianity makes a man meek and lowly in heart (Matt. 11:29).

Earthly joys are short lived. The objects from which it proceeds are liable to change and perish. But the joy of the Holy Spirit is permanent and tends to increase. The Lord is unchangeable and His fullness is ever unfolding itself. As we know and experience more of God, there is more joy in Him. Thus we see there is to be a constant increase of spiritual joy in the believer.

Third, brotherly love is to expand. In I Thessalonians 3:12 it is written: **“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you.”** “Make you” is literally “you may the Lord make.” Spiritual growth depends on Jesus Christ. **“To increase and abound”** could read “to increase in abundance and to overflow.” We are to increase and overflow with brotherly love. Christian love is progressive. **“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more”** (I Thess. 4:9-10).

Fourth, there should be an upsurge in our knowledge of God: **“That ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God”** (Col. 1:10). The more we know about God, the more good we can do to please Him. To increase in the knowledge of God suggests an experience of spiritual

growth and enlargement.

IN THE HARMONY OF THESE GRACES

In Galatians 5:22-23 we have listed the ninefold fruit of the Spirit which He produces in the believer: **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”** All of these are seen in harmony in the Christian life. These nine graces should be seen in the life of every Spirit-filled believer. I can only briefly look at these things.

The first link in the golden chain is **“love.”** This is a divine love planted in the heart by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5; I John 4:7-8), and it annexes us to God who is love. The word includes love for both God and men.

The second is **“joy.”** This is inward joy in the Lord and eternal cheerfulness. It is satisfying and perpetual. No outward circumstance can remove it so long as the heart is right with God. It exceeds worldly laughter and burst of human mirth (I Pet. 1:8).

Third, in the golden chain of Christian virtues is **“peace.”** This means peace of mind and conscience because of the work of the Prince of Peace (Eph. 2:14-17; Rom. 5:1). Controversies, riots, social strife, and family quarrels have little effect upon the Christian who lives in the circle of tranquility (Isa. 32:17-18; Job 34:9). Those at peace with God strive to live peaceably with all men (Rom. 12:18).

Fourth, he mentions **“longsuffering.”** This is resignation to the will of God and a disposition to bear insults and injuries from others without seeking revenge.

Fifth, there is **“gentleness.”** He who has this grace has a compassion for others. Sixth, there is **“goodness.”** This means a kindly activity for the benefit of others.

The last three are equally important. The seventh is **“faith.”** This most likely mean faithfulness, loyalty, trustworthiness, and reliability. The eighth is **“meekness.”** This means a person is not inclined to anger and resentment. He has his strength under control, for he is under the control of God. The last is **“temperance.”** This again means self-control. This grace enables a man to walk through the world completely in control of himself when most others are out of control. All these graces existed in Christ, and the Holy Spirit will produce them in us if we are real Christians.

The necessity of harmony in Christian virtues is seen in II Corinthians 8:7: **“Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith,**

and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.” Since they abounded in such spiritual qualities as faith, word, knowledge, diligence, and love, it would be inconsistent for them to fail in the grace of giving.

In II Corinthians 9:8 it is written: **“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”** Abundant resources are at our disposal. God’s grace is always enriching and thus the Christian is ever increasing. It is taken for granted the believer’s life consists of good works, that his energies and possessions are consecrated to God. Those who know the grace of God in truth will not be lacking in any good work.

God’s grace is all-sufficient to meet the needs of the Lord’s people. It is deep and overflowing like the waves of the sea. It is unfailing and abundant at every stage of life and every hour of the day. There is an ample supply for all the inward and outward experiences of life. The result of such fullness of blessings should be amazing spiritual growth and an abundance of service. Abounding grace produces abounding spiritual achievement.

GROWTH IN HOLINESS

In Romans 12:1 it is written: **“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.”**

“The mercies of God” refer back to election, predestination, calling, justification, adoption, and redemption. **“Present”** is a temple term for the bringing of anything to God. This same Greek word is rendered **“yield”** in Romans 6:13 and 19. The believer is seen here as priest, sacrifice, and altar. Unlike the sacrificial animal, which was presented slain, the Christian presents his body as a living sacrifice. His body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:15,19). This is his reasonable service, or spiritual service, offered by the direction of the Holy Spirit. This sacrifice, like the sacrifices of the law, must be **“holy,”** for the body of the saint should be holy as well as the soul. This living sacrifice is well pleasing to God.

In II Timothy 2:21 I read: **“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.”**

The main thought being presented

is for a believer to be clean and acceptable to the Lord under the figure of a vessel. **“To purge”** is to cleanse out thoroughly. The Christian is to separate from false professors, or vessels of dishonor (II Tim. 2:20). Faithful service requires separation from those who would contaminate us. This is both a moral and outward separation, and it is true of the church gathering or the social life. Paul told the Corinthians: **“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you”** (I Cor. 6:17). In Isaiah 52:11 it is written: **“Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.”**

A Christian is to be a vessel unto honor, a person adorning the doctrines of God and the church of God. He must depart from iniquity if he belongs to God (II Tim. 2:19). This is not enough, for he must also be consecrated to God. **“Prepared”** carries the idea of willingness and eagerness as well as readiness. **“Meet for the master’s use”** means possessed by a spirit and character adapted to the service of Christ.

The thought here is Christ-likeness in word and deed. **“Master”** (*despotes*) indicates the absolute authority, which Christ has in the life of His servants. The figure of a vessel implies the emptiness of self in addition to cleanness.

In II Corinthians 7:1 it is written: **“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”** **“Having these promises”** refers back to the separated life in the proceeding verses. In living such a life we would experience the presence and blessing of God (II Cor. 6:14-18). The blessing promised in II Corinthians 6 is conditional. If we will come out from evil associations, God will come to us in intimate blessing. God expects us to live close to Him and avoid evil companions.

Please note that in the exhortation Paul includes himself: **“Let us.”** He charges them to do two things: avoid contamination and strive to become pure.

First, consider the negative: **“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.”** There are two kinds of cleansing in the Bible. One is positional, which is ascribed to God (John 13:10; Acts 15:9; I Cor. 6:11; I John 1:7). The other is practical, which is ascribed

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to man (Ps. 119:9; Neh. 13:14; Jas. 4:8). Paul in II Corinthians 7:1 is concerned with practical cleansing, which is our responsibility: "Let us cleanse ourselves." We must not wait for God to do what He commanded us to do. We must cleanse ourselves from the habitual practice of sinning.

There are sins which pertain to our body, or "the flesh." This could be sexual sins, drunkenness, dirty talking, and idolatry. There are also sins of the spiritual part of man. These could be pride, malice, evil thoughts, envy, covetousness, jealousy, and hatred.

The positive is also enjoined: "Perfecting holiness in fear of God." It is our duty to perfect holiness. The holiness of our position in Christ causes us to practice holiness in our every day life. This must be done in reverence and devotion toward Him to whom we owe everything and in awe of His awful judgment seat where we shall give an account of the deeds done in our body (II Cor. 5:10; I John 2:28).

We must not simply practice holiness, but we are to carry it on to perfection. Not that perfection of holiness can be obtained in this life of vanity, for holiness is synonymous with Christ-likeness (I John 3:1-2). This does not lessen our responsibility to strive toward being holy like God is holy. Filthiness must go out as holiness comes in. Filthiness recedes as holiness proceeds. This progress in holiness is not optional. Hebrews 12:14 says: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." To put it simply: no holiness, no Heaven!

NOTE

Many of the books we have in this list are out-of-print from the publishers. Others we will not restock due to large orders required by publishers. We have only 1 copy of some of these. We plan to stock less books in the near future, but keep a better supply of what we offer. These are sold on a first-come-first-serve basis. If books are all sold, we will refund your money. On orders of \$20.00 or more you may take a 20% discount except those for those marked no discount.

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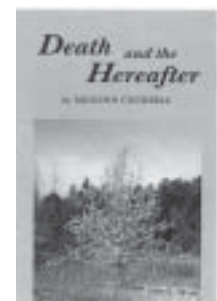
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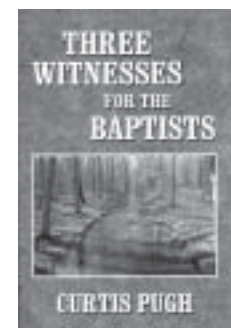
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THE NEW SCRIPTURES

ACCORDING TO TYNDAL, HUXLEY, SPENCER, AND DARWIN

BRO. EDITOR:- I hear much about evolution as a new theory by which they account for the creation of the world, and man, and animals, etc. What is it?

Well, here it is as described by one who has patiently studied it, and we advise all to cut out and save it for reference:-

1. Primarily the Unknowable moved upon cosmos and evolved protoplasm.

2. And protoplasm was inorganic and undifferentiated, containing all things in potential energy; and a spirit of evolution moved upon the fluid mass.

3. And the unknowable said, Let atoms attract and their contact beget light, heat, and electricity.

4. And the unconditioned differentiated the atoms, each after its kind; and their combinations beget rock, air, and water.

5. And there went out a spirit of evolution from the Unconditioned, and working in protoplasm, by accretion and absorption produced the organic cell.

6. And cell by nutrition evolved primordial germ, and germ developed protogene; and protogene beget cozoon, and cozoon beget monad, and monad, beget animalcule.

7. And animalcule beget ephemera; then began creeping things to multiply on the face of the earth.

8. And earthly atom in vegetable protoplasm beget the molecule, and thence came all grass and every herb in the earth.

9. And animalcules in the water evolved fins, tails, claws, and scales; and in the air wings and beaks; and on the land they sprouted such organs as were necessary as played upon by the environment.

10. And by accretion and absorption came the radiata and mollusea, and mollusea beget articulata, and articulata, beget vertebrata.

11. Now these are the generation of the higher vertebrata, in the cosmic period that the Unknowable evolved the bipedal mammalia.

12. And every man on the earth, while he was yet a monkey, and the horse while he was a hipparion, and

the hipparion before he was an oredon.

13. Out of the ascidian came the amphibian and beget the pentadactyle, and the pentadactyle by inheritance and selection produced the hylobate, from which are the simiadae in all their tribes.

14. And out of the simiadae the lernur prevailed above his fellows, and produced the platyrhine monkey.

15. And the palyrhine beget the catarrhine, and the catarrhine monkey beget the nathropoid ape, and the ape beget the longimanous orang, and the orang beget the chimpanzee, and the chimpanzee evolved the what-is-it.

16. And the what-is-it went into the land of Nod, and took him a wife of the longimanous gibbons.

17. And in the process of the cosmic period were born unto them and their children the anthropomorphic primordial types.

18. The homunculus, the prognathus, the troglodyte, the autochthon, the terrangen—these are the generations of primeval man.

19. And primeval man was naked and not ashamed, but lived in quadrumanous innocence, and struggled mightily to harmonize with the environment.

20. And by inheritance and natural selection did he progress from the stable and homogeneous to the complex and heterogeneous—from the weakest died, and the strongest grew and multiplied.

21. And man grew a thumb for that he had need of it, and developed capacities for prey.

22. For, behold, the swiftest men caught the most animals, and the wisest animals got away from the most men; wherefore the slow animals were eaten, and the slow men starved to death.

23. And as types were differentiated, the weaker types

continually disappeared.

24. And the earth was filled with violence; for man strove with man and tribe with tribe, whereby they killed off the weak and the foolish, and secured the survival of the fittest (*The Baptist*, Nov. 18, 1876).

Editor's comment: Study the above carefully. Then read Genesis, chapter 1, and see which makes more sense.

GLEANINGS FROM OREGON

Below are a few gleanings from the early churches in the State of Oregon. I note this information of the Yamhill Baptist Church in Yamhill County, six miles southwest of McMinnville, in the year of 1846: "The church sometimes postponed its Communion because of a difficulty in procuring wine" (*Baptist Annals of Oregon 1844-1900* by C. H. Matton, Vol. I, p. 5).

Here is another gem from the Santiam Baptist Church, located in Linn County, at Soda Springs. The church was organized in 1848. Here are some of its early activities: "But thirty-four members were dismissed to organize the Pleasant Butte Baptist Church, (now Brownsville), leaving thirty-four members" (*ibid.*, p. 8).

Here is still another account of the West Tualatin Baptist Church: "Located at Forest Grove, in Washington County, on the Southern Pacific Railroad, West Side.

"Organized with eleven members, (dismissed from the West Union church), by Rev. William Porter and Deacon David T. Lenox, May 22, 1852.

"For some years the church met at different houses and private residences to suit a widely scattered membership. Occasionally, all would visit the 'Mother Church,' and some 'glorious re-unions' were had on such occasions" (*ibid.*, p. 11).

CONSIDER

Bro. Graves I wish some one would give a few hints about two great women, viz.:

1. Great mystery, Babylon—the mother of harlots. Who are her daughters? Are they all dead?

2. Who is that fair woman, clothed with the sun-moon under her feet, and crowned with so many stars? Is she alive? Who is her family kindred?

J. M. THOMAS

1. All Protestants as well as Baptist commentators are agreed that the meretricious woman of Revelation is the apostate Romish church, and if so then there can be no doubt that the harlot daughters are the Protestant sects that were begotten by her, and they are alas! all alive and doing a thorough business in seducing Christians to commit adultery with them.

2. The woman clothed in the sun with the moon and stars under her feet is the pure church of the New Testament, the bride of Christ that does not claim to be only a continuation of the old Jewish church that was in the moon and stars, but above them, and lighted and guided only by the Sun (*The Baptist*, Nov. 18, 1876).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder Cecil A. Fayard, pastor of Elliott Baptist Church, Elliott, Miss., has printed some outlines of I Peter, called "Special, Selected, Scattered, Strangers." Those interested in this book may write Elliott Baptist Church, P. O. Box 595, Elliott, MS 38926 or call 662-226-4425, or visit www.elliottbaptist.org.

The Berea Missionary Baptist Church, Collinwood, Tenn., and Pastor Steve Martin will have a fellowship meeting Sept. 7th, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Lunch will be served by the church. Various men will speak. For more information call Pastor Martin at 931-724-4196.

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church, 2750 S. 53rd W. Ave., Tulsa, Okla., and Pastor David O'Neal will have a Bible Conference Oct. 4-6. Services will begin Friday, Oct. 4th at 6:30 p.m. Speakers on the program are as follows: Elders Vernon Buttress, Jerry Dodson, Jack Green, Homer Laurence, Mark Minney, Daniel Pope, Doyal Thomas, James Tweet, Larry Wilson, and the Editor. For more information call Pastor O'Neal at 918-583-8261 or email dwo.gmchurch@juno.com.

Coming in the next issue . . .

Rethinking the Atonement by T. P. Simmons

The Triumph of Faith by Milburn Cockrell

A High Degree of Spiritual Growth by Milburn Cockrell

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