

Three Lights On Spiritual Matters

By Curtis Pugh
of Bocsa, Romania

1. THE LIGHT WITHIN EVERY HUMAN BEING: THE LIGHT OF CONSCIENCE.

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, and their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. 2:14-15).

There is a light within every person. It may be called conscience, inner spirituality, or something else, but all humans have it. It was placed in mankind by the Creator God so that we might know right from wrong. This inner knowledge is an awareness or feeling of



what is right and wrong. While this "inner light" originally was very good, it has two weaknesses.

(1) The first weakness of this inner knowledge is that the human conscience can be taught to accept or reject the wrong things. For instance, there are some peoples and cultures where men are thought to be more important than women. Multitudes of girl babies have been dumped outside and left to die because this was acceptable according to the individual and group conscience. Self mutilation, sacrifice of human victims, abuse of women---all these things have

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Belief and Unbelief

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:18-20).

This text is a portion of the words of Christ to Nicodemus. They are a plain and powerful presentation of the gospel. Here is declared the privileges of believing, and the perils of not believing in the Son of God. Here is taught justification by faith and condemnation by unbelief. If a man believes and receives Christ he will be free from condemnation. If he believes not he shall die in his sins. Every man is a

believer or an unbeliever.

"HE THAT BELIEVETH"

Verse 18 begins: "He that believeth. . ." It does not say, "He that is baptized." Nor does it read, "He that joins the church." Neither does it declare: "He that does the best he can." It reads: "He that believeth." John 3:18 shows the immense importance of faith in the sinner's justification. "He that believeth" means he that has confidence in Christ, that relies on Him, that trusts His merits and promises for justification.

There is no period after "He that believeth," for it goes on to say, "on him." The object of faith is Jesus Christ. So it means he that believes on Christ as the Godman, he that believes the gospel record about Christ. A person that trusts Christ believes that He was born of a virgin, lived thirty-three years on earth, died on the cross, and rose again for our justification. He must believe that Christ ascended to Heaven and is now

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Is It Anger, Righteous Indignation, Justifiable Emotion or A Temper Tantrum?

By Raymond Bennett
of Ithaca, New York

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26).

Anger has always been an emotional issue among Christians. There are those who feel that a Christian should never get angry or express extreme emotion. The problem with this notion is that in order to feel real joy, happiness and pleasure, one must also be able to feel real sorrow, sadness, anger and pain.

Some would advocate that Christians should never respond strongly to a given situation which upsets them, but instead silently suffer abuse without defending themselves, citing our Lord's silent, unresponsive acceptance of the abuse and crucifixion, coupled with His command to Peter on that last night, "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). However, this concept misses the contextual application

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The Young Visitor; or, The Deceiber Reclaimed

(Continued from last issue.)

CHAPTER III OTHO'S ILLNESS---THE VELVET BRACELET

There was a very large orchard at Beechwood. The cherries trees were all gone, but many of the trees were still loaded with ripe peaches, and rosy apples. Mrs. Taylor knew that Annie was not a greedy little girl, so she trusted her to walk in the orchard, and to help gather the fruit. She was not forbidden to eat a little of it occasionally, but she always ran to her mamma or to one of her sisters, to ask leave first. It was a great amusement to the children to run into the orchard after there had been a gust of wind, and to collect the fallen apples into heaps, ready for the gardener to wheel them away in his barrow.

One morning, as they were very busy in this way, Mr. Taylor came out, and called them.

"Look here, children," he said; "I want you to come with me."

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Spiritual Leprosy

By Tom Ross
of South Point, Ohio

"And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them" (Luke 5:12-15).

The account of the leprous man being cleansed by Christ is recorded in all three of the synoptic Gospels so it must have been a miraculous and important event. Leprosy was the one disease that was singled out by God to represent the corruption, defilement, and severity of sin. In the Old Testament, God devotes two entire chapters, Leviticus thirteen and fourteen, to show how to deal with the defiling disease of leprosy. There are many parallels between the disease of

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**He who receives a good turn
should never forget it;
he who does one should never mention it.**

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

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been completely acceptable according to human consciences when they have been wrongly taught.

(2) The second weakness of conscience is that it can be seared by repeatedly doing things contrary to it. Moral "scar tissue" is built up, so to speak, by abusing one's conscience. Perhaps you can remember the first time you acted contrary to your conscience. You may have really suffered inside because of what you felt about your actions. However, it may be that you have continued acting contrary to your conscience and now it hardly bothers you at all. Since our inner light can be (1) wrongly taught and influenced and (2) can be seared, this inner knowledge or conscience is not a safe guide at all! We need a better and greater light.

2. THE LIGHT AROUND EVERY HUMAN BEING: THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

There is a light for all mankind to see. All around us we see evidence of the Creator. Creation is His handiwork. Perhaps you remember the lines which say: "Poems are made by fools like me, but only God can make a tree." There is much wisdom and truth in those words. The clear light of nature tells us about the Creator just as the existence of a great building tells us about an architect. An impressive building tells us of the existence and ability of the man or woman who designed the building, but it does not tell us much more than that. We might suppose from looking at a finished building that the designer was male or female, that he or she liked certain textures or colors, etc., but little could be known with certainty. This is one of the weaknesses of the light which we often call creation.

Creation furnishes us with a very limited understanding of the Creator. It tells us the Creator exists and that He is of great power and ability, but tells us nothing of how we are to worship and serve Him in an acceptable way. We are left to our own devices as to how He is to be placated. This is why many differing cultures have developed different approaches to worshipping the Creator. The Bible tells us about this in Romans 1:21-25 where we read: **"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. . . Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the**

creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

The result of the incomplete light of conscience coupled with the incomplete light of creation is that human beings end up worshipping the creation instead of the Creator. To quote the Word of God again, we humans have **" . . . worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. . . "** Instead of seeking to know and serve the Creator, we have prayed to and thereby worshipped stones, animals, lakes, trees, fire, wind, etc. We have made sacrifices to fire, to the four directions, to lakes, to spirits and other created things instead of honoring the Creator alone Who made all these things. We have told ourselves that it is all right to worship both the Creator and His creation even though the Creator alone is worthy of love and worship.

Are we not like the gigolo who has found a rich woman. He loves her money and is willing to make attempts to please her, but he really is interested in her money more than in her person. We love the things of creation and make a pretence of honoring the Creator, but really care more for His things than for Him. We need a greater light than either conscience or creation if we would know God aright.

3. THE LIGHT FROM ABOVE EVERY HUMAN BEING: THE PERSON JESUS CHRIST.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Since the inner light of humans can be wrongly taught and can also be seared so that conscience is not a safe guide, and since creation is limited in what it tells us about the Creator, God has made a further and complete revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is called the **"Word"** (Greek logos) in John chapter one. If you would know what the Creator is like, look at Jesus Christ for He is the Creator. In the Bible we learn that Christ, called the **"Word"** came to earth as one of us for we read: **" . . . the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"** (John 1:14). So, then, the Bible tells us the name of the Creator. The purpose of the Bible is to tell us about the Creator, Jesus Christ, as well as God the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Bible also tells us about ourselves and our sins which have separated us from God. The Bible is the only "light" that tells us about the grace of God. The inner light of conscience tells us nothing about God's grace and neither does the external light of creation! This is why the Bible is absolutely necessary if we would know God in a saving way.

Most human beings think to please and placate God by some kind of works.

It is thought by many that by "being good" we can please the Creator. Others think by religious rites, fasting, acts of purification, etc., that God will accept their persons and forgive their sins. This is the thinking of man when he only has the inner light of conscience (which tells him of his wrong doings) and the outer light of creation (which tells him of the existence and power of the Creator). Unless and until the Spirit of God shows a person that he or she cannot please God by works, that person will continue trying to please and placate God by human effort.

Those who do not understand the message of Jesus Christ and the Bible--even though they may claim to believe the Bible---think to please God and go to Heaven by their works. Some so-called Christians think they can qualify for or earn the grace of God by their works. Such a thing as pleasing God by works or earning grace is an impossibility according to the Word of God! Even if you or I could do only good and live a perfect life from this moment on, we could never atone for our past sins! Of course we cannot live perfectly and therefore cannot please God by our works. That is the "bad news." Having given us the "bad news" about our sins and helplessness to do anything to make ourselves acceptable to God, the Bible tells us the "good news" (gospel) about Jesus Christ! The true message about Jesus Christ is a message of grace. Now the Bible definition of grace is **"unearned and unmerited love and favor."** By its very definition, then, you cannot earn or work for the love and favor of God! That grace (unearned love) cannot be mixed with works (earning grace by religious rites and rituals) is clearly seen in Romans 11:6 where we read: **"And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."** Salvation (deliverance from sin) is a matter of pure grace. This is only revealed in the Bible, God's Word. In Ephesians 2:8-9 we learn: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."**

Mankind, in his lost condition, hates the gospel (good news) of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ because the gospel robs man of his pride and self righteousness. Because of this hatred for the true God and His grace, some deny the truthfulness of the Bible and attempt to save their consciences by "being a good person" or "living according to the golden rule" or by adopting some religion which suits them. Others, because they hate the grace of God, claim to believe the Bible and claim to be Christians while they change the message of grace into a works religion---a completely different religion than Bible Christianity.

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From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



Assurance of Salvation

The Apostle Paul urged the Corinthians: **"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. . . Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"** (II Cor. 13:5). These church members were enjoined to examine themselves concerning their spiritual state. This was because it is a matter in which they might be easily deceived, and wherein a deceit is soul-destructive.

There is more religious confusion in our generation than the world has ever known. Religious leaders, blinded by their craze for numbers, have made salvation synonymous with church membership. Ministers are compassing sea and land to make one proselyte, and when is proselyted, they make him twofold more the child of Hell than before. Modern evangelists and pastors speak of the four simple steps and of man's supposed ability to make a decision for Christ. Multitudes of church members know no more about salvation than a mule does arithmetic. Preachers attempt to lead others where they have never gone themselves as the blind continue to lead the blind. Most people have churchanity instead of Christianity.

CAN YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE SAVED?

Salvation is not something one can sing about on the golden street of the New Jerusalem. It is not something to be hoped for at the judgment bar. Salvation is something to be received, enjoyed and assured of in this present life. Certainly Peter would not have urged us to **"give diligence to make your calling and election sure"** (II Pet. 1:10), if one elected and effectually called could not know that these things were so. One can know he is one of God's elect: **"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God"** (I Thess. 1:4). Job said: **"I know that my redeemer liveth"** (Job 19:25) and so can every redeemed person. David declared: **"The LORD is my shepherd"** (Ps. 23:1) and every one of the Lord's sheep can be that sure the Lord is his shepherd. **"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine"** (John 10:14).

If there is one thing to be sure of, it is your own salvation. You can be wrong about Bible doctrines and still be a saved person but you can be right about Bible doctrine and be a lost person. So I desire to show you by God's Word how you can know you have passed from spiritual death to eternal life, how you can have a

personal confidence in a present salvation.

CONVICTION OF SIN

A renewed man can recall a time the Holy Spirit convicted him of his sinfulness (John 16:8). This convicting work of the Spirit causes a man to see that the flesh profits nothing. The convicted sinner is brought to the gates of Hell; he undergoes a foretaste of Hell on earth. Under such **"sorrows of death"** and **"pains of hell"** (Ps. 116:3), he cries out: **"I am a sinful man, O Lord"** (Luke 5:8). Or he may say like Isaiah: **"Woe is me! for I am undone"** (Isa. 6:5). Or he may say like the jailor: **"What must I do to be saved?"**

Individuals who have no trace of conviction of sin have not been renewed by the Spirit of God. It is impossible for an individual to have the sinless Christ dwelling within and not have a new sense of sin.

UNFEIGNED REPENTANCE

Repentance is the missing note in modern preaching. In the Bible it is said to be **"from dead works"** (Heb. 6:1) **"toward God"** (Acts 20:21) and **"unto life"** (Acts 11:18). It is a change of mind which results in a change of conduct.

True repentance includes conviction (Acts 2:37), contrition (II Cor. 7:10) and confession (Ps. 51:3-4) of sin. It is being sorry enough for sins to confess and forsake them (Prov. 28:13). An old hymn went: "Repentance is to leave. . . the sins we loved before. . . And show that we in earnest grieve. . . By doing so no more."

Have you obeyed God's command to repent? If not, you are still in the bond of iniquity and the gall of bitterness.

FAITH IN CHRIST

Saving faith is a definite experience. The Apostle Paul relates of himself: **"I know whom I have believed"** (II Tim. 1:12). One cannot personally trust his soul to Christ's safe keeping without knowing what he has done. By this act a person can be assured in his own heart that God made him **"accepted in the beloved"** (Eph. 1:6).

If you know you have experienced faith in Christ, then you can be certain of salvation, for God has promised to save all who believe on His Son. I John 5:1 reads: **"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."** Then in even plainer words verse 13 informs us: **"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of**

God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life."

Saving faith is more than a mental concept of Christ (Jas. 2:19). It is a **"faith which worketh by love"** (Ga. 5:6), a transforming thing which lasts for life and increases daily. If your faith produces a holy life, a life separated from the world and separated to Christ, **"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace"** (Luke 7:50).

A REAL CHANGE OF LIFE

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (I John 1:6). If God cannot keep a person from a sinful, worldly life, then He cannot keep that person out of Hell. The Lord has not saved a drunkard from his drinking if he still drinks. Christ has not redeemed a man from lying if he still lies. Christ saved His people **"from their sins"** (Matt. 1:21).

There must be harmony between the life and the profession. If a man's religion did not change his life, then he would do well to change his religion! If a man does not live differently from what he did before conversion, his repentance needs to be repented of and his faith is dead.

God does not save a man by grace so he may live a life of disgrace. He does not quicken a person to live like a man spiritually dead. He does not justify a man by faith unless faith has made the justified one a just man. I would sooner expect to see an infidel in Heaven as a man who is not **"careful to maintain good works"** (Tit. 3:8). I John 2:29 declares: **"Every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."**

OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDMENTS

The person who has been quickened by the Spirit surrenders to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:6). He will have a willingness to obey the Lord in all His commandments (John 14:15). The Apostle John wrote plainly on this: **"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"** (I John 2:3-4).

I do not expect to see those in Heaven who habitually and deliberately refuse to obey the Lord's commandments. Again John says in chapter 3, verses 7 and 8: **"Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil."** Some poor deceived church members are going to miss salvation as far as Hell is from Heaven! Some have joined the church but they were never really converted. They just got their clothes wet! They are religious but lost.

The Lord's commandments are not grievous to the regenerate man, for he knows Christ is **"the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"** (Heb. 5:9). In regeneration God makes a person walk in His statutes and keep

His judgments (Ezek. 36:27). Goats may disregard the Shepherd's voice and follow Satan, but not the Lord's sheep.

LOVE FOR THE SAVED

I read in I John 3:14: **"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."** Here love for the brethren is made an absolute test of personal salvation. A saved person loves every one who is a part of God's family. This love for one another is the normal experience of all who are born again.

REALITY IN PRAYER

Prayer holds a vital place in the experience of a Christian. Since the life of Christ was one of prayer, even so the one in whom Christ dwells will be moved to prayer. Psalms 65:4 discloses: **"Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee."** Luke 18:7 reveals that God's elect **"cry day and night unto him."** I dare not believe in a man's salvation if he does not daily cry unto the Lord. If there is no prayer, the soul is dead.

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

Those born of God are given the indwelling Spirit. Romans 8:9 says: **"The Spirit of God dwell[s] in you."** God's Spirit is in our heart to give us assurance of salvation. Paul tells us in Romans 8:16: **"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."**

O dear friend, does God's Spirit dwell in you? Does He bear witness of your sonship? If not, you are yet in your sins. Of the Spirit Christ said: **"Whom the world cannot receive"** (John 14:17). **"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"** (Rom. 8:9).

ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

While the natural man cannot receive spiritual truths (I Cor. 2:14), the renewed man has received the Spirit of God and can know spiritual truths. The indwelling Spirit teaches us all things that are spiritual (I John 2:27). A Christian can understand the Bible because the Spirit will teach it to him. With the unsaved this is not the case. The cry of the redeemed man is: **"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day"** (Ps. 119:97).

PERSEVERE TO THE END

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). Christ taught that only those who actually do withstand the chilling influences of the world and endure to the end are saved. Perseverance is not the lot of the laborious preacher of the Word; it is the common lot of all believers. It must be so, for only then can we prove that we are believers. God says of His people in Jeremiah 32:40: **"They shall not depart from me."** Again we are told in Job 17:9: **"The righteous also shall hold on his**

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way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

Only superficial professors fail to endure to the end (I John 2:19). If a man does not hold on, if he goes back to sin, if he never returns to God, he is a spiritual Egyptian! Such a person does not have the salvation which is in Christ Jesus!

CONCLUSION

The heart where Christ dwells is aware of His wonderful presence. The believer is not left to his own misguided feelings as to the precise manner in which the indwelling Christ will be manifest. Our assurance of salvation does not rest upon a changeable experience, but upon the things written in the unchangeable Word of God. The written promises of God are our title to mansions in the sky. Men are sure of salvation by the Word of God, not by the fleshly emotionalism far too prevalent at the present time. It becomes men to believe God's Word. What He says, He will do. No self-merit or religious works are of any value in saving you. Christ alone can save. Good works must follow salvation to give us assurance of conversion, but they do not save or help save.

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. . .O, what a foretaste of glory divine. . .Heir of salvation, purchase of God. . .Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood" Jesus is mine. Is He yours?

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).



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There are, in the final analysis, only two religions in the world today although the one kind goes under many different names. Man-made religion, even when it calls itself "Christianity" says that you must by your works please and placate God. According to this religion, salvation is a matter of works. God's religion--the religion of the Bible, of Bible Christianity, of sound Baptists---says that no man is good enough to please God, but that the wonderful news is that Jesus Christ, the Creator Himself, has paid for the sins of His people and provided a free (by grace) salvation that is not dependent on the religious rites and so-called "good works" of men. This is the true message of the Bible as seen in John 3:36: **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."**

Are you trying to please the Creator

by your works? You can never do it in a million lifetimes! Are you trying to earn the grace of God by baptism, communion, prayers, attendance at religious meetings, etc? You cannot do it because grace cannot be earned! Have you been brought to see your utter helplessness and hopelessness apart from the grace of God? Turn from your sin and self effort to trust in Jesus Christ alone! Only Christ can save you for: **"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name (other than Jesus Christ) under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12).



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interceding for the saints. Jesus Christ in all His person and work is the object of saving faith.

Faith in Christ saves the soul: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith"** (Eph. 2:8). Christ the Savior is received by faith: **"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"** (John 1:12). Justification is by faith: **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Rom. 5:1). Faith purifies the heart: **"And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith"** (Acts 15:9). Faith makes us children of God: **"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"** (Ga. 3:26). Faith sanctifies: **"...them which are sanctified by faith that is in me"** (Acts 26:18).

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Those who have not faith are not saved, not justified, not children of God, not sanctified, and still possess an unregenerate heart. Jesus said: **"He that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:16). He again declared: **"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"** (John 8:24). Revelation 21:8 expressly says: **"But the fearful, and unbelieving. . .shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."**

God deserves to be believed. He is a God of truth. It is impossible for Him to lie. To be false, fallacious, and insincere is contrary to His nature. Unbelief is a terrible sin because it slights the person of God. **"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"** (I John 5:10-11). The unbeliever refuses to receive God's testimony about His Son. True saving faith is taking God

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at His Word.

"NOT CONDEMNED"

John 3:18 reads: **"He that believeth on him is not condemned."** Jesus died as our substitute; He suffered for us. By His sufferings our sins were expiated, and it is consistent for God to forgive us (Rom. 3:24-26). When the sinner believes in Christ as having died in his place, he is justified. By believing that God accepted the offering which Christ made in our stead as equivalent for our sufferings in Hell, there is no further condemnation. **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"** (Rom. 8:1).

"Not condemned" suggests more than a mere reprieve. It means acquitted, pardoned, justified, cleared from guilt, delivered from the curse of the law, no longer counted a sinner, but reckoned perfectly righteous in the sight of God. If the believer is not condemned, then he must be discharged. The moment a man believes he is free from condemnation. He may have lived a life of sin for 40 years, yet if he believes all his sins are forgiven. He stands before the heavenly tribunal as though he had never sinned. When you believe, you stand in Christ's stead, even as Christ at Calvary stood in your stead (II Cor. 5:21). **"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. 8:33-34).

God delivers the believer from the guilt and punishment of his sins. **"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin"** (Rom. 4:5-8). Such a believer is no longer being judged as a lost sinner, but he is forgiven and recognized as an heir to eternal life. **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death to life"** (John 5:24).

The justified believer may be afflicted, he may be chastened for his sins, and he may be persecuted by the world, but he is **"not condemned."** He may be condemned by the world, but, thank God, he will never be condemned with the world (I Cor. 11:32). The born-again believer can lie down at night upon his bed and say, "I am not condemned." He can rise the next day to face a frowning world and say, "I am not condemned." When he comes to the valley of the shadow of death he can close his eyes in peace, shouting to the highest heaven, "I am not condemned."

THE WORTH OF THIS

The truth of John 3:18 ought to give assurance of salvation to all believers. **"He that believeth on him is not condemned."** This truth should drive doubts and fears from the heart. Why doubt or wonder as to whether you are saved or not. The Bible says, **"He that believeth on him is not condemned."** Why should you condemn yourself if God has not condemned you? Surely we can believe the words of Christ, and He said the believer is not condemned.

This thought should drive us toward godly living and away from a life of sin and wickedness. How can we that are forgiven go on sinning? How can I enjoy that which caused my Lord to pour out His precious blood? It is hard to sin against a pardoning God. It is far harder to sin against the blood of Christ and against a sense of pardon, than it is against the terror of the law and the fear of Hell. The man who says he is forgiven and continues in sin is a vile reprobate on the borders of the deepest Hell!

WHY MEN BELIEVE

Saving faith is a spiritual grace communicated from God in Heaven to a poor sinner on earth. It is the gift of God's grace: **"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake"** (Phil. 1:29). Hebrews 12:2 tells us Jesus is the beginner and finisher of our faith. Faith is given to us by the **"Spirit of faith"** (II Cor. 4:13; I Cor. 12:3, 9; Gal. 5:22). Men believe through grace (Acts 18:27). Faith is the production of God's grace operating upon the heart of the sinner, the fruit of electing love. Men believe because they are ordained unto eternal life (Acts 13:48) and because they are sheep (John 10:26).

Faith flows to the sinner through the

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CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

Encouragement and thoughts from a prisoner to other prisoners and readers.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried" (Rev. 2:10).



Does God Hear Sinners?

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader, in the Name above all names, Jesus the Christ. May He bless you daily.

I don't have a long intro this month because things are idling right along. The Automotive Technology class is going great. I'm really enjoying wrenching on cars again. The HVACR Technician course is going equally well. Through 12 of 22 lessons I have a 95.6% average. And my Bible studies are moving along well.

In a couple of weeks I'll be taking a college placement test so I can start taking academic courses. Once I pass the test I'll be working toward an Associate in Liberal Arts degree. I'm thinking, if nothing else, the degree will improve my research and writing skills and make me a better employment risk when I get out. I should have just enough time to complete it before I come up for parole.

Please pray for me, dear reader, as I continue the daily struggle that is prison life and endeavor to further my education and write this column.

Thank you! And God bless you!

Now to the matter at hand: Does God hear the lost? I ask this question, dear reader, in view of the so-called, "Sinner's Prayer." Most Protestant denominations teach that if a sinner is sincere in his heart and repeats this stock prayer they will be saved. But, is this biblical? If so, where then, dear reader, is this supposed key to the Kingdom found in Scripture?

In short, it's not. In fact, the Sinner's Prayer is contrary to the inspired Word of God! Let's compare this man-made prayer to the Scriptures:

Prayer: * *"Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and have displeased you in many ways."*

Can the lost, natural man know he is a sinner? Does he really care that he's displeased God? I know when I was lost I didn't give a hoot about God or if He was displeased or not!

"As it is written, (Hello!) There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10-12).

"They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8).

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23).

Prayer: * *"I believe You died for my sin and only through faith in Your death and resurrection can I be forgiven."*

Does the lost, natural man really believe that a God he does not know died for his sins? Sins that he really doesn't consider all that bad?

The mind of the flesh **"is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"** (Rom. 8:7).

"But natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14).

Prayer: * *"I want to turn from my sin and ask You to come into my life as my Savior and Lord."*

Does the lost, natural man really want to turn from his sin? He may change a few things in his life on his own but he cannot change the innermost desires of his heart to sin without the nature changing work of the Spirit of God!

"There is none that seeketh after God. . .there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:11-12).

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jer. 13:23)?

And furthermore, is the Lord God of Heaven and earth, the Creator of all that is, the great I AM some milk toast savior sitting on a stool in the corner wringing His hands and begging poor sinners to just invite Him into their hearts so He can save them? I DARE SAY NOT!!!!

The Lord God Almighty Who saved me (He did the saving, see!) reached out a mighty hand and wrapped it around my heart and said with a shout, "You my son, are MINE!!!" At the same moment in time He changed my nature and I could do nothing but whimper, "Abba, Father. . ."

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44).

Prayer: * *"From this day on, I will follow you by living a life that pleases You."*

Need I do more than quote: **"They that are in the flesh cannot please God"** (Rom. 8:8).

My dear reader, it is not the repeating of a man-made prayer that saved you, it

is the effectual calling of God Almighty by the foolishness of preaching (I Cor. 1:21) that awakens poor, spiritually dead sinners to life everlasting (Eph. 2:1).

"He that has ears to hear, let him hear." This is an oft used phrase in the Gospels but just as oft misinterpreted. Everyone has ears, right? So everyone should be able to hear the Gospel, right?

Wrong!

Yes, everyone has natural ears to hear with---unless they are deaf, in which case they "hear" by sign language or Braille--but only God's elect have spiritual ears to hear and respond to the Gospel. And even those ears are not activated until God's appointed time in their life to believe.

God chose the foolishness of preaching to call His people from the darkness into His Light. . .and no man-made prayer is ever going to change that.

Please don't be deceived, or deceive others, with this Arminian mind game called the Sinner's Prayer. Do read your Bible and prove these things for yourself (I Thess. 5:21).

Until next time, **"Grace be with all of them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen"** (Eph. 6:24).

Krystal Ruthann, I love and miss you dearly. May the Lord watch over you daily.

Bro. Jeff, y'all are in my thoughts and prayers continually.

Bro. Harold and Bro. Luther, thank you for your continued fellowship and encouragement.

Bro. Danny, keep up the good work and tell Bro. Pratt to hurry up with those volunteers so we can get a study going over here!

Bro. Kevin, I miss you, man! I miss our many hours on the rec. yard going all the way there, you know!? I haven't had that kind of fellowship since I left. I love you, Brother. Keep fighting the good fight, you are not alone!

* Author's Note: The version of the Sinner's Prayer used here comes from the Soldier's Pocket Bible, Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB), 2004.



Belief and Unbelief

(Continued from page 164) ♦

atonement of Christ. I Peter 1:21 tells us that it is by Christ that we believe in God. Because Jesus died for us the Spirit of faith causes us to believe through grace. Faith is not the procuring cause of salvation, but it is the instrumental cause. Christ is the real cause whom faith embraces. It is not faith, but the atonement which faith receives that satisfies the justice of God.

Nevertheless, God gives faith through the instrumentality of the preaching of the gospel. Jesus prayed: **"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also**

which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20). Acts 4:4 declares: **"Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed."** **"And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized"** (Acts 18:8). Paul wrote in Romans 10:17: **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."** God gives faith, but He gives it through the preaching of His Word.

SOME BELIEVE NOT

The first part of John 3:18 is about the believer. The last part is about the unbeliever: **"He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."** It is a known fact that some believe not. **"For all men have not faith"** (II Thess. 3:2). In Romans 3:3 Paul wrote of some who did not believe. In Romans 10:16 he said: **"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"** Jesus declared: **"But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep"** (John 10:26).

Some teach that the only sin for which a man goes to Hell is unbelief in Christ. They boldly affirm that it is not the sin question but the Son question. They are saying that unbelief is the only sin for which a man is accountable. Certainly it is a Bible fact that unbelief is a ground of condemnation, but John 3:18 does not teach it is the only ground. Men go to Hell because of their sins of which unbelief is only one.

Man is condemned long before he hears the gospel. He is condemned even if he never hears a gospel sermon in his entire life. A man is under condemnation because of Adam's sin: **"Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation"** (Rom. 5:18). He is condemned because he has a sinful nature (Ps. 51:5; 58:8). He is condemned in his unbelief for having rejected the gospel.

"CONDEMNED ALREADY"

The man who refuses to believe on Christ is in a state of condemnation before God while he lives on earth. The curse has already taken hold on him; the wrath of God now fastens upon him. **"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"** (John 3:36). He is condemned already by his conscience and in his own heart. The high court of Heaven has already met and heard his case. The verdict is **"guilty before God."** His judgment is already past. He is merely waiting for the punishment his sins deserve. The first sentence, **"Thou shalt surely die"** (Gen. 2:17), remains in full force and unrepealed against the unbeliever. He hangs by a rotten twine thread over the fire of Hell. There is but a step between

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Belief and Unbelief

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him and eternal torment.

Unbelief is a great damning sin. It leaves one under the guilt of all other sins. Faith takes all of man's sins away. Unbelief keeps them all on him and under the curse of the moral law (Gal. 3:10). The unbeliever is condemned already for he lies open to the law for all his sins. The obligation of the law is in full force and power against him. Unbelief closes up the prisoner in the law's dark dungeon. Only faith in Christ can open the door (Gal. 3:22-24).

Man is condemned for any act of sin. He is condemned for covetousness, adultery, lying, murder, and stealing as well as unbelief. Why then is unbelief such an awful sin? Why is this sin so great, so damning, and so ruinous? All manner of sin may be forgiven if a man will believe on Christ. Unbelief locks and bars the gates of gospel mercy. It is a sin against the remedy. There is but one way to be delivered from sin and that is by faith in Christ. The unbeliever refuses the only way of deliverance. Nothing is so suicidal on the part of man as to turn away from the only remedy which can heal his soul. Unbelief shuts the door of mercy against the soul beyond the arm of man or angel to open.

A LOVER OF DARKNESS

Jesus went on in John chapter 3 to say: **“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”**

The light that made an entrance into the world is the gospel. II Corinthians 4:4 speaks of **“the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.”** The gospel presents Christ as light to those in darkness. It tells the sinner whose heart is darkened by sin that Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12). The gospel light is now shining in the world as never before. The church of Christ is preaching it to **“all nations”** (Matt. 28:19-20) and to **“every creature”** (Mark 16:15). The gospel can be heard in churches and on the street corners, on the foreign mission fields, and on the air waves. The gospel can be read in books, papers, and tracts in many lands.

The problem is that people who hear the gospel **“love[d] darkness rather than light”** (John 3:19). They love error more than truth, sin more than holiness, Belial more than Christ. They love their sins, their ignorance and their mistakes. They prefer the darkness of sin to the light of the gospel. Oh, how wretched is man who loves his sickness and refuses to be made whole! who loves his slavery and will not be made free!

The reason that a man loves darkness rather than light is because his deeds are evil. He cannot receive the Christ of the gospel without parting with sin,

ignorance, superstition, and irreligion. He loves all of this too much to part with it. A gospel-rejecter has loved, does love, and always will love darkness because of his corrupt nature. He who loves darkness will be cast into outer darkness. He who does not like the light of the gospel will be shut out from the light eternally. The unbeliever is condemned because he loves darkness rather than light!

A HATER OF THE LIGHT

John 3:20 declares: **“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”** Job 24:13 reads: **“They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.”**

The unbeliever is a lover of the darkness of sin and a hater of the light of the gospel. He knows he is a sinner, but he is unwilling to look at his sins in the light of infinite purity. He finds pleasure in sin and is opposed to everything which tends to reveal its true nature and subdue the heart to penitence. He hates the gospel because it condemns his conduct and causes his conscience to accuse him.

I discover in this verse that it is the design of the gospel to reprove sinners of their sins. Anything which makes sinners at ease in their sins is another gospel. The Holy Spirit uses the preached Word to convict sinners. No man who is a sinner loves the gospel. No man by nature is disposed to believe the gospel of his own volition. The reason why the gospel is hated is because man is a sinner. Christ is hated because sin is loved.

HELPLESS, BUT NOT HOPELESS

How terrible is the unbeliever's condition! By unbelief he has closed the door to salvation and justification. He hates the very gospel by which he must be saved. He shuts his eyes against the light. He loves his sickness and hates the remedy. He loves his slavery and hates the thought of freedom. He will not come to Christ that he might have life (John 5:40). He says to God, **“Depart from us [me], for we [I] desire not the knowledge of thy ways”** (Job 21:14).

He is helpless and without strength (Rom. 5:6), but he is not hopeless. There is given to him an everlasting consolation and good hope through the grace of God. His hope is not in himself, nor some other person, nor some action on his part. Christ and Christ alone is his only hope (I Tim. 1:1). The gospel says to the helpless sinner: **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”** The believer is not condemned.

Is John 3:18 for me? Does it mean that a sinner like me can believe and be justified? Yes, it is for you if you will claim the promise. This you will never do until the Holy Spirit has performed a work of grace upon your heart. But if you desire justification then believe on Christ, knowing that: **“He that believeth on Him is not condemned.”** Believing will

avail nothing unless it is in the personal Christ, Who gave His life a ransom for all who believe. Not to believe on Him is to be **“condemned already,”** because He is the **“only begotten Son of God,”** the only Name under Heaven given among men whereby we can be saved. **“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”** (John 9:35).



Spiritual Leprosy

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leprosy and the disease of sin.

Perhaps as you read this article you may think to yourself that you don't have physical leprosy, so I must be all right. Please don't deceive yourself! Every man has a far more fatal disease than physical leprosy, it is called the disease of sin. The only hope for those who have contracted the disease of spiritual leprosy (sin) is the healing and cleansing found in the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ. Many of the physical healings during the ministry of Jesus Christ typify the miraculous healing that comes to a sinner when he is saved by the grace of God.

The healing of the leper in our text was a most miraculous event in light of the fact that only two people in the Old Testament are recorded as being healed of this dreadful disease. Miriam, the sister of Moses was healed by God of the disease in Numbers chapter twelve. Naaman, the Syrian captain, was also healed of the dreadful disease during the ministry of Elijah the prophet in II Kings, chapter 5. Jesus used the healing of Naaman to illustrate the sovereignty of God's grace when He told the Pharisees that there were many lepers in Israel, but God saw fit to heal only one who was a Syrian Gentile in Luke 4:27.

THE CONDITION OF THE LEPER

1. Leprosy has an insignificant beginning. It starts with a small scab and is imperceptible to the natural eye. Physical leprosy goes unnoticed until it is too late. Likewise, the disease of sin had small beginnings. The entire human race fell into a state of condemnation and separation from God because of the disobedience of one man. Adam transgressed the law of God and ate the forbidden fruit, thereby plunging all his descendants into a state of defilement and depravity. The fact that one sin condemned the entire human race illustrates how differently God and man view sin and its severity. Men think that there are differences between “little sins” (white lies) and “big sins.” But the fact is that Adam took only one bite of the forbidden fruit and God condemned the entire human race. Romans 5:12 declares: **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”**

All sin usually starts out small. A drunkard doesn't become one overnight, it starts with the first drink. A cocaine or crack addict doesn't become a junkie overnight, he usually starts out by smoking pot. A sexual pervert doesn't become one overnight, he starts out by looking at pornography. People usually don't drop out of church all at once, they just start missing services sporadically. Sin is such a deceitful disease with such small beginnings that people don't notice the effects of it until they are already trapped by it. James 1:14-15 illustrates this truth: **“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”**

2. Leprosy is a transmittable or inherited disease in some cases. It poisons the blood and is transmitted from parent to child. This is also true of the disease of sin. Every man, woman, boy, and girl inherit a nature of sin from their fallen father Adam. Everyone is born into a state of sin and condemnation regardless of their race, social standing, wealth, or gender. No one is exempt from the disease of sin, it affects everyone to some degree. Psalms 51:5 declares: **“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”** Psalms 58:3 states: **“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born speaking lies.”**

The most refined, religious, self-righteous person has a sin nature just like the worst harlot or murderer. There may be different degrees and levels of human depravity, but one thing remains true, all men are sinners and under the condemnation of a Holy God apart from saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 3:10-12 and 23 declare: **“As it is written, THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; THERE IS NONE THAT DOETH GOOD, no, not one. FOR ALL HAVE SINNED, and come short of the glory of God.”** (Emphasis T.R.)

3. Leprosy once contracted spreads rapidly. It spreads internally and externally to all the parts of the body, ultimately ending in death. Likewise, the disease of sin has infected every faculty of man, he is totally depraved. Every facet of man's makeup has been adversely affected by sin. The heart, mind, will, conscience, body, soul, and spirit of man have all been poisoned and corrupted by the disease of sin.

I have heard some people say that most men have a “good heart.” Yet the Bible declares man's heart to be corrupt and in rebellion against God. The first time

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Spiritual Leprosy

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the word heart occurs in the Bible is in Genesis 6:5: **“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”** (Emphasis T.R.) Jeremiah 17:9 declares: **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”**

Man’s thoughts are not honoring to God in his natural state according to Romans 8:7-8 which states: **“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”** Even man’s will has been poisoned by sin. Apart from Divine intervention in the effectual call, no man desires to come to Christ according to John 5:40 which states: **“And ye WILL NOT COME TO ME, that ye might have life.”** (Emphasis T.R.)

Some self-righteous people may object to the above description of the natural man. Yet their argument is with the Word of God which states in Isaiah 1:5-6: **“Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.”** Dear reader who will you choose to believe concerning your state? The sinful opinions of secular humanists or the authoritative statements of the Word of God?

4. Leprosy was highly contagious. The leper was to dwell outside the camp and had to cry, **“Unclean, unclean,”** to let others know that he had the disease. Likewise, sin is a contagious disease that is easily contracted by the influence of others. Why do we have such problems with young people today? It is because of the peer pressure they undergo. Evil influences and examples can easily creep into a society and ruin the moral fabric of a nation. That is what has happened to America. Proverbs 4:14-15 states: **“Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.”** I Thessalonians 5:22 commands: **“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”**

5. Leprosy is a numbing disease. It is like a state of living death for its victims. They feel little or no pain in the latter stages of leprosy. Leprosy works on the mind and body of a person. Even though they are in a state of putrid corruption they will have a warm and sunny feeling all over and are not really alarmed about the disease. You can poke a leper’s sores with a needle and he would feel no pain.

This is also true of the spiritual leprosy of sin, it has a blinding, numbing effect upon lost sinners. Every lost man thinks he is all right because he is not presently being punished for his sins. The minds of lost men have been blinded to the Gospel and the effects of sin by Satan according to II Corinthians 4:3-4 which states: **“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world (Satan - little “g”) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”**

Most people think they are all right, but the fact is that no man is all right apart from the saving grace of Jesus Christ who alone has the power to make sinners right with God. Proverbs 12:15 declares: **“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.”** Proverbs 16:2 states: **“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.”** Proverbs 21:2 declares: **“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.”**

Dear reader, have you ever repented of your sins and trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour? Don’t deceive yourself into thinking that because you are a “good person” God will let you into Heaven. Just because you don’t drink, smoke, cuss, or chew doesn’t mean that you are saved and on your way to Heaven. You need Christ, or you will perish in your deceived, self-righteous state.

6. Leprosy is a hideous disease and loathsome to look upon. If a man with leprosy in its latter stages would come into your house you would be frightened by the sight and horrified by the awful smell. The face of a leper shines and is bloated and is usually covered with sores. The sores are like knobs, green on the bottom and white on top which ooze with blood and pus. The hair of a leper is very stiff, and when it is pulled hard enough it will rip out the rotten flesh on the head. The eyes of a leper are red and swollen and shine like a cat’s eyes. The nose is usually sunk in because the cartilage has rotted away. Leprosy eats away at its victims, usually their ears, fingers, and hands just rot off. A leper is truly a hideous sight to look upon.

Yet sin is even more offensive in the sight of a Holy God of whom it is said: **“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity. . .”** Every lost sinner is filthy, abominable, corrupt, unclean, and unholy in the sight of God. Sin is such a defiling and ugly disease men have attempted to rename it so it doesn’t appear so wicked. People today talk about so-called “safe sex” which is in reality fornication and adultery that will be judged by God. The only “safe sex” is in the realm of marriage according to Hebrews 13:4 which states: **“Marriage is honourable in all, and**

the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” Other attempts at renaming sin include: calling drunkards alcoholics, harlots-call girls or ladies of the night. No matter how much men may rename or attempt to hide sin, it will still be judged by God Almighty!

7. Leprosy was a separating disease. It was dealt with by banishment from the congregation of Israel and they were denied the privilege of public worship. In like manner lost sinners are called strangers and aliens from God in Ephesians 2:12. When Adam sinned he was banished from the garden of Eden. If you don’t trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ your sins will separate you eternally from God in Hell. Romans 6:23 states: **“For the wages of sin is death. . .”**

My friend, unless you repent and believe the Gospel you are going to be separated from God and suffer the condemnation of His wrath throughout all eternity. II Thessalonians 1:7-9 declares: **“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, IN FLAMING FIRE TAKING VENGEANCE ON THEM THAT KNOW NOT GOD, AND THAT OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: WHO SHALL BE PUNISHED WITH EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD, AND FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER.”** (Emphasis T.R.)

8. Leprosy was an incurable disease as far as man was concerned unless God miraculously intervened. The only thing a leper could do would be to go to the priest who could not heal, but only confirm the disease. What a perfect picture of the law of God in relation to sin. The law only confirms the condition but cannot heal the victim. The leper, like the sinner, is at the sovereign mercy of God who alone has the power to kill or to make alive (I Sam. 2:6).

THE CONVICTION OF THE LEPER

1. The leper in our text was awakened to his deplorable condition. For the first time in his life he came into the presence of Jesus Christ. He was in the presence of Holiness which made him realize that he was full of leprosy and in need of cleansing. As he came close to the Light of the world, he was made to feel the darkness of his own sins.

Until a lost sinner is awakened by the power of the Holy Spirit he will not see his need of Jesus Christ. Before a person can ever be saved they must first recognize the terrible condition they are in. This is the problem of modern day evangelism. Sinners don’t know why they should believe on Christ because they are rarely awakened to their own sinful condition.

I shall never forget the conviction of sin that was wrought in my heart when I was

♦ (Continued on page 168)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 7-1-2007 to 7-31-2007

Beginning Balance\$6,468.45
RECEIPTS:

B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL 31.23
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS458.36
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....60.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN.....150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX.....100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID 50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY125.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL.....50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR.....25.00
Floyd Dack, Springport, MI 5.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL.....50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV100.00
J. Sadler, Panama City, FL.....60.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL50.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM.....100.00
Letson Farrell, Des Allemands, LA.....100.00
Lord’s C. of Beverly Hills, Goose Creek, SC..150.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM500.00
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., Decatur, AL100.00
South Park B. C., Seattle, WA25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Burghill, OH75.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL.....100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC...100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA25.00
Walnut Creek B. C., Grove City, OH 50.00
Subscriptions180.00
Anon.....640.00
Dividing Checks145.00
Sub Total\$4,384.59
TOTAL \$10,853.04

EXPENDITURES:

Printing.....597.51
Postage891.59
Supplies442.48
Wages2,240.00
FICA152.95
Dividing Checks145.00
Total Expenditures4,027.05
ENDING BALANCE\$6,825.99

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 7-1-2007 to 7-31-2007

Beginning Balance\$10,167.16
RECEIPTS:
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY75.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY100.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS225.00
.....450.00
TOTAL10,617.16

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time410.00
Tape Production180.00
Postage26.05
TOTAL EXPENDITURES616.05
.....\$10,001.11
Interest+2.75
.....\$10,003.86
Less Corbin, KY des.-491.52
ENDING BALANCE\$9,512.34

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance\$651.52
RECEIPTS:
.....651.52
EXPENDITURES:
WCTT160.00
ENDING BALANCE\$491.52

Spiritual Leprosy

(Continued from page 167) ♦

awakened to my deplorable condition. For the first time in my life I was struck with the realization that I was unholy and full of sin, and hence unacceptable to God. Immediately, all the false hopes and good works I had trusted in were completely shattered. I realized I was an unjust, filthy sinner deserving of the eternal wrath of a righteous God.

2. The leper in our text was humbled by the presence of Christ. When he saw Jesus he fell on his face ashamed of his dreadful condition. When a sinner is genuinely convicted by the Holy Spirit and sees his need of Jesus Christ all his self-righteousness and self-sufficiency is stripped away. When God convicts a sinner there are two things which the sinner becomes painfully aware of. First, the awful majesty and holiness of God and secondly, the corruption and stench of sin in himself. The conviction of sin always results in humility and an abhorring of self. When Isaiah the prophet saw the Lord high and lifted up he cried: **“Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts”** (Isa. 6:5).

3. The leper had an urgent desire to be cleansed. He did not care what others may have thought of him. More than anything else he wanted to come to Christ for healing and salvation. Once a sinner is truly awakened to the condition of sin and its effects, he no longer wants to remain in that condition, but wants to be clothed with the garments of salvation.

I remember when I was saved. I didn't care what my sinful companions and friends would say about me. I wanted to know Jesus Christ and experience His love and forgiveness more than anything else in the world. Dear reader, do you desire to be cleansed of your sins more than anything else in the world? Then seek God for mercy and peace through the blood of Jesus Christ. Once God breaks down the enmity of the will, the sinner gladly flees to Christ for cleansing and forgiveness. **“Draw me, and we will run after thee”** (S. of S. 1:4) is the common experience of every one of God's elect who have been effectually drawn to Christ.

4. The leper realized that he was at the sovereign mercy of God. He didn't rely on his free will for salvation, but on the sovereign grace of God. So many preachers are heralding man's free will as though it were a savior, as though salvation was up to the decision making process of the sinner. The leper had more sense than most modern day preachers of easy-believism, he cried out: **“If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.”** God's will, not man's will, is the determining

factor in the salvation of every sinner according to James 1:18 which states: **“OF HIS OWN WILL begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”** (Emphasis T. R.) The leper knew that he didn't have the power to cleanse himself, he had come to an end of himself. He threw himself on the mercy of Christ. As the old songwriter said: *“Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling, Oh lamb of God, I come.”*

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER

1. It was a Divine cleansing. The leper had come to Jesus Christ in order to be cleansed of His dreadful disease. The only cure for spiritual leprosy (sin) is found in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only remedy for sin is repentance and saving faith in the gospel of Christ. Jesus Christ is THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION. John 14:6 states: **“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”** Acts 4:12 declares: **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”** No matter what religionists say, salvation is not found in good works, baptism, sacraments, or church membership, but only in Jesus Christ. Only faith in the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away sin and cleanse the sinner. Ephesians 1:7 declares: **“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”**

2. The healing of the leper was a compassionate cleansing. Mark 1:41 is a parallel passage of the same account which states: **“And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.”** Jesus was moved with compassion toward the leper and demonstrated it by reaching forth His hand and touching him. It was probably the first touch of a human hand that the leper had felt in many years.

How thankful I am to have a Great High Priest in Jesus Christ who is touched with the feeling of my infirmities. How thankful I am that Jesus reached down while I was in my sins and touched me and made me whole by His power in spite of what I was. I shall never forget the day when Christ pronounced me clean and forgave me of my wicked sins. I praise God for having compassion upon such a Hell-deserving sinner as myself. I am convinced that God has the power to save the most vile and wicked of sinners, attested by the fact that He had compassion upon my unworthy soul.

4. The healing of the leper was an immediate cleansing. Jesus said: **“Be thou clean,”** and immediately the leprosy departed from him. The leper didn't have to go through a catechism class, he didn't have to be baptized, he didn't have to sign a conversion card, or make his way to an

“old fashioned altar” to pray through. Jesus spoke the word and he was cleansed. Psalms 107:20 declares: **“He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”** The leper became a new man just as a sinner does who is born of God. II Corinthians 5:17 states: **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”** When Jesus says: **“Be thou clean,”** to a sinner He is saying be thou justified, be thou sanctified, be thou glorified.

Dear reader, has God shown you that you have the dreadful disease of spiritual leprosy? Do you feel the pangs of conviction? Do you finally recognize that you are a sinner deserving of the eternal judgment and wrath of God? Then flee from the wrath to come and trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He alone can pardon your sins, grant you peace through the blood of His cross and give you eternal life. **“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”** (Acts 13:38-39).



Temper Tantrum?

(Continued from page 161) ♦

and ignores such passages as those commanding Israel to militarily destroy certain people, the Jews' preparation to defend themselves from the destruction sought by Haman recorded in the Book of Esther, and our Lord's own words in Luke 22:36: **“Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.”**

Some reserve the right to be angry and even to respond violently to whatever they perceive as an offense to themselves or to God's name.

There is certain validity to each of these perceptions. The challenge is to find a balance among these schools of thought, one that seeks to control one's anger yet justifying anger in some cases. This takes us to our text verse: **“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”**

There are a number of words translated “anger,” “wrath” or “angry” in our King James Bible, but the main words are the Hebrew “aph,” pronounced *af*, the Greek *orgi*/zw (*orgidzō* or *g-id/-zō*), or a verb form of those words. The meaning of the words used by divine inspiration is important to *any* proper interpretation or application. So then, it is necessary to see how divine Scripture uses “anger” before you and I can justify our own

anger or judge another's anger. Too often, traditional interpretations and leading with one's emotion rather than with one's mind has moved believers to make unjust charges. I have even seen some denominational teaching that charges Jesus Christ with sin because He was angry with and violently drove the money changers from the temple. **“And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables...”** (John 2:14-15). Of course such a charge is rank blasphemy even though it was taught in the name of Christian dogma by a denomination adamantly claiming to be the true church and representative of God.

In our text **“Be ye angry”** might well be translated “be provoked, incited to anger.” “Anger” or “wrath” in the Old Testament is from ‘aph’ which literally means ‘nostril.’ It speaks of that flared up, emotional, fervent anger of one whose patience has run out after being disobeyed, hurt or offended too many times.

A Christian without emotion is as good as dead. John makes that point clear from the other side of the emotional pendulum in 1 John 3:17: **“But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, (emotions) how dwelleth the love of God in him?”** Christ harshly rebukes the Laodicean church for its *lack* of emotion. **“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth”** (Rev. 3:16).

The phlegmatic preacher or church serves only to pacify the Christian who wants nothing more than to be known as a Christian, make a show of Christian service and perhaps avoid the traditionally accepted outward sins which are recognized by the particular culture. In this way they avoid the convicting preaching and the deeper issues of Bible doctrine that demand a more drastic change in lifestyle, obedience and attitudes. To these people, the preacher who does not show emotion is too cold, the preacher who raises his voice is too loud and threatening, and the preacher who dares to be specific about sin is meddling. The worship service is thus reduced to a religious social time and a weekly duty that pacifies their conscience.

While emotion in the pulpit can get out of control, I suggest that too many preachers become cold and dutiful in their teaching and void of any emotion that might suggest that the preacher really cares about his subject or his people.

♦ (Continued on page 169)

Temper Tantrum?

(Continued from page 168) ♦

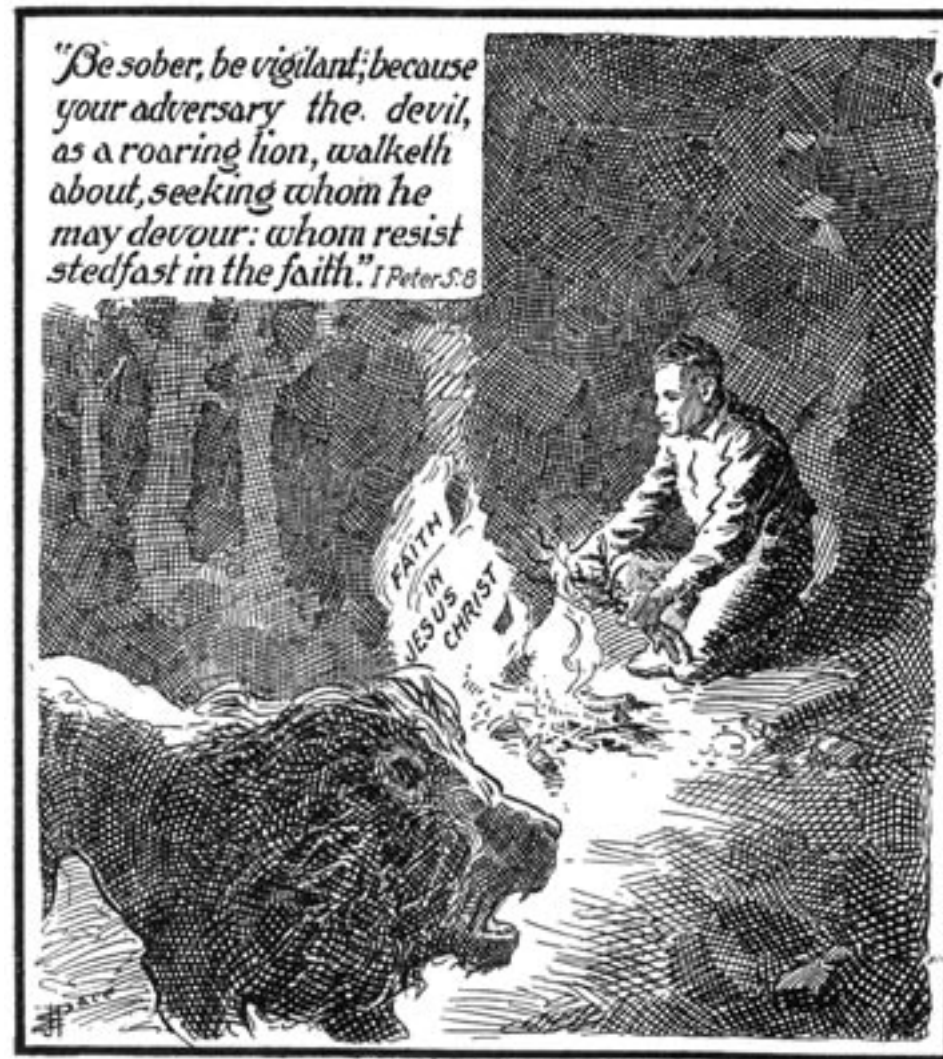
Yet we need to take heed of the multitude of Scriptural warnings against wrong anger. **"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment..."** (Matt. 5:22). The key words here are, **"without a cause."**

By expressing **"Be ye angry"** in the imperative, our text makes it clear that anger is not only justified in believers but should be a valid response to some situations which a believer may face. The expression, **"and sin not"** alludes to the ease with which anger can become sin. So we conclude that there are not only scriptural warnings against anger without just cause or only because we didn't get things our own way, but that there are things over which a true believer may both be justifiably angry and at which he *should* be angry.

The Bible does not rebuke anger by a person from whom more is demanded than is just or possible. The Bible does not criticize Jacob for his anger toward Rachel when she demanded from him what only God could do. (Genesis 30:2: **"And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?"**) So we conclude that the overloaded saint who has been saddled by others with demands beyond his time and ability and is then criticized for not meeting those demands can be justified for being angry. Sadly, many Christian employers tend to overload and take advantage of their Christian employees and too many congregations tend to overload and take advantage of their pastors simply because they don't think a Christian should object.

Christ justified the anger of the landlord whose servants did not perform as they were expected. **"What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others"** (Mark 12:1-9). Christ justified the anger of the King in the account in Matthew 18:21-35. **"And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him"** (Matt. 18:34). So we conclude that the employer may be justifiably angry with the employees who continually fail to do the work they were hired to do, that a customer may be justifiably angry with the service provider that continually fails to produce the service they promised. A Christian may be justifiably angry with those who make promises but do not keep those promises or don't bother to tell you when they can't follow through.

The Bible is full of references to God being angry with His people for being unfaithful in worship, disobedient to known doctrine and unbelieving, as, for



instance, in Isaiah 5:25: **"Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people..."** Logically, if God is angry with His own people for these things, He is angry with the wicked for these things. **"God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day"** (Psa. 7:11). So we may also conclude that God's servant should be angry with those who are unfaithful, undependable, disobedient and unbelieving. The servant of God should be especially angry with

those who by word or deed blaspheme God. **"Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?"** (Psa. 139:21).

We are living in a world where sin runs rampant in our society, in our government and in our churches. I suggest that it is high time that true Christians get angry.

Be ye angry and sin not.



An Eternal Perspective

By Dave Hunt

As part of the fallen nature inherited from Adam and Eve, all mankind is plagued with an endemic "earthly mindedness." Locked into that perspective, men **"call their lands after their own names"** (Ps. 49:11), as though their days on earth will never end. Of course, we all intellectually recognize that our time on earth is temporary, but we still think and act as though it were not. No wonder Moses wrote, **"So teach us to number our days [i.e., to truly understand their brevity], that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"** (Ps. 90:12).

Death is a fate that we all imagine we will somehow avoid, at least for quite a while---until some serious illness or accident strikes without warning as a shocking wake-up call. In fact, no

matter how healthy one may seem at the moment, death is always only a breath away. The very fact that this is an unpleasant subject we don't like to think or talk about proves Moses right. We need God's help through His Word to fit our few days into an eternal perspective.

Solomon said, **"It is better to go to the house. . . of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. . ."** (Eccl. 7:2). But modern funerals, with their beautiful flowers and kind remembrances of the deceased, seem almost designed to keep the mourning to a minimum in order to help the living remain detached from the unspeakable event that has drawn them together. We cannot bear, for ourselves or for others, to dwell upon the fact that death inevitably puts its terminating stamp upon every earthly passion, position, possession, and ambition.

He lives as a fool who forgets the solemn reminders that Scripture gives of the brevity of this life. Even Homer's eighth century BC *Iliad* declared: "Death in ten thousand shapes hangs ever over our heads, and no man can elude him." Death comes with the same regularity as birth. One is greeted with joy, contentment, and great satisfaction. The other is fought off as an alien intruder come to rob us of that to which it has no right. When, always too soon, it overtakes those whom we love, we understand the anger expressed in Milton's *Paradise Lost* that anyone should ever become "Food for so foule a Monster."

No matter how long a life the deceased may have lived, those who are thoughtful understand Lady Capulet's inconsolable grief as she laments over Juliet: "Death lies on her like an untimely frost upon the sweetest flower of the field." Still, we try to ignore the irrepressible truth that we as well, and all too soon, will be swallowed up by the same "foul monster." Death seems especially nonthreatening when all is going well.

In one of Christ's parables, a rich man's fields yielded so abundantly that he told himself, **"I have no room where to bestow my fruits. . . I will pull down my barns, and build greater. . . And I will say to my soul. . . thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said. . . Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God"** (Luke 12:16-21).

The brevity of life is not the most serious consequence of death. More sobering still is what the Bible warns will follow: **"after this the judgment"** (Heb. 9:27). For us as Christians, death has lost its sting because of Christ's death and resurrection on our behalf. Yet who can say that he or she has always lived in a way that would give one confidence to face the judgment seat of Christ without any regrets or shame and only with joy? I'm sure there will be tears of deep sorrow and remorse on that day.

I am often overwhelmed by the solemn and fearsome reality that grows nearer every day of standing before my Lord and Savior at last. I know that His love to me is infinite and eternal, but as well as being my Redeemer, He is my Creator to whom I must give an account of what I have done with the brief life He has committed to my use! Thankfully, we are assured that God **"shall wipe away all tears"** from our eyes (Rev. 21:4), and every true believer **"shall. . . have praise of God"** (I Cor. 4:5). Tears will give way to the eternal joy of sins forgiven through Christ's full payment of sins' penalty.

Atheists try to convince themselves and others that "when you

♦ (Continued on page 177)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Give a brief exposition of 2 Timothy 2:24-26? - Mississippi

Mike DeWitt Sr.
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Springfield, OR 97477

Pastor
Parkway Landmark
Baptist Church
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Springfield, OR 97477



him from heaven" (John 3:27).

MIKE DEWITT

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH 45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH 45619



The Apostle Paul to Timothy under inspiration of the Spirit of God writes this: **"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will"** (II Tim. 2:24-26).

The first two verses are referring to the demeanor of a God called preacher. These attributes are not in some cases inherent to the minister of the Lord's churches. These attributes must be exercised and displayed. An attending to flock by a Pastor with these characteristics will also have a flock that displays the same.

I suppose the reason for the question is the 26th verse. This verse at first glance may seem to pose a problem with the doctrine of grace, but not so. This verse refers to the escape that the soul of man receives by the power of God in the regeneration of a sinful heart. Salvation comes by the working of the Holy Spirit, the supernatural implanting of a new heart by God, and the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, these work together for one self same purpose.

"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped" (Psalms 124:7). If this was taken by itself and not considered with the above verses we would attribute the escape to ourselves, but not so, for further review of Holy Writ proves otherwise.

"...who are taken captive by him at his will" (II Tim. 2:24-26). Is it not but the will of Satan to keep all that are His? Did not Satan desire to have Simon? Does not Satan only work and have power in the bounds of God's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence? All the answers to these questions are yes.

Repentance and faith come only from God. A godly life comes only from God. Good works are wrought in the soul of regenerated man by God. Piety, holiness, and service come by God and only by God. **"John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given**

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (II Tim. 2:24-26).

In this epistle Paul is instructing the young pastor named Timothy concerning the many facets of the ministry. In this particular passage Paul is emphasizing the importance of a right attitude and godly demeanor especially when dealing with lost sinners.

Every God called preacher is a servant of the Lord, one who is under the authority and direction of the Lord. The preacher must be submissive to the laws, statutes, commands, and precepts of God's Word.

The attitude of the pastor/preacher must be characterized by a gentle spirit, meekness, and patience especially when dealing with the lost. The pastor/preacher must recognize that the unsaved are in the bondage of sin and the captivity of Satan. When combined with their own inherent depravity, their aversion to the Gospel, and their hatred of God they naturally oppose what is spiritually good for them. Lost sinners don't want what we have to give them! They think they are alright because they are dead in trespasses and sins.

Pastors/preachers are not to dispute, argue, or engage in mean spirited dialog in an attempt to win a debate. We must recognize that sinners are dead wrong, but don't know it. Thus, we must deal with them in a gracious, loving, meek spirit praying that God will open their eyes and deliver them from the bondage they are in. We must focus on preaching the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as the only means of salvation to blinded sinners. We must never find ourselves getting mad, frustrated, or impatient with the unsaved as we witness to them. Only God can give the gifts of repentance and saving faith. We must be

faithful witnesses and leave the work of regeneration and conversion to the Holy Spirit applying the truth of the Word.

Pastors/preachers and believers who witness to the unsaved must speak the truth in love with an ultimate desire to see folks delivered from the penalty of sin and the bondage of Satan. Oh, that God would pour out His grace upon multitudes of lost sinners enabling them to repent and recover themselves from the bitter bondage of Satan and sin!

TOM ROSS

Raymond F. Bennett
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Missionary of
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Baptist Church
PO Box 39
Mantachie, MS 38855



"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (II Tim. 2:24-26).

First of all, you must include verse 23 in order for this passage to be taken in context: **"But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes."**

In my experience as a missionary pastor I have observed that there will always be a few who ask foolish questions because they don't want to accept the clear teaching they have received. They seek some avenue of escape in an attempt to avoid the change in practice or lifestyle that the Scripture demands or they want to debate, trying to disprove what the pastor has taught. That is not to say that I think this question falls into that category, but the **"servant of the Lord"** must avoid such questions simply because they *do* cause strife and waste his time. It is often difficult to discern the difference between an honest question and a debater's question. That, I suggest, is the key to understanding these verses.

The **"servant of the Lord"** specifically applies to Timothy as an acting pastor but has equal application to any pastor/teacher. Compare 1 Timothy 3:2-3.

"Must not strive." The Bishop is not to be a man who is always ready to fight (not a brawler) and **"apt to teach"**, patient with those who are not quick to learn. Jay Green translates this, "it does

not behoove (him) to quarrel." **"Must"** is "dei," which Kenneth Wuest aptly translates, "necessary in the nature of the case."

The Bible teacher must always remember that it is the Holy Spirit who really does the teaching and makes personal application of the Word of God. The teacher's job is *not* to debate or to win a war of words but to patiently and gently present the truth of the Word as it deals with the questions of his students.

This instruction applies more directly to dealing with **"those that oppose themselves"**. These are the ones who, in verse 23, bring up foolish and unlearned questions, often directly opposing the clear statements of Scripture, or offer arguments that are illogical when one reads the whole context. The honest questioner cannot be said to be caught in the snare of the devil.

The "if" is supplied by the translators because the use of "peradventure" seems to be subjective in nature although the grammar isn't subjunctive or optative. Maybe God will give the opposer repentance or maybe He won't.

Peradventure is "mē pote," which literally means "not even, never, in no supposable case." (Bullinger's Critical Lexicon) The actual grammatical structure better fits with Isaiah 6:10: **"Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed"**; Matthew 13:15: **"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them"** and John 12:48: **"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."** They will one day stand in judgment before the One with whom they can *not* debate.

These opposers are caught in the **"snare of the devil," "taken captive by him (the devil) at his will."** Their only hope is if perchance God will grant them repentance (see Acts 11:18 **"...Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."**)

RAY BENNETT



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What book is Moses referring to in Exodus 32:32-33, that he asked to be blotted out of? – Mississippi

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"Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Ex. 32:32-33).

This book can be none other than the Book of Life (also called The Lamb's Book of Life, Rev. 21:27) spoken of in Revelation 17:8: **"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."** (Emphasis mine.)

Jude alludes to this book, by referring to those who are *not* found in it, in Jude 4: **"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."** Paul alludes to this book in Ephesians 1:4: **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."**

The plan of salvation was determined before the foundation of the world according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. **"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."** (Acts 2:23) God's plan was designed to bring Him glory which would be seen in contrast with evil. Before He made man, God had the fall of both angels and man all worked out. Augustine wrote, "He (God) judged it better and more indicative of his power to bring good out of evil than to prohibit evil altogether." (City of God. Book xxii)

Those who were **"chosen ... in him before the foundation of the world"** were written in this **"book of life from the foundation of the world."** They were known to him, as Peter says: **"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..."** (1 Pet. 1:2) They were

positionally known by God in eternity past even as the saints are positionally glorified in this age although it hasn't happened experientially. **"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified"** (Rom. 8:29-30).

Paul had the same burden as Moses, and he expressed it in Romans 9:1-3. **"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."** Moses and Paul had such a burden for those who were lost that they were willing, *if it were possible*, to give up their own salvation so others could be saved. They truly fulfilled the thought of Philippians 2:5-8: **"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."**

Of course, only Jesus Christ could do that, and He did, for Christ alone was able to purchase another's redemption.

Dear reader, have you, will you, believe and apply this great truth to your life?

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"Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Ex. 32:32-33).

We know for sure that the book referred to here cannot be the Lamb's Book of Life which has the name of all of God's elect inscribed in it. By comparing Revelation 13:8 with 17:8 we know that

the names of God's chosen were written in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world according to the sovereign decree of electing grace. It is impossible for the elect to be blotted out of this book in light of Romans 8:28-39. Absolutely nothing can separate the elect from the eternal and immutable love of God. In fact, in His high priestly prayer Jesus made it clear that it was God's will that all who the Father gave Him be made perfect in one: **"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world"** (John 17:23-24).

I can tell you what the book is not, but I am not nearly as confident when it comes to revealing what the book referred to is. I believe it is the book of the living because it is connected to sin and death. I believe that Moses was a compassionate intercessor who would rather die than see Israel, his beloved people destroyed. His prayer is very similar to the expressions of Paul in Romans 9:1-5 and 10:1-3. Both Moses and Paul had a burning desire to see their people converted and kept from condemnation.

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"Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made" (Ex. 32:32-33).

I would say that the book in question is the book of the living. The love that Moses had for God's people was strong enough to request that God take His own life to spare the children of Israel, rather

than to exterminate Israel.

Does this yet remind you of a greater One than He who gave His life for the Sheep of God's pasture?

MIKE DEWITT



The Young Visitor

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He led them to the south side of the house, and showed them a tree, nailed against the wall.

"Do you know what that tree is called?"

Annie answered directly:

"Yes, papa. That is the espalier pear-tree, that the gardener takes so much pains to train. And, oh! see; there actually are some pears on it. I had not noticed them before."

"I see them," said her father: "and it is exactly about that I have brought you here. I wish you not to touch that fruit. This is the first season that pear-tree has borne, and I am anxious the fruit should come to perfection. I shall be very much disappointed if the pears that are on it are gathered before they are ripe."

"When will they be ripe, papa?"

"Not till late in the autumn; and they will not be fit to eat until the middle of winter. You shall both have some then, and you will find them delicious. Meantime you can luxuriate among peaches, and apples, and raspberries, and blackberries. Only with two conditions; don't make yourselves sick, and don't touch my pears."

They both promised, and ran back laughing to their work.

After this, Annie thought no more about the matter. She seldom went near that tree, for it grew in a very warm spot, and they always preferred to play in the shade. But Octavia liked to linger near it. Annie asked her one day, what she was doing there. She said she was looking if any pears had been blown down, that she might carry them to Mr. Taylor, as he prized them so much.

"Why is not mamma come down to breakfast?" Julia inquired one morning, as they were all assembled in the dining room, ready for prayers.

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“She sent word Miss,” Mary answered, “that she should not come down this morning. Otho is not well, and he will not let her put him down from her lap.”

Poor little Dodo was, in fact, very unwell; he had a fever all night; and now he lay in his mamma’s arms, with his face very much flushed, and his hands burning hot.

The doctor was sent for directly after breakfast. The children were not allowed to go and see him till the doctor had come, and had told them what his illness was, for fear it might be something contagious. Dr. Wells was a long time in the nursery, The little girls watched his horse standing patiently at the door. At last he mounted it, and rode away. They longed to know what he had said, but every one seemed to busy to attend to them. Whenever they asked any one what was the matter, they were told to go away, and play with their dolls.

At last Maria came to them. Her eyes were very red, as if she had been crying. She told them the doctor was afraid that Otho had the scarlet fever, and that they would not see mamma, or Otho either, for a long time; for mamma was going to nurse him, and she would keep away from all the family until, if it pleased God, her little boy was well.

“Mamma sends word,” Maria added, “for you both to be good children, and to be very quiet, because poor Dodo’s head aches very much. The little girls cried when they heard this. They could take no more pleasure in playing with their dolls all that day. They got some story books, and sat down quietly to read. In the afternoon, Annie’s papa took them for a walk, but they did not run and jump as usual, for they thought of poor little Dodo, and it made them very sad.

Otho was ill for a great many days. Mrs. Taylor would have sent Octavia back to school, that she might be away from all infection; but the teachers wrote to Mrs. Taylor, to beg she would keep her at Beechwood. They were afraid lest, coming from a house where there was scarlet fever, she might bring it to the school where there were a number of scholars already; and it would have been a sad thing had it broken out among so many little girls, just as they were all returning.

So Annie and Octavia were left very much to themselves. As long as they knew that Otho was in great pain, and likely to die, they were very sad and unhappy. At last they heard the good news that he was out of danger. He was still very weak, and could not bear any noise, so they kept quite still while they were in the house, and they went out into the garden and orchard when they wished to jump and play.

One wet afternoon Octavia told Annie she could teach her how to make a penwiper, that would look like a beautiful butterfly. Annie was delighted with the idea.

“What must you have,” she inquired, “to make it of?”

“Why, first, I must have a piece of velvet for the body and wings; then I must have some gold-colored silk to buttonhole-stitch it round the edge, and to make spots on it; then I must have some horse-hair for the long feelers, two glass beads for the eyes, and some bits of cloth or silk for leaves, to wipe the pen on.

“You want so many things,” said Annie, with a sigh, “I am sure I have not got half of them. I have some little pieces of cloth, and a skein of cherry silk will not that do?”

“No, indeed,” said Octavia, “the wings must be of velvet to make it look like a butterfly. In India I have seen a magnificent one, green and gold; it was larger than a hummingbird. And I know where there is green velvet and gold thread.”

“Do you?” said Annie, eagerly. “I will beg for some of it.”

“You can’t do that. It was when I was arranging your mamma’s work-box I saw there a piece of broad, green velvet, and two spools of gold and silver thread. Oh, it would make such a gorgeous butterfly.”

“But I can’t get it,” said Annie, sadly. “You know I can’t go to mamma, and we never see her now.”

“Don’t you think she would give it to you, if she were with us as usual?”

“Yes, I am almost sure she would.”

“Well, then,” said the artful child, “I am sure there can be no harm in your taking it.”

“No, no,” said Annie. “I cannot do that without mamma’s leave.”

“Yes, you can. It is such a trifle to make a fuss about. Only a little bit of velvet, and a needleful of thread.”

“Ah, but you don’t know the verse,” said Annie.

*“It is a sin to steal a pin,
Or any other little thing.”*

Octavia only laughed. Then she began to describe the butterfly again, till she made Annie long for it very much.

“Only look at it,” she said, bringing the work-box to her. She took out the velvet ribbon, and laid the gold thread across it. “Is it not lovely?”

“You should not tempt me with it, Octavia. It is not mine, and I know it would be wrong to take it.”

“I will tell you what,” said Octavia; “you can make if for your mamma, and then I am sure it will not be stealing.”

“But, perhaps mamma may not like it,” said Annie, who was beginning to hesitate.

“Not like it!” exclaimed Octavia; “why she will be perfectly enchanted. It will use up such a little piece. Only that much.”

And she held it toward Annie, and put the scissors into her hand. She took them reluctantly.

“I don’t know, Octavia. It does not seem right.”

“Pshaw! nonsense! You are going to make it for a present for you mamma. I am sure she will thank you for it, very much.”

Annie yielded to the temptation, and the velvet was cut in two.

“Octavia, what mischief have you made me do!” Annie exclaimed the next moment as she discovered a beautiful bracelet, that her mamma was embroidering in gold and silver thread, on the corresponding piece of velvet.

“What a pity!” said Octavia. “Now, Annie, you have spoilt the pair. But you can’t say I made you do it. You know you did it yourself.”

“It was you who coaxed me into doing it, when you saw I did not wish to. You are a cross little thing. You must have seen the bracelet there before, and you knew all about it.”

“It was no such thing. I did not know it. Or if I did, I had forgotten it.” The dispute ran very high between the two little girls. Octavia was very angry and passionate, and Annie was both irritated and unhappy. At last they made it up. Annie said she should tell her mamma all about it, as soon as she had an opportunity; but Octavia persuaded her to follow a far worse plan. She advised her to hide the other bracelet, and all the gold and silver thread, and then she was sure Mrs. Taylor would forget all about it; and they would both keep it a profound secret.

But Annie could not put it out of her mind. Before this she had been wishing for her little brother to get well, and for her mamma to be about again, but now she felt afraid for her to come down stairs, lest she should go to her work-box, and miss her bracelet. She grew so dull, that Octavia said there was no fun playing with her, and she often went off to play by herself.

CHAPTER IV THE PEAR-TREE---POOR LITTLE PETE.

It happened one day that Annie was left all alone. She went and sat down in an unfurnished spare room, half filled with trunks and boxes, where they were allowed to play. She took her doll in her lap; but she was not thinking of the doll, she was thinking what an unhappy little girl she was; and how she wished she had not cut that piece of velvet. And then it came into her mind that one of the commandments is, “**Thou shalt not steal.**” She knew that God could see her always, in the night and in the day, when she was with others, and when she was alone. God had seen her stealing. He must be angry with her. This thought made her feel afraid.

She was just thinking if she should

kneel down, and ask of God to forgive her, when she was startled by a loud noise. There was a shattering of glass, and then something gave her a hard knock on the head. She gave a scream, but nobody heard it, for the room was at the back of the house. After sitting quite still for some time, with her hand to her head, she began to wonder what could have struck her. She looked about, and found the stick of Octavia’s hoop. She knew it was hers, because she had painted her name on it, with some green paint. Octavia must have thrown it at the window, for it had broken out a pane of glass, and then hit her this hard blow on the head. Annie wondered very much why Octavia had done it. Her forehead pained her very much, and she went down stairs to look at it in the glass. She found she had a large black lump, and that the skin was slightly grazed. When Annie found how very sore it looked, she began to cry. She had not cried much before; she was too much surprised.

She went into the hall, to look for Octavia. There she found her, sitting very quietly reading a book, as if she had done nothing. She was very much frightened when she learned all the mischief she had done; and when she saw Annie’s sore bruise she began to cry.

“What could you have been doing with your hoop stick, Octavia, to throw it up there?”

Octavia had not intended to tell what she had been about; but now that Annie had found her hoop stick, she thought it would be of no use to try and hide any thing from her. She burst into tears afresh, and said,

“Annie, dear; pray don’t tell. You know the pear-tree grows against that wall. I thought it would never be missed if I could just get down one of the topmost pears. So I threw the stick at them, to knock one down. I thought it must have lodged up in the tree, as it did not fall down again. I had no idea it had broken the window, and hurt you so much.”

“Did any pears fall?” Annie asked.

“Yes, a whole shower. More than I intended. Here is one for you, dear; my pockets are full of them.”

“No, thank you,” said Annie. “What a pity, Octavia. What will papa say!”

“How is he to know, pray, unless you tell him.”

“He will be sure to miss them.”

“He will not know but what it was the wind blew them down.”

Octavia began to eat one.

“They are not nice at all,” she said in a disappointed tone; “they are as hard as turnips. I would not have taken them if I had known it.”

“Don’t you remember, papa told us they would not be ripe till winter?” said Annie. “He promised we should taste them then.”

“How do I know I shall be here in the

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winter?" Octavia answered. "It is very easy for you to wait patiently till then."

Annie put her hand to her head, and Octavia began to talk to her in a more good-natured tone.

"Does the bruise hurt you very much, dear?" Let me put some cold water to it. How very bad it looks."

Annie liked to be pitied and made much of. Octavia admired her for being so patient. She bathed her head very tenderly with cold water, and then gently smoothed her hair, parting it on one side, and bringing it down so that it hid the bruise completely.

"And now dear, darling Annie," Octavia said in her most coaxing tone, "I know you are the kindest, most good-tempered girl in the world. Do promise me you will say nothing at all about it. I will give you my prettiest shell, and I will never say one word about the velvet."

On being reminded of the velvet Annie thought she had no right to tell about Octavia, so she said:

"I will not tell, unless I am asked."

"No; but you must promise you will not tell at all events. I am sure I would not tell of you, even if you had happened to cut my finger with the scissors, or if you had hurt me even so much."

"It is not because of the bruise that I don't quite promise," said Annie; "but because I do not want to tell an untruth."

Octavia recommenced her entreaties, and at last she got Annie to promise she would tell no one thing at all about it; that if, asked, she would say she had not taken them; and if asked, Who then? pretend not to know.

Mr. Taylor happened to be away from home, so the little girls were in no fear of immediate detection. Annie had a bad headache all the afternoon, and Octavia was as kind to her as ever she could be.

The next evening when they were walking in the garden, Horace came up to them, and said:

"Did either of you young ladies take some pears off the espalier pear-tree?"

"No," Octavia answered boldly; and Annie answered, more timidly, "No."

"You don't happen to know who did take them, I suppose?" he asked again. Octavia answered quickly.

"No, to be sure not; how should we?" She saw that Annie blushed very deeply, and she was afraid she might tell all. Annie thought she might avoid answering, but Horace said again, "Don't you know either, Miss Annie?" The little girl felt a choking in her throat, but she bolted out, "No," louder than her usual tone, and turned quickly away. But she could not help hearing. Horace say:

"Then it must be that little scamp, Pete; I shall give it him, the young rascal. More than half the pears are gone. He

denied it stoutly when I taxed him with it: what a liar that little chap must be."

"Oh, Octavia," Annie said, after hearing this, "do let me tell all. I am afraid poor Peter will be punished for it."

"And would you rather I should be punished than he?" Octavia asked, reproachfully. "I thought you loved me, Annie."

Annie said no more, but she felt very uneasy. She lay awake that night for a long time, after going to bed, and she awoke before daylight. At break of day, she hear some one crying just under the window. Presently she heard a scream, followed by another, and another.

Octavia! Octavia!" she cried, springing out of bed, "do you hear that?" It is poor little Pete. I am sure Horace is beating him. Let us call to him to stop."

"Don't, don't Annie, if you love me," said Octavia, starting up also, and listening to the screams. "It is very cruel of Horace, but I daresay the boy is used to it, and it will soon be over now."

"How can you be so hard-hearted?" exclaimed Annie, who could contain herself no longer. She rushed to the window, in spite of Octavia's endeavors to detain her; threw it open, and called out:

"Stop! stop! It was not Peter who stole the pear."

"Oh, Miss Annie," said the old negro, looking up sorrowfully, shaking his head, "I had almost sooner believe it was Pete had done it, than to think the like of you."

"Octavia, do let me tell all. He thinks it was I who did it," said Annie, crying bitterly.

"It will be very mean of you if you do," Octavia answered, in a passionate tone. "You will disgrace me before all the servants. You know you promised me you would not tell."

Horace had, meantime, gone into the house; but Pete remained a long while under the window crying and talking to himself.

"You might have spoken sooner," they hear him say. "I am sure I hollered loud enough for you to know he was beating me. It is too bad to be beat for nothing, and to get called liar, and thief."

"Poor fellow," said Octavia; "we will give him a quarter of a dollar, to make it up to him."

Annie felt that Octavia had acted very ungenerously. She would have let the boy have a beating without interfering; and now she was willing to let her be suspected of what she had done herself. Contrary to Annie's usually forgiving disposition, she kept up very angry feelings toward Octavia. They were aggravated by the behavior of the servants. Annie was sure that they all suspected her of having stolen the fruit. They turned away their faces, and gave her short answers, and she overheard one of them say:

"It was shocking to let the poor child

be beat in that manner, before she would own to it herself."

And the other answered, "Well! I never could have believed it of such a gentle, nice young lady, as our Miss Annie. I shall never trust to people's looks again."

Annie felt all this very much. She was a very affectionate little girl. She was ready to love every body, and she wanted every body to love her. She was sure little Pete must hate her; and all the servants had learnt to dislike her. Her mamma would be very angry with her if she knew how naughty she had been, and she could not have right feelings toward Octavia, who had brought her into all this trouble.

Maria and Julia had taken charge of the baby and of the housekeeping while their mamma was nursing Otho, and they were so busy that they had not noticed how unhappy Annie was. They merely thought that the little girls must have had some childish disputes, and judged it best not to interfere, but to let them make it up between themselves. Mr. Taylor was expected home, and poor Annie had a fresh source of anxiety lest Horace should tell her papa that she had stolen the pears, and got Peter a beating. She again begged and entreated Octavia to let her tell all about it, Octavia got so very angry that she was quite frightened to see her.

The long day wore on, in crying and disputing. At last Annie's papa arrived. His little girl did not run to meet him, as usual. She heard Horace speaking to him, and she was afraid he was telling all. When he came in, she dared not look up.

"Why, what is the matter, little one?" he asked, as soon as he saw her, and he said it in such a kind voice, that Annie was sure he knew nothing.

"What is it, Octavia?" he asked again, as Annie made no answer, "what has Annie been crying about?"

"I don't know, sir," Octavia answered; "she has got a headache, I think, have you not, dear?"

"Oh, Octavia!" was all Annie could say; and she hid her face in her hands, and burst into tears afresh. Mr. Taylor took her on his knee. He saw she had been crying very much; her eyes were very red and swollen, and there was a bright scarlet spot on both her cheeks.

"There must be no more crying now papa has come home," he said kindly; and then he began to talk to her about his journey; and he told her she might dive into his pockets, and see what she could find. She pulled out two parcels; in one there was a very pretty book, full of pictures; and in the other, a little work-basket, lined with cherry satin. At any other time Annie would have been highly delighted with these pretty presents; but now she only smiled a little, and then the tears come into her eyes again. She said:

"Papa, my throat feels very sore; and my head is so hot. I do wish I could see

mamma!"

Mr. Taylor sent Octavia away. Dr Wells had just come to see Otho, and he called him into the parlor to see Annie.

"I am not sick papa," Annie said; "I am only very unhappy. I have been crying all day, and that is what has made my eyes and throat feel so sore, I know."

But the doctor thought differently. He saw at once that Annie was sickening with the scarlet fever.

CHAPTER V THE SICK BED---MARIA AND OCTAVIA

It half consoled Annie for the prospect of a long illness, to know that she should now have her mamma to nurse her. Mamma came to her at once. She covered her with kisses, and carried her up stairs, and put her to bed in her room. Annie was very restless; she could not lie still till she had told her mamma what she had done.

"Dear mamma, " she cried, as her mother leaned over her, smoothing the tumbled pillow, "you would not love me so much, and be so kind to me, if you know how wicked I have been. I have been a little thief."

"Annie! my child, what can you mean?"

Then Annie told her all about the piece of green velvet. She did not try to excuse herself, but she told how Octavia had persuaded her there would be no harm in taking it, and repeated every thing, exactly as it happened. When she had finished, Mrs. Taylor looked very sad, and Annie saw her wipe away her tears.

"Speak to me, dear mamma," she cried, sitting up in the bed, and clinging to her. "I have made you unhappy by being so naughty. Oh! what shall I do? what shall I do?"

"Hush, Annie!" Mrs. Taylor said firmly, but kindly. "You will make yourself worse if you excite yourself in this way. The doctor wishes you to keep very quiet, and to go to sleep."

"I cannot go to sleep, mamma, while I know you are angry with me. Do talk to me, and make me a good girl."

Mrs. Taylor sat down by Annie's bedside, and took the little hot hand in hers.

"Oh! mamma; I have been very unhappy for such a long, long time. I do wish I had never asked you to let me bring Octavia home with me. I thought she was such a dear little thing, but now I don't like her at all."

"You must not feel so, Annie," her mamma said.

But, mamma, it was she who led me all wrong. I do not wish, and I do not mean to tell tales about her, but I cannot love her as I used to do."

"How should you feel," Mrs. Taylor asked gravely, "If I were to say I can't love

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Annie as I used to do?"

Annie's lip trembled.

"Please do not say it, mamma. I have deserved it, I know; but it would make me so very unhappy."

"I shall not say so, my love, for it would not be true. I love you as dearly as ever, though I am both shocked and sorry that you should have acted so wrong. Ought you not to feel the same toward Octavia?"

"Yes, mamma," Annie answered softly. But she was only half convinced.

"I am afraid, Annie," Mrs. Taylor said after a short pause, "you are thinking more about Octavia's faults than your own. I thought you said you wanted me to talk to you, and to teach you to be a good girl."

"So I do mamma," she answered earnestly. "I do so want to be a good girl again; to be good to Octavia, and to every body."

Mrs. Taylor then reminded her little girl how wrong it is to take what does not belong to us; and that one of the Ten Commandments is "Thou shalt not steal."

"I thought of that afterward, mamma," Annie said, "but it did not seem to me like stealing at the time."

"That was because you tried to persuade yourself it was not. You knew it was not yours, and you knew you would have been frightened if I had come into the room; and you would have tried to hide what you were about."

"Yes mamma."

"And yet you were not afraid because God saw you."

"I thought of that, too, afterward," Annie said in a trembling voice.

"Now Annie, my dear child, I do not want to distress you, and to add to the pain that you feel; but I want to make you good to Octavia and to every body else, as you yourself said. I must say that there was much more excuse for Octavia than for you in this matter."

"She is three months older than I am, mamma," said Annie, looking surprised.

"That makes but very little difference. Octavia has not had the same advantages as you have. You know she was born in India. India is not a Christian land, but the people there are very ignorant, and worship dumb idols. Many of them do not know right from wrong. Octavia's parents were, no doubt, Christians, and I hope they tried to teach her to do right; but her papa's servants, and all the people around her, would tell her it was no harm to tell untruths and to steal. They would even teach her that she had done a very ingenious thing, if she had stolen something, and then would deceive so skillfully that it should never

be found out. I have little doubt that it made Octavia's mamma very unhappy, that she should learn such wicked ways, and, I dare say, that was the reason why she made up her mind to part from her, and to send her to America, to be educated in a Christian land. But you have been taught better, Annie, and you should have set Octavia a good example, and helped her to do what was right. Do you not think that we ought to be sorry for Octavia, instead of refusing to love her?"

"I am sorry I said that, mamma," Annie answered; "I don't feel so now. I see now that I was a much worse girl than she, because I knew better. Will you forgive me?"

"Yes, dear; you have my forgiveness. But who besides me must you ask to forgive you?"

"Octavia, mamma."

"Yes; for you have done her a great wrong, where you might have led her right. But whom else have you offended?"

Mrs. Taylor spoke so solemnly that Annie knew she meant God. She begged her mamma to kneel down by her bedside and to pray that God might forgive her.

After this prayer, and her long conversation with her mamma, Annie felt happier than she had for many days. She did not mind the soreness of her throat, and the burning pain in her head, half so much, now that this great weight was off her heart. It was a comfort to her to reflect that she had kept her promise to Octavia, and had not told one word about the stolen pears, though she wanted to clear herself so much.

"I wonder where Octavia is," Maria remarked the next day to Julia. "The poor little thing must feel very sad and lonely now, with no playmate."

"I suppose she does," Julia answered; "though I do not think she and Annie latterly were very good friends. She seems to me to be an artful child, while our Annie is as open as the day."

"That may be, but she is a very loving little girl; and we all have our faults."

So saying, Maria went in search of her. She found her, at last, sitting in the spare room, and looking very dull.

"What are you about here, Octavia, all by yourself?" Maria asked. "I am doing nothing," Octavia answered mournfully. "I am only thinking."

"Why, what can you be thinking about?" It is cold here, this wet day. And dear me, this window is broken. Do you know how it happened?"

"No, I don't."

Now Octavia had just been thinking that she wished she were a better girl; but it came so natural to her to tell falsehoods, it was such a confirmed habit, that she said it out at once, without the least blushing or hesitation.

"If I had said I knew about the broken window," she thought to herself, "I should have had to tell all; and I cannot do that. I wonder if Annie will tell; but I do not believe she will; she always keeps her word." Octavia could admire truthfulness in others, though she did not practice it herself.

"Come with me, dear," Maria said kindly. "You know I am housekeeper. You shall carry my keys, and follow me all about; and then we will see if I cannot find something in my drawer to make a new frock for Annie's doll. That will please her when she gets better."

Octavia's face brightened up. She stopped Maria, as they were going down stairs together, that she might kiss her, and whisper in her ear, "I do love you so much!"

While the children were ill, Mrs. Taylor often wrote little notes in pencil, to Julia or Maria, to let them know how the invalids were getting on. Just as they reached the kitchen, one of these notes was put into Maria's hand.

"Oh, what does it say about Annie?" Octavia inquired eagerly.

There happened to be no one in the kitchen but the cook and Peter, so when she had glanced at it, she offered to read part of it aloud.

"Mamma writes, 'Otho is much better, but Annie is very feverish. The poor child has the scar of a bad bruise on her forehead. She is too ill to tell me how it happened. I observed, when first I noticed it, that she kept putting up her hand and stroking her hair down over it, as if she were anxious to conceal it. Now, however, my darling is in an uneasy sleep; her hair is tossed back, and I can see the bruise very plainly. I wish you would make some inquiries about it. She must have had a severe blow, or a fall; and this may have been the first cause of her taking the fever.'"

When Maria read this, Octavia began to cry very bitterly.

"Do you know any thing about it?" Maria asked.

She only shook her head, and sobbed more violently. Maria thought it a proof that she had a tender heart. She next inquired of the cook if she knew whether Annie had met with an accident.

"No, Miss," the cook answered. "but since you ask me, Miss I think it is but right that Mrs. Taylor should know what Miss Annie has been a'doing. I am sure I am sorry to tell any harm of Miss Annie; and she so ill too, poor lamb; but it may be for her good, Miss; so that the Doctor may know what medicines to give her."

"What do you mean, Dinah?"

"Why, Miss, I do believe Miss Annie made herself sick in the first place, eating them green pears, that grow against the wall. They are the most unwholesomest things, and Mr. Taylor would not have had them touched for the world; but

Miss Annie went and got down more than half of them."

"And she let me be beat for it, she did," put in Peter, who was still very cross on this subject.

"That was the only way we come to know who took them, Miss," the cook went on, "for Horace asked both the young ladies, and they denied it as stoutly as may be. But the next morning, when he was beating Pete, for he thought to be sure the young scamp had done it, he made such a yelling, that Miss Annie could not stand it. So she hoisted the window, and calls to Horace to stop, for Peter had not taken the pears. So of course, Miss, she must have taken them herself."

"I can't believe it," said Maria, with tears in her eyes. "It is so unlike Annie to be greedy, selfish, and deceitful."

"That is just what I was a saying, Miss, to Lucy. Says I to her, who would have thought it?"

Octavia continued to cry and sob. Maria took her to her room. Then her first impulse was to tell her all; but the next moment she felt afraid.

"They will all hate and despise me, I know," she thought to herself, "if I confess all. And, if Annie dies, they will say I killed her. I will never, never tell. And then they will never know, for I am sure Annie will keep my secret. The poor dear!" she thought, with a sudden pang at her heart, "to think of her stroking her hair down over the place to hide it, in order to screen me from blame; while I . . ." She could hardly bear to dwell on the thought of the ungenerous part she was acting. She turned her head quickly round to shake it off. She saw Maria, sitting at her desk, and wiping away her fast falling tears.

"I can't bear to send mamma this sad history about Annie, and the poor child so ill, too;" she exclaimed half aloud, and then, taking up her pen, she began hurriedly to write. Octavia flew across the room, and caught her hand.

"Don't write it, Miss Maria; pray don't."

"I am afraid I must, Octavia," Maria answered, sadly. "If she has eaten all that unripe fruit, it may be, as Dinah says, of the greatest importance that mamma should know it."

"No, no; you must not, you shan't write," Octavia cried with passionate earnestness. "I won't let you write; I shall keep tight hold of your hand."

"I own it seems hard to tell tales of her," Maria said: "and I can hardly bear to do it. Oh! if I only knew that Annie had not tasted those pears."

"Let me whisper to you," Octavia said, with a sudden impulse; "she did not touch one of them."

"Octavia! Is it possible that you knew this, and yet have kept silent so long? It was unkind, ungenerous, to let Annie

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be suspected and accused by all the servants, and for you to hear it, and not contradict the tale. Tell me now all you know. Who did take those pears?"

Octavia was silent. The flush that was lately burning on her cheeks was gone, and she stood before Maria, looking very pale, with her brow contracted, and her lips firmly pressed together, determined not to speak.

"I will not ask you to tell me now," Maria said, after waiting a few moments for an answer. "I am glad you have spared me the sad task of writing to mamma a false accusation of my little sister. Sit down quietly for a few minutes, and then I will help you, as I promised, to dress Annie's doll."

Maria felt sure that the best means to win Octavia's confidence would be by exercising that charity which "suffereth long, and is kind." She had, indeed, taken the proper means to win the little girl's heart. If she had reproved her sharply, she would have hardened herself against it, but at Maria's unexpected words of kindness her heart was softened, and her tears again overflowed.

Maria wrote a few lines to her mother, to tell her she had been unable to discover in what way Annie had received the bruise; and then she went to her drawer, and took from it a nice piece of plaided silk, and commenced cutting out the doll's frock. She gave Octavia the skirt to make, while she herself contrived the body and sleeves. They sat at their sewing very silently. Octavia only spoke when she wished to ask advice about her work; and then it was in a very subdued tone, in contrast to her usual quick, lively manner. Maria answered her kindly, and spared no pains in arranging her work. She sewed very nimbly at the part she had undertaken, and the frock was finished and ready to put on, in the course of two hours.

"How do you like it?" Maria asked, when Miss Dolly was dressed.

"I think it beautiful," Octavia answered, timidly.

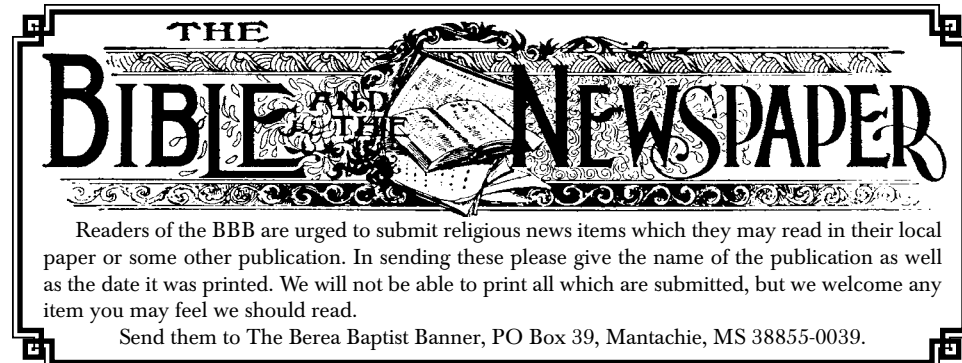
"You have sat still long enough now, and had better go and play. I will put away the doll for Annie, and on Monday we must dress yours."

Octavia could not answer. She felt a choking in her throat, at this undeserved kindness.

"She does not know how wicked I am," she thought to herself, as she walked up and down in the garden, "or she would not be so kind to me. I will never tell her."

So long as Octavia persevered in this resolution, she felt more and more unhappy.

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COUPLE AWARDED MILLIONS FOR "WRONGFUL BIRTH"

(EP News)--A Florida couple was awarded \$21 million in late June in a "wrongful birth" case, claiming a doctor misdiagnosed a rare genetic disorder in their son, leading them to have another child with similar complications.

Daniel and Amara Estrada from Tampa said they would have had an abortion had they known. Their two children have a rare disorder called Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome that leads to mental retardation and other disabilities. A jury decided their doctor was 90 percent negligent.

They join parents from New Jersey and New York who are suing doctors for "wrongful birth."

Dr. Gene Rudd with the Christian Medical Association said the ethical problems start with the term used to describe the cases.

"This notion of 'wrongful birth' - I disapprove of the term because it leads to the concept that there's a life not worthy to be lived," he said.

He said once it's determined some lives are not worthy to be lived, it places all lives at risk - especially preborn babies who are increasingly being tested for birth defects. He said the line will not be drawn by the facts of the Florida case.

"We might say that today about this particular syndrome," he said, "but tomorrow, we might say that's true about Down syndrome, or the next day that's true about muscular dystrophy."

Dr. Tom Benton, president of the American College of Pediatricians, said raising a handicapped child is difficult, but he would rather see parents accept the situation and lean on support groups.

"In the state of Florida," he said, "there are lots of resources to help with handicapped children such as this."

MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY ADVOCATES TAKE ON LAWMAKERS

(EP News)--Voters in Massachusetts will not get to weigh in on gay marriage for at least five years — thanks to 11 lawmakers who switched their votes and decided the people should not have a voice in the matter.

A proposed constitutional amendment to define marriage as between one man and one woman was defeated 45-151 on June 14 by a joint session of the Legislature, eliminating any chance of getting it on the ballot in 2008. At least 50 votes were needed to advance the measure.

"We had 57 votes going into this battle," said Kris Mineau of the Massachusetts Family Institute. "We came out with 45." Eleven switched their votes. One lawmaker — Rep. Anthony Verga — was injured and unable to vote.

Now, Mineau said, it's time for voters to hold those lawmakers responsible.

Nine House members changed their votes: Reps. Geraldo Alicea, Christine Canavan, Paul Kujawski, Paul Loscocco, Robert Nyman, Angelo Puppolo, Richard Ross, James Vallee and Brian Wallace. Two senators also reneged: Gale Candaras and Michael Morrissey.

NORTH DAKOTA RESIDENTS RALLY TO SAVE TEN COMMANDMENTS

(EP News)--A Ten Commandments monument will remain on the lawn outside City Hall in Fargo, N.D., thanks to thousands of residents who said, "Enough is enough," when the City Commission recently voted to move it.

The 6-foot-tall granite monument was donated to the city in 1958 by the Fraternal Order of Eagles. It has been the most prominent feature of the lawn outside City Hall since 1961, *USA Today* reports.

In 2002, several residents filed a lawsuit demanding it be moved. U.S. District Judge Ralph Erickson ruled three years later that the monument has religious and secular connotations and concluded it doesn't suggest that the city endorses the religious message.

Last month, the City Commission voted to move the Commandments off city property. The vote set off a ruckus. Opponents of relocating the Commandments monument collected 5,265 signatures — far more than the 2,850 needed to force commissioners to either accept an ordinance stating that any monument in place for longer than 40 years can't be moved or be required to allow voters to decide the matter next year.

A few weeks later, one commissioner switched his vote, and the commission voted to keep the Ten Commandments monument where it is.

The possible eviction of the monument struck a nerve in the community, said Warren Ackley, a businessman who led the petition drive. "Common sense in the heartland prevailed," he told *USA Today*. "It's a pretty innocent marker. The commandments are good rules to live by."

HOUSE BILL GUTS ABSTINENCE EDUCATION, PRO-LIFE PROVISION

(EP News)--The U.S. House of

Representatives voted Aug. 1 to reauthorize the federal health program for children. But tucked into H.R. 3162 are two dangerous provisions -- one that could lead to more state-funded abortions and one that essentially hands abstinence funding over to Planned Parenthood.

In 2002, the Bush administration issued a regulation that defined a "child" as being from conception to 18 years of age, a regulation that is known as the "unborn child rule." This regulation allowed states the option of covering the health care of the preborn child and has the benefit of covering the pregnant woman's health care as well.

"The new House bill changes the program to cover health insurance for a 'pregnant woman,' rather than cover the child in the womb," said Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council (FRC). "This would undermine the 'unborn child rule' and could possibly allow funding for abortions in those states that include abortion as part of their Medicaid health coverage for women."

Citing the exclusion of "coverage for certain unborn children and their mothers" and numerous other issues, the president indicated today he would veto the bill if it made it to his desk in its current form.

David Christensen, director of congressional affairs at FRC, said: "The federal dollars wouldn't necessarily be used to do the abortion, but it's freeing up states to perform these other services, including abortion, with their own state money."

"To add insult to injury," Perkins said, "the bill contains a provision to gut the Title V abstinence-only education program."

For a decade, Title V has provided \$50 million annually for abstinence education. The funding is set to expire in September. H.R. 3162 will renew the funding for two years — but will allow those precious abstinence funds to be used for comprehensive sex education.

"They're simply giving states more money to fund Planned Parenthood and the programs that teach our children to have sex," said Linda Klepacki, sexual health analyst for Focus on the Family Action. "Comprehensive sex education will once again have a monopoly on your school systems."

Ashley Horne, federal policy analyst for Focus Action, called it a "greedy political maneuver."

"Comprehensive sex education gets funded over abstinence by a 10-to-1 margin," she said. "Allowing abstinence money to be used for comprehensive sex ed is like having a banquet in front of you but then stealing food from your neighbor."

VERMONT COMMISSION STUDIES SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

(EP News)--The leaders of the Vermont House and Senate have appointed a commission to ask Vermonters whether the Legislature should allow same-sex couples to marry, *The Associated Press* reports. The volunteer commission will hold public hearings and is scheduled to complete its

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study by the end of April and report to the Legislature.

In 2000, the Legislature passed a law that allowed same-sex couples to enter into civil unions.

STUDY CALLS ABORTION PILL “SAFE” FOR WOMEN

(EP News)--In 2000, the Food and Drug Administration approved the abortion drug mifepristone, also known as RU-486. Since then, it has ended the lives of 500,000 U.S. preborn babies and millions more worldwide, Time.com reports.

Now, a study appearing in the Aug. 16 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* reports that the drug is safe for women in the long term.

The study indicates that the risks posed to future pregnancies are the same for RU-486 abortions and surgical abortions, but the study didn't measure either group against women who have never had an abortion, according to Time.

“Women who have had abortions have greater risks of miscarriage and infertility than women who have not had abortions,” Operation Rescue Senior Policy Adviser Cheryl Sullenger said in a statement. “It is no accident that the study refused to compare these two groups of women, because we know they would have found that abortion hurts women, and that is obviously a conclusion that they did not want to reach.”

Carrie Gordon Earll, senior bioethics analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said both chemical and surgical abortions pose physical risks, including ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage and premature birth with future pregnancies.

“In the last few years, at least 10 women have died after submitting to a RU-486 chemical abortion, six of those in the United States,” she said. “This study is no comfort to the families of Holly Patterson, Vivian Tran and Chanelle Bryant who, among others, died believing that they would survive an RU-486 abortion.”

Contrary to the marketing messaging of abortion advocates, Earll said, RU-486 does not trigger a quick and easy abortion.

“Common side effects are potentially serious and include abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and vaginal bleeding. Five to eight percent of women require a follow-up surgical abortion because the chemical abortion fails.”

SAN DIEGO FIREFIGHTERS SUBJECTED TO “DEGRADING SPECTACLE”

(EP News)--Four San Diego firefighters were subjected to “vile sexual taunts” at the city's GayPrideparadeaftertheywereordered against their will to participate, according to a complaint filed by the Thomas More Law Center. Attorney Charles LiMandri, West Coast director for the law center, said

the “inexcusable” incident violated sexual-harassment laws as the men were subjected to gross sexual gestures, indecent exposure and countless verbal taunts. One firefighter was quoted as saying, “If any crew member were to hang up pictures at the station of what we saw, we would be disciplined.” The men said Fire Chief Tracy Jarman, who is lesbian-identified, ordered them to participate.

SAN DIEGO FIREFIGHTER SAYS HE RECEIVED THREATS

(EP News)--A San Diego firefighter said he is getting threatening phone calls after he and three of his co-workers objected to the sexual taunts and graphic gestures they endured while participating against their will in a “gay pride” parade.

The four say they were ordered to be in the parade and have filed a sexual harassment suit over the incident.

Capt. John Ghiotto, who said he's been the target of threats, told San Diego radio host Rick Roberts about what he had to go through.

“We got subjected to a lot of verbal abuse, a bunch of sexual gestures,” he said.

Peter LaBarbera, president of Americans for Truth, said the incident shines a light on activists' constant cries for “tolerance.”

“This is not an aberration,” he said. “This is the history of this movement, which pretends to be a civil-rights movement, but is actually a radical homosexual-activist movement.”

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department announced last week it will no longer require on-duty crews to participate in parades. But Brian Rooney, an attorney with the Thomas More Law Center, which is representing the firefighters, said the lawsuit is still necessary.

“We want the policy changed clearly so that nobody will ever be ordered against their will to participate in this kind of parade again,” he said. “We also want that to stand as the paradigm for other policemen and firemen across the nation to say that if they are put in this situation, they don't have to take it, and they can stand up and say, ‘I'm not going to do it.’”

CALIFORNIA CITIES DISPLAY NATIONAL MOTTO

(EP News)--Twenty-six California cities have moved to display the national motto, in spite of the threat of lawsuits. While ACLU challenges to “In God We Trust” has led to its disappearance from courthouses, city halls and police cars, Bakersfield Councilwoman Jacquie Sullivan said she was determined that her city would not be next. “We have the motto arched over our city seal,” she said. “We presented our display for the first time to our community on the anniversary of when the motto was officially approved by Congress and the Supreme Court,” which was July 30, 1956. She said she dreams of the day when every American city adopts the national motto and displays it proudly. “City by city, the motto demonstrates that the cities are committed to the values that our country was founded upon.”

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IGNORES CITIZEN OBSCENITY COMPLAINTS

(EP News)--More than 67,000 obscenity complaints have been filed with the U.S. Department of Justice through a special Web site, but to-date there have been no prosecutions based on that data. Robert Peters, president of Morality in Media, said his group set up ObscenityCrimes.org so people could alert the Justice Department to pornographic spam e-mail and Web sites that cross the line. “From our perspective there is simply no excuse for not doing more cases,” he said. Daniel Weiss, senior analyst for media and sexuality at Focus on the Family Action, said America is being shortchanged. “When you have 67,000 complaints being ignored, the Justice Department is really under-serving the American public,” he said.

CHURCH GROUP SUES N.J. OVER FREE EXERCISE OF RELIGION

(EP News)--A Christian group filed a federal lawsuit against New Jersey officials on Saturday after the state began investigating the group's religious practices. The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights has threatened to prosecute The Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association of the United Methodist Church for refusing to allow a same-sex civil-union ceremony at one of its worship facilities. “The government can't force a private Christian organization to use its property in a way that would violate its own religious beliefs,” said Brian Raum, senior legal counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, which is representing the Camp Meeting Association. “This action by the state of New Jersey is a gross violation of the First Amendment.” Civil-union ceremonies are specifically prohibited by the doctrines and beliefs of the United Methodist Church.

ABORTIONISTS AVOID PBA BAN BY KILLING BABY FIRST

(EP News)--To steer clear of the federal partial-birth abortion (PBA) ban, abortionists are injecting preborn babies with a lethal drug dose before aborting them, according to *The Boston Globe*. The National Abortion Federation is training doctors to inject potassium chloride into a baby's heart. Since the procedure kills the baby while in the mother's womb, abortionists argue they cannot be prosecuted under the ban. Dr. Gene Rudd with the Christian Medical Association called it an appalling situation. “In an effort to circumvent the partial-birth abortion ban,” he said, “abortionists have basically moved the death of the baby by just a few inches and a few minutes.” He also points out that if potassium chloride gets into the mother's system, it could place her health at risk. “We have breached a major tenet of medical ethics,” Rudd explained. “We're not really doing what's in her best interest. We're doing what's in the physician's best interest.” Denise Burke, staff counsel for Americans United for Life, said potassium chloride is used to execute death row inmates. “It is ironic that they're using drugs to end an innocent life,” she said, “using the exact same drugs that we use to execute prisoners who've

had all their due process rights.”

FEDERAL COURT RULES IN FAVOR OF SAME-SEX ADOPTION

(EP News)--Oklahomans recently woke up to find that a federal court had wiped out their policy stating that kids do best in a home with a mom and a dad. In what some are calling a calculated strategy, a law forbidding same-sex adoption was torn out of the books. The ruling could impact other states as well. The 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that “Oklahoma's adoption amendment is unconstitutional in its refusal to recognize final adoption orders of other states that permit adoption by same-sex couples.” David Dunn of the Oklahoma Family Policy Council said the amendment passed because gay couples were flocking to the state to adopt. “That's why the bill was actually passed in 2004, to make it clear that Oklahoma didn't want to support same-sex adoptions,” he said. “Once again, we have federal judges that come along and overrule the will of the state just to push the agenda of those that are trying to shake the foundations of our culture,” Dunn said.

GEORGIA COURT SUPPORTS RELIGIOUS SPEECH

(EP News)--A Georgia Superior Court recently dismissed all charges against Frederic Baumann, a Christian whom Cumming police arrested in April for passing out religious literature on a public sidewalk. Police arrested Baumann on April 22 for distributing religious tracts on a public sidewalk outside the fairgrounds. Officials told Baumann he violated a city ordinance requiring parade and demonstration organizers to obtain a permit prior to such activities; however, the permit requirement only applied to private organizations or groups of three or more persons. He served two days in jail and was convicted before a municipal court judge, who sentenced him to time already served.

ABORTION IS NO. 1 KILLER IN BLACK COMMUNITY

(EP News)--Since 1973, more than 13 million black babies have been killed by abortion, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's more than twice the number of black deaths attributed to AIDS, violent crimes, accidents, cancer and heart disease during that period. “Planned Parenthood kills more black people in three days than the Klan has killed in its entire history of existence,” said Joseph Parker, pastor of Campbell Chapel AME Church in Pulaski, Tenn., the birthplace of the Ku Klux Klan. “Yet many in the African-American community don't even see Planned Parenthood as an enemy, (they) would see them as a friend. “Right now the biggest killer of the African-American community is abortion.”

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS PREGNANT CHINESE WOMEN FIND SAFE HAVEN IN HONG KONG

(EP News)--Benny Mak, a Hong Kong real estatebrokerwhoismarriedto a Chinamainlander,

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said that when his wife became pregnant with their second child, the doctor recommended an abortion. "If we stay in China, they could arrest my wife while she is still pregnant, make her get an abortion and pay a big fine," he told the *Los Angeles Times*. "It would all be legal." Since the countries were reunited in 1997, mainland women are heading to Hong Kong not just to take advantage of a superior public health system but also to protect the lives of their preborn children — China's one-child policy does not apply in Hong Kong. In the 1990s, a few hundred mainland babies were born in Hong Kong. In the first 10 months of 2006, that number topped 20,000. Under rules imposed in February, pregnant mainlanders entering the territory who appear to be in their third trimester are charged \$5,000 to guarantee a spot in a Hong Kong maternity ward. Otherwise, they're not allowed to cross the border.



An Eternal

(Continued from page 169) ♦

are dead, you're dead; that's the end of all sensation." Yet the universal and overpowering conviction has persisted in every culture since the dawn of time that death does not end human existence. The fact that man is a spiritual being who survives the death of the body in which he temporarily lives on earth is a basic human instinct that can be denied only with great effort. Moreover, even apart from Scripture, the scientific validity of this universal belief is easily proved.

It is undeniable that our minds can hold intangible ideas such as truth or justice or grace. Mankind understands and applies hundreds of similar nonphysical concepts daily. These common concepts defy physical description, have no physical properties, do not occupy space, and are clearly not part of the scientifically observable universe of time and sense. Obviously, nothing physical could originate and hold such thoughts--a fact that eliminates the brain as the source of any thinking at all. We do not wait for the brain to tell us what it wants us to do! We--the persons of soul and spirit living within each body--initiate our thoughts.

In fact, all thoughts are nonphysical. No thought of any kind has any spatial location or any physical substance. The conclusion is inescapable: man is a nonphysical being living in a temporary, physical body. Not his brain but man himself is the originator and guardian of his thoughts.

Though death separates man from the house he has inhabited on this earth, the spirit and soul, which are his real self, do not and cannot cease to exist. What about animals? While we have bodies much like theirs and a superficial physical likeness

in many ways, which has spawned the ridiculous and unscientific theory of evolution, there is a great and eternal difference between mankind and the animal world. What is it? As Mortimer J. Adler (a brilliant former atheist and now professing Christian) points out in his book, *The Difference of Man, and the Difference it Makes*, man's ability to form nonphysical conceptual ideas and to express them in speech confines all non-human life to the other side of a chasm that evolution could never bridge.

The fact that our thoughts do not originate with the brain can be proved in many other ways. For example, it makes no more sense to credit the physical brain with morals and ethics than to speak of an "honest liver" or an "immoral kidney." Nor can anyone absolve himself from any thought or deed by saying "my brain made me do it." Clearly, the selfless and volitional commitment of love, the appreciation of truth and beauty, the loathing of evil, and the longing for ultimate fulfillment do not arise from any quality of the atoms, molecules, or cells that comprise any part of the body--including the brain.

Inasmuch as the real person inside depends upon the body for no more than temporary housing and the means of functioning in this physical universe, there is no reason to believe that death ends a person's conscious existence. We are driven rather to conclude that death releases the soul and spirit from its bodily confinement to experience another even more real dimension of being.

Without doubt, death ends our bodily existence. But the death of the body cannot end the existence of the soul and spirit, which were not part of it. They resided within and made the conscious and willful choices for which, not the body but the thinker responsible for thoughts, words, and deeds, will be held accountable.

Some 250 years ago William Law portrayed a "very prosperous and busy young tradesman" who was "about to die in his thirty-fifth year." The young man had this to say to the friends who came to express their sympathy:

"You look upon me with pity, not that I am going unprepared to meet the Judge of quick and dead, but that I am to leave a prosperous trade in the flower of my life. . . . And yet what folly of the silliest children is so great as this?

Our poor friend Lepidus died. . . as he was dressing himself for a feast. Do you think it is now part of his trouble that he did not live till that entertainment was over? Feast and business and pleasures and enjoyments seem great things to us--but as soon as we add death to them they all sink into an equal littleness. . . .

If I am now going into the joys of God, could there be any reason to grieve that this happened to me before I was forty years of age? Could it be a sad thing to go

to Heaven before I had made a few more bargains or stood a little longer behind a counter?

And if I am to go amongst lost spirits, could there be any reason to be content that this did not happen to me till I was old, and full of riches. . . ? Now that judgment is the next thing that I look for, and everlasting happiness or misery is come so near to me, all the enjoyments and prosperities of life seem vain and insignificant. . . .

But my friends, how I am surprised that I have not always had these thoughts. . . ! What a strange thing it is that a little health or the poor business of a shop should keep us so senseless of these great things that are coming so fast upon us!"

Through the lives and deaths of two men, Christ describes the two destinies, one or the other of which everyone faces at death. This is not a parable about fictitious people but a true story because one of the characters is named--something Christ never did in His parables. He declared:

" . . . **a certain rich man. . . clothed in purple and fine linen. . . fared sumptuously every day. . . [and] a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. . . . The beggar died [and received a royal welcome by Abraham among the redeemed]. The rich man also died [all the riches in the world will not extend one's life a nanosecond]. . . and in hell [Gr., *hades*] he lift[ed] up his eyes, being in torments**" (Luke 16:19-31).

No matter how long it lasts, this life is very short at best. James said, "**It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away**" (James 4:14). Moses declared, "**for it is soon cut off, and we fly away**" (Ps. 90:10). Compared with the endless ages of eternity, man's average lifespan is nothing at all. When we live life from this eternal perspective, we clearly see the folly of trading a few short years of pleasure, popularity, and power for eternal torment in the Lake of Fire. As Christ said, it's a shortsighted, bad bargain: "**For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul**" (Matt. 16:26)?

Even as a young man, Moses made his choice from an eternal perspective: "**By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. . . .**" (Heb. 11:24-27). In contrast, many a soul has traded eternity in Heaven with the Lord for momentary earthly rewards.

Momentary? Yes. Satan showed Christ "**all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time**" (Luke 4:5). From an

eternal perspective, a moment is how long the kingdoms of this world last. Surely, he is a fool who barter an eternal reward in Heaven for the fleeting momentary honors that can only be had from Satan, "**the god of this world**" (II Cor. 4:4), by denying the Lord.

It is easy for us to see the vanity of earthly honors in the case of Daniel, whom Belshazzar offered to be "**clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about [his] neck,**" and be the "**third ruler in the kingdom**" (Dan. 5:16). Daniel wasn't even being asked to compromise his beliefs to receive these honors. Daniel's response was, "**Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another**" (v. 17). He knew that the kingdom would fall in a few hours.

Nevertheless, at Belshazzar's command, "**they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation. . . that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom. . . .**" (v. 29). This was one of the shortest lived promotions in history! Nor can any reward that this world may offer last any longer in comparison to eternity.

"**Give thy rewards to another,**" should be the Christian's response in the face of every temptation to seek or to accept the praise of men. Sadly, the church has an entire stable of the horses of temporal honors that many Christian leaders love to ride in pride's parade. How many pastors, preachers, authors, and Christian leaders have phony doctorates in front of their names---and even insist on being called by that title, which they basically purchased from a diploma mill. It is a scandal among evangelicals today! They would never have been tempted by such vanity had they kept an eternal perspective.

Nor can anything so motivate us to share the gospel of Christ with others as the same eternal perspective. Each soul we meet is an eternal being who will never cease to exist but will either enjoy eternal bliss in God's presence---or eternal torment. May I, and each Berean, keep that eternal perspective firmly in our hearts. May we seek to rescue as many as we can from the broad road that leads to destruction, bringing them onto the narrow way that leads to life everlasting.

(*The Berean Call*, Aug. 2007).



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We have several books we are discounting to clean off shelf and storage space. Some of these titles are out of print so once our supply is gone we will have them no longer. Other titles are limited to what we have in stock. Titles that are out-of-print are followed by the number we have left in stock in brackets []. At these prices our standard 20% from retail discount does not apply. See shipping chart for postage and handling charges.

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(These prices good through the month of September.)



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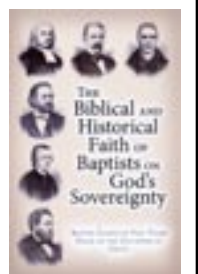
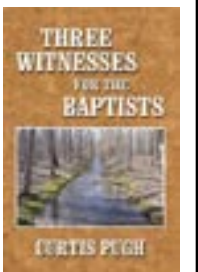
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WORLD SCENE

By
Capt. G. Russell Evans USCG (Ret.)



NAFTA Superhighway

At a time that we are being drowned in a sea of illegal aliens *and* at risk daily from Islamofacist terrorists. . .

The Bush administration is quietly advancing the construction of a massive superhighway that will all but obliterate our borders with Canada and Mexico.

The short-term goal? To make it easier for cheap foreign goods from Asia to be transported from ports in Canada and Mexico into the United States.

The long-term goal? To form a "North American Union" with Canada and Mexico that will create a single continent-wide entity without borders, tariffs and customs.

"The American public is largely asleep to this key piece of the coming 'North American Union' that government planners in the new trilateral region of the United States, Canada, and Mexico are about to drive into reality." (*Human Events*, June 12, 2006)

Naturally, the developers and government officials promoting this scheme, from the President on down, all deny this. They claim this new "Superhighway" will advance the economies of all three countries and ease congestion through the heartland of America. But that is all smoke and mirrors, which is why this "Superhighway," which will soon begin construction in Texas, is being developed under the radar screen. . . And why it is absolutely crucial that we band together to stop this globalist nightmare *BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!*

This article also respectfully warns the President that a major effort is being made to expose this massive threat to our sovereignty, prosperity, and security. . . and that there will be a severe price to pay in the court of public opinion for ignoring this warning!

When Congress and Bill Clinton pushed through the *North American Free Trade Agreement* (NAFTA) in 1994, we were told that this would lead to better prices and more "fair trade" for American businesses.

What we were not told was that NAFTA would:

* Encourage millions of illegal aliens to sneak into America for low-paying but abundant jobs.

* Lead to the destruction of America's manufacturing base and millions of good-paying jobs along with it, and,

* Help drive down the value of the American dollar.

But the news gets worse. Why? Because *THE REAL* long-term goal of NAFTA is the dissolution of our borders

with Canada and Mexico. . . and this final and disastrous stage of NAFTA is about to begin with the construction of a massive superhighway from Mexico to Canada!

Here are the facts:

1. The 1994 NAFTA agreement called for a massive corridor that would allow international goods to flow into America through a "Sentry" system of "Fast" lanes that would only do an electronic "security" check on vehicles.

2. The vehicles would be officially checked at a "Custom Center" located in Kansas City, Missouri – roughly 1,000 miles from either border! (This massive "border check center" also will soon be under construction).

3. From Kansas City, the vehicles and goods would be allowed to fan out across the nation in a new system of rail and roadways totaling 4,000 miles across the U. S.

4. These new roads that will begin with the "Trans Texas Corridor" (TTC-35) will be constructed through a series of new highways and improvements to existing highways.

But the immediate damage of this globalist creation will also be catastrophic:

* Millions of homes, ranches, farms, businesses, and whole communities will be bulldozed under "eminent domain" as thousands of miles of new highway are paved.

* Taxes and tolls will go up all across the nation to help pay for the construction of the "Superhighway."

* Americans will be forced to also pay for the Mexican portion of the "Superhighway" since the corrupt Mexican government claims it can not afford to pay on its own.

* There will literally be NO security on what were once our borders to prevent



Revelation 6:1-8

Behold! The White Horse is coming
As an Archer with a Crown;
He cometh forth to Conquer,
Trampling truth and casting down.
Be warned! The Red Horse cometh
As a Swordsman, Chaos wielding;
He taketh 'way all peace on Earth
His legacy - bloodshedding.
Despair! The Black Horse coming
As a rider with a Scale,
To measure Famine on all men
All nourishment to Fail.
O Woe! The Pale Horse neareth
As Death and Hell the crafter;
Today's the Day, Flee to the Lamb,
He'll give you Peace hereafter.

Matthew Stepp



the entrance of radical Islamic terrorists and other enemies who wish America and its people harm.

Do we really want Canada and Mexico dictating to us on these vital issues? Canada is one of the most enthusiastic globalist nations in the western world, signing onto just about every socialist environment treaty. Canada has:

* Banned the death penalty,

* Imposed draconian restrictions on guns rights,

* Legalized homosexual marriages,

* Refused to cooperate with the United States in both Iraq and the development of a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and most recently,

* Encouraged members of our armed forces to desert and seek haven in Canada.

Meanwhile, Mexico, one of the most corrupt nations on earth, is constantly lecturing America on human rights while actively encouraging their own citizens to sneak into our nation, break our laws, and live off our welfare system. So again, do we really want either Canada or Mexico telling us how to secure "North America's" borders?

I say NO! and NO! and NO!

But this is the future if we fail to let the powers-that-be, from the President on down, know in no uncertain terms

that there will be a severe price to pay for this betrayal, and I don't have to tell you whom a "North American Community" would hurt.

It would hurt *you*, our savings, our retirement, our economy, our security, our independence, and me. Canadians and Mexicans would get richer---at our expense. Together, our two neighbors have ruined their economies with high taxes, oppressive regulations, and massive welfare State programs. Believe me, we will become one with these two socialist nations at our own peril!

"I have found that there are three stages in every great work of God: First, it is impossible; then, it is difficult, then it is done." (Hudson Taylor)

(Excerpts are from previous writings of Capt. Evans, and excerpts from Public Policy Research, Selous Foundation writing Morgan Norval, Executive Director).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Providence Baptist Church and Pastor Kenneth Long will host a Bible Conference September 29-30, 2007. Services will begin each day at 10:00 a.m.

Speakers will be Elders Joe Collins, Lonnie Bennett, Larry Lafferty, Mark Minney, Billy Holbrook, Nathan Long, Dan Gordon, and Garner Smith.

All readers in the Louisville, KY area are invited to attend.

For more information contact Pastor Long at (812) 967-1321.

The Berea Baptist Church of Collinwood, TN and Pastor Steve Martin will be hosting the area fellowship meeting on October 27th. Services begin at 10:00 a.m. A noon meal will be provided by the ladies of the church.

Elders Garner Smith and Doyal Thomas are the scheduled speakers.

All are invited to attend.

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