

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

"Found Wanting"

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2004)

Daniel 5

Belshazzar was the second ruler in the kingdom of Babylon. Nabonidus, his father, was king and had associated him with himself on the throne. Belshazzar was in supreme command in the city the night of the feast. His father Nabonidus had been shut outside the city walls by the forces of Cyrus.

Feeling proud of his newly-gotten power, Belshazzar made a great banquet. Thousands of guests line the table dazzling with plates and cups of silver. The air was filled with the sound of the dulcimer and sackbut. Wine flowed in abundance. The guests sang praise to the gods of Babylon as they drank out of the vessels from the Jewish temple in Jerusalem taken by Nebuchazzar years before.

In the midst of this hilarity, the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote on the wall of the palace. A hush like death fell



upon the banquet hall. Every eye was turned in the same direction, including those of Belshazzar. The mysterious fingers of an armless hand scared the king almost to the

point of death.

When all the wise men of Babylon failed to interpret the message written on the wall, Daniel the prophet was summoned and offered costly gifts. Daniel, with noble pride, scorned the proffered gifts. "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation" (Dan. 5:17).

But first Daniel proceeds to rebuke the blasphemous daring of Belshazzar. He recalls the history of Nebuchadnezzar, his
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The God of the Overwhelmed

By Doug Newell IV
of Wake Forest, NC

An Exposition of Psalm 61

"To the chief Musician upon Neginah, A Psalm of David. Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah. For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations. He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him. So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows" (Ps. 61:1-8).

We are weak and needy creatures. Anyone who would observe mankind for



a few moments would see how fragile and weak we are. I think that sometimes we are blind, or at least forget, how needy and how weak we really are. In a world filled with

sin and the results of sin, we reap the sorrows of our rebellion against God, but all too often forsake the only real comfort we have. Some teach a prosperity gospel that equates possessions with God's love and trials with sin (they need to read the book of Job). Trusting in Christ for the salvation of your soul does not remove all problems from your life. We are saved, but we are still in this world, and in this world we will have tribulation. The question is how do we live in this present life, facing sore trials? In the 61st Psalm, we find a psalm of David when he was

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Repentance



"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy."

Proverbs 28:13

Confession of Sin

By Timothy Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

I Chronicles 21:1-28

Text: vs. 8 – **"And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly . . . but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."**

Sin always seems harmless until it has been committed. The way that people view sin and the way God views sin are entirely different, until the sinner comes under the convicting power and working of the Holy Spirit. David had sinned in obeying the influence of Satan and not the will of God. There did not appear anything harmful in David's desire to number the children of Israel over whom he was king, except that God had not told him to do so, the devil had. People think that something is harmless if they do not



see the harm in it. Did they ask God? Are they doing the things they are doing for the honor and the glory of God? The world and God view sin differently, and children of

God ought to view sin in the same way that God does, as sinful and foolish. If you say, "Well, I don't see any harm in this or that. I don't think it will be too bad," then who are you really believing, the devil or God?

God takes a keen interest in His children, and He is displeased when they sin. He was displeased with David's sin.

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Are You Going to Heaven?

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

GOD GIVES US GLIMPSES OF A BETTER WORLD---WILL YOU BE THERE?

"In my Father's house are many abodes, and if not I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you unto myself, that where I am, ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3---corrected translation).

This is a small world, as it were a mere speck of dust in the great universe of God's creation, and a human lifetime is less than a moment of divine revelation and like simple savages overawed by the inventions of the learned---learned, at

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*Inactive wishes are but a waste of time,
And, without effort, prayers themselves a crime:
Vain are their hopes who miracles expect,
And ask from Heaven what they themselves neglect.*

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Editor: Christopher Cockrell
Staff: Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Kiser, Virginia
Cockrell

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

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

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address.

Overwhelmed

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facing such a time in his life. David was a man after God's own heart, but was no stranger to problems in his life. Many of his problems were the results of his sin, but many of them were not. The pain was real, the sorrow was heavy and the cry was from the depth of his soul. Where did David turn? Where do the children of God go in such times? In this passage we see the overwhelmed go to the God of the overwhelmed and the benefits that are received there. There are two sections of this psalm, and we will see a change from the first part to the second. What was the change, and how did the change occur?

First, David said "hear my cry, O God" (Ps. 61:1). The saints of God do not escape the sorrows of this life. I may say that not only do we not escape life's sorrows, but I believe that we also experience deeper sorrow. We experience true joy, but having faced true joy in salvation, we experience deeply the grief of sin. The gospel of the world teaches that Godliness is gain, that true believers do not experience grief. The prosperity gospel teaches that God will give us all that we desire, money, health, possessions to fulfill our lives completely on this earth. No one has the promise of a life of ease, but in fact the Christian will have problems. It says in II Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Not only will we not be permitted to pass through life on flowery petals of repose, but we are to expect persecution in this life. Jesus encouraged His disciples, not by telling them they will never experience pain or trial in this life, but to expect it. The comfort came not from taking away all trials, but having peace in Him, that in Christ we will overcome this world. John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Paul, who was no stranger to the blessings of God as the great servant of God, also was no stranger to problems. Romans 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." There is no question that the saints of God will cry, but notice what the cry was. David's cry was not "woe is me" but his cry was to His God. He was not a stoic, nor should we be, but his cry was unto God. Hear David as he is in deep sorrow, "Hear my cry O God!" Hear me Mighty Father, attend unto my prayer. When we cry, let us cry unto our Father. When we are in such despair that we can't pray, but only cry out unto God, He will hear us. When we don't know what to say, our heart is heavy with grief and all that can proceed

from our weary mouth is a desperate cry unto God, does not our loving Father attend unto our prayers? If our earthly fathers can attend unto a child's weeping, how much more so will our perfect Heavenly Father hear our prayer? We come to a loving Father hurt, knowing He knows what is best, and that He will attend for our good and His glory.

Where do we cry? "From the end of the earth." So many Christians, when they cry, do so unto the world. There is no true comfort here, not for one who has been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Once we have tasted of that sweet fellowship with the Father, through the Son, by the power of the Spirit, one could travel every inch of this world, and not find the peace and comfort of soul that is found in Christ. Oh, the vanity of life when we are downcast! We don't need to despair, for where ever we are found, from the ends of the earth, we are never too far from the Master's ear. We are never too far from the love of God. Whether under the depths of the sea, to the farthest reaches of the plains, God will hear our cry. We may be far from friends and family, we may be alone and afraid, but we are never truly alone if we have Christ. He Who bore our sins will never leave nor forsake us. David said "when my heart is overwhelmed". Browns Driver Briggs defines the Hebrew word here ataph translated overwhelmed as "to cover, to envelop ones self, or to be feeble, faint, growing weak." The heart is weak, feeble, overcome by sorrows as if shipwrecked at sea, with the waves of grief shrouding the soul. How many times have the children of God been overwhelmed? Our hearts are feeble. Even the most hardened soul, at some point has been overwhelmed. How much more so for the children of the most high? We see our families away from God, our neighbors leaving this world with out Christ, we suffer persecutions and are attacked by our enemy, the Devil, looking about this world which waxes worse and worse each day. Sometimes we see the saints of God, we once had sweet fellowship with, now forsaking the assembly of our great God. The grief, the pain, the sorrow is overwhelming. That doesn't even take into consideration the sorrow of our hearts over our own souls for our own sin. How we fail our Lord! Oh how oft we sin against our Saviour! Are not our hearts grieved and overwhelmed at our failures, the sin in our lives? Are we not overwhelmed at times from the great work we have been commissioned to do, and yet it seems we spin our wheels, and toil and labor, with seemingly no results? I cry unto God when my heart is feeble. When I am filled with doubts and fears. When I don't understand, and strive to serve my God. I cry unto my God when I am alone, when my faith is weak and I'm sorely tried. The children of God have and truly know what it is like to

wear the cloak of despair, and to languish in the depths of grief, and to have the heart overwhelmed, beyond the ability to express the emotion of our fainting fits of despondency. We will have a heart that is overwhelmed.

But if that was the end of our walk with Christ, we would be of all men most miserable. All the sons of Adam experience such woe, but the joy of the Christian is we do not remain. The world will seek comfort in self, pleasures and other futile attempts of merriment, but we have such a blessed treasure, for when we are weak, He is made strong. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Jesus is the Rock that is higher than I. When our hearts are overwhelmed, it is Christ in which we find safety and refuge. When we are overcome we are as if we were lost at sea, shipwrecked with no hope of recovery, no hope of making it to shore, with drowning in despair our only conceivable hope. Jesus Christ is the Rock that is higher than I. He is the safety when our hearts are overwhelmed, He is the mighty Rock of refuge, and of our salvation. He is higher than I, higher than our troubles, higher than we could ever get ourselves. Psalm 18:2 says: "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." When we are overcome by grief and sorrow, Christ is where we must flee. Jesus is the solid, secure, and safe refuge. Through the blood of Christ, we have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul. Lead me to the Rock, for I can't go on my own. I am too distraught to find my own way, to weak to see, lead me, Holy Spirit, in my distress, to the Rock. Let me never look for refuge in any other. Lead me, take me, help me! I cry out when I can't help myself, but not to my own devices, not to my own works, but to the Rock, the solid rock, that is higher, loftier, mightier than I, that has hope and life for all who cling to Him.

O then to the Rock let me fly
To the Rock that is higher than I

"For thou hast been a shelter for me." Jesus is our protection from danger. When do you seek shelter? When you need a hiding place from storms or danger. A shelter is a place of refuge, a place of comfort. Though the winds howl and the rains beat down, the thunder roars, we are secure in the shelter we seek. Jesus is our shelter. He is our hiding place. The child of God runs to Christ to find a refuge, to find comfort, to find a hiding place. We are secure in Christ. When all the world forsakes us, He never will. When we are being tormented on every side, we go to God in prayer, and there, in the shelter of Christ, we are reminded of His love, mercy, kindness to us and are

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Overwhelmed

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strengthened. The storm is never as bad when viewed from a shelter.

Jesus is our strong tower from the enemy. He is our strong defense from certain danger. When in battle, a fortress will make the weak and the outnumbered safe. A strong tower provides protection. If the odds were 1000 to 1, it's not the power of the one that would protect, but the strong tower. Jesus is our confident strong hold. He has won the victory over any enemy we may face. Jesus came in the flesh that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. I Corinthians 15:54 says: **"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."** Notice in I Corinthians 15:55-58, **"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."** He is our strong tower, even in death. What greater enemy could there be? Even in our greatest hour of trial, and our weakest moment in the flesh, Jesus is promised not only to be there, but to give us victory.

"I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever." The joy we have abiding in Jesus is unspeakable. To be with Him, to have fellowship with Him, what joy there is in Christ. It could seem a contradiction to those who do not know Him, how we could joy in tribulation, have fellowship in suffering, be blessed in persecution because they know nothing of the peace of Christ, or the indwelling of the Comforter. God is the God of peace, and when we are overwhelmed, we abide with Him because He will see us through. How often the saints, when they are troubled say they are too troubled to be in God's house? Why forsake such a blessing? The television, the lake, the golf course are sought to find rest for their soul. Do we not believe that God speaks to us through His word, and when we are in need, what better place to hear than in the house of God? To dwell in God's house, to be where God is, to be where God receives glory, to hear praises to His name, and His word expounded, with our brothers and sisters in Christ,

there will we find comfort. Coming in from the battle, weary and down, to hear of the grace of God, the goodness of our Lord is what we need to get ready for what ever may come.

"I will trust in the covert of thy wings." Fear, sadness, danger, these things send children to their fathers. During the night, when a thunderstorm blows in, a child may become scared of the wind, the lightning and thunder, and run to the safety of father's arms. The little birds will find comfort under the wings of the hen. How much more will our Heavenly Father give us what we need? The storm is still there, the danger is still present, but how different it seems "under His wings." We see in this metaphor the trust of the child in the Father that under His wings is the place to be. Where do you find the disciples of God when faced with doubt and fear? John 13:22-23, **"Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved."** Could there be a more comforting place for the hurt and broken hearted?

*Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o'ershaded, sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark! tis the voice of angels, borne in a song to me.*

Over the fields of glory, over the jasper sea.

*Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe from corroding care,
Safe from the world's temptations, sin cannot harm me there.
Free from the blight of sorrow, free from my doubts and fears;
Only a few more trials, only a few more tears!*

*Jesus, my heart's dear Refuge, Jesus has died for me;
Firm on the Rock of Ages, ever my trust shall be.
Here let me wait with patience, wait till the night is over;
Wait till I see the morning break on the golden shore.*

*Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on His gentle breast
There by His love o'ershaded, sweetly my soul shall rest.*

This is the consistent feeling and action of the child of God. Psalm 57:1 is the Psalm of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave. Notice in David's despair he cry's **"Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast."** The hope of the worried soul is in Jesus. Even amongst the worst of calamities, we have faith in God that they will pass. We flee to Almighty God, and rest in Him during the midst of the engulfing ruin of life's ordeals. Even if the catastrophe results in our death, we will leave this earth clinging to Christ, and then spend eternity clinging to Him! What can separate us from the love of God? Nothing. The loving kindness of Christ our Lord, as it were, stretching out His wings of love, to comfort, protect, keep His beloved. It will be He that faces the trials, He that gets us through, He

that sees the end, and guides us safely on. While the tempest rages, and the storm blows, it is our loving Master that says, Peace, be still. Oh that we will find peace in the covert of thy wings of our Heavenly Father.

As the child goes to God, and seeks refuge, shelter, protection in Him, we find that there is a change in the tenor of the psalm. We find that something drove him to despair, which drove him to Christ. Now see God's benefits to the overwhelmed. **"For thou, O God, hast heard my vows."** God hears our prayers. These were not empty words in the night, but prayers unto the Most High God. The pouring out of our souls to the Lord is not an exercise in futility, but God hears us. He hears our words, He hears our pleas. Even when we don't know how to pray, or what to pray for, the Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmities. When we don't know what to pray for as we ought, the Holy Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that can not be uttered, He searcheth the hearts.

"Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name" (Ps. 61:5).

Not only does God hear our prayers, and give us refuge, but we are the children of God. We have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Abba is the Aramaic word for father, a more tender way of address, like daddy. We are the children of God and not only do we experience this filial love, but consider the benefits of being sons and if sons and heirs of God through Christ and joint heirs with Christ, if so that we suffer with Him, we may be glorified together. Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations. We know that we are eternally secure, and have comfort in that, but we also trust that God answers our prayers. Is there any sick? Pray. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. James 5:16, **"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."** The benefit of God toward the overwhelmed child is that He answers prayers. No matter what happens, we will be OK, but God may see fit to remove the sore trial that we are in the midst of, whether persecution, sickness, or any other distress. Believe that God is able to deliver us, not only eternally, but here and now.

"He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him." God will preserve us. God is going to keep us. There may be thorns of the flesh that remain with us, even unto death, but God may be

pleased to show His power by removing the distress in our lives. This trial may be a preparatory work, that you will be a great help to some other pilgrim down the way. II Corinthians 12:9-10 says: **"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."** So if we do not have the results that we desire God will give us grace and help in our time of need. The result God has for us is much better than what we think we want. God will keep us by His mercy. God is merciful, and He will always do what is right, and what is truthful. Praise Him Who deals with mankind mercifully and truthfully!

"So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows." We find the psalmist different at the end than when we found him at the beginning. He started the psalm in despair, but ends it in song. He started crying in pain, and left singing in Christ. He started declaring vows, and left fulfilling them. Can't you see the difference when we go to Christ? How pitiful the Christian who will stay in sorrow, and wallow in misery and not flee to Christ. Daily we should go to Him. The longer we are away, the longer we stay in our misery. The longer we are away, the longer we remain in darkness. The more we stray from our refuge, the more we forget about the joy of our salvation. We can praise God in our troubles because God will always give us comfort. We are always protected by God. The Father will hear our prayers, the Holy Spirit will lead us to Refuge, and we will always have the help and grace which is sufficient for us. We'll go through this life, never bearing more than God know we are able to, and God helping us to bear what we are given.

When, not if, but when we face these problems, no matter how dreadful they seem, we have peace in Christ Jesus. We will go to our prayer closets overwhelmed, and leave singing. The problem may still be there, but how sweet to cast ALL our care, ALL our anxieties, ALL our problems upon Him, because He cares for His own. We see in this psalm, that God is sovereign, God is in control and we must trust in Him. Prayer doesn't change God, prayer changes us. I Peter 5:10-11 states: **"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."**



Confession of Sin

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“And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel” (vs. 7). David’s sin led to others being smitten. As king, he was responsible for the leading and guiding and feeding of the nation. He had sinfully numbered the nation. Now God was going to change the number of the nation. He touched David in the very place where David had sinned, in numbering the people. God knows how to deal with sin and how to reprove and correct and chasten His own children.

We find in our text that David confessed his sin to the Lord. He confessed and sought forgiveness. The only reason that confession of sin is of any value whatsoever is because of the truth that David knew and believed concerning the Lord: **“And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are his mercies”** (vs. 13). The only place where mercy for sinners can be found is from the hand of the Lord. The only place where forgiveness of sins can be obtained is from the Lord. The hand that smote David and Israel was the only hand that now could heal. It would be pointless to go to God in the confessing and forsaking of sins were it not that with Him are great mercies. It would be impossible to go to God for the forgiveness of sins and pardoning grace if not for His great mercies. David would not have known God’s mercies are great and that he could turn to God for forgiveness and recovery from sin if God had not revealed this great truth concerning Himself. **“And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation”** (Ex. 34:6,7). **“Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy”** (Ps. 103:1-8). It is of God’s

great mercy that we may know that with Him there is forgiveness of sins. **“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon”** (Isa. 55:6, 7). Read also Mark 2:1-12.

Confession of sin is a whole lot more than what most people have been led to believe. Some people have been led to believe, or have led themselves to believe, that so long as they admit that they are sinners and tell some of the things they have done that are wrong in the eyes of God to a priest or preacher sometime before they die, they will escape the penalty and punishment of their sins. Some people believe that you must continually just be confessing your sins every day, and if you die with any particular unconfessed sins, then you are in danger of hellfire. Beloved, the confession of sins is not you merely telling on yourself, or you merely pleading for forgiveness so that you don’t suffer the just penalty of your sins. The confession of sins is the acknowledgement of your guilt before God, and your desire, not so much to escape punishment, but rather to have the alienation and estrangement and enmity and separation between you and God which your sins have caused removed in a God-pleasing, God-honoring way. If God became a party to people’s sins in granting forgiveness, no truly born-again person would be glad of that. David’s primary concern when he confessed his sin was that he had besmirched the name of his God and that he was no longer pleasing and acceptable in his conduct toward God. He could no longer approach God in worship and fellowship. He was the cause of God’s displeasure. His inward thoughts and desires had been the devil’s tools and not God’s friends and servants. If you don’t recognize that your sin is a foul, stinking, vile, abominable thing that causes you to appear hellish and devilish in God’s sight, and you don’t long to be rid of it because you do not want to be the reason of God’s displeasure, but rather be unto His pleasure and joy, then you have not truly confessed your sins and forsaken them. If you don’t acknowledge that by your sin you have been Satan’s ally and God’s foe; a traitor to and denier of the Holy One; a treasonous rebel toward the august, supreme, righteous, and gracious name of the Lord of glory, then you have not truly confessed your sin in a spiritual and scriptural sense. **“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy”** (Prov. 28:13).

“And David said unto God...” David confessed his sin first and foremost unto God. We have no reason to doubt that he confessed his sin unto the prophet

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Gad, and perhaps to others. Yet we find that first and foremost he confessed his sin to God. He **“said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing.”** God alone has the power, the authority, and the right to forgive sins. People today are always being heard to say, “Only God can judge.” They would be correct if they instead would say, “Only God can forgive.” Millions of people the world over are resting content in their sinful condition because they have been comforted by the words and teachings of some false prophet or religious person who has told them that they have forgiveness of their sins. Only God can tell you that your sins are forgiven, and so to God you ought to confess your sins. Many Baptist church members have rested content with confessing their sins to themselves. They did not confess to God because they really and truly did not hold themselves accountable before God, and were not primarily concerned with being right with God – they just wanted to feel better so they could get on with living their lives in the way they chose. That’s a cheap counterfeit for true confession of sin unto God.

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). Until you know that you need God’s mercy, you won’t confess your sins unto Him. You won’t acknowledge your sin-guiltiness and cast yourself upon His mercies. **“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise”** (Luke 23:39-43). The thief on the cross who truly sought the Lord’s mercy had in view the honor and the glory of God. He had in view the righteousness and the honor of God: **“Dost not thou fear God?”** He looked upon Jesus as the One Who can supply mercy to the sinner,

and called upon Jesus as the One Who only can forgive sin: **“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time”** (I Tim. 2:5, 6). **“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”** (Acts 13:38, 39). How foolish to confess sins unto others and not unto God! Only God can forgive, and God does forgive all who believe on Jesus Christ as the saving Son of God.

God is the One Whom your sins have offended. God is the One Whose holy eyes see all, Whose holy ears hear all, Whose holy mind perceives all, and Whose holy law your sins have trespassed and trampled. A criminal who has broken the law and causes injury and damage to his country, his fellow-citizens, his family, his friends, and his governor, prince, president, or king, does not need, when he finds that his heart is broken over his evil doings and he longs to be forgiven and reconciled to those whose rights and claims he has unlawfully violated and disdained, to confess his crimes to and seek forgiveness from his fellow criminals. They do not have the right or the power to forgive or to grant pardon. Only those whose rights and claims have been violated and disdained have that right. God’s rights and God’s claims have been ignored, neglected, abused, rejected, denied, and usurped by all your sins. David allowed the devil to hold sway in that which only God had the right to decide and determine, the governing of Israel; and you have followed the devil in those things over which God only ought to have authority and control, your thoughts, your words, your deeds, your affections, your beliefs, your determinations, your decisions, your pleasures, and your worship. You don’t need to confess to and seek forgiveness from sinners, from other people; you ought to confess your sins to God, desiring His forgiving and recovering mercies. People will cheat on their spouses and then go confess to

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their friends at the bar so their friends who do the same things can make them feel better. Try that with God, and you'll go to hell. Church members will call other preachers or talk to other church members and try to get comfort for what they've done in disobedience to God and dishonor to their church's testimony instead of confessing and forsaking their sins. God is not mocked by people's hypocrisy. God knew what David had done that displeased Him, and He knew that David was the one who had done it: and David knew that God only could forgive him of his sins.

Beloved, David did not have to climb a special mountain, go through a ritual, read a certain book, or inflict harm to himself physically, mentally, or emotionally in order to receive forgiveness. He had to go to God in the way God said. **"Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite" (vs. 18).** David had to be reconciled to God through the God-ordained sacrifice upon the altar that symbolized the soul-atoning, sin-removing substitute. You have to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ Who died at Calvary in the place of guilty sinners, and whose name, through faith in His name, is salvation and life to all who repent toward God. **"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2). "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5). "Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1,2). "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13, 14). "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which**

he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. 10:19,20). "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20). David was shown that only through the blood of the offering could he be recovered from sin, forgiven by God, and reconciled to God in righteousness. Only through the blood of Jesus Who offered Himself in righteousness to God can you be forgiven of, recovered from, and reconciled from sin to and by God.

"And David said unto God, I have sinned . . ." When any sinner makes confession of his or her sin, that sinner owns his or her sin. David did not deny that he had sinned, but called his sin his own. In the beginning, when Adam sinned and was confronted by God, he said, **"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12) (Emph. T.H.).** When questioned, Eve responded, **"The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:13) (Emph. T.H.).** **"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest" (Ps. 51:3, 4).** Yes, Satan was culpable, having provoked David; but David confesses his own guilt, **"I have sinned . . . I have done this thing."** **"And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed" (vs. 17).** In this David was right, and he agreed with God: he had sinned and done evil indeed. He had been the ally of Satan and the foe of God, the dupe of Satan rather than the intelligent and free servant of the Lord. Read also Luke 5:1-11; Isa. 6:1-8. If we had right knowledge of God we would have a right sense of sin, what an awful thing that sin is, what an abominable thing in God's sight! Standing before God, all must own their sin as being theirs, for His all-glorious and holy Personage will allow no other conclusion than that which is right and true.

In confession of sin, there is no excuse-making, no justifying of evil by perverse rationale and corrupt reasoning. David did not say to God, "I made a mistake . . . it wasn't my fault . . . others were doing the same thing . . . the devil tempted me . . . it's not as bad as it looks . . ." He said, and rightly so, **"I have sinned."** He identified himself as the sinner, and what he had done as sin. **"And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly" (II Sam. 24:10).** David was smitten in his

own heart – his own heart condemned him because he knew he was guilty before God. Heart matters belong to God, so to God he took and confessed his sin.

"I have sinned greatly." How many will say this? There was no coloring over of this sin by David, but to him it was a great sin, as all sin is. Only a deceived mind thinks of sin as anything but great, great in guilt, great in filth, great in harm, great in damage, great in opposition to the good and perfect will of God. Sin is greatly to be abhorred and avoided. Sin is a great stench in God's nostrils, a great offense before His eyes, and a great raucous and disturbing noise in His ears. Sin is a great act of treachery and indifference toward God's moral and spiritual government of the universe and man's heart. When sin is rightly confessed, it is confessed as sin, as a thing greatly hated and provoking of God, and a thing greatly injurious to one's neighbor and one's self. **"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:12-14, 24, 25).** A great act of God is required to remove sin, and that act of God was finished at the cross of Calvary some two thousand or so years ago, when Jesus Christ was nailed to a cursed tree so that sinners such as you and me might be free. The greatness of sin is only truly seen at Calvary, where the Holy and the Just One poured out His life's blood for unholy and unjust sinners such as us. When wicked hands crucified the perfect One because of the hatred in their hearts toward Him, and God bruised Him in your place and mine, then was seen the great awfulness of sin, which makes man the enemy of his God and of himself, and the ally and friend of the wicked one. Don't ever say, "Oh, this is just a little sin." No sin is little that nailed Jesus to the cross! When you make true confession of sin unto God, you confess your sin as sin, and as being that which only Jesus' blood can remove.

"And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing." David's confession of sin was specific: he named his sin. **"Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered?" (vs. 17). "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16). "And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all,**

and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver" (Acts 19:17-19). Read also Luke 19:1-10; 15:18, 19, 21. Oh, sin is not named today! People will say, "I have sinned;" or, "I have sinned against the church;" but they will not name their sins. God does not care for our acting as though we do not know what particular sins we have committed when we pretend to be confessing our sins. Yes, we sin ignorantly everyday, without thought, without knowledge, and without consideration: for which cause we ought to pray like David in the Psalms, **"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Ps. 19:12).** But when the sin is known, we ought to name it, or else we have not confessed it. A person who goes to the hospital for medical treatment does not say, "I am sick," and expect to be relieved or cured when he knows that he ought to say, "I have cancer of the liver," or, "I have irritable bowel syndrome," or, "I suffer with arthritis and rheumatism." You ought not to expect God to hear you and forgive when you refuse to admit to your own sin.

David was seeking to have his sin removed. **"But now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant."** He does not ask for merely the consequences of his sin to be removed. He does not ask merely to have the penalty of his sin removed, though certainly that is included. He wants his sin removed, the willfulness of his sin, the pride of his sin, the stubbornness of his sin, the wickedness of his sin, the deceitfulness of his sin, and the inclination of himself to sin. He would have that sin which was between him and his Lord removed in such a way that both he and God might act toward one another as though that sin had never existed. **"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:11,12). "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Isa. 38:17). "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," (Micah 7:19).** Read also Lev. 16:20-22, 29, 30. The confession of sin is the seeking of a heart that is grieved with its own sin to be right with God, and the only way to be right with God is to be cleared and cleansed by the Sin-

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Remover who carried away the sins of His people forever at Calvary. **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"** (I John 1:9). **"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"** (I John 2:1,2). I cannot **"do away"** my own sins, God must **"do away"** with my sins, for only He Who is the Holy One has sin-removing power to make me holy in His sight.

"For I have done very foolishly. O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness" (Ps. 38:1-5). Sin is the utmost folly. David did not say, "Well, I had good intentions, they just didn't work out as I hoped." He did not say, "Anyone could have made the same error in judgment that I made." He did not say, "It might have worked out better under different circumstances." He said, "I have been a fool in my sin!" Sin is the worst kind of foolishness, for sin destroys all that it touches. None can commit sin and not be burned. None can practice sin and come out the winner, land on solid ground, or be better off overall. People will say of their mistakes, "Well, at least I learned a lot." You don't learn anything in sin, except pain, sorrow, and loss. To set one's own house on fire while still living inside would be thought the utmost folly. To drink poison and say, "I shall not be harmed," would be thought the utmost folly. To run a sword through one's own belly and expect to feel no pain would be thought the utmost folly. Sin is more foolish than all of these things, for sin ruins a man's soul and destroys his fellowship with God, Who is the source of all true peace, joy, prosperity, and life, both now and forever. You cannot sin and live. **"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 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. Do not err, my beloved brethren"** (James 1:13-16). **"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ**

our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). You might set your house on fire while still inside, and yet live. You might drink poison, and yet live. You might run a sword through your own belly, and yet live. No one can sin and live. **"Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"** (Rom. 5:12).

Sin is foolishness, and only the wisdom of God can remove sin and rescue a man from his own sinful condition. **"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God . . . But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God . . . But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"** (I Cor. 1:18,23,24,30). There never has been and never shall be in all the world or all of human history any wisdom so wise as that of Christ crucified at Calvary to save fallen and sinful men, women, boys, and girls. There will never be anything so wise as the blood that answers God's justice and supplies man's redemption. There will never be anything so wise as the substitution of Christ for sinners, upholding and magnifying righteousness while making peace between a righteous God and unrighteous men. There will never be anything so wise as that grace and truth which saves to the uttermost through the life, death, resurrection, and intercession of Jesus every hell-bound, hell-deserving sinner who comes to God by Him. There will never be anything so wise as that one offering which has perfected forever all them who are sanctified unto God thereby, the offering by Jesus of Himself to God as our Sin-bearing, Sin-cleansing, Sin-removing sacrifice. This wisdom will answer the conscience of every believer, and remove the sin-stains that foolishness had all but otherwise made permanent upon the sinner's soul.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). **"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"** (Isa. 55:6, 7). Read also Matt. 3:1-6; Acts 26:13-20. David found mercy of the Lord. So have all who have truly confessed their sins. Do not suppose that your case shall be any different. Do not suppose that He Who says in His Word that you ought to confess and forsake your sins in order to obtain pardoning and restoring mercy will do anything other than that He has said. I have heard of some who

thought that their sins could not be forgiven. Jesus said, **"All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men"** (Matt. 12:31). He should know, as He has the power to forgive sins. Do not suppose that your sins can be forgiven by any other except Him.

God is ready and willing to grant forgiveness, seeing that He now commands all men everywhere to repent, to turn from sin unto Him. If it were otherwise, then you might doubt; but now, seeing He openly declares that He will pardon all who come to Him and by faith wash in the blood of Jesus, you have no reason to do anything else but come, confess your sins, and be made right with God. Whether lost and on the road to hell, or a born-again child of God who has backslidden from God's will, you must confess your sins to God in order to have the blessing of forgiveness. You must go to God with your sin if you would receive forgiveness of your sin and be freed from your sin. You must take your sin to God and say, "God, only you can remove this black stain from my heart, my mind, my soul, and my life. I would have it removed in the way that pleases you. I would have Jesus, and not sin. I would have Jesus' blood to cleanse me, and not any works of my own doing. I would have your name honored and magnified, and the sins which are justly written against my name expunged through Jesus' blood. I would have your holy and perfect mind satisfied, and so will I then and only then be satisfied that my sins are removed." Confess and see if God will not answer your conscience with forgiving mercy and love. He only can. He surely will, in Jesus' name.



Are You Going To

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any rate, in the science of destruction---not only avowed enemies of Christianity but multitudes of infidels parading as Christians are denying the teaching of the Bible on such fundamental subjects as the character of the true God and the nature of man, righteousness and sin, life and death, Heaven and Hell.

We need not be disturbed by the excursions of mice, monkeys, or men into outer space. Divine truth will survive the discoveries, inventions, and theories of astronomy and astronautics just as it has survived the discoveries, inventions, and theories of biology, geology, and other sciences---including a great deal of **"science falsely so called"** (I Tim. 6:20).

HEAVEN IS A PLACE

Spiritualists and people deceived by them, who ought to know better, think that Heaven is just a different state or condition of existence. Note that Jesus says, **"I go to prepare a place."**

Three heavens are mentioned in the

Bible: First (that is, nearest to us), the air in which the birds fly (Gen. 1:20). Second, the space where He put the moon, the sun, and the stars (Gen. 1:14-18). Third, the heaven that is His throne (Isa. 66:1). It is this third heaven, also called paradise (II Cor. 12:2-4) that we are talking about now.

If anyone wants to argue that Heaven is not a place but a state, let him argue the point with our Lord when he gets there if he gets there. Jesus said, **"I go to prepare a place for you,"** but "He was talking to disciples who believed His word."

In a sense, God is everywhere (Ps. 139:7-12), but His presence is more manifest in Heaven. So our Master taught His disciples to pray, **"Our Father Who art in heaven"** (Matt. 6:9).

The fact that God is especially resident in Heaven appears again and again in the Bible. Thus we read, **"The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men"** (Ps. 14:2), and other such references which show that the omnipresent God manifests Himself especially in and from Heaven. In "Heaven we shall be with God" in a sense far beyond anything we can experience or imagine here.

WHERE JESUS IS

"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven," said Jesus to Nicodemus. Being God as well as man, Jesus was also in Heaven at the very time he was talking to Nicodemus. But since then He has returned to Heaven in the glory of His resurrection body, and has opened the way for His followers to go up there also.

In Acts 1:9 we read that **"a cloud received Him out of their sight,"** and in Acts 7:55 that the martyr Stephen, **"being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."**

So we need have no difficulty in knowing where Jesus has gone---where He is now---to prepare a place for us. It is in Heaven above, **"where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God"** (Col. 3:1).

WHERE ANGELS ARE

"Take heed," said Jesus (Matt. 18:10), **"that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."**

It would be easy to multiply Scripture references to holy angels, angels of God, heavenly hosts, etc., to show that Heaven is the regular abode of these **"ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"** (Heb. 1:14).

WHERE LOVED ONES ARE

The mortal bodies of our departed loved ones sleep in the dust of the earth, but "it is not so with their souls." If they **"died in the Lord"** (Rev. 14:13), while their bodies rest, spiritually they have not

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Mini-Edition by Joseph Harris

Chairman of Biblical Studies
Southeastern Baptist
College, Laurel, Mississippi
www.miniedition.net



Who You Votin' For?

Concerning the upcoming Presidential election, it has been stated there has not been a crisis like the present. The big question is who to vote for, but in my estimation, the question is who "not" to vote for and it should be apparent for real conservative, Bible believing Christians. It is a lose-lose situation for all who love liberty and America as we know it. It is a win-win situation for the media, the ones responsible for the placement of the "Big Two" as the only possible choices for President.

Consider the candidate, Barak Hussein Obama, who is nothing more than a creation and promotion of the media. Even if a person couldn't see a grain of rice on a piece of black paper, they should be able to see through his facade. He is a liberal, social/Marxist elitist who will do, say or promise anything for power. Take away his script and he stutters worse than an Evinrude outboard motor with water in the tank. Early in the campaign, I thought his swooners were just poor deluded saps, but now realize they may be following him because they "know" what he stands for and actually agree with him. If so, America is in trouble. Some will say, "But that's just the problem; we don't know what he stands for," to which I say, go back to the third sentence of this paragraph. He stands for everything a liberal, social/Marxist, elitist would support. Listen to his words, weigh the evidence, use common sense, discard his political cross-dressing, while checking his voting record in the Senate (all two years worth) and you will have no problem discovering what he believes and will be able to uncover the "change" he has in mind for America, the country for which he and his wife have so much disdain.

Here are a few beliefs and plans that define who Obama really is. He abhors tax cuts and will push for tax increases (even larger than under Republican rule) if elected. He wants to provide a universal health care plan, and is in favor of murdering babies (I guess no healthcare is provided while in the womb). He actually opposed the Born Alive Infant Protection Act in Illinois, which made it illegal to kill a child once out of the womb. He believes the Bible allows for homosexuality and calls the plain condemnation of this abomination in Romans an "obscure line" and not authoritative. Obama wants to spend billions more on early education, which has not proven to be successful. He also

believes strongly in "sharing the wealth" or what I call Robin-Hoodism, which is a philosophy that says government should take from the hard working achievers and indiscriminately give to all through legalized plunder called taxation. Then there is also the debacle relating to his racist pastor and his radical racist rantings, yet Obama, never seemed to "be there" when the rantings were spewed forth. He is either lying, or he's deaf, or he's a poor church member who only occasionally darkens the doors of the church.

And then there is the other option, John McCain. Is he really conservative? Republicans are crossing their fingers in hope that he really is, ignoring the facts and placating their collective conscious with the mantra that at least he is more conservative than Obama and the lesser of two evils. And if you, as a conservative dare question them, then you are branded as a traitor, a dangerous menace who will split the vote, therefore you must hold your nose and vote for McCain. Voting for the lesser of two evils is still voting for evil. If one man tells 50 lies and another man tells 10 lies, are they not both liars? And, by the way, holding your nose does not take away the stench. It momentarily hides it. The smell, however, always comes back stronger.

McCain is a manipulated creation of the media. He is the opponent of Barak, chosen by the media. None of the other Republican hopefuls ever had a chance. When he reached across the aisle in his gestures of bi-partisanship, it was McCain and not Kennedy who reached out. It was McCain, not Feingold who reached out. It was McCain and not Lieberman who reached out. But you get the picture. Liberal Democrats never reach out to Republicans, but McCain, the liberal Republican has always reached out to liberal Democrats. Rather than reaching out to conservative Republicans, McCain has castigated them, or as we say here at home, kicked them in the teeth, then made them swallow the teeth.

Look at McCain's defining conservative qualities. He loves big government and federal authority and would have no problem with government intervention in controlling TV cable companies. He is against tax cuts and even partnered with Tom Daschle against tax cuts. I realize he has said he would make the Bush tax cuts permanent, but when will we learn? You don't "listen" to politicians. You "watch" how they vote. On immigration, traditionally, he has been on the wrong side, favoring amnesty (of course, during election time things change). On gun control, McCain sponsored an amendment outlawing private sales at gun shows. Out of 15 votes relating to keeping and bearing arms, McCain voted in favor of gun owners only 4 times. His infamous Campaign Finance Reform bill

selectively curtails free speech prior to an election.

We are told that to not vote for McCain is to waste a vote or split the ticket. When anyone feels they "must" vote R or D, then they are simply voting for a party, not a person, but it's people who hold offices, not parties. To quote Obama, I would like to see change also. For once, I would love to see everyone vote, based on their true, heart-felt, ingrained beliefs and convictions, voting on and for principle. I believe John McCain and Barak Hussein Obama are both bad for America and though I am not settled as to who I will vote for in this great election, I know "I will vote" for someone, and that someone will not be one of the "Big Two" even though they are presented as the only possible candidates.

I realize this may be too political for some, especially the religious periodicals that occasionally or frequently print Mini Edition, but here it is anyway. Keep those cards and letters coming. I haven't caught any flack for a while and it makes me think I haven't written anything noteworthy.

Hate Speech

Disagree with the ungodly on any point, at any depth, and you are a hater using hate speech. Period. This is the open and shut verdict pronounced by the media today. Speak against homosexuality, pedophilia, bestiality, adultery, and other acts plainly denounced by scripture, and you are a hateful hater of the ones guilty of the acts. The same is true if you speak the truth about Islam and its mandate to persecute or kill unbelievers. If you insist on calling a specific candidate by his full name, Barak Hussein Obama, then you are hateful, trying to smear his name, (actually the name Hussein does a good enough job of smearing itself). If you speak the truth about illegal aliens, you automatically hate all Mexicans. Whether or not you boycott McDonald's over their obvious in-your-face decision to support homosexuality and same sex marriage, you still have the right to exercise your constitutionally guaranteed free speech and the right to choose where to spend your money. Speaking of rights, everyone should have the right to exercise their free speech without being called a hater.

I have noticed that liberals are almost always guilty of what they accuse others of doing. They cry "tolerance" and then are intolerant of everything that opposes their agenda. Just recently, a group of lesbians shut down a speech given by Ryan Sorba, called "The Born Gay Hoax" at Smith College in Northampton, MA, by storming the room and shouting him down. Security did nothing. When they accuse others of bigotry, I have found they are usually greater bigots. They want free speech for filth, but not

for the reading of the Bible (but the Koran is ok) or for prayers to be offered on "sacred government property" (What an oxymoron).

Just recently, some "gays" called for a boycott of a San Diego hotel, because the owner donated a sum of money for the promotion of the referendum to be placed on the California ballot to protect the sanctity of marriage and oppose so-called marriage of the same sex. Turn about is fair play. I wonder how the wording would sound if covered, in fairness, by the media? *"This just in: A group of left wing, mean spirited homosexuals have just called for a boycott of a luxury hotel, based on the politics of the owner. This boycott appears to be motivated by hate. Hatred has no place in our culture."* By the way, you can imagine the success of their boycott. The hotel was booked solid the next week.

Is anyone naive enough to believe they will ever read or hear words similar to the preceding news report coming over the airwaves or in print, with today's biased reporting? The last line, "Hatred has no place in our culture" is an exact quote from a McDonald's spokesman concerning the AFA boycott, indicating the boycotters hate homosexuals. Just for the record, I do not hate homosexuals, but do hate homosexuality, a self destructive, sinful, chosen lifestyle. I once heard someone say they hated cancer, after it claimed the life of their loved one. With today's spin, that individual must hate everyone with cancer. How hateful.

If you are guilty of hate speech, then you can be found guilty of a hate crime. And this is the goal. Both, Canada and Sweden, have hate speech laws on their books to protect deviants. Hitler's fascism began with silencing his opposition and this is exactly what homosexuals, C.A.I.R., Jesse Jackson, Democrats and liberal Republicans (Remember the McCain-Feingold folly), Barry Lynn, N.O.W., and many others are trying to do. Silence the opposition. Let your voice be heard. Speak the truth with charity, but always in boldness. **"Open rebuke is better than secret love"** (Prov.27:5). And remember this old axiom from childhood: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" which is just a proverbial way of saying "Grow Up."



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YOUR READING YOUR FINAL ISSUE

Are You Going To

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died at all," but have gone on to Heaven and are now with the Lord.

"Whosoever liveth and believeth in me," said Jesus, "shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:26). No, believers in "soul sleeping" do not believe Jesus, but His word is still true. As one of our poets has said, "Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul."

When Stephen was being stoned to death he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Though in the body "he fell asleep," can anyone doubt that this martyr, "full of the Holy Ghost," was received by his Lord into His heavenly presence?

FRIENDS TO RECEIVE US

With the story of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-9), Jesus exhorts us, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Jesus plainly says that these friends are to receive us "not" at the resurrection but "when ye fail." In other words, "at the very time we fail" "from this world we are received into the next."

Even so, the Apostle Paul wrote: "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:6-8).

Surely God has made it clear enough in His Word that "all our departed loved ones who were saved by His grace," along with all the saints of past centuries, probably from Adam and Eve and certainly from righteous Abel to the last unconscious infant laid beneath the sod, "are now with Him in heaven," ready to bid us welcome when we pass through the shadow of death to that bright world above.

OUR NAMES ARE THERE

To the disciples who reported with joy that demons were subordinated to them in His name, Jesus answered:

"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

In Revelation 20:15 we read that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Thus we can understand why Jesus taught that there is more reason for joy in knowing that our names are written in Heaven than in having great power, even miracle-working power, on earth.

TREASURES IN HEAVEN

One of Jesus' commandments is that we shall lay up treasures in the right place so that our hearts will be in the right place:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures

upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

If we have obeyed Jesus in this matter, we have treasures stored up for ourselves in Heaven, and so Heaven is more precious to us.

Several crowns are mentioned in the Bible as among the treasures that can be laid up in Heaven: an incorruptible crown (I Cor. 9:25); a crown of rejoicing (I Thess. 2:19); a crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4:8); a crown of life (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10); and a crown of glory (I Pet. 5:4).

RESERVED FOR US

Unlike treasures on earth, which "moth and rust" can corrupt and which thieves can steal, our treasures in Heaven are reserved under the same protective power of God as are we ourselves. Men may rob us of potential crowns and other treasures that we could and ought to earn but come short of (II John 8; Rev. 3:11), but if we ever get them to our credit in Heaven, they are safe:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:3-5).

OUR ETERNAL HOME

Note the word "abodes" in our text (John 14:2). The place our Lord has gone to prepare for us is "a place to stay." ("Mansions" of the King James version meant about the same thing 350 years ago.) Of course, this does not mean that we shall be confined to these abodes, or dwelling places, in our Father's "house," but we shall always have a place to call "home." And it will always be a home of such love and joy and peace as this world knows nothing of.

Even now, we ought to think of ourselves as strangers and pilgrims in this world, on our way to a better country and a better city (Heb. 11:10-16). In fact, our true citizenship is in Heaven (Phil. 3:20).

If we die and go to Heaven before the second coming of Christ, "He will bring us back with Him to get our glorified, resurrection bodies" before the translation of the saints still living in mortal flesh:

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring

with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:14-17).

THE HEAVENLY CITY

As we have already seen, the "Father's house" of John 14:2 is also called a "country" and a "city" in Hebrews 11:10-16. And in Galatians 4:26 we read, "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

Now we read in Revelation 21 a partial description of this glorious heavenly city, and that it will come down, not upon this present earth, but to the new earth that is to be:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. 21:1-3).

WHO CAN ENTER?

Heaven is "a prepared place for a prepared people." The Bible is very clear that only those who were chosen and made fit can enter the new Jerusalem:

"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, That they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (I John 3:23).

Let me ask you again: "Are you going to Heaven?" Let me beg you to accept one of the great invitations of God's Word:

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).



"Found Wanting"

(Continued from page 401) ◊

grandfather, and how God had humbled his stout-hearted pride. Then he says, "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: Then was the part of the band sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, ME-NE, MENE, TE-KEL, U-PHAR-SIN" (Dan. 5:23-25).

This is the interpretation of the thing: "Mene"---God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. "Tekel"---Thou are weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. "Peres"---Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

Belshazzar calls for the royal robe, and it is placed on Daniel. A chain of gold is cast about his neck, and he is proclaimed next to Belshazzar, third ruler in the kingdom. The royal banquet goes on. The hilarity increases; but, hark! the tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, of soldier's feet in the streets of Babylon. The armies of Cyrus have turned the waters of the Euphrates, and have come in by the riverbed and the two-leaved gates of Babylon.

There is a crashing sound at the gate. The guests look around for a place to flee. But it is too late. Tramp, tramp, tramp, up the palace stairs, with a crash and a rush, the Persians and Median soldiers come in with their swords flashing in the light. Belshazzar looks up, and sees the sword over his head. It falls. Belshazzar is a corpse. "That night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain" (Dan. 5:30).

I call attention to the words: "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting" (Dan. 5:27). In whose balances was Belshazzar weighed? I believe in the balances of God. Certainly not in his own estimation of himself. He would not have been wanting there. Not in the balances of public opinion or human philosophy. His actions were weighed in the just and unerring balances of Divine equity. God knows as perfectly the true character of a man as the goldsmith knows the weight of that which he has weighed in the finest scales.

Every man is destined to be weighed in the balances of God at some time or another. Man on the great day of judgment will not be weighed in his own opinion. He is to be weighed in the scales of Heaven. How much will you weigh in these scales? Some boast of their morality, culture and refinement. But if they knew how little they weighed in the balances of God, they would fall on their knees and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

What are God's weights wherewith He weighs men? In what way can we

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum EXTRA

(Editor's Note: Last month the editor was late in getting the questions to the forum writers. The paper went to press before we received Elder DeWitt's answers. As an extra his answers are being printed.)

1. In reading Luke 4:5-7, is Satan controlling this present world?

"And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine" (Lu. 4:5-7). The understanding of Satan's power is not measured by His illusory description. **"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"** (John 8:44). Satan is not to be trusted in anyway shape or form. Satan's power can only be displayed and used so far as God permits.

The reply of the Saviour was not in recognition of the supposed power to give wealth to the very one who has all things, for Satan has nothing in Christ at all to tempt Christ to sin. **"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"** (Heb. 4:15). The force of the reply from the Christ was that of repulsion towards the worshipping of the creation. **"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"** (Lu. 4:8).

Satan does have power, and He is called the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world, and the prince of this world. Satan is powerful and we must not minimize His influence upon this world. Satan, once again, cannot do anything beyond the boundaries God has set for Him. Satan has control over the lost in this world, and those who are lost who are in places of high offices of state. **"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"** (Eph. 2:2). **"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"** (Eph. 6:12).

The children of God have much to be thankful for what Christ has done for them. **"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they**

may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

MIKE DEWITT

2. Could you please explain Ephesians 2:10?

"For we are his workmanship." Ps. 100:3 says, **"Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."** God, thru the Holy Spirit has regenerated His elect. Without the Christ His elect would never be redeemed. Thus the preceding verses demonstrate the fact of the prevailing doctrine of Gods word, not of **"ourselves," "not of works"** by and thru the grace of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. 2 Cor. 5:17 says, **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."** The Saints citizenship, thru salvation, is no longer in this world of darkness, while under the control of the prince of the power of the air, but in Heaven under the loving providence of their eternal God. The performances of works by the Saints are from the motive power of the new heart given by God. Thusly **"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit"** (Gal. 5:25).

"Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 1:4) says, **"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 Saints have been in the mind of God for all of eternity. He loved us before we loved Him and by His determinate council The Saints will work according as he has ordained them to. **"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works"** (James 2:17-18).

MIKE DEWITT



"Found Wanting"

(Continued from page 408) ♦

tell how much we weigh in the balances of God" Do we weigh any more than Belshazzar did?

God's scales are the Ten Commandments. Let's read them and see how much we weigh in the balance of God.

FIRST WEIGH

The First Commandment reads: **"Thou shalt have no other gods before**

me" (Ex. 20:3). What is a man's god? It is what he thinks most of. If you think more of your money than anything else, money is your god. Many worship social position. They put society before God. Some worship intoxicating drink. They sacrifice their respect and reverence of their family for this cursed stuff. They worship whiskey by offering their children and wife as a sacrifice. Many young boys and girls worship the god of pleasure. They give up everything for amusement. If you are putting anything before God, you are found wanting by God's First Commandment.

SECOND WEIGH

The Second Commandment reads: **"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth"** (Ex. 20:4). This forbids us to worship the true God by images or false worship.

Do you have images in your church? Are there pictures of Jesus according to some artist on the wall of your house? Do you observe Easter which is pagan in origin in an attempt to honor Christ? Do you celebrate Christmas, the mass for Christ, and think that you are honoring Christ on His birthday? If you are guilty of any of these, you are weighed and found wanting in God's scales.

THIRD WEIGH

The Third Commandment is: **"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain"** (Ex. 20:7). This forbids more than profanity. It forbids one to profess God's name and fail to live up to his profession. We are not to use God's name carelessly or without any regard to its awful significance.

How much do you weigh by that law? How many break this law and never think about it. They think it is a light matter, but God does not so regard the matter. If there is any sin which shows that the very foundation of a man's character is honey-combed with rottenness, it is the sin of profanity. When a man has no reverence for God, he has very little for man or himself. The foundation of his character is gone. Profanity reveals how very low man is in the moral scale. A man displays less intelligence by cursing God than an animal. Dogs never curse their Maker. If you take God's name in vain, you are a vile wretch. You are weighed in God's scales and found wanting!

FOURTH WEIGH

The Fourth Commandment says: **"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy"** (Ex. 20:8). God is to be served and honored every day. But one day out of seven is to be particularly dedicated to Him and spent in His service.

Did you attend church this morning? Do you plan to go tonight? If your answer is no to either one of these or both, you have broken the Fourth Commandment. Is the first day of the week a holy day to

you on which you commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Do you do the Lord's work on this day, or do you work around your house or in the garden or field? If you do your pleasure on the Christian Sabbath, you are weighed in the scales of God and found wanting!

FIFTH WEIGH

The Fifth Commandment reads: **"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee"** (Ex. 20:12). Here we are enjoined to show a decent respect to our earthly parents. We are to obey their lawful commands; submit to their lawful rebukes. We are to contribute to their comfort in this world.

Do you look upon your father and mother as old fogies? Maybe you think you know more than they do. By disobedience to parents we bring the curse of God upon us. Even when we are grown up we have no right to treat them with disrespect. God have mercy upon the one, young or old, who breaks this commandment. Such people will reap what they sow. They are weighed in God's balances and found wanting.

SIXTH WEIGH

The Sixth Commandment says: **"Thou shalt not kill"** (Ex. 20:13). This means we are not to do anything injurious to the health, ease, and life of our body or any other person's.

Some would say they are alright in this weight. You are saying, "I am no murderer." But there are other ways to kill people besides shooting them with a gun in the brain. A husband can kill his wife by neglect, cruelty, and unfaithfulness. Many a woman has gone to an early grave with a broken heart because she discovered the man who swore to be true to her had committed adultery. And the same is true of a husband in the case of an unfaithful wife.

Many a prodigal son has killed his parents by his wayward life. Some of you reading this are hastening your father and mother to an early grave by the life you are living. You are weighed in the scales of Heaven and found wanting.

In our time mothers murder their own unborn babes. Their hands are scarlet with the blood of murder. There are men who call themselves physicians who help in this hellish business. Such a one ought not to put "M.D." after his name, but "D.M."---damnable murderer.

SEVENTH WEIGH

The Seventh Commandment is: **"Thou shalt not commit adultery"** (Ex. 20:14). This commandment forbids all uncleanness, the fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Even the looking in order to these lustful desires.

There is no class of sins upon which God has set His stamp of disapproval in a plainer way than this sin. The curse of God is upon the woman or man who is

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. *Today's parents seem to be more relaxed in the discipline of their children. What will the out come of this current practice be in view of the Scriptures?* – Internet

Raymond F. Bennett
Beracah Baptist Mission
271 Gray Road
Ithaca, NY 14850-8761

Missionary of
Berea
Baptist Church
PO Box 39
Mantachie, MS 38855



In the first place I think we have to look at the reasons for this phenomenon. We are quick to blame the modern culture on psychology, but we must first realize that the intellect of today was raised by the same folks who bemoan the culture of today. Even those in the church have let modern psychology supersede the Biblical instructions for raising children.

Proverbs 22:6 is just as true when applied to a child taught the wrong way as it is to a child who was taught the right way. **“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”** We have listened to “child psychology” until we have made biblical discipline a crime, child abuse, in our society. I heard a young girl, just entering her teens, come home from school and tell her mother, “I don’t have to obey you.” That was what she was being taught in the public school.

Children who have not learned to obey – out of love and respect, not just fear of being spanked – by the time they are 3 or 4 years old will probably be discipline problems and a grief to their parents as they get in their teens and out on their own. **“A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him”** (Prov. 17:25).

Also, children who see fighting, inconsistencies in discipline, the absence of love, and even in some cases immorality, in dysfunctional homes, will always have a barrier between them and the Christian way of life.

There is a lot more behind that type of situation, but I’d like to suggest two basic errors in our churches that lead to that kind of youth attitude. (I said “churches” because it includes our kind of churches, not just the liberals.) But let me only suggest these two brief concepts.

One is that we do not seem to be getting across to our youth the sin and danger of an unequal yoke. In some cases we have not produced true conversions but just conversions that were made because “that’s what we are supposed to do,” or “that’s what our church teaches.”

We must also remember that just marrying someone who has professed Christ and may very well be in the “family of God” does not make an equal yoke.

The issues of proper doctrine, Christian obedience and a proper biblical family must be considered.

The other is that children brought up under strict, harsh discipline but without a loving gospel teaching along with it, will and do rebel. Then they determine that they will not subject their children to discipline.

Perhaps there is a third concept we should consider, that of the practical demonstration of true conversion in our own lives, a life and testimony which will bring our children to know Christ and shows them how to live for Christ. **“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel”** (Jud. 2:10).

In a more direct answer to your question, “What will the out come of this current practice be in view of the scriptures?,” beyond what we see in society today as a result of that practice I think that, if the Lord tarries, we will see the destruction of our way of life, we will become a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah, and reap the judgment of God.

What we have sown, so shall we also reap. If we do not care for our garden, the weeds will over run it. **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”** (Gal. 6:7).

RAY BENNETT

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

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



The Scriptures make it clear that one of the ways we prove our love for our children is to be consistent in our discipline of them. The discipline of children may be divided into two main categories: preventive discipline and punitive discipline. I believe that preventive discipline is by far the most important form of discipline. Preventive discipline comes in the form of instruction, teaching, providing a godly example, and having a faithful testimony that honors God. In preventive discipline we prepare our children to make moral choices based on the Word of God and principles of righteousness. Over and

over again in the book of Proverbs the wise man exhorts his son to follow his instruction and his example. Proverbs 2:1 and 5 declares: **“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee...Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”** (Other passages that are similar: 3:1-4; 4:1-6, 10-11; 5:1-2; 7:1-5; 23:15-23, take the time to read them). Proverbs 23:26 states: **“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.”** Here is where parents are failing in my estimation. They are not laying the foundation of preventive discipline in the home. Few are serious about teaching their children the Scriptures, memorizing verses, prayer, tithing, faithful church attendance, godly living, separation from the world, a good work ethic, how to come to the house of God and pay attention to the preaching of the Word. All of these disciplines and many more must be set in place to raise up a godly seed. When God is pleased to save a child and give him or her spiritual wisdom it is a source of great delight for the parents. Proverbs 23:24-25 states: **“The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise son shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.”**

There are huge blessings that may be reaped from the practice of preventive discipline in the home.

Punitive discipline involves the chastening and punishment of children for willful disobedience. This kind of discipline is far more effective when it is administered with love and the aim of restoration to fellowship. The Scriptures are very clear in stating that this form of discipline is an absolute necessity in the formation of righteous character in a child. Proverbs 23:13-14 declares: **“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell”** (cf. Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 29:15, 17, read them carefully!!). When children are young they must be spanked when they willfully disobey. They must be taught that there are consequences for their decisions and actions in life.

Where preventive and punitive discipline are lacking there will be chaos, shame, and disrespect for authority in a family and ultimately in society at large. Proverbs 10:1 declares: **“The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother”** (cf. 13:1, 13, 18; 15:5, 20; 17:25 18:13). How many parents are grieving over the foolish behavior of their wayward children! May God be pleased to raise up parents who will believe and apply the words of wisdom contained in Scripture and especially in the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 22:6 declares: **“Train**

up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

One word of caution regarding discipline must be inserted. Be careful not to make your children miserable by being so strict they are afraid to sneeze. Allow your children to be children. Let them play, laugh, and enjoy life. Spend time with them and love them. Don’t restrict them to the point of bitterness and resentment. Ephesians 6:4 declares: **“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”** My wife and I have had the privilege of raising three wonderful children. I do not consider myself an expert. I do believe that my Heavenly Father is the expert who has given us His infallible Word to follow. May God give us grace to be diligent in discipline as Deuteronomy 6:5-7 commands: **“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”**

TOM ROSS

Mike DeWitt Sr.
PO Box 950
Springfield, OR 97477

Pastor
Parkway Landmark
Baptist Church
PO Box 950
Springfield, OR 97477



The lack of discipline of a generation of children has produced a generation of children that have no respect for authority. **“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying”** (Prov. 19:18).

The world would have us to believe that God ordained discipline is a way to produce deviant behaviors, or lower the self esteem of the child. In fact the lack of discipline produces behaviors that produce shame for the parents of the non disciplined child. **“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame”** (Prov. 29:15). A good example of this very fact is Eli’s shame because of the lack of discipline to his sons and the facts of their ruin because of no well ordered instruction.

“Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul” (Prov. 29:17). Discipline is used only out of love for the loved one, and not out of anger. So many times I see in news reports of children being abused because of anger. I have one these young

◊ (Continued on page 411)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Just what is baptism? Is it a means to join the church or outward show to the world that we have joined a church? – Kentucky



“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:3-13). I certainly pray that all Baptists have been well informed of the importance of baptism. One of the most important doctrines that Baptist preachers need to continually teach is what baptism is. Baptism is the new believer’s witness to the lost of the world and to the church that they desire to serve God in newness of life.

Baptism is definitely needed before membership, although these two reasons run together in importance one is not more important than the other. Membership and the outward show of a new life are the reasons for baptism. Baptism is not needed to achieve salvation although baptism ought to be completed to fulfill all righteousness, as Christ did.

Our outward life, our works before others and our love for the members of the church we have joined is the outward

show of our church membership.

MIKE DEWITT



Baptism when properly administered has four essential elements. 1) It must be administered by the proper authority, a Scriptural New Testament Baptist Church. 2) It must be administered in the proper way, by complete immersion in water. 3) It must be administered upon the proper subject, a genuine believer in Jesus Christ who has made a confession of faith. 4) It must be administered for the proper reason, baptism is a symbolic and declarative act. It has no soul saving qualities whatsoever. Ordinances and religious ceremonies have never and will never save anyone. If any of these four elements of baptism are lacking the baptism is defective and must be rejected as invalid.

Baptism is referred to as a picture or the like figure of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Pet. 3:21). When a believer is baptized he is publically declaring his death to his old way of life, that he is raised to walk in the newness of life, to serve Jesus Christ through the New Testament church. In Scriptural baptism we are declaring that the blood of Jesus Christ alone has justified us through faith, that we have been saved for the purpose of serving and glorifying God, and that we are one day going to be glorified because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

J.A. Cobb summed up the purpose of baptism concisely when he wrote:

“Baptism is an act of public confession of one’s faith in and of his friendship to Christ. Baptism is a profession of one’s faith in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. It was by those that his salvation was procured. It is an imitation of Christ’s own act which professes or confesses one’s discipleship to Him. It manifests one’s friendship to Him because it shows a willingness to do what He has commanded. Baptism is, therefore, a declarative, not a procurative, ordinance. Not only does it profess one’s faith in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, but it also professes one’s faith that Christ will raise him up from the dead. It therefore, signifies the complete redemption of the disciples of Christ.”

Therefore, the design of baptism is to publically declare that you have already been saved by the grace of God and that you have a sincere desire to follow the Lord. Baptism also displays your obedience, loyalty, and allegiance to Christ and His church. Baptism is also the means that God is pleased to add believers to His kind of church in light of Acts 2:41: **“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls”** (cf. I Cor. 12:13, 18). The answer to both questions is yes, baptism does add the believer to the church and it is a public declaration of faith.

TOM ROSS



The simplest answer is “yes and yes, but a lot more.” There are many passages dealing with baptism, but I think these four can best quickly summarize the meaning of baptism.

First, it is the **“answer of a good conscience.”** **“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”** (I Pet. 3:21).

It is not the means of salvation! Between the “Campbellite” error and the “universal church” error, modern theology has just about reduced baptism to little more than an optional or denominational ritual. Baptism is commanded! It is clearly the first step of Christian obedience and identification. **“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...”** (Acts 2:38).

Second, Jesus, both in fulfilling the law and setting the example, was baptized by John, saying **“Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness”** (Matt. 3:15).

Third, baptism is the public identification of the believer with Jesus Christ. It is by immersion because that is the only tangible way to picture our death, burial and resurrection with Christ. **“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”** (Rom. 6:4).

I heard a candidate for ordination brag about how he applied this verse after he had shown the people that

“there wasn’t a drop of water in it.” I am surprised and disappointed that a supposedly Baptist church and council still ordained him.

Yes, baptism is the means of joining the church and an outward show that one has joined the church – but this demands a proper understanding of the local church, not the notion of an invisible, mystical, universal church. That was the ordination candidate’s mistake. He reversed the baptism spoken of by John in Matthew 3:11. **“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me (re: Christ) is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he (that is Christ) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”** Notice the inserted comments.

Fourth, if baptism lacks the proper authority it is merely an “outward show” and is invalid! **“And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus”** (Acts 19:3-5). When Christ formed His church, John’s baptism was no longer valid. Christ then delegated the authority to baptize to the Apostles **“When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples...)”** (John 4:1-2), and it has since been passed on through and to the ordained officers of a proper local church.

RAY BENNETT



Forum #1

(Continued from page 410) ♦

ones in my home that my family and I have adopted. The use of discipline must be consistent and structured to create an understanding of limits within the child.

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Heb. 12:6). The example of discipline needs to be used in a time in which a system that endorses self esteem (I’m ok your ok) doctrine and the thought that you’re only responsible to your self, and if you are not hurting anybody then it is ok to do it.

I will say it again, discipline is God ordered. Discipline is used in love always. The lack of discipline produces a lack of respect and a fear of authority thus producing the irreverent attitudes and actions.

MIKE DEWITT



“Found Wanting”

(Continued from page 409) ♦

untrue to the other mate. The meanest scoundrel upon earth is the man who steps in between a man and his wife. The worst devil in the world is the woman who under any circumstances comes between another woman and her husband.

Our free and easy divorce laws permit adultery on a wide scale. You can have as many husbands and wives as you want so long as you take them one at a time. Committing adultery by legal means does not lessen the sin. **“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery”** (Luke 16:18).

Do you lust for the good-looking woman, dear man? Do you desire the handsome man you see, dear woman? Our Savior said: **“Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”** Our Lord charges adultery upon not only the overt act, but to the secret thought of the heart. You are weighed and found wanting again in God’s scales.

EIGHTH WEIGH

The Eighth Commandment is: **“Thou shalt not steal”** (Ex. 20:15). This forbids us to rob ourselves of what we have by sinful spending. We are not to take our neighbor’s goods or his estate forcibly or clandestinely. We are not to withhold just debts, rents, or wages. We are not to rob the government or the taxpayers of their money.

How much do you weigh by this law? What is it to steal? It is to take property from another without giving adequate equivalent in either property or money. Every man who sells goods under false pretense is a thief. Every employer who does not pay a full wage to his employees is a thief. Every laboring man who does not give his employer an honest day’s work is a thief. The gambler who gambles and wins is a thief. The non-tithe paying church member is a thief! You are weighed and found wanting again, are you not?

NINTH WEIGH

The Ninth Commandment is: **“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor”** (Ex. 20:16). This forbids speaking unjustly of our neighbors. This prohibits slandering, backbiting, tale-bearing, etc., which is so common in our day even among church folks.

How much do you weigh by this standard? You may say: “I have never been convicted of perjury.” This may be true, but this is not all this commandment involves. Every time you tell anything untrue about another you have broken God’s law! When you add your little bit to a story in the community, you are a

lawbreaker!

Some of you say, “Did you hear that awful story about Mrs. . . .? I was sorry to hear it, but. . .” You lie. You were glad to hear it, or you would have kept it to yourself. The gossip and the slanderer is the vilest of thieves. The thief steals money; the slanderer steals what money cannot buy, reputation.

TENTH WEIGH

The Tenth Commandment is: **“Thou shalt not covet”** (Ex. 20:17). This forbids all inordinate desires of having what belongs to another.

This law covers not only the overt act, but also the thought of the heart. Some of you would not steal your neighbor’s car or house, but you wished it was yours. You would not run off with your neighbor’s wife, but you wished she was yours. You would not steal your neighbor’s money, but you wished it was yours. You have broken God’s law. You are weighed in the balances of God and found wanting.

How much do you weigh by the golden rule: **“All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them”** (Matt. 7:12). The heaviest weigh of all is Matthew 22:37-38: **“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”** Have you kept this commandment? Have you put God first in everything? If you are honest, you must admit that you have not. Then you have committed the first and greatest sin in all the world.

Every one of us is weighed and found wanting in God’s scales. God has weighed the whole world and found it wanting. But in Christ He has provided salvation for a wanting world. God sent His Son to keep the law for you and me who have broken it. When you take Christ into the balances with you, Christ can weigh up all the weights. When you take Christ into the balances with you, then you are weighed and found not wanting.

Will you not trust Jesus Christ? Will you not take Him with you in the balances of God? Woe to the man who is weighed in the balances of God for the last time without having Jesus Christ with him!



Stand Firm, Earnestly Contend

By Dave Hunt

A major part of Paul’s ministry was spent in disputing, reasoning, and persuading (Acts 19:8, 26; 28:23) in synagogues and market places (Acts 17:2, 3, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8), in religious schools (19:9), and wherever debates were held, such as on Mars Hill (17:18-34). Paul tells us that we are to follow his example,

so Christians should be earnestly reasoning with and persuading others of the truth of the gospel as the Lord gives opportunity. Friends, neighbors, perhaps family members are on their way to a Christless eternity. Let us try to help them!

Time is short. Whether by death or the Rapture, we’re all leaving this world soon.

We also saw with equal clarity that the Bible does not promote ecumenism of any kind or any other compromise of the faith. We are to **“earnestly contend for the faith,”** a clause that cannot be twisted to mean, “emphasize what we have in common and avoid controversial differences so that we can all work together for the common good.” That may sound commendable, but it is not biblical and is shameless disobedience to our Lord’s command.

The early church made no alliances with apostates, heretics, or non-Christians, even for seemingly good causes. There is no time to waste, and we must decide our priorities. Will we spend our time and resources in partnership with the world in political and social action, or will we preach the gospel and earnestly contend for “the” faith once for all committed to the saints?

From Genesis to Revelation, we are instructed to stand firm, following the Lord with pure hearts, not turning from the narrow way. Christ’s command to every Christian was and still is, **“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”** (Mark 16:15). This is every Christian’s marching orders.

Earnestly contending for the faith does not mean arguing over moot points that are not essential to the gospel. We must be patient with differences of opinion on minor matters of doctrine and practice. Yes, Paul openly rebuked Peter to his face before the church at Galatia, but his rebuke concerned the gospel, which cannot be changed one iota: **“I withstood him to the face. . . when I saw that they [the believers who had been led astray by Peter’s compromising in order to placate the Jews] walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. . .”** (Gal. 2:11-14).

We must stand up for God’s truth and not compromise. Sadly, we have Christian leaders today who not only disobey but even dare to revise what God has clearly written in His Word!

We cannot make what we think will be acceptable “small adjustments” to God’s way of salvation. If we tamper in the slightest with the gospel, we are despising God’s Word and jeopardizing the eternal destiny of souls! The unchanging and unchangeable **“gospel of Christ** [not the latest revision of it]. . . **is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth [it]”** (Rom. 1:16). This is the only way of salvation. Jesus said that for anyone to **“see [and] enter into**

the kingdom of God [i.e., be saved] **he. . . must be born again”** (John 3:3, 5, 7). Peter declares that we are **“born again. . . by the word of God. . . which by the gospel is preached”** (I Peter. 1:23-25).

No wonder we must proclaim the gospel. Only in believing this Word from God can anyone be saved. Tragically, we have seen that the gospel is being tampered with and compromised by many who claim to believe and preach it. Passages of Scripture such as the above, which are crystal clear in the duty they impose upon every Christian, are being willfully set aside to avoid “offending” the unsaved. How can someone’s hurt feelings be compared with an eternity separated from God in the torments of the damned? (Copied excerpt: *The Berean Call*, July 2008).



Longsuffering

By J. Harvey

(Continued from last issue.)

III. THE ADVANTAGES DERIVABLE FROM THE POSSESSION AND EXERCISE OF THIS FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

Though this temper of mind is somewhat difficult to be acquired, yet the advantages are incalculable.

1. *It smoothes the path of life.* To escape opposition, trials, and unabridged enjoyments, is, perhaps, too much to expect in this world. Nevertheless, if we cultivate Christian patience, it will afford solace to the mind, and enable us to bear up under all the vicissitudes of life, and render our conduct more estimable in the world.

Pure religion does not plant thorns in the path of life, torture the body, nor fill the mind with sorrow and gloomy forebodings. This may be the Romish way, as their convents, nunneries, and inquisitions testify. The deluded inmates of these places have known, to their sorrow, while performing penance, kneeling on peas, and perforating their cheeks with pins, that it was a rugged road to Heaven for them. Their mouths have been gagged, their bodies brutally tortured by the “pulley” and the “rack,” and damp and filthy dungeons have been their miserable abodes; and they were taught by their corrupted and fiendish priests and other functionaries of such diabolical dens of infamy and dungeons of death to believe that that was the only way to secure everlasting happiness in Heaven.

On this subject you need only read “The awful Disclosures of Maria Monk, as exhibited in a Narrative of her Sufferings during a Residence of Five

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Longsuffering

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Years as a Novice, and Two Years as a Black Nun, in the Hotel Dieu Nunnery at Montreal." Published, 1838, by Horner and Bates, New York; and reprinted by J. Howitt, Nottingham. Also the "Narrative of a Singular Escape from a Portuguese Convent, with an Introductory Address by the W. Carus Wilson, Rector of Whittington." And also, the ably written "History of the Inquisition," by Charles H. Davie.

Such inquisitorial proceedings, such extorted confessions and imposed penances, under the garb of religion, is absolute mockery---a system which savours more of Satan than of Christ. The religion of the Bible is a religion of light, liberty, love, and enjoyment. It sweetens the cup of life, assuages grief, and moderates the desires of the heart. It has reduced many a mountain to a plain, made many a rough path smooth, many a crooked thing straight, many miserable souls happy, and given an essential feature to the character.

If the mind is torn and distracted by impatience and fretfulness, there cannot exist in the soul that deep repose and settled calm which is the result of longsuffering; a virtue we should possess, a grace we should cultivate, and a spirit we should always manifest. We must be **"followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises"** (Heb. 6:12).

2. *It gives sobriety to the judgment.* Cause and effect, actions and results, are closely connected. Where patience and fretfulness exist, there is corresponding evidence in the conduct. Patience is very requisite in seasons of trial and affliction, or we are liable to forget that they are designed for our profit. When Jonah's gourd withered by his side, and he fainted beneath the scorching rays of the orb of day, he became fretful and querulous, when he said, **"It is better for me to die than to live"** (Jonah 4:3). **"I do well to be angry, even unto death."** But the resigned and submissive patriarch could say, and, perhaps, under far more trying circumstances than those of Jonah: "Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee." Fretfulness would soon conclude, **"All these things are against me"** (Gen. 42:36) but patience does not jump to a hasty conclusion, but examines, calculates, reasons, weighs, and then conducts you into a rational and inspired opinion. **"The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD"** (Lam. 3:25-26).

3. *It enables its possessors to overcome difficulties.* Difficulties at which the impatient man would start aside. Every

acquisition worthy of man's pursuit is beset by difficulties, or surrounded by obstacles of some kind. Learning is not attained all at once; arts and sciences, trades and professions, are not comprehended without close application and diligence. The student and the apprentice must grapple with difficulties until they are surmounted, and the mountain becomes a plain. Patience, therefore, is necessary to secure the end contemplated in such pursuits.

And it is equally essential to a progress in religion. The path of Heaven is often difficult; strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth thither. Here are formidable barriers to our advancement in the Divine life, which arise from the world, the flesh, and Satan; we must contend for the faith, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ. It will be well with us, if by our continuance in the path of duty, and incessant labours in the vineyard of the Lord, it can be said of us as the Saviour said of the church at Ephesus---**"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou . . . hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted"** (Rev. 2:2-3). Some have laboured long in the service of Christ, have borne the heat and burden of the day; no difficulties, however great, no opposition, however powerful, no trials, however fiery, could ever move them from their purpose. Let us, my brethren, **"run with patience the race that is set before us"** (Heb. 12:1). **"For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds"** (Heb. 12:3).

*"Loose me from earth's enclosure, from the sun's Contracted circle, set my heart at large;
Eliminate my spirit, give it range
Through provinces of thought yet unexplored;
Teach me, by this stupendous scaffolding,
Creation's golden steps to climb to Thee."*

4. *It tends to preserve union in the church.* It is generally admitted that an evil prevented is better than an evil removed. Hasty conclusions, rash judgment, uncharitable suspicions, unguarded expressions, invidious remarks, an impatient spirit, engendered in the church, are calculated to destroy the unity of its members and diminish their spirituality of mind. Discord and agitation are sore evils wherever they exist, and frequently terminate or issue in the destruction of piety.

It is especially desirable that longsuffering should be cultivated in order to prevent disruption, and promote harmony and love in the church and in the world. We must carefully avoid everything that would impede the progress of religion and the growth of grace in our hearts. It is not an obscure virtue, belonging only to those who exist

in the catacombs or prisons of the earth, but must be exhibited in our intercourse with each other, that men may have no occasion to suspect the sincerity of our profession and the integrity of our hearts. This fruit of the Spirit must be possessed, for it is indispensable to the harmony of our character and the perfection of our attainments. We must restrain every inclination to resentment and impatience by cherishing a submissive spirit and willing resignation to the Divine will in all things. **"Put on . . . bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering"** (Col. 3:12).

There are sufficient reasons for the cultivation of the Christian grace of longsuffering.

1. *Because our afflictions are light and momentary.* **"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"** (II Cor. 4:17). They are light in degree, and light in comparison, with what we have deserved; they are momentary, **"but for a moment,"** in reality brief when compared with eternity. Sufferings, conflicts, temptations, persecutions, and bereavement, are only endured for a while; they are fleeting in their duration. Our life is but a day that is waning fast; it is dwindling to a point; it will shortly close; the shadows of night will soon be on the sky. At times the horizon may be wrapt in thick darkness, but there is a pure, tranquil, and bright region beyond the sorrows and commotions of the present life.

*"With Christ in my heart, and a staff in my hand,
I travel in haste through an enemy's land.*

*The road may be rough, but it cannot be long,
So I'll smooth it with hope and cheer it with song."*

The race will soon be run, the battle will soon be over, the storm will soon be past, the voyage will soon be ended. **"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you"** (I Pet. 5:10).

2. *Because divine help is promised.* **"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour"** (Isa. 43:2-3). **"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness"** (Isa. 41:10).

His presence, help, and protection promised to His people are powerful incentives to patience. His help is sufficient to sustain you in the most trying circumstances, and to enable you to vanquish your enemies, to repel

temptation, and His grace can preserve you from repining and fretfulness. **"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest"** (Ex. 33:14).

3. *Because the provision of the Gospel is adapted to our necessities.* In the economy of grace suitable provision is made for man. The Gospel supplies every blessing requisite to our state, however diversified our wants and numerous our desires. Everything is provided which is essential to our happiness and conducive to our enjoyments. Man in his natural state is guilty, but the Gospel reveals pardon; he is polluted, but the Gospel offers purity; he is dead in trespasses and sins, but the Gospel imparts life; he is in danger, but the Gospel points him to a city of refuge; he is in darkness, but the Gospel is a lamp to his feet and a light to his path; he is perishing with hunger, but the Gospel supplies him with the bread of life; he is diseased, but the Gospel contains a sure remedy.

Here we discover the wisdom and goodness of God in providing a catholic provision for the world and instituting means by which we can secure permanent peace and everlasting happiness. While many reject the provision of the Gospel and despise the means of its attainment, let us be grateful to the Author of our being for the unmerited favours He hath bestowed upon us. If the gifts of Providence are unequally distributed let us not demur on that account, for the Almighty knows what is best for us; but rejoice that we may be equal partakers of divine grace---an ample compensation for any temporal privation we may have sustained.

The apostle Paul has recorded his testimony in favour of the Gospel: **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"** (Rom. 1:16).

Every believer in Christ can bear testimony as to the incomparable blessings it confers. The universality of this provision is worthy of remark. It is for all classes, tongues, and people, without restriction. "Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man." What encouragement and hope are here to the true penitent! Ye wandering prodigals, ye weeping mourners, ye trembling penitents, look up; there is mercy for you---provision suitable for you.

"Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1).

From these considerations let Christians exercise the grace of longsuffering, cherish feelings of brotherly kindness, put off their bloom, and lay aside their sackcloth; banish their irascible passions and murmurings; wipe the tears from their eyes, and look

♦ (Continued on page 414)

Longsuffering

(Continued from page 413) ♦

at the iris in the clouds, and think of the inheritance beyond the starry heights. Let the pledges of Divine love, the assurances of the divine favour, and the experience of former deliverances encourage and strengthen your attachment to Him Who hath said, **"My grace is sufficient for thee"** (II Cor. 12:9).

"Patient the appointed race to run,

This weary world we cast behind;

From strength to strength we travel on,

The New Jerusalem to find:

Our labour this, our only aim,

To find the New Jerusalem.



The Blame Game or Excuses

By H. C. McSwain
of Mansfield, Louisiana

"And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12-13).

An excuse may be defined as "less than a logical explanation for one's actions." A reason has more logic and is more acceptable.

"Passing the buck" is as old as mankind, as we see here. God was looking for accountability on the part of His creatures and found none. Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent who did not have anyone to pass the buck to. Thus the idea of irresponsibility was born, continued on through the antediluvian age into Moses' time, and yes, even seems to be thriving better than ever.

We have a novelty song called "Excuses." It goes something like this: "Excuses, excuses, you'll hear them every day. Now the devil, he'll supply them if from church you'll stay away. . . ." These words are amusing, true, and never ending.

In virtually every criminal case today, this theme raises its foolish, but most appealing, head. Not too many years ago in California, we saw the Menendez case, then the Dohmer case, the Rolling case in Florida (this man was actually from Shreveport originally). I think all of these criminals were "excused" from the death penalty, though they deserved it.

In Somerville, N.J., Charles Cullen, a male nurse, who had admitted murdering 29 people in two states, was "excused" from the death penalty because, "he promised to help investigators solve the killings." That was really nice of him, don't

you think? How many people will you have to kill to receive the death penalty? What excuse do we offer to let people like these continue to live and to be an expense to the tax payers?

CAIN

We see this idea continued in the life of Cain, the firstborn of Adam. After he killed his brother Abel, and being questioned by God as to Abel's whereabouts, Cain answered, **". . . I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"** (Gen. 4:9).

In essence, Cain said, "I am not accountable for what happened. You, God, made me. You gave me a bad temper; it erupted and this is the result. Don't blame me, blame yourself, God!" And the twin brother of irresponsibility is the whining syndrome. **"My punishment is greater than I can bear"** (Gen. 4:13). This translates into, "I should not be punished for my horrendous crime because of mitigating circumstances." (Doesn't this sound sophisticated? Does anyone know what "mitigating" means?)

SARAH

"And Sarah said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee" (Gen. 16:5). Literally translated it says: "It is your fault Abraham!" I think Sarah had been the originator of this idea of sharing her personal maid with her husband!

ESAU

"And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" (Gen. 27:36).

Esau, after he had made the decision to give away his birthright, and realizing it was a mistake, now takes the easy way out by trying to make Jacob at fault. It did not fly with the Lord or even with his old, half-blind father.

AARON

"And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf" (Ex. 32:21-24).

Aaron said, "Don't blame me, blame the people who made me do it." What about "The Devil made me do it?" We can all get on "his" case without anyone being offended.

SAUL

After being accused by Samuel of not obeying the commandments of God, he offered this lame excuse: **"But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal"** (I Sam. 15:21).

In other words, "Hey Samuel, it was not I, but the people who did this. I really did not want to, but you know how it is; I didn't have any choice."

PILATE

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it" (Matt. 27:24).

Pilate has to be the champ at trying to duck responsibility. Do you suppose he really thought a little hand washing in public would relieve him of all responsibility?

JUDAS

"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed and went and hanged himself."

Judas was trying to duck out of his responsibility in the betrayal of Christ. It is similar to what Pilate did. Is it similar to a man getting drunk, killing someone and then saying, "I really didn't mean to. It was the liquor."

THE BARREN FIG TREE

"He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luke 13:6-7).

Regardless of what this may or may not represent, the primary lesson is, we are not to just look beautiful; we have no excuse from not serving some useful purpose in this life, otherwise we are only occupying space, and I am convinced that purpose must be related to the Lord in some manner or other.

MORE EXCUSES – GIDEON'S

When the Lord laid His hand on Gideon, Gideon tried to duck out of his responsibility by making excuses. The first he offered was, "Lord, you have abandoned us: **". . . but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites"** (Jud. 6:13).

The excuse seemed a little strange as it was the Lord Himself talking with him! Yet, he was actually blaming God for their

circumstances! That seems a little bizarre.

The second excuse was that of poverty and lack of prominence: **"And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manassah, and I am the least in my father's house"** (Jud. 6:15).

But what was he really saying? That he could see no way this could possibly be accomplished; he was judging on the basis of his perception of prevailing circumstances. We can all identify with this one.

JESUS INVITATION

"And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:59-60).

Was Christ too demanding? Was He unreasonable? No. The man was saying he had something else more important to do, before he could follow the Lord. So, what is he saying? He is putting Christ second or perhaps even further down on his list of priorities.

Remember Moses and his lame excuses? Do you remember his first one? He stuttered! But God wasn't asking him to emcee a talk show. The Apostle Paul seemed to be dealing with this same problem when he said to the Corinthians, **"I . . . came not with excellency of speech."**

FOOLISH EXCUSES

Luke 14:18-20, **"And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."**

What is the one thing all of these excuses have in common? They are foolish. Hardly anyone will buy property without looking at it; hardly anyone would buy oxen without first trying them out; surely no good wife would be a detriment to her husband. Why didn't they tell the man the truth and say, "We don't like you"?

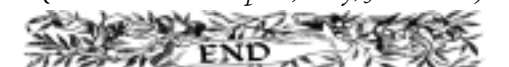
PROCRASTINATION

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, God thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25).

The homosexual community now claims they are the victims of their genes! So, that means mom and dad, or maybe God is to be blamed. They are not to be blamed for their foolish ways.

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

(The Landmark Baptist, May/June 2008)





From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The History of Premillennialism

PART 1

The millennial reign of Christ has been an area of controversy since the third century. In the last two centuries there has been renewed interest in this subject due to the world events. Everybody from liberals to conservatives are talking about the millennium. It is regrettable that so many systematic theologies have failed to give an honest treatment of the millennial issue.

It is to be doubted if any Biblical teaching has suffered any worse at the hands of expositors and church historians than this precious truth. In our generation Satan has been successful in dividing Christendom into increasing difference of opinion about this topic. We would expect no less of the old Serpent, especially with Christ coming so near at hand. The religious world is more confused today about the second coming of Christ than the Jews were about His first coming.

TERMS DEFINED

The world millennium means a thousand years. It is derived from two Latin words, *Mille* which means a thousand and *Annum*, which means a year. The word itself is not found in our English translation, yet its equivalent is found six times in Revelation 20:1-7. Millennium is a theological term based upon this passage of the Holy Writ. Those who take this passage literally are called millenarians, or more commonly, premillenarians.

Those who believe this doctrine in the centuries following the apostolic age were called chiliasts by their opponents. This term came from the Greek word *Chilia* which means a thousand.

Some say the thousand years in Revelation 20 is now in process; others expect it to occur in the future before Christ comes; still others expect Christ to return before the kingdom can come. These views are respectively called amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism.

AMILLENNIAL

An amillennialist is one who is against the teaching of a literal millennium, hence called a-millennialists. He is the one who when told about Revelation 20 says: "Ah! I don't believe that is so." Those of this persuasion have been saying this

since the days of Augustine and Origen. They say Satan was bound at the first coming of Christ. The present age with its gospel benefits is the fulfillment of the millennial prophecies. Others, realizing the foolishness of such a theory, say the millennium is fulfilled by the departed saints who reign in Heaven.

Amillennialists are more certain about what kingdom prophecies do not mean than what they really mean. They spiritualize all the kingdom prophecies, making Israel the church and David's throne Heaven. A thousand years to them merely means an indefinite time, or something, in Revelation 20. Every prophecy must be reworked to fit their theories. They never seem to consider the words of the Apostle Peter: "**No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation**" (II Peter 1:20).

Amillennial sovereign grace Baptists need to consider that the method of spiritualizing the Scriptures is the method which liberals use to discredit all the great doctrines of the Word of God. It is the same argument used by infidels to disprove the Bible. It is the method used by those who teach a universal, invisible church. If the spiritualizing method of amillennialists were applied to all the doctrines of the Word, Christian revelation would be completely destroyed.

PREMILLENNIALISM

A premillennialist is one who believes that Christ will come before the millennial reign. Those who hold this view contend that Christ will literally reign on earth for a thousand years with the saints following the second advent. Premillennialists interpret literally the kingdom prophecies in the Old and New Testament.

Premillennialists believe the Bible teaches that world conditions will grow worse and worse. The present age will terminate in the greatest time of trouble the world has ever known called the Great Tribulation. The second advent of Christ will destroy Antichrist and apostate Christendom. Satan will be bound a thousand years in the bottomless pit. The nation of Israel will be revived, regenerated, and restored to their ancient land. Christ will establish a glorious heavenly kingdom on earth in Jerusalem. In this kingdom of outward glory there

will be a time of righteousness, peace, and tranquility and the world will enjoy its long-expected Sabbatic rest.

It is also true that premillennialists hold to two bodily resurrections, one for the righteous, the other for the unrighteous, separated by a thousand years. They also distinguish between the church which Christ established during His personal ministry and the saints of the Old Testament. They do not make Israel the church.

THE EARLY CHURCHES WERE PREMILLENNIAL

The premillennial view of Christ's second coming is no new doctrine. It dates back to the days of the prophets of old as it was largely the subject of their prophecies. Particularly is this so of the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Malachi, who prophesied during the period from 700 to 400 B.C. It was clearly taught by Christ. The Apostles firmly held to premillennialism and the apostolic churches held it up as a criterion of perfect orthodoxy.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

The first witness I introduce is Barnabas, a Levite of the country of Cyprus. He was a traveling companion and fellow-preacher with the Apostle Paul. He left an epistle which sets forth his views on the millennium. Some consider his epistle apocryphal, but even if this is so, this epistle still belongs to early Christian antiquity, and it is a competent witness as to what were the views then entertained.

The epistle was probably written between A.D. 70 to 79. This statement is found in it: "He meaneth this, that in six thousand years the Lord shall bring all things to an end; for the day with Him signifieth a thousand years; and this He himself beareth me witness, saying; Behold, the day of the Lord shall be a thousand years. Therefore, children, in six days, that is in six thousand years, everything shall come to an end. And He rested on the seventh day. This He meaneth; when His Son shall come, and shall abolish the time of the Lawless One, and shall judge the ungodly, and shall change the sun and the moon and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day" (*The Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 151-152). Such is the testimony of the one the Bible calls "**A good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.**"

The next witness is Clement, pastor of the church at Rome, who wrote about A.D. 96-100 in his Second Epistle: "If therefore we shall have wrought righteousness in the sight of God, we shall enter into His kingdom and shall receive the promises which ear hath not heard nor eye seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man. Let us therefore await the kingdom of God betimes in love and righteousness, since we know not the day of God's appearing" (*ibid.*, pg. 48).

Clement was the companion of Paul and John. Paul mentions him among his "**fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life**" (Phil. 4:3). He believed in a speedy coming of Christ to set up His kingdom. "He connected 'the great and glorious promises' made to the people of God with the promise that 'the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.' He taught that 'we shall come to judgment in the flesh, and so also in the flesh receive the reward.' He also identified the coming of the kingdom with 'the day of God's appearing,' and exhorted his readers hourly to expect, wait and pray for it, that they might 'enter into his kingdom and receive the promises'" (*The Last Times* by J. A. Seiss, pp. 238-239, 1856 edition).

The next witness is the Shepherd of Hermas, the contemporary of Clement. He wrote about A.D. 90-100 these words: "The elect of God will dwell in the future age, and remain pure and unstained. They will be all joyful then. All things will be smooth to them if they keep His commandments. They shall obtain victory and reward, but the world that now is shall be destroyed by fire. This Age is winter to the just, the future or coming Age is Summer" (Cited by Nathaniel West in *Premillennial Essays of the Prophetic Conference*, pp. 331-332, 1879).

The next person is Polycarp, pastor of the church in Smyrna and a disciple of the Apostle John. He wrote about A.D. 95-100 these things: "For if we be well pleasing unto Him in this present world, we shall receive the future world, also, according as He promised us to raise us from the dead, and that if we conduct ourselves worthily of Him we shall also reign with Him, if indeed we have faith" (*The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 97). Such is the testimony of "**the angel of the church at Smyrna.**" Eusebius bears the highest testimony concerning him, and makes him a pattern of orthodoxy. Burnet, Duffield, Brooks and Ward pronounce him a decided millenarian.

The next witness is Papias, pastor of the church in Hierapolis and friend of the Apostle John and Polycarp. Eusebius, an amillennialist, pronounced him "eloquent and learning in the Scriptures." Papias collected all that could be gathered of the teachings and sayings of Christ and the apostles. He claimed to have gotten his chiliasm from the book of Revelation and the apostles of Christ. He certainly had the opportunity to know the truth.

Eusebius himself thus speaks of Papias. "The same person, moreover, has set down other things as coming to him from unwritten tradition, amongst these some strange parables and instructions of the Saviour, and some other things of a more fabulous nature. Amongst these he says that there will be a millennium after the resurrection from the dead,

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Premillennialism

(Continued from page 415) ◊

when the personal reign of Christ will be established on the earth" (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I, p. 154). Papias wrote about A.D. 110.

Ignatius, pastor of the church at Antioch, writing toward the close of the first century made brief references to our doctrine. He mentions "the last times" and exhorts his readers to "expect Him" (Cited by Lewis Chafer in *Systematic Theology*, Vol. IV, p. 272).

The next witness I call is Justin Martyr who lived from A.D. 100 to 168. Mosheim calls him "a man of eminent piety and learning, who, from a pagan philosopher, became a Christian martyr." In his Dialogue with Trypho, he says "I, and as many as are orthodox Christians, do acknowledge that there shall be a resurrection of the body, and a residence of a thousand years in Jerusalem rebuilt, adorned and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah and others do unanimously attest. . . Moreover, a certain man among us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, in a revelation made to him, did prophesy that the faithful believers in Christ shall live a thousand years in the New Jerusalem, and after that shall be the general resurrection and judgment" (*The Last Times* by J. A. Seiss, pp. 239-240, 1856 edition). Not only does Justin here declare himself a believer in our doctrine, but he holds it up as the keystone of orthodoxy.

Next is Irenaeus (A.D. 140-202), the pastor of Lyons and the disciple of Polycarp and the pupil of the Apostle John. It has justly been said that "for learning, steadfastness, and zeal, he was among the most renowned of the early fathers." Mosheim says that his writings are "the most precious monuments of ancient erudition." He wrote: "For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which take place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in the times of which resurrection the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels. . . (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I, p. 565).

Again he writes: "But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring

to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that 'many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Issac, and Jacob'" (*ibid.* p. 560).

Also it must be said that there can be little doubt that the predecessor of Irenaeus, Pothinus, was a chiliast along with all the churches of Lyons and Vienne. Melito, bishop of Saradis, who lived about A.D. 100-170 is called by Jerome and Genadius "A decided Millenarian" (*The Theocratic Kingdom* by George Peters, Vol. I, p. 495). Hegisippus (A.D. 130-190) is called the Neander "a church teacher, of Jewish origin and strong Jewish prepossessions" and was an advocate of "sensual Chiliasm" (*Neander's Church History*, Vol II, pp. 430, 432). Apollinaris (A.D. 160-240), the pastor of the church at Hierapolis, is conceded by Hagenback as having "held millenarian notions and wrote a treatise in two books against Dionysius, which met with great success at the time" (*History of Doctrines*, Vol II, p 88).

Others may be added to these.

But we must not close without calling forth Tertullian (A.D. 150-220). He was reckoned by Jerome among the Latin millenarians. He was a man of eloquence and learning and he had many excellencies. His testimony is conspicuous and positive: "But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem. . . (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III, p. 342).

I have now brought down my list of testimonies to the end of the second century after Christ. I have given you the language of the most pious and distinguished Bible scholars who lived during that time. And without one dissenting voice among them, it has been proven that the early church fathers believed in premillennialism. Justin Martyr recognized premillennialism as the criterion of a perfect orthodoxy. He even went so far as to call those who opposed this teaching "godless, impious heretics, teaching doctrines that are in every way blasphemous, atheistical, and foolish" (See *The Millennium in the Church* by D. H. Kromminga, p. 45). Many of these men died martyrs, sealing the premillennial truth with their own life's blood.

Those who are acquainted with church history know that premillennial truth was one of the old landmarks of the faith of the apostolic churches. They looked for Christ to return in glory and to reign in Jerusalem with His glorified saints for one thousand years. If the church of today is to keep to the simplicities of those early times after which she professes to pattern, she must hold to the personal reign of Christ with His saints on earth

as the blessed hope of God's people.

WHAT THE SCHOLARS SAY

Some of the best Bible scholars and church historians in the world are agreed that the early church was premillennial in doctrine. This is not idle chatter. I shall prove it for the benefit of all concerned.

"Faith in the nearness of Christ's second advent and the establishing of his reign of glory on the earth was undoubtedly a strong point in the primitive Christian church" (*The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. XVIII, p. 461). This article was written by Adolp Harnock who was no friend of premillennialism.

The well-known infidel historian, Edward Gibbon, wrote: "The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ. As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present state, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to six thousand years, By the same analogy it was inferred that this long period of Labor and contention, which was not almost elapsed, would be succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection" (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. I, pp 533-534).

The same writer continues: "The assurance of such a Millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the son of Constantine. Through it might not be universally received, it appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers. . ." (*ibid.*, p. 534).

William Chillingworth (1602-1644), the Chancellor of Salisbury, declared: ". . . the doctrine of the Millennium was believed and taught by the most eminent Fathers of the age next after the Apostles, and by none of that age opposed or condemned; therefore, it was the catholic doctrine of those times" (*Works of Chillingworth*, fol. ed., p. 174).

Professor George Bush, the Hebrew scholar of New York City and an amillennialist, admits that "there is ample evidence that the doctrine of the Chiliasts was actually the catholic faith of more than one century," that even "during the first three centuries it was very extensively embraced" (*Millennium*, chap. 1, section 2).

Daniel Whitby (1638-1726) in his Treatise on Tradition gives this information: "The doctrine of the Millennium, or the reign of saints on earth for a thousand years, is now

rejected by all Roman Catholics, and by the greatest part of Protestants; and yet it passed among the best Christians, for two hundred and fifty years, for a tradition apostolical. . ." (Cited by George Peters in *The Theocratic Kingdom*, Vol. I, pp. 482-483).

Joseph Mede (1586-1638), the great English biblical scholar, penned these words: "Chiliasm was the general belief of all orthodox Christians in the age immediately following the Apostles, and none were known to deny it but the heretics, who denied the resurrection" (*The Works of Joseph Mede*, pp. 602, 771).

Wilhelm Muenscher (1766-1814), of the University of Marburg, declared: "It was universally received by almost all teachers" (*Church History*, Vol. II, p. 415).

Horatius Bonar says: "I intended to have devoted a chapter to the history of Millennialism. This, however, I have since resolved not to undertake. . . But the conclusion to which all inquires upon this subject have come, in reference to the early history of doctrine, is, that during the three first centuries it prevailed universally, its only opponent being the Gnostics. This is now an acknowledged historical fact, a fact which we may well ask our opponents to account for,---a fact which we believe cannot be accounted for, save upon the supposition that Chiliasm was an article of the Apostolic Creed" (*Prophetic Landmarks*, preface xv, 1847 edition).

Philip Schaff, the great church historian, states: "The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment. It was indeed not the doctrine of the church embodied in any creed or form of devotion, but a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers" (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, p. 614).

Sir Issac Newton (1642-1717), the scientist and theologian, said: "In short the doctrine of the Millennium was generally believed in the three first and purest ages, and this cause of the fortitude of the primitive Christians; they even coveted martyrdom, in hopes of being partakers of the privileges and glories of the martyrs in the first resurrection" (*On Prophecy*, p. 591-592).

Bishop Russel, and amillennialist, affirms that "down to the beginning of the fourth century, the sure and certain hope entertained by the Christian world, that the Redeemer would appear on earth and exercise authority during 1,000 years, was universal" (*History of the Scotch Episcopal Church*, p. 84).

Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler (1792-1854), the German Protestant church

◊ (Continued on page 417)

Premillennialism

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historian wrote: "Millenarianism became the general belief of the time and met with almost no other opposition than that given by the Gnostics" (*Church History*, Vol. I, p. 166).

John Lawrence Mosheim (1694-1755), a Lutheran and apost-millennialist, said of the millennial controversy in the third century: "Long before this period, an opinion had prevailed, that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men, before the entire and final dissolution of this world. This opinion, which had hitherto met with no opposition, was differently interpreted by different persons" (*Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. I, p. 77).

Commenting upon the apostolic age to Constantine, George Park Fisher (1827-1909) of Yale Divinity School said: "The belief in a millennial kingdom on earth, to follow the second advent of Christ, was widely diffused. In some cases it was conceived of a scene of material comfort, when the ground would have a miraculous fertility, and its products be proportionately rich. We discern in this millennial expectation traces of the Judaic conception of the Messiah's reign. The Christian doctrine of a millennium differed, however, in regarding his reign on earth as limited in its duration, and as only the prelude to the heavenly state--a state of spiritual blessedness. This millennial or chiliastic belief is found in Justin, Irenaeus, and Tertullian" (*History of the Christian Church*, pp. 84-85).

Herny Clay Sheldon (1845-1867), a Methodist Episcopalian of Boston University, testified that "premillenarianism was the doctrine of the Christians in the first and second century. The fathers expected anti-Christ to arise and reign, and meet his overthrow at the personal coming of the Lord. After which the Kingdom of Christ for a thousand years, would be established on earth" (*History of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. 1, p. 145).

Crippen declared that "the early Fathers lived in expectation of our Lord's speedy return... They distinguish between a first resurrection of the saints and a second or general resurrection. These they supposed would be separated by a period of a thousand years, during which Christ should reign over the saints in Jerusalem" (*History of Doctrine*, p. 231).

"In the early years of the church, the millennial hope, often referred to as 'chiliasm,' was a popular theme of Christian writers. It is still a widely held article of faith in the Christian Church" (*The Layman's Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 524).

Walter Rauschenbush (1861-1918), at one time professor of Church History in Rochester Theological Seminary and a well-known Higer Critic and

exponent of Modern Theology, said: "The hope of the immediate return of Christ dominated the life of primitive Christianity. Its missionary zeal, its moral energy, its theological conceptions, and its outlook on the world, the interests it cherished and the interests it repudiated can all be understood only under the high atmospheric pressure of that expectation. This great culminating event was believed to be very near. Paul, too, believed this . . . The return of the Lord meant the inauguration of the kingdom of God. What the prophets had foretold, what the people had longed for, and what John the Baptist had proclaimed as close at hand, would come to pass when Jesus returned from heaven to reign. He had not achieved His mission during His early life; the opposition of the rulers had frustrated that; it had been God's will so; but He was still the Messiah of Israel; the national salvation was bound to come; the kingdom would yet be restored to Israel" (*Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. 103).

John Wesley (1703-1791), founder of the Methodist Church said: "From the time that the Church and State, the

kingdoms of Christ and the world, were so strangely and unnaturally blended together, Christianity and heathenism were so thoroughly incorporated with each other that they will hardly ever be divided until Christ comes to reign upon earth" (*Norris-Wallace Debate*, p. 11, 1935 edition).

The well-known Baptist leader, J. R. Graves (1820-1893), said on this subject: "The belief in the premillennial coming of Christ was the faith of all orthodox Christians in the first three centuries . . . I feel warranted in declaring the doctrine of the premillennial coming of Christ is one of the old landmarks of primitive Christianity, and should be received and held fast by all Christians of this age" (*The Seven Dispensations*, pp. 404-405).

If this list of well-known authorities does not establish that the early church was premillennial, then there is no list which can. Those who deny that the early Christians were premillennial are strangers to the Holy Scriptures and the major books of antiquity.



THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

CITY OF MODESTO SILENCES CHRISTIAN SPEECH

(EP News)--Attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) sued the city of Modesto, Calif., July 23 after officials silenced a Christian man for evangelizing in the city plaza. Kevin Borden and his friends had peacefully shared their faith every Saturday night for three years, until Brenden Theatres, a private business located on the plaza, complained to the city about Borden's speech. The theater began renting the plaza almost every Saturday evening, excluding Borden from the area. City officials and theater security guards threatened to arrest Borden and his friends if they enter the plaza on Saturday nights, claiming that evangelizing is not an activity protected by freedom of speech laws.

"Christians have the same First Amendment rights as anyone else in America," said ADF Litigation Counsel Heather Gebelin Hacker. "Government officials cannot single out Christians for discrimination because some people don't like the content of their message."

FEDERAL LEGISLATION FOCUSES ON "ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY"

(EP News)--Under legislation sitting in

Congress, teachers may have to sacrifice reading, writing and arithmetic for lessons on global warming. The No Child Left Inside Act would allocate federal funds to "environmental education and teacher training" for grades K-12. Critics, including Allen Quist, a political science professor at Bethany Lutheran College, said there's an agenda behind the bill. "They don't have to be literate with regards to our Constitution or our Declaration of Independence," he said, "but they have to be environmentally literate. Come on."

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES MARRIAGE INITIATIVE

(EP News)--Mississippi State University's Healthy Marriage Initiative will bring together community organizations, agencies and individuals to help the state's troubled marriages and families. The initiative comes in response to research showing Mississippi leads the nation in single-parent households and is last in child well-being. Tabitha Staier, assistant professor in family education and policy at Mississippi State, said the goal is to support healthy marriages, which research shows benefit children and adults. "We know that children living in a two-parent, married household tend to experience better physical

and emotional health," she told OneNewsNow.com. "They have less juvenile delinquency and school failure, and an increased chance of graduating college." The program also offers help to stepfamilies, grandparents and engaged couples.

OHIO JUDGE GRANTS TEENS ABORTIONS

(EP News)--Parental-involvement laws are supposed to protect teen girls, but an Ohio judge freely sidesteps those laws and allows every teen she sees to have an abortion. Ohio is one of 36 states that requires parental notification or consent before a girl younger than 18 can abort her preborn baby. Most of those states allow judges to bypass parents if they feel the girl could face abuse. Kim Browne, a judge in Franklin County, said she has never denied a request. "I don't think I'm playing God at all," Browne told The Columbus Dispatch. "That is their choice. That's the decision they are going to have to live with."

BUSH WORKS TO PROTECT PRO-LIFE HEALTH CARE WORKERS

(EP News)--The Bush administration wants all health programs seeking federal aid to promise — in writing — they will respect health care providers' moral convictions. The proposal would prevent state and local governments from discriminating against hospitals and individuals that oppose abortion. Dr. David Stevens, executive director of the Christian Medical Association, said the move was overdue. "It's high time the will of the people, as expressed by over 35 years of laws passed by Congress, finally be translated into practical health care regulations," he said.

TEXAS ALLOWS HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE COURSE

(EP News)--The Texas State Board of Education approved an elective high school Bible course Friday, ignoring complaints from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). "Elective Bible courses now have the final green light from the Texas State Board of Education, and Texas has now gained an academic advantage," said Jonathan Saenz, director of legislative affairs for the Free Market Foundation. "There was some token opposition from enemies of academic freedom, but at the end of the day, the (board) followed the attorney general's opinion and made the right decision."

MARRIAGE ADVOCATES LET CALIFORNIA BALLOT LANGUAGE STAND

(EP News)--California's marriage-protection amendment will go on the November ballot as is. Originally, the initiative's title and summary statement explained that the amendment simply defined marriage as between a man and a woman. Now, it also states that the amendment will "eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry." Marriage advocates have decided their lawsuits challenging the biased wording

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will not go on.

"We have declined to further appeal this matter," Yes on 8 spokeswoman Jennifer Kerns told PolitickerCA.com. "We will leave it to the ultimate judge — the voters — on Election Day."

CENSUS BUREAU RESPECTS MARRIAGE

(EP News)--Massachusetts and California may have decided to legalize gay "marriage," but the U.S. Census Bureau will not count same-sex "marriages" in its 2010 census report. Census officials said even though same-sex "marriage" is legal in some states, federal law defines marriage as between one man and one woman. "The U.S. Census Bureau procedures used to count and tabulate relationship data are guided by and comply with legal requirements of the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996, which requires all federal agencies to recognize only opposite-sex marriages for the purposes of administering federal programs," said Stephen Buckner, a spokesman for the Census Bureau. "Many of these programs rely on Census Bureau statistics."

LIFE ADVOCATES TAKE A STAND AT NEA CONVENTION

(EP News)--Lifeadvocatesgatheredoutside the National Education Association (NEA) convention in Washington, D.C., in July to bring attention to the group's pro-abortion policies. Regional events were planned at state capitols across the country. Bob Pawson, national coordinator of Pro-Life Educators and Students, said the NEA tries to hide its true agenda behind the phrase "reproductive rights." "The NEA has sponsored or co-sponsored some of the pro-abortion rallies held on the Mall in Washington, D.C.," he said. Kristan Hawkins, executive director of Students for Life of America, said the NEA's stance became obvious when it opened its headquarters recently for a Feminist Majority Foundation meeting. "They are an organization that advocates abortion on demand, all nine months of pregnancy -- pretty scary," she said.

CALIFORNIA HOME-SCHOOLERS APPLAUD DECISION

(EP News)--A California family-court judge has dismissed the case that led a higher court to call for a statewide ban on most forms of home schooling. Home-school advocates are hopeful the decision will influence the 2nd District Court of Appeals, which ruled Feb. 28 that California parents without teaching credentials cannot home-school their children. Brad Dacus, president of the Pacific Justice Institute, said the appellate court is expected to decide in the next few weeks whether to drop its earlier ruling. "If that were to happen, we would be back at square one as if this whole mess had never taken place — at least legally speaking — because there'd be absolutely no precedent on the books,"

he said. "These ups and downs can be very nerve-racking, but in the end, we're confident home schooling will be legal in California," he said. "People should be praying for this matter, praying for the appellate court."

ARIZONA MARRIAGE AMENDMENT HEADED TO BALLOT

(EP News)--Arizona voters will get another chance to define marriage in November, thanks to a 16-4 state Senate vote July 11. Two years ago, a more complex marriage-protection amendment failed at the polls by 2 percentage points. This year's amendment states that "only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state." Peter Gentala, general counsel for The Center for Arizona Policy Action, called the victory "tremendous news" for Arizona residents and their children. "We know that when a child doesn't have mom or dad in their lives, it puts them at risk," he said. "In Arizona ... the voters are going to have a chance to decide to reaffirm a law that's fundamentally about the protection of children and about passing on strength and stability to the next generation." Polls show 65 percent of Arizonans support traditional marriage.

HALF OF STATES REJECT ABSTINENCE-EDUCATION FUNDING

(EP News)--Millions of federal dollars are offered to states to fund abstinence education, but nearly half of the country has turned down the funding. Twenty-two states have opted out of Title V abstinence-education funding, and Arizona and Iowa plan to decline their share of the \$50 million at the start of the fiscal year, The Associated Press reported. Participation in the abstinence program is down 40 percent over two years. Valerie Huber, president of the National Abstinence Education Association, said the nation's No. 1 abortion provider is to thank. "This whole effort is being orchestrated by Planned Parenthood, (which has) a national campaign to convince governors to turn back Title V abstinence education funding," she said. "What they're doing is locating liberal governors who'll say, 'We don't want these funds based on their ideological bent rather than on a message that would be in the best interest of the youth.'"

MASSACHUSETTS PUSHES SAME-SEX 'MARRIAGE' ON THE NATION

(EP News)--Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick signed a bill to repeal a 1913 law that prohibited couples from marrying in the state if their unions were not legal in their home states. Before he signed the bill, on July 29, lawmakers added an "emergency" clause to it to prevent intervention from family advocates.

Kris Mineau, president of the Massachusetts Family Institute, said lawmakers created an "insurance policy to circumvent any possibility of the citizens in Massachusetts doing a petition to suspend this law."

The Massachusetts Constitution allows voters to conduct a petition drive within 90 days of the passage of a law. If enough signatures are gathered, the issue can go to the voters. In this case, however, the Legislature thwarted that possibility by declaring an emergency.

Bruce Hausknecht, judicial analyst for Focus on the Family Action, called it a cheap political trick to once again prevent Massachusetts voters from weighing in on marriage.

"There was no 'emergency' here, other than the desire by homosexual activists to export gay 'marriage' across the nation as soon as possible," he said. "What these legislators did was an 'in-your-face' action designed to tell Massachusetts voters they are merely a hurdle to clear, not participants in the political process."

GOV. SCHWARZENEGGER VEToes GLOBAL WARMING CURRICULUM

(EP News)--Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed a bill July 25 that would have required global warming to be added to California schools' curriculum. Schwarzenegger said he supports education that addresses climate dangers, but was opposed to educational mandates. Though a discussion of global warming is currently allowed in high school classes, the measure would have mandated all future science textbooks to include it as a subject. "At a time when dismal graduation rates were recently announced in California, it's ridiculous to try to force teachers to waste valuable class time on politically correct agendas," said Candi Cushman, education analyst for Focus on the Family Action. "That's a disservice to taxpaying parents — and it's a good thing Gov. Schwarzenegger took a stand against it."

LEGISLATION GRANTS SPECIAL STATUS BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION

(EP News)--In Colorado, men and women legally can use any public restroom they choose, based on their "perceived gender identity." The idea is spreading to at least two other states. According to a Cleveland Plain Dealer report, a man who "lives as a woman" wants to use the women's locker room at an Ohio recreation center. So far, officials have required the man use the men's locker room to change clothes. A bill before the Ohio Legislature would create special rights based on sexual orientation — and could open both locker rooms to everyone. And in Flagstaff, Ariz., the City Council is considering an ordinance to provide special rights based on, among other things, "gender identity or expression, and sexual orientation."

SOUTH DAKOTA REMAINS FIRST ABORTION-FREE STATE

(EP News)--On July 21, eight women arrived at the Planned Parenthood office in Sioux Falls for abortions but were instead met with locked doors and a hand-written note indicating the only abortion clinic in South Dakota was closed. Planned

Parenthood remains closed for abortions after their abortionists, who are flown in from other states, refused to work under the new law that went into effect July 18. The law orders abortionists to inform patients of the humanity of their babies and that the procedure could affect their mental health two hours before the abortion can be done. The law also provides that abortionists can be sued if they do not comply.

DEBATE RENEWED OVER HOMOSEXUALS IN THE MILITARY

(EP News)--A U.S. House subcommittee on July 23 debated the future of a 1993 law that bans openly homosexual men and women from serving in the military. Gay activists and some members of Congress are attempting to repeal the so-called "don't ask, don't tell" law. Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center for Military Readiness (CMR), said forcing a sexual agenda on the military will hurt discipline and morale. "The culture of the armed forces — how things are done, the infrastructure of values, standards, priorities, everything that makes our military as strong as it is — all of these values are now under attack," Donnelly said during a recent Focus on the Family radio broadcast. "There are civilian activists who do not understand the culture of the military, who want to use the Armed Forces toward their own end. The military today is about to be hit with the full force of extreme social engineering." According to a recent Military Times poll, less than a third of active duty personnel think openly gay individuals should be allowed to serve in the military. However, more than half of the American people, according to other polls, think it is OK for gays to serve openly in the military.

IOWA JUDGE DECIDES STRIPPING IS A FORM OF ART

(EP News)--An Iowa judge ruled Friday in favor of a sexually oriented business charged with violating Iowa's indecent exposure law by allowing a 17-year-old girl to perform naked. Iowa law bans strip clubs, but allows nudity at "art centers," theaters and museums. The judge said the Hamburg strip club is a theater and therefore protected by law. Fremont County Attorney Margaret Johnson said the ruling endangers children.

"If minors can be naked in theaters regardless of their age because it's a theater, that opens up some pretty scary situations where children can be exploited," she told the Omaha World-Herald.

AS MARRIAGE DECLINES, CHURCH ATTENDANCE FALLS

(EP News)--A dramatic decline in marriage, particularly among young adults, has led to a decline in church attendance over the last three decades, according to a study by Robert Wuthnow, a sociology professor at Princeton University. Men are 57 percent less likely to regularly attend church if they are not married. Single women are 41 percent less likely to attend church than their married

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counterparts. "It exaggerates only a little to say that Americans in their 20s and early 30s divide into two groups of about equal size: those who are married, the majority of whom participate in religion; and those who are not married, the majority of whom do not participate," Wuthnow said at a conference at The Heritage Foundation. Brad Wilcox, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Virginia, said the biggest factor driving the decline in church attendance is delayed marriage. "Marriage is a gateway into family life, and family life, in turn, is often a gateway into church attendance," he said. "The longer people postpone marriage, the less likely they are to attend church at a given age, and also the less likely they are to attend church down the road."

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS

BRITAIN'S LARGEST ADOPTION AGENCY TO OK SAME-SEX PARENTS

(EP News)--The largest Catholic adoption agency in England and Wales has opted to allow same-sex couples to adopt. The decision, made by the Catholic Children's Society of Arundel and Brighton, Portsmouth and Southwark, is in response to the U.K.'s Equality Act, which requires all goods, facilities and services – including adoption services – to be provided regardless of the sexual orientation of the recipient. The "equality law," which goes into effect in January, has already forced the U.K.'s Catholic Children's Rescue Service to close its doors.



SIN

By J. W. Porter
(1863 – 1937)

"Fools make a mock at sin" (Prov. 14:9).

Sin is not a theory, but a stubborn and tragic fact. It is a condition that confronts us from the cradle to the grave. Our conception of sin determines our opinion of the Cross. Given one's views of sin, we have his idea of the atonement.

The Cross was predicated and predetermined on account of the nature and character of sin. Some one has suggested that sin can be cured by an operation. The heart, and not the head, is the seat and citadel of sin. Only a change of heart can make us a new creature in Christ Jesus and save us from the penalty of sin.

Fools make a mock of sin in their idea of sin. It is becoming quite common to regard sin as a mistake. Sin is infinitely more than a mistake, it is a cruel crime. We can apologize for a mistake, but we must expiate a crime. Sin has blinded our eyes, until we have become spiritually

color-blind. Our constant exposure to sin deadens our spiritual sensitiveness. Truly it has been said:

"Vice is a monster of so fearful mien,

To be hated needs only to be seen,

But seen too oft, familiar with her face

We first pity, then endure, and then embrace."

Sin is sin, under all conditions and circumstances. No condition can justify wrong, or cancel the guilt of sin. In the rich and poor, wise and foolish, sin is essentially the same. Some seem to hold the view that education will atone for sin. Education can never atone for sin, though it may enlarge and intensify the power of sin. The schoolroom can never take the place of the Cross, higher critics to the contrary notwithstanding. Whether clothed in rags, or broadcloth, sin is ever the same. The flash of the diamond will not atone for the hell in the heart.

There is only one quality of sin. The variations of sin are in quantity, and not quality. In essence sin is ever and forever the same. The difference is in degree, not in quality. Sin is sin, whether in an angel by the throne of God or in the harlot in the brothel.

Poor McCullough went from the stage to a sanitarium for lunacy. Gazing through the iron bars, he would say: "I am not mad! I am not mad!" But he was.

Fools make a mock of sin in their practice of sin. Men try to differentiate between "big" and "little" sins. The smallest sin, if unforgiven, will damn the greatest soul. The smallest grain of sand will disarrange the mechanism of the finest watch. It is the little microbe that brings death to millions. It is,

"Little drops of water,

Little grains of sand;

Make the mighty ocean,

And the pleasant land."

The little sin of today means the big sin of tomorrow. We do not start great sinners. The unregenerate grow in iniquity as the regenerate grow in grace. The man becomes a gambler by degrees. It is not uncommon to hear one speak of "small vices," and yet these vices point the path to perdition. In the day of judgment no sin will appear small! Record, conscience and God will one day reveal every sin in its true light.

Fools make a mock of sin by denying they are sinners. We have all sinned and come short of the Glory of God. We were conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity. Through the Federal headship of Adam we come into the world in a state of condemnation. We may have never committed any great outbreking sin, and yet we are all guilty before God.

A rattlesnake is a rattlesnake, whether he ever bites any one or not. His bite is only a manifestation of his nature, and the poison he vomits in the veins of his victim is a part of his being. It may be truly said of one and all---

"Poor worm of the dust,

Dearly ye pay for your primal fall,
A few flowerets of Eden, ye still may inherit,
But the trail of the serpent is over them all!"

Heredity constitutes us sinners, and even the best environment, without Christ in the heart, but intensifies and develops our sinful nature. And while we are all sinners, thank God, many of us are sinners saved by grace. We become so accustomed to sin that we forget our sins, yet if our sins are not forgiven, the recording angel keeps the record, and will not forget them. Many of the sins of our youth were long ago forgotten. Well has one prayed, "Lord, remember not the sins of my youth against me." The forgotten sin does not mean the forgiven sin; and if unforgiven, the sin of the long gone years will yet confront us. God spare us from having to face our long accumulated catalogue of crime!

One day a man was gazing upon the old gallows, at Fort Smith, Arkansas, while the hangman was telling him of the many criminals who had been hanged there. While listening to the gruesome story, a mockingbird lit upon the gallows, and began its gladsome song. All unconscious, the feathered songster, of the tragedies that marked with melancholy the sad and lonely spot. So we forget the sins that have wrecked and ruined the lives of others, and making fast for our own destruction.

Whatever we may think of sin, it is exceedingly sinful, because it is destructive. Sin is the universal destroyer. The real tragedy of life is the wreck and ruin which sin hath wrought. Sin has shed rivers of blood and tears, and marred and murdered the lives of millions. The insanity of sin leads to soul-suicide, the outstanding crime of all the centuries. The lost man crimson his hand in the blood of his own soul. Sin incited the mob that murdered Christ, and drove a God to an earthly grave. And yet in spite of our sin, Christ loves us, and yearns for our salvation. Some years since, in Louisville, Kentucky, a father sent his little daughter to the saloon to purchase beer. Accidentally she spilled some of the beer. Already crazed by drink, he began whipping her, because a part of his beer was gone. While brutally beating her, she said: "Papa, don't kill me, I didn't go to do it. Papa, I love you." Though sinners nailed Him to the Cross, He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Sin is exceedingly sinful, because God hates it. "Do I not hate the abominable thing saith the Lord." Surely, we can ill afford to love what God hates. We rightly hate lying, stealing, and murder, and yet these cries are but sin in action. Sin is the father of every unkind word and evil deed. Sin knows no pity and shows no mercy. It blights the life of the manliest man, and withers the being of

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BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

7-1-2008 to 7-31-2008

Beginning Balance \$8,379.21

RECEIPTS:

B.C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL27.57
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 400.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN 150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX 100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV 300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY... 150.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV 200.00
Inez Tweet, Seattle, WA.....20.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA..... 125.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM..... 100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM 500.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH. 100.00
New Testamnet B. C., Bristol, TN 10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA.....40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL 100.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS.....50.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL..... 100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC. 100.00
Sovereign Grace B.C., Warren, OH.....75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA25.00
Walnut Creek B. C., Grove City, OH50.00
Subscriptions32.00
Anon..... 205.00
Dividing Checks 150.00
Sub Total \$3,699.57
TOTAL\$12,078.78

EXPENDITURES:

Printing..... 581.71
Postage 884.02
Wages2,120.00
FICA 152.95
Dividing Checks 150.00
Supplies97.00
Total Expenditures3,985.68
ENDING BALANCE \$8,093.10

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

7-1-2008 to 7-31-2008

Beginning Balance\$12,041.81

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN50.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY... 100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
..... 475.00
TOTAL..... 12,516.81

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time1900.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES1900.00
.....\$10,618.42
Less Corbin, KY des.-490.92
ENDING BALANCE\$10,127.50

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance\$690.92

RECEIPTS:

..... 690.92

EXPENDITURES:

WCTT 200.00
ENDING BALANCE\$490.92



WORLD SCENE

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



Al Gore's Global Warming

Are you sick and tired of the media mindlessly pandering to Al Gore's environmental extremism . . . or their infatuation with his radical climate agenda and their cult-like obedience to every word he says? I know I am. I'm sick and tired of left-wingers trying to run "my" family, "my" home, and "my" life.

Our very own investigative news team at the Media Research Center (MRC) has put together a blockbuster expose on Gore and the true motives behind his global warming scare campaign. This report reveals, in painstaking detail, how Gore stands to personally profit from his Doomsday predictions. You will be stunned and appalled at the hypocrisy of Al Gore when you read the copy of this Special Report. More importantly, I believe this report will be an eye-opener for any journalist willing to take an honest look at the facts.

Gore FINANCIALLY INVESTED IN CLIMATE CAUSE

"Gore's financial stake in businesses that could profit from government policies designed to fight global warming demonstrates a motivation other than a selfless desire to protect the planet."

Fred Lucas, CNSNews.com Staff Writer, on May 14, 2008 wrote, weeks before announcing a \$300-million, three-year advertising campaign to raise awareness about global warming. Al Gore was conducting a slide show for a group of investors in Monterey, Calif., touting companies such as Bloom Energy, Amryis, Mascoma and other firms that are not household names--yet.

These bio-fuel and green technology firms could be poised to takeoff, Gore told his audience. "Here are just a few of the investments I personally think make sense," he said during the March 1 presentation. "I have a stake in these so I'll have a disclaimer there."

Gore's admitted stake in those companies comes from his partnership in the venture capital firm, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers (KPCB). Gore joined the firm last November, forging a partnership between KPCB and the London-based Generation Investment Management, a firm Gore chairs.

Gore has lobbied Congress and state governments to enact bolder environmental regulations. Gore's defenders counter that he and his partners are simply looking at companies that will have long-term sustainability during the "climate crisis."

"There are a bunch of folks that stand to make real money, who have invested a lot in companies that are not worth real money until the agenda that this ad campaign is advocating is achieved," stated by Chris Horner, a senior fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

The growing sense of global urgency over our twin crisis---climate change and energy security---is now driving businesses to become green, consumers to demand green and policy makers to drive policies to accelerate the market adoption of green products. When Gore joined KPCB as a partner, John Doerr (KCPB) joined the Generation Investment Management advisory board. GIM's long-term strategy for investing goes further than environmental factors. Richard Campbell of GIM said other sustainability factors, such as corporate governance and staff retention, also play a role. Matthew Vadum, a research associate for the Capital Research Center that has invested Gore's financial interests in the global warming movement says, "He's already in the global warming business." Mr. Vadum says "I believe Al Gore is a true believer, but he also is a smart businessman."

GETTING RICH

Noel Sheppard, Associate Editor of NewsBusters on October 3, 2007 said "Americans willing to look at the manmade global warming debate with any degree of impartiality and honesty are well aware that those spreading the hysteria have made a lot of money doing so, and stand to gain much more if governments mandate carbon dioxide emissions reductions.

In fact, two months ago, ABC News.com estimated soon-to-be-Nobel Laureate Al Gore's net worth at \$100 million, which isn't bad considering that he was supposedly worth about \$1 million when he watched George W. Bush get sworn in as president in January 2001.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING

Al Gore's campaign against global warming is shifting into high gear. Reporters and commentators follow his every move and bombard the public with notice of his activities and opinions. But while the mainstream media promote his ideas about the state of planet Earth, they are mostly silent about the dramatic impact his economic proposals would have on America. Journalists routinely ignore evidence that he may personally benefit from his programs. Would the romance fizzle if Gore's followers realized how much their man stands to gain? That is why media have largely been mute on this matter. . .Add it all up. Al Gore really is perpetrating a scheme that could end up being much more costly to Americans than anything Ken Lay did. As if that's not bad enough, our media are totally complicit rather than doing their jobs exposing the scam. . . .

(Excerpts by letter, L. Brent Bozell III, Founder and President, Media Research Center, Fred Lucas, CNSNEWS.com Staff Writer, Matthew Vadum, Research Associate, Capital Research Center, and Noel Sheppard, Associate Editor of NewsBusters)



Sin

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the most winsome woman. It corrupts governments; bankrupts the home, and deluges the world with the blood of its own citizens. Sin is God's worst enemy and Satan's greatest ally.

Either the righteousness of Christ or the sin of Satan must conquer in every life. Sin, like the sinner, "stoops to conquer"; and, if cherished, will one day conquer. We often rest in fancied security that we can control our sins, when we are being mastered by them. The eagle swoops down upon the unsuspecting serpent and buries his claws in the quivering flesh. With the wounded serpent he flies upward, far upward till he is lost in the blue of the sky. Soon he is seen slowly descending. His wings are weary and his flight is heavy. In a moment, like a leaden ball, he dashes dead to earth. In the hour

of his seeming victory the poison of the serpent has conquered.

Sin is the more unpardonable, because God has provided a pardon. In its last analysis, all sin is willful. The unregenerate man is a lost sinner because he prefers the pathway of sin. "Whosoever will" may come and be saved, and whosoever will may refuse to come and be lost. Thank God, grace is greater than sin and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

*"What can wash away my sin
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,
What can make me whole again,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
For my cleansing, this I see,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
For my pardon this my plea,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus."*

Oh, that you might seek safety from the guilt and power of sin. Perhaps, at this moment, the destiny of your soul trembles in the balances. You cannot afford to take the risk. On one occasion, Major Penn, of blessed memory, urged upon his hearers the necessity of immediately receiving Christ. He closed his great discourse with these words, "You cannot afford to take the risk." At midnight he was hastily summoned to the bedside of a dying girl. He entreated her concerning her soul. In response to his request that she receive the Saviour, she said: "Major Penn, it is more than kind of you to come and try to help me, but it is no use. Tonight when you said, 'You cannot afford to take the risk,' I wrote on the fly leaf of the hymn book, 'I will take the risk.' You will find the book on the left hand side of the church, as you enter, and on the third pew. I took the risk, and in a little while I will meet my God unforgiven. Good-bye, Major, go help others. I am lost." He went out and it was night. In a little while she was face to face with Him, with Whom we all have to do! God help you to be ready, when that hour shall come!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Providence Baptist Church of Valley Station, KY will be having a Bible Conference on September 27-28, 2008. Services begin at 10:00 a.m. and lunch will be served by the host church.

Speakers are Elders Joe Collins, Bob Kellar, Ron Crisp, Mark Minney, Nathan Long, Mike McCosky, Dan Gordon and Garner Smith.

They would like to invite all from the Louisville, Ky area to attend.

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

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elders may call 618-288-4236 for more information.

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