

Psm. 11:3

Baptists For Liberty

Prov. 29:2

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Galatians 5:1

NEWS LETTER

Issue #38

August/September 2016

Mr. Practical: A Biblical Worldview, by Bro. Todd Bryant

The message of the Bible is often quite cut and dry. Jesus plainly said, *"No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money"* (Luke 16:13). It's impossible to balance the desires of the flesh while keeping *"in step with the Spirit"* (Galatians 5:25). The desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit *"are opposed to each other"* (Galatians 5:17). The flesh is constantly striving to keep you from serving God fervently.

In the passage before us, John couldn't be clearer. If you are fully attached to this world, then you are not attached to God. In fact, he says if this world holds all your desire, *"the love of the Father is not in"* you. Certainly, this ought to give us pause. If we are to be diligent to confirm we have been called by His grace (2 Peter 1:10), one of the things we need to examine closely is the desire of our heart. Are we focused primarily on worldly things? Or, are we focused primarily on furthering the kingdom of God? There is no middle ground here. You cannot do both. (Continued on page 5)

Ideally there wouldn't be any mistake when an issue is published and shared. However, I make mistakes, a lot of them. Kind of a funny thing, here this issue's theme is idealism, yet this is this issue I need to post a clarification on our issue number. Somewhere along the line I published an issue with the wrong number and didn't catch it right away cause quite a few issues that followed to be marked incorrectly. So you might notice that both the previous issue and this one are marked "#38" I am quite certain that this is the actual #38.

- Joanna Works, editor.

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Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." ~ 1 John 2:15-17~

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Freedom from Religion?

by Bro. Jeff Short

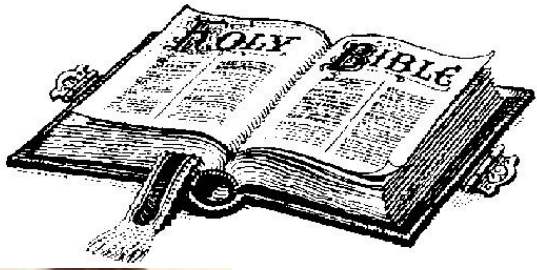
The late Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, and Sam Harris were one time the anointed leaders and spokesmen for the "new atheists." A decade ago, each published an anti-God screed that was only more of the same without anything "new" about them. If anything was new, it was the fervor with which they were attacking Christianity, God, and the Bible. To be fair, they were attacking all religions such as Islam, Catholicism, and Mormonism, but their prime target was Christianity. Hitchens' subtitle was, *How religion poisons everything*, and that was his primary contention. They advocated for the end of all religion, or at least the complete expulsion of religion from public life.

It's hard to say what they accomplished but they may have helped fuel the fire of those crying for the so-called separation of church and state. What is the Christian response to the cry for freedom from religion? This debate is taking place at the intersection of religion, philosophy, and political ideology. It's at the epicenter of the clash of worldviews, so how are we to think about all this.

(Continued on page 17)

Sermon

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. II Timothy 4:2



“Who Will Love Me For Me”

by Bro. John Fry

This past Thursday after I dropped the kids off for school I was listening to the radio and I was joyfully made low through some words that I heard from a song that maybe some of you have heard and in fact I’ve heard several times before, but the words just hit me more this time than they had before. The name of the song is “What Love Really Means.”

The premise of the song is just to take three people who feel like an outcast of love and after their individual story the chorus goes like this.

*“Who will love me for me
Not for what I have done or what I will become
Who will love me for me
Cause nobody has shown me what love really means.”*

This morning I hope to answer that question of who will love me for me. If you have a bible with you this morning please turn with me to the gospel of Luke and chapter 18.

At this time in his life Jesus is making his way to Jerusalem to spend his last days upon this earth as a man. Jericho was not actually on his way to Jerusalem. Christ here made a bit of a detour because there were some people here in this city that needed Jesus. Jericho by the way had the reputation of being a city of great sin. Today we call Las Vegas Sin City. In this day in Israel this was the kind of place Jericho was.

Look with me,

Luke 18:35 And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

The man who we have here is most likely Bartimaeus as we compare this scripture to others. He was blind and he was a beggar. He was as low as low could get. Undoubtedly some probably thought that he was blind because of some great sin in his life others because he had a curse on him because of the sins of his parents.

One can only imagine people were not lining up to be his friend. He took his spot daily and held out his hand asking for money to make it through the day.

Luke 18:36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

Luke 18:37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

Bartimaeus was not a stranger to the name of Jesus he had heard of how he healed the lame, caused the deaf to hear, and more importantly how he made the blind to see.

Luke 18:38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

In this title that he is shouting out at as the multitude goes by he is by calling him the Son of David recognizing him as the promised Messiah. But he was there asking for mercy. He is going to find more than mercy this day. He is going to find grace.

Luke 18:39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

The reaction of the crowd shows just how much they thought of this man. They thought he was beneath speaking to Jesus. They thought there was no way a man as important as Jesus was that he would care a moment for a man as filthy and disgusting as that old beggar Bartimaeus.

How many times in Bartimaeus’ life do you think he was made aware of what a wretch that he was? How many times do you think he wandered if anyone would ever care for him? How many times do you think he wandered the question, who will love me for me?

The more they tried to shut him up this day the louder he cried out Jesus Son of David. He realized the only hope that he had was the hope in Christ that was so close but seemingly so far away. He must have wondered if Jesus would take one moment and show him just a slither of mercy.

Luke 18:40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,

Luke 18:41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

Luke 18:42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

Luke 18:43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

Because of his affliction this man had been an outcast for all of his life. He must have spent many a nights feeling very alone and very helpless. Few people in his life had probably shown him much love at all. But this day he got the answer to his question of who will love me for me. The answer was God.

To God it made no difference that this man was a beggar. It made no difference he was blind. God loved Bartimaeus with an everlasting love. Not because of who he was or what he'd become. He loved him for him. This day Bartimaeus asked for mercy and he found grace through the Love of the Savior. Who had come to this earth because he loved him enough to die for him and set him free not just of blindness, but of his sins as well.

Let's read on into chapter 19,

Luke 19:1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

Luke 19:2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

Zacchaeus was a Jew by birth but in the course of his life he became a publican. A publican was a tax collector. The Romans would employ citizens of the land to gather taxes for the great Iron Empire. There was a certain amount they were required to gather and then what they collected on top of that they were able to keep for themselves.

The people of the land of Israel were very poor for the most part. They didn't have a lot to give in the first place and these men were getting rich out of their suffering. So you can imagine these men weren't exactly popular. In fact they were considered great sinners. When one became a tax collector they cut themselves off from their family and many of their friends because no one would have anything to do with them. They also cut themselves off from the worship of God in many ways as they were not allowed to go up into the temple to worship as others were.

I don't think it is an accident folks that in chapter 18 Christ tells the story of the two men who went to the temple to pray and the one was a publican crying out for mercy. The bible doesn't tell us the name of that man, but I can't help but to think that man might have been Zacchaeus.

Luke 19:3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

Luke 19:4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

Luke 19:5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.

Luke 19:6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

Luke 19:7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

Zacchaeus undoubtedly had heard of Jesus. By this time in his ministry all of Israel had heard of Jesus. He must have heard of the great miracles that Jesus performed. But I imagine he heard something else. This great man of God had surrounded himself with apostles from all walks of life including Matthew who was a

publican.

That must have resonated through Zacchaeus. He was a man who had everything he desired. The bible told us that he was the chief of the publicans and that he was rich. But he was as empty as could be on the inside. Because of who he was he didn't have the love of his people. They hated him. The only people who undoubtedly would have anything to do with him were those who had sold out just like himself.

Zacchaeus had no idea that Jesus was going to pass through this town for him this day. But it was no accident. God before the foundation of this world chose Zacchaeus for his own. Choose to cast his everlasting love upon him. He didn't choose Zacchaeus for who he was. He didn't choose Zacchaeus for what he would become.

Ephesians tells us,

Eph 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

God chose to love Zacchaeus out of his own good pleasure and on this predestinated day from eternity past and a predestinated moment, Jesus Christ is going to call out to Zacchaeus to come down from the tree and show him the love that God has for him.

Luke 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord;

Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

Luke 19:9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Zacchaeus may have never regained the trust and friendship of his kindred. But you know this day he learned that he was loved of God. Not because of how great a person he was or how great a person he might become. But God loved him for who he was a sinner saved by the grace of God.

Turn with me back in the gospel of Luke to chapter 8,

Luke 7:36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

The city that is spoken of here is most like the city of Capernaum. The Pharisees loved to be seen with Jesus not because they agreed with him, but because they desired to challenge him in his words and practice. They desired to find fault constantly in Christ. But the faults they found were faults of the traditions of men and not with fault in word of God.

Luke 7:37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

The woman here many speculate to be Mary Magdalene or some others confuse her with Mary of Bethany who too washed the

feet of Jesus with her hair. This certainly would not be Mary of Bethany and is probably not Magdalene either. Luke would have no reason to hide her name here.

The scripture here says that she was a woman in the city and she was a woman of the city known for her sin. What these sins were we are not told. Most assume she was a prostitute and perhaps she was. Maybe she was an adulterer. Maybe she was a drunk. I don't know what her sins were and in the long run it doesn't matter for her sins were not and could not be greater than the forgiveness of God.

Luke 7:38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

This woman was brought low herself this day. She understood that she was a sinner. She understood that she needed forgiveness. She understood that Christ was the answer for the despair that she had in her sins.

You know this woman maybe had many lovers in her day, but you can have many lovers and never know love. At this moment when it was just her and her sins before Christ I know she alone and I know that she felt unworthy.

The host of the dinner looks on at Jesus and this lady with disgust. He says nothing, but Christ as God knows the thoughts and hearts of men.

Luke 7:39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

We see what this man thought of this lady. Do you think he was the only one of the city that felt that way? Of course the answer is no! When I was growing up, there were certain people of reputation that I was always instructed to avoid. I even will say that to my children now. Don't go around them because you will end up in trouble. It's sad, but true that's how we are as people ourselves.

This woman because of her sin had been shunned undoubtedly by many and I'm sure the question entered her mind on many occasions who could love me? I've done this. I've done that. Who could ever love me for me?

Jesus knowing the thoughts of Simon and seeing the repentance of the woman posed to Simon a question. Read it with me here.

Luke 7:40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

Luke 7:41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

Luke 7:42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

Luke 7:43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom

he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

This only makes sense that the one who was forgiven the most would show the greatest favor to the master. This is only logical.

Now look here,

Luke 7:44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Luke 7:45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

Luke 7:46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Luke 7:47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

Luke 7:48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

How glorious is the forgiveness of God? How glorious is the love of God? She learned firsthand this day of God's favor and love. Not because of what she had done or who she'd become. God cast his loving eyes upon her long before the fall of man. God loved her for who she was a sinner saved by sovereign grace.

You know we have spent this morning looking at people who felt unloved by those around them. Unloved because of things they had done or because of just who they were born to be.

These people were outcasts. But you know what no matter how good we think we are in life we aren't any better than any of the ones we have looked at this day.

We are all born into this life with spiritual blindness not understanding the ways of God. Most here at some point in their life have like Zaccheus went against our families and maybe even taken advantage of others for our own good. Some of us have been men and women just like the woman who washed the feet of Jesus who was no stranger to sin.

And you know most of us in our lives, despite the love of family, and friends have even pondered that same question when we are left alone pondering the greatness of our sins and wondered who could love a sinner like me.

This past Thursday as I listened to that song I was reminded that God loved me not because he looked through eternity and saw that John Fry was going to be an okay guy. He didn't look through eternity and say if I love him and save him he will eventually get his life in order and serve me.

No God didn't love me because of who I am or what I will be. I was nothing. I'm still nothing. Yet he loved me out of his good pleasure. He loved me with a perfect love and an everlasting love. Even though I've tried to please him and failed more often than I have succeeded. God loves me for me and showed me a love that I'd never know on my own.

Maybe this morning you are here and lost. Maybe you have

never come to know Christ as your personal Savior. Maybe you don't even know much about Jesus Christ.

Maybe though you know a lot about sin. Maybe you can look in your life and seeing that you are looking for happiness and looking for love through the vices of men. You've not found happiness yet. You've not found love and you never will on your own.

Is the Lord pricking your heart right now? Is He showing you that you are a sinner standing in the need of grace? Can you cry to Jesus this morning? The bible says there is no other way of salvation but through Christ.

You could try to change everything about yourself this morning. Turn over a new leaf to say. You could start coming to church. But none of those things will save your soul. Only Christ and Christ alone by his grace. Call out to him and learn of the greatest love that man has ever known.

Disaster & Recovery

Thirteen people have been reported dead due to the flooding in the Baton Rouge area. A [Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce analysis](#) showed that more than 110,000 homes were located in the flood area.

Grace Bible Baptist Church in Denham Springs Louisiana has had flooding in their church building as well as their church member's home. Their website has [pictures of damage](#) done. If you would like to contact the church about helping in some way Their contact info is on their web site <http://gracebbc.dyndns.org:81/>

Related reports news articles of interest:

[“Walker Mayor: Flooding event was man-made”](#)

“WALKER, LA (WAFB) - The frustrated mayor of Walker, Louisiana said Tuesday (Aug 16th) that the flooding event in his city was "man-made" and announced plans to file suit against the state of Louisiana and federal government.”

[Facebook](#): A Louisiana nurse posts pictures and commentary on Red Cross over of shelter she had been volunteering at.

[“Lawmaker: Licensing for Cajun Navy not meant to limit, but empower”](#) local CBS station reports on efforts of the ‘Cajun Navy’ and disputes regarding purposed permits.

[“Mucker’s Diary, Second Edition”](#) a reader of Rod Dreher’s American Conservative column writes in to share their experiences of volunteering in the cleanup efforts.

[“Louisiana Lawmakers to Determine Flooding Response”](#) Garret Graves hopes floods spark broader discussion over disaster response

Mr. Practical 



I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. ||| John 1:4



with Bro. Todd Bryant

A Biblical Worldview

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” – 1 John 2:15-17

(Continued from the cover page)

What is the standard for the people of God? Without a doubt, the Bible is the answer to that question. *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*. When you hold a Bible in your hand, it's as though God Himself is speaking directly to you. The Bible has been *“breathed out by God”* Himself. It is the actual Word of the Creator. Everything that we do must be rooted in Scripture. We may do this well in the assembly. But how well do we do this outside of church? I mean, certainly God's Word directs what we preach and practice when we congregate – we get that. But, God's Word is given to direct the steps of His children outside of church just as much as it is inside. When you go to work, you are to serve God there. When you go to the market, you are to serve God there. When you gather with friends and family, you are to serve God there. Jesus said, *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23)*. Daily – not just on Sunday. Too often, we find our faith is only active inside the four walls of our church buildings. That is not at all a reflection of our calling.

The Bible must be our standard in every detail of life. Our decision-making must be rooted in God's Word and the standards prescribed therein. When somebody wrongs us, how do we respond? When those in charge of us wrong us, how do we respond? When we live in an evil society, how do we interact? The answer to all of these questions and many more are repeated again and again in God's Word. A child of God must

understand that the Word of God is not merely a book for knowledge...that is, a book to learn theology. The Bible is a book that calls us to action. There is no final exam at the Judgment Seat of Christ to see who had all their doctrine correct. It is our works that will be judged (**1 Corinthians 3:10-15**).

Now, our doctrine must be accurate if we are to properly serve, for sure. However, God has called us to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (**James 1:22**). In a theologically driven church, there is a temptation to only know the truth and not to worry so much about living it. If this is the case with us, it must be corrected.

What are you spending the most time on? An occupation? A hobby? A sports team? Politics? Or, are you spending time in the things of God? If you examine what is on your mind the majority of the time, you will have the answer to this question. If you look at what the most energy in your life is spent doing, you will have the answer to this question. Jesus said, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (**Matthew 6:19-21**). What do you treasure most in life? That will tell you a lot about your heart.

Perhaps the biggest hindrance to God’s people in serving Him is that we often don’t have a proper Biblical worldview. That is, our conception of the world including the events happening around us should be influenced completely by what we read in God’s Word. Yet, often it isn’t. This is election time. Like it or not, we are faced with the worst choices in the top two political parties that we have ever seen...hands down. What are we to do? Our first thought should be, “what would God have me to do?” In fact, that’s the only thought we should have! What does the Bible say about leaders? What are the characteristics of a good leader according to the Word of God? Can I vote for this candidate or that candidate while glorifying God? Our instruction to “do all to the glory of God” (**1 Corinthians 10:31**) does not stop at the voting booth. We do not have the option of checking our faith at the ballot box. Even more, we shouldn’t want to! If somehow we can separate our political leanings from our faith, we are trying to balance service between God and this world...a thing that Jesus said you couldn’t do.

Perhaps one of the most detrimental things to having a Biblical worldview is to have ones eyes fastened on a news channel 24/7. Conservatives watch Fox News and liberals watch CNN, right? It does appear that way. But neither of those channels is presenting the news with a Biblical worldview. Whether one of them portrays information more accurately than the other is irrelevant if there is no Biblical foundation for what they say. The more a Bible believing Christian watches Fox News or CNN, the more he will be convinced that a wicked, evil, arrogant candidate is the answer to our nations problems. This is unbiblical. In no sense is this a Biblical worldview. Publicly supporting wicked candidates is confusing to the lost and rightly so. When the world looks at us, it must see a segment of society that is led by something altogether different than the rest. Our communities must realize that we see the events of the world

through the eyes of Scripture, not a newscast. We simply cannot influence a society to repent and turn from their sins if we are standing beside them arm in arm fighting the same battles as they are.

God is sovereign. He is guiding the events of this world. Nothing is happening outside His sovereign will and purpose. The affairs of men are not outside His control. We are not off track, in the big scheme of things. Things are not out of control, whether they seem like it or not. Knowing that, we should be the most confident people in the world. Christians should not be causing mass hysteria continually with posts on social media (plug on how Christians should be cautious in actually posting facts when they post...but I digress). We shouldn’t be taking every opportunity we have been given to share the Gospel through a certain medium and use it to serve the world’s political system. We are certainly in the world, but we are not of the world. We are citizens somewhere, but our citizenship in Heaven must be primary (**Philippians 3:20**). We can certainly take part in whatever political freedoms we have been given. However, it absolutely should NOT be the primary goal for any one day...any 5 minutes...of our lives. We are children of the One True King. In answering Pilate, our One True King said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world” (**John 18:36**). A quick perusal of the social media accounts of believers may give you a different idea. Christians that never post anything spiritual to a wide audience of lost friends are constantly posting political junk. I say “junk” because much of it is full of hate, arrogance and bitterness. Much of it is skewed, at best. Sadly, many of these posts are on the pages of pastors and church leaders. Look folks, the Bible says, “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (**Ephesians 6:12**). Our enemy is not our neighbor who lives a different life than us...who has different political leanings than us. No...our neighbor is our mission field! I fear in many cases, this has been forgotten. Why? Simply, we do not have a good Biblical worldview.

For years, I have stayed on a strict Bible reading schedule. I make a point to read the Bible at least once a year – cover to cover. I do not say that to brag in any way. It’s just a commitment that I made...a commitment that every child of God should make. The more I read the Word of God, the more I realize we simply do not have time to get so involved in the affairs of this life. Our instruction is to evangelize the world – to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (**Matthew 28:18-20**). We aren’t given vacation time. We don’t get to take off during football or basketball season. We aren’t allotted paid leave during political seasons. Our first calling as Jesus followers is to make other Jesus followers. We don’t find Jesus and the early church involved in current societal affairs of the day. Why is that? Simple – they had a Biblical worldview. They knew the things of God far outweighed anything this world had to offer.

Let us strive to be Biblical in our approach to life. As we see events unfold around us, let give diligence to be approved by God (**2 Timothy 2:15**). If this is right, nothing else matters. Let us make sure we have a Biblical worldview. Only by having such a perspective can we serve God properly and influence our fellow man accurately. May God help us all to commit to Him daily as we see His plan unfold in this world.



A Bold Confidence

by Bro. Donnie
Burford

I may question myself, my faith, faithfulness and abilities, even of those God has provided for me at times, Yet I stand firmly certain in Gods faithfulness and abilities towards me! For He is not only Faithful, He is Able!

Psalm 121:1-8; *"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."*

John 10:27-30; *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."*

Hebrews 6:18; *"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:"*

1 Corinthians 1:8-9; *"Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Hebrews 7:25; *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."*

Hebrews 13:5-6; *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we*

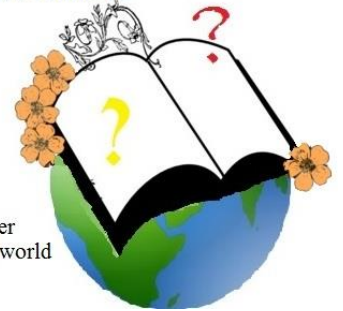
may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Philippians 4:13; *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."*

The Forum

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

~ Proverbs 1:5



Questions and Answers to help the believer make sense of our sin filled & confusing world

Conservatism, President, Compromise?

Is conservatism really Biblical?

Bro. Clint Keith (Pastor of Grace Baptist church Monticello, KY): Is Conservatism really biblical? Not necessarily. There are a number of conservative principles that are Biblical principles as well, such as pro-life, the importance of working to supply your needs, the importance of liberty, etc. However, conservatism has been espoused over the years by many different people, some amoral, some agnostic and atheistic, and just because someone calls themselves a conservative does not mean they hold to all conservative principles or to the same degree someone else may. You see there is no pure definition of conservatism, just as there is not for liberalism and libertarianism either. There are certain principles assigned to each one but each of the ideologies have a scale by which each adherent is able to find a place for himself in each movement, one might be hard right, right center, left leaning or left center, or hard left. There are also gradations for social conservative and fiscal conservative, and mixtures of both of these. Therefore to declare conservatism biblical is much too broad. This question must be addressed by the individual from another direction. The question needs to be posed first from the perspective of ones worldview. Am I Biblical? Does my ideology match the Bible? If it does not which must be changed my ideology or my worldview? You see I am a conservative because conservative principles best match my Biblical worldview, but that makes me extreme right-wing conservative by the standard scale of measuring conservatism. You see my political ideology must never determine my worldview, the Bible must do that and my ideology must change to meet the scripture.

Bro. Jeff Short (Pastor of Charleston Baptist Congregation in Charleston, WV) Conservatism in theory can be biblical.

Conservatism in practice is often not. Political conservatism refers to being cautious and slow to change. It is the opposite of progressivism which is all about right now and what's new (Acts 17:21). Progressives want to be early adopters and they change quickly based on popular thought at the moment. Progressives are blown about by every change in the wind, whereas conservatives are not so quick to change or move from their convictions.

The ideals of conservatism and progressivism are like the contrast between prudence and simplicity in Proverbs (Proverbs 14:8, 15). The simple are quick to jump on an idea and run with it without considering where the end of that road will lead. The prudent consider their way carefully and cautiously. The prudent are concerned with where they are going and where the road ends if they take it. So, yes, ideally, conservatism is biblical.

However, conservatism in practice is often not so prudent. To conserve means to protect and keep from harm. Practically, conservatives are often romantic conservatives. By romantic, I mean the worldview and not sappy poetry. Conservatives romanticize a certain time period and expend their energy trying to return to it. Many conservatives today want to turn back the clock to the 1950's, proving they have no understanding of the worldviews involved and how we got to where we are. Biblically, the prudent consider well the end of the road before they take it. Today, conservatives are at the end of the road and want to back to the beginning and do it all over again. It's like watching a really bad movie and going back to the beginning hoping it turns out better the next time (Ecclesiastes 7:10).

Bro. Todd Bryant (Pastor of Sovereign Grace Baptist church Northport, AL): No. That may sound like a strange answer to many since we often refer to ourselves as "conservative Christians". But conservatism merely for the sake of being conservative is not Biblical. Forgive the simple statement, but being Biblical is Biblical. We need to remember that Jesus was basically nailed to the cross by Jewish conservatives – Pharisees. They weren't interested in being Biblical at all, by this time. They were merely conservatives. They had taken God's Law and added much to it. They had replaced truth with legalism. Yet, they were considered to be conservatives.

I think we often seek out the most conservative position without any regard as to whether it's Biblical or not. As believers, our goal must be that we seek to be Biblical. This may, at times, cause us to be looked at as liberals by some and conservatives by others. But the Word of God is our guide – not a movement.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." – **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

What are the ideal traits of a president?

Bro. Clint Keith: The first ideal trait for a president is godliness, for if he is godly he will be honest, kind, compassionate, temperate, humble, etc. I know one mantra of today is "we are not electing a pastor", well I understand the sentiment, but many of our founding fathers warned us, including Madison and Adams, that the Constitution was made for a Christian people. In fact Madison warned that that is the only kind of society the Constitution could work with, in fact he stated if America ceased to be Christian, America would cease to be. Therefore, if we are looking for a president we need to look for a godly man. Another trait we want to see is the heart of a statesman. We want to see in our national leader a love for America and founding principles, and a desire to promote those principles in his administration. Too many of our elected leaders today are all about the power and money, and sadly only a handful could even be considered statesmen today and probably even fewer that could be called godly. Oh, how we need to pray for our country, and how we need to get busy delivering the gospel to every creature. For the only reason we accept anything less than these traits is because we have deemed such traits as impossible for our day.

Bro. Jeff Short: Ideally, the president would be a righteous man (Proverbs 29:2) who is competent (Exodus 18:21) and wise (Deuteronomy 1:13). I realize that is far too sanguine for most people. Where are we going to find men like that? If we consider those passages carefully, we notice in the Exodus and Deuteronomy passages Israel was instructed to look for "able men" who were "known among your tribes." That means they were to look for men who had demonstrated competence and a track record, or good reputation. In other words, the choice was to be based heavily on character. We also see this principle in the qualifications for a church elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Those lists are predominantly concerned with issues of character.

Why is demonstrated character so important in choosing leaders, whether in the church or in the government? Because we do not know the future (Ecclesiastes 6:12; 8:7; 10:14). We do not know what is going to happen and choosing a leader based mainly on their "plans" for the future is shortsighted at best. We don't know what things will be faced by the man we are electing and that's why his demonstrated character, reputation, is so important. What has he done in the past? How has he handled situations before? Even this is no guarantee, for a man that has a reputation for wisdom can still fall (Ecclesiastes 7:7; 10:1). Nevertheless, it is still better to be guided by wisdom in choosing a leader, even if it doesn't turn out well.

Bro. Todd Bryant: Not Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump. Sorry, but I couldn't resist. Yet the truth remains; neither of them embodies traits that are ideal for a political leader in any office.

Psalms 33:8 says, *"Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!"* This is a command to "all the earth". This includes the United States of America. Without a leader in power who has this foundational

understanding, the nation will continue to crumble. For more than a half century, our leaders moral character has often been in question. Without a doubt, it has gotten worse in the past few elections. Neither of our current candidates for President seems to have the understanding that the entire world is to “*stand in awe of [God]*”. The same Psalm says just a few verses later, “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!*” (**Psalms 33:12**). What of nations that do not regard God? Clearly, they are not blessed.

Secondly, an American President needs the “*fear of the Lord*”, which is the “*beginning of wisdom*” (**Proverbs 9:10**). The problem with our recent options on the presidential ballot is that they are much like Israel during the time of the Judges – “*Everyone did what was right in his own eyes*” (**Judges 17:16**).

I don’t want to make this overly simplistic. But, it really is in a sense. If our leaders understand that God is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe and they fear him, their decisions – the laws that they pass or seek to pass – will reflect His Word. Abortion will be outlawed. Family values will be foundational in our land. And, leaders will care for their people – not simply use them as a means to power.

Much, much more could be said about this subject. But at the point we are at in our current political climate in America, we need these basic two principles in a leader. And until we get them, things are looking bad for our future.

When is compromise on social or political ideals okay or is compromising always wrong?

Bro. Clint Keith: I would think there is a level of compromise on most any issue, politically and socially as leaders look at each problem to determine how far they can go at any given time to help solve it. However there are some issues that are moral issues, that really have no place for compromise without trampling over cause altogether. Such is the Pro-life movement. There is no compromise over the life of the innocent, it must be protected at every juncture. The homosexual movement, it is still sin, no matter how it is packaged or how it may be accepted by society as a whole. Moral issues do not change, if the Bible calls it sin, it is still sin and therefore cannot be compromised.

Bro. Jeff Short: Compromise on ideals, so long as they be biblical, is never okay. If by compromise we mean incrementalism, then that can be okay and even wise. Incrementalism is fighting for small changes over time that will add up to big changes in the end. For instance, every Christian should want the complete ending of all abortions. If that is presented as a bill tomorrow, it will not pass. However, if we can pass a ban on partial-birth abortion, we should do that. If we can pass a ban on late term abortion, we should do that. If we take those lesser bans and continue to push for greater bans, that is incrementalism. If, on the other hand, we accept a ban on partial-birth abortions and then quit fighting for more, that’s compromise.

Incrementalism means you don’t get the whole pie at once, but if you keep nibbling away at it, you can get the whole thing. Even the ant doesn’t gather its whole winter store at once. It gathers little by little, day after day, and when winter comes, it has a big pile (Proverbs 6:6-11). If little by little the house can fall down, it can also be built up little by little. This is the consequence of living and operating in a fallen world. We can wish it otherwise but that won’t make it so.

Bro. Todd Bryant: Another short answer from me. If this question is asking whether it’s OK to compromise Christian principles in voting, then it never is. We cannot compromise by voting for candidates that aren’t pro-life and pro-family. We do not want to look back and regret voting for men or women that don’t hold Biblical positions on these subjects. We cannot vote for despicably immoral or wicked candidates. We cannot vote for candidates that claim to be Christian, but prove by a reckless lifestyle that they are not – this is just mockery. We cannot vote for candidates that have no love for their fellow man. The Bible has much to say about character. We simply cannot vote for a candidate that lacks character. I’d much rather a wicked ruler be elected because God’s people refused to compromise their integrity than for Christians to vote for wickedness in high places. Our integrity matters in the voting booth just like it does everywhere else.

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” – 1 Corinthians 10:31

Now, if you are referring to issues that don’t relate to the Bible, compromise is just a part of politics. For instance, taxes may have to be raised or lowered at some point in the future. Politicians must work together on issues like this. This requires compromise as part of the process. I doubt the question was aimed at this type issue but I thought it was worth mentioning.



Media Circus & Political Parties

by Sis. Joanna Works

The media was very focused on the lead up to and days of the two major party's national conventions the RNC ran from July 18th to 21st in Cleveland, Ohio while the DNC took place July 25th–28th in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

What wasn't so widely covered however were the national conventions of smaller parties, C-Span being an exception to this rule provides a video library of a wide selection of speeches given at these conventions, including but not limited to; Constitution Party held in Salt Lake City, Utah in April. C-Span did cover their presidential nominee (Darrel Castle) acceptance speech delivered April 16th which you can watch [here](#). The Constitution Party also made changes to their platform, which you may read at [this link](#).

Libertarian National Convention was held May 26th-30th in Orlando, Florida nominated former NM governor Gary Johnson as their presidential candidate for the second time, this time his running mate is William Weld who was Governor of Massachusetts from 1991 to 1997. Both Johnson & Weld served their respective offices as Republicans in the past. Speeches by them may be found [here](#) and [here](#). Of the smaller parties on enough state ballots to theoretically receive enough electoral votes (this would be the Constitutional, Green, & Libertarian parties) the Libertarians have received the most media coverage both before and especially after their convention, they have also been wooing former Bernie Sander voters through social media. ReasonTV has a play list of videos from their coverage of the [Libertarian convention as well](#).

The Green Party Convention was held in the first week of August in Houston, Texas. Once again they nominated Physician and environmental health advocate Jill Stein, her speech can be viewed [here](#).

Getting back to our two Big Parties Reason has a play list for them as well, the [RNC](#) and [DNC](#), respectably... or not so respectably, their coverage of the DNC is a little more extensive as they have more interesting questions to ask the delegates and record Jill Stein and Gary Johnson crashing the Democratic party's party... bad puns aside, I was able to ask radio host & author Josh Tolley about his experiences at these two conventions.

Did any of the spectacles or speeches at either convention truly surprise you?

JT: I would say that the thing that surprised me most about the conventions was the difference between the two. The Republican convention was much more patriotic yet the people were much more low key. The Democrat convention the people were much more active yet there was little to no patriotism.

That and the fact that the DNC controlled what the media seen and reported was appalling. Even my Secret Service contact informed me that the DNC was going to have a much tighter leash on the media than the RNC did.

What was the differences between these two major parties? (Organization, Atmosphere, rhetoric, agenda?)

JT: The differences were many. Besides the differences in the media control and the access or lack there of; the DNC did a terrible job organizing their event. From not being sure where people were supposed to park to putting talk-shows right in the middle of the hallway which got in the way of everyone, the DNC just didn't seem very organized.

There were a few stories that came from the RNC & stories from DNC that kept the internet buzzing, such as Cruz endorsing (or not endorsing) Trump and the speech from Khizr Khan. What is your take away from either of these hot topic subjects?

JT: The hot button issues were there for sure. Ted's response to Trump just went to show what was expected of the party. For some reason Ted Cruz had many Christians fooled into thinking he was the candidate for "Christian Conservatives" even though his track record reflects something very different. You could sense though that the Ted supporters were dragging their feet in their support of Trump the first few days. The momentum changed a lot though on that last night. The crowd really started to get behind Trump. This is a contrast to the DNC where there were chants of "lock her up" all week and what the media wasn't showing you was how few of the people in the convention actually support Hillary.

Having been present for all the floor drama, what should the media have been covering that went unnoticed or under reported?

JT: Hahaha, everything. The media certainly dropped the ball on these events. Mostly the medias treatment of the DNC though is what I find most appalling. They muffled audio so the people at home thought the crowd was cheering, they put actors in the seats to make it look like there were more people than there really was and that those people were excited. It was sad really to see how bad the mainstream media covered the DNC.

If you've watched much of the main stream media coverage, is there a particular network that has been egregiously miss leading?

JT: I would say CBS and NBC/MSNBC were the two worst, followed closely by CNN

Mr. Tolley's videos from the conventions can be found here:

["RNC Update – Sunday"](#) July 17th

["BLM Protester Has a Change of Heart During LIVE Interview at RNC!"](#) July 18th

["Black Lives Matter vs Bikers for Trump on Cleveland RNC Streets"](#) July 19th

["Crazy Protesters Get Out of Hand at RNC \(Explicit Language\)"](#) July 20th

["What the TV Cameras DIDN'T Show You Could Be Huge Problem for Trump!"](#) July 20th

["Cleveland Police WANTED Clashes to Happen at RNC"](#) July 21st

["Josh Tolley has arrived DNC – Philly"](#) July 24th

["DNC Update - Cops want to arrest Hillary"](#) July 25th

["DNC Update: Dems Hope You are Stupid and CBS Acts Like a Baby"](#) July 26



One Constant In A World Of Change

by Bro. Curtis Pugh

People, politics, religion, opinions, morals, economics, laws – you name it and it has changed, is in process of changing or will soon change. Is there nothing that remains constant? Is there no solid rock among the ever changing waves crashing around us?

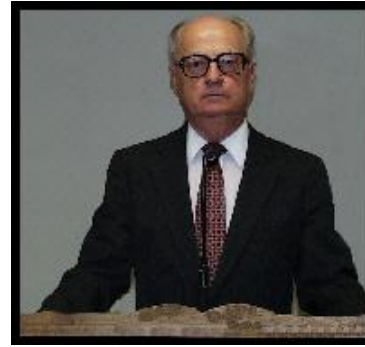
Yes, there is one unchanging constant. In Malachi 3:6 we read: “For I am the LORD, I change not...” Jehovah is always the same, always dependable, always constant. Again we read, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19). A similar statement is made in 1 Samuel 15:19 where it is written, “And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.” James contrasts God with the sun which is constantly producing moving shadows, calling Him, “...the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,” (James 1:17).

Because He never changes we can depend upon what He has said. Because of this Paul wrote, “For all the promises of God in him [Christ] are yea, and in him Amen,” (2 Corinthians 1:20). God does not change. He does not need to change either His mind or His actions. (He may be said to repent - change or turn – only in that He may proceed in a certain direction for a time and then after arriving at a predetermined point move in a different direction, but this is all to achieve His predetermined purpose which has never changed.)

Joseph was instructed concerning the name of Mary's firstborn, “...thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins,” (Matthew 1:20) and He is doing just that. In the Old Testament it was prophesied of Christ that, “He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law,” (Isaiah 42:4). Neither God the Father, God the Son, nor God the Holy Spirit has ever failed nor will failure ever be known to God! He is dependable. His Word is sure.

His Word reveals His Son, the Savior, the Messiah, the Christ, God's Anointed. Christ is called by God, “...mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth...” (Isaiah 42:1). The One in whom the Father delights is the One who is “**the firstborn from the dead,**” (Colossians 1:18). God's foreknowledge of certain individuals and His predestination of them shall eventually conform them to the image of Christ, thus making Christ “the firstborn among many brethren.” We learn this from Romans 8:29 which says, “**For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he**

might be the firstborn among many brethren.” So it is that God, without failure, is constant and dependable in successfully carrying out His plan of salvation – which is the only plan of salvation.



Deceitful Hearts

by Bro. Wm. Doyal
Thomas

(This article first published in The Baptist Herald - April, 1992)

**"Thus saith the Lord;
Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." (Jeremiah 17:5-10).**

There is an awesome matter before us today, and every day it continues, and will continue so long as we dwell in mortal flesh. And that matter concerns the heart. It concerns the depraved nature of the heart. It concerns the deceit that lurks within the heart of sinful man. We cannot cast it out, nor can we hope to reform it so as to alter its nature. We may, to some degree, restrain, but we cannot reform.

I call your attention to verse 9 of the reading from Jeremiah, chapter 17, and ask that you prayerfully enter into a concentrated study of the text within the context of what is recorded. "**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**" This text will occupy our thoughts as we seek to examine the great truths that God presents to His people. May we be taught. May we examine.

One other text comes to our minds, which is also connected with what we seek to declare to you during the course of this message. Look to chapter 14 of the same writing: "**Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart"** (Jeremiah 14:14).

I stand firmly convinced that the heart is deceitful. I stand firmly convinced that the heart is deceitful above all things. I

stand firmly convinced that the heart is deceitful above all things, and that none can know it so as to understand, nor exercise sufficient control over it.

Yet, I must speak to myself, and to each of you who hear or read these words, what I consider to be a heavenly dictated maxim. And that is, "Know thyself." God's word enjoins us to consider our circumstances, and our state. Not only what is our condition, but also what is our nature. Not only what is our conduct, but more vitally, what is our character.

It has been reported that John Bunyan said, of himself, that he often prayed that God forgive his sins. But, he then declared that when he, John Bunyan, was permitted and caused to see himself as God saw him, his prayers then became, "Lord, forgive me for being sin". Not only for sinning, but for being sin. And so it is with every one who is so brought to look at themselves as they ought, and to "know thyself". May we all be so brought.

Whatever knowledge we may possess in matters of the things around us, the world and all its many and varied subjects, the universe and all its myriad arrangements, is of little real value to us if we do not know ourselves. Whatever knowledge of these things we might strive to attain throughout the entire span of our lifetime will avail us nothing if we pass through that span being destitute of any real knowledge of ourselves. For without knowledge of ourselves, we will never be made to see our need to know God. The apostle Paul wrote, "**What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.**" (Romans 7:7).

Paul said, "... **I had not known sin** ...". Did he say, or did he imply when he thus wrote that he was not infected by sin, when he conducted himself as he said that he did? Did he say that while he lived most manifestly as a "Pharisee of the Pharisees", that he was not then a sinner? If he was not then a sinner, when did he become a sinner?

No, dear ones, he did not say that he was not a sinner. What he said was that he did not know that he was a sinner. He did, not know himself to be what in actuality he was. He had a totally misguided opinion of himself, for he said concerning his life then as Saul, that, "**I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.**" (Acts 26:9).

But take note of this same one, who, following a work of grace having been performed on his heart, made this resounding statement concerning himself. "**This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.**" (I Timothy 1:15).

Paul said of himself that he was before, "... **a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.**" (I Timothy 1:13). He, previous to this transaction by God in his behalf, was ignorant of his condition, and while in that awful state, went about doing those things that were injurious to God's people and to His cause. His heart was so deceitful until it had convinced this highly

religious man that he was doing God service, when in reality, he was a blasphemer and a rebel against the God whom he thought he was faithfully serving. How deceitful was his heart?

Dear reader, ignorance of ourselves is a willful blindness, for which we cannot plead extenuations. Men who do not know themselves and their state of blindness are in that deplorable condition because of sin. And sin was willful on Adam's part, and consequently on all our parts, for we sinned when Adam sinned, and are fully responsible before God for our sins. "... **Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it ...**" (Genesis 3:17). Did Adam willfully sin?

Ignorance of ourselves is willful. "**Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.**" (Romans 1:19,20). "**Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willing are ignorant of, ...**" (II Peter 3:3-5).

Ignorance of ourselves likens us to a traveler who prefers to go on in the darkness with all its attendant dangers to the journey being taken in the fullness of light. To grope in darkness is to be desired over moving in light? How foolish is the darkened heart of man?

God's word is the only resource which is available to us so that we can find the way. God's Spirit is the only source of enablement that we have for the self-examination that we all need so that we can "know ourselves", as we must be brought to do in order to know of the deceitfulness of our own hearts; and then be brought to lean not upon our own arm of fleshly strength, but instead upon Him who is our Strength.

God's word is our resource. It is our only sure haven of safe harbor. It is our only light to enable our journey to be taken in full illumination; in full safety. "**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.**" (Psalms 119:105). "**For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**" (Hebrews 4:12). Note that God's word is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart!

The text that we have presented to initiate this look into ourselves gives us a fearful, yet most accurate and revealing picture of ourselves. It also shows forth in vivid and unequivocal terms the moral condition of the soul. "**The heart is deceitful ...**" Thus, our subject can be seen as the spiritual anatomy of the heart, and we most surely need to carefully examine ourselves in light of this declaration that God has made concerning the condition of our hearts.

First, let us verify the great and grand truths of this text. Then, we will seek to picture these truths so as to place the deceitful hearts on open display. And finally, we will seek to apply the truths of this text so as to be benefited in our lives, and to magnify the grace of God in living those lives as pleasing Him.

Verification of Truths

When we begin to analyze what is told us in the text, we discover that what is said of the heart actually relates to the whole soul, to the entire mental man. In this analysis, we see that included here in this overall statement is the understanding, the judgment, the conscience, the will, the passion, and all other faculties of man, without exception. We see the depravity of man described when the heart is opened to view.

Man's understanding is darkened. **"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart :..." (Ephesians 4:17,18).** Note that the believing Gentiles in the Lord's church were not to walk, or conduct themselves, as other, unbelieving, unregenerate Gentiles walk, in the vanity (emptiness) of their darkened minds, and this due to the fact that their hearts were blinded.

Man's judgment is impaired. When Adam rebelled against God, and sinned against His Holiness, what did he then do? The inspired record bears out that he exercised his judgment as to what he imagined he ought to do under these circumstances, and did exactly opposite what sound judgment would dictate. Instead of fleeing to God so as to seek His forgiveness and corrective action, he fled from God and sought to undertake for himself. Was his judgment impaired? His actions say so. What about those fig leaf aprons he fashioned? What about his seeking to hide himself from God?

Man's will is alienated from God. To captive Israel God said, **"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." (Ezekiel 18:31,32).** To His own people, God has frequently spoken that they might be instructed in the ways that please Him. Yet, because of their sin and the consequences of their sin, their darkened hearts and demented wills remain at odds with Him. Their will is toward themselves and their ambitions, and is contrary to His will.

To Israel also the Lord Jesus Christ said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." (John 1:11). "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (John 5:40).

It seems to be needful as we proceed in this examination of our deceitful hearts, and the abject wickedness that these hearts exhibit to take a moment and look at the words "deceitful" and "wicked", since these two words have been chosen by the Holy

Spirit to describe the heart of sinful man, as He superintended the writing of the Bible.

The term, deceitful, literally means crooked, perverse, and totally lacking in conformity to that which is right, both as right pertains to rule, and to action. Crooked means tricky, as regards conduct; not to be trusted; dishonest. Perverse means turned aside; distorted from the right; obstinate in the wrong; disposed to be contrary.

The term, deceitful, also means that what goes forth is false and fraudulent, both as to motive and intent. False signifying all that is not truth, and fraudulent signifying that the falseness is motivated by a deceitful intent to defraud, or to do, or cause evil to ensue. It is a monstrous display of self-will seeking to assert itself at whatever cost that may be incurred. In the case of rebellion against God, the cost to be borne is the cost of condemnation, resulting in separation from God. What an awesome cost this is. And yet man insists upon his own way, even when these costs result. Folly!

The term, wicked, signifies corrupt, criminal, and totally given over to evil. It means, evil in principle and in practice; deviating from, or contrary to moral or divine law; addicted to vice; sinful; immoral; depraved; vicious. This description is of the heart. It is deceitful. It is wicked.

Now, as we seek to verify the truths of this text, we will do so by presenting to you such evidence as cannot be denied nor successfully gainsayed. We will prove conclusively what the text declares. We will call forth the testimony of Scripture. We will call forth from the history of wicked men. And we will present also the record of the weakness and sins of those men who are generally regarded as "good men".

First, we declare that the statements that God has made concerning men of old time are true, even today, as they were true when God spoke them. **"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5).** Jesus testified of the same truth when He said, **"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." (Matthew 15:18-20).**

Scripture likens man's deceitful heart to a cage of unclean birds, and to a corrupt fountain, and to a bad tree that can bring forth no good fruit. Scripture declares that the heart is not right with God, that the heart is forward to evil, that it is full of evil imaginings, that it is full of hypocrisy, etc., etc. The heart is said to be hard, impenitent, perverse, rebellious, and set to do evil.

Then, we will call upon recorded history from the Scriptures, from man's recorded history, and from contemporary knowledge that the life and conduct of wicked men will verify the truths of the text into which we are looking as we seek to examine ourselves, to "know ourselves". Without going into great depths

of detail, I will call your attention to some whom God has been pleased to tell us of. As we call your mind to these, I ask you to look into the Scriptures so that the record may be verified; so that the truths of the text may be verified and established in our minds.

Examine the scriptural account of Cain. Did he exhibit a wicked, rebellious heart? Did he bring forth, in faith, a suitable and acceptable sacrifice? Did he? Why didn't he? Was his heart deceitful and wicked? Did not his sinful nature show itself when his heart convinced him that surely the best that his hands could produce would find favor when he presented the produce of his fields and of his labor?

Look also to Pharaoh. Did not his heart lead him to continuously defy God and insist upon his imagined mastery of his own destiny? Did he not openly and flagrantly pronounce his independence from the God of the Hebrews? In fact, the heart of sinful Pharaoh manifested itself in all its grotesque arrogance when from the abundant evil that lurked in the deepest recesses of his depraved heart, his mouth was led to issue forth this terribly blasphemous statement: "...**Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.**" (Exodus 5:2). From the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. And so, from the abundant wickedness of Pharaoh's heart, his mouth spoke.

Look also to the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Look to the envious, sensual inhabitants of those cities as they sought to promote their "alternate life style", and to walk totally contrary to principle and practice of both divine order and moral precept. From the abundance of their wicked hearts, having been fed by the deceit from within, their mouths spoke, and their wicked and sinful lives defied God and His prescribed ways. And so it is, even to this dreadful day. Nothing is different.

Look to Judas, to Pilate, to Saul, and to numerous others whose miserable lives are set forth for our examination in the Scriptures. In each of their cases, we may correctly view the outpouring of evil that dwelled within their darkened, depraved hearts. We may even be caused to wonder at God's willingness to tolerate such enmity against Himself as is so clearly exhibited by these, and other monsters who have lived while they so openly defied the God who rules supremely over all His creation. "**What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:**" (Romans 9:22).

And what of wicked men of our age, even of our day? What of Adolph Hitler? What of Saddam Hussein? What of Jeffrey Dahmer? What of wicked men of every age, innumerable in number, but alike in their character? What of sodomites today? What of wickedness of every stripe and species that runs rampant in the societies of the entire world today? What of sinful man in total?

In these wicked men that we have named specifically, and those we have generally identified or alluded to, can we not see what man can become. Can we not see how vile, wicked, and terrible men in their depravity may become?

As further study into the lives of men that are generally identified as "good men", as opposed to the adamantly wicked men that we have been viewing will reveal, we see evidence that substantiates what we have said. From the so-called worst to the best of men, and from the lowest to the highest of men, we find conclusive proof, when the facts are verified, that tell us of man's deceitful heart.

Look at Noah as an example of what we are saying. Here is a man who has been commended by his exemplary life. Here is a man who is said to be one who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and whose life, generally, is a life that was found to be pleasing unto the Lord. And yet, because of excesses, he is also seen as being clothed in shame, as drunkenness are displayed. And this conduct from Noah, whom God set apart from all other men, and was pleased to save he and his family when judgment came upon men.

Look at Lot. A man who is said to possess a righteous soul. A man who, being one of God's men, yet goes after the allurements and benefits, though fleeting, of the world. Lot looked upon the well watered plain and chose him that way and that place in which to live, not giving proper regard to what would please the Lord. He looked. He chose. His choice being influenced by the deceitful testimony of his own heart. Many today do likewise. They look, and choose, without regard for what God would have them do.

Look at Jacob. Here is a man chosen of God to an exalted position. Yet, by fraud he robs his brother of the natural birthright, and by deceit he tricks his father into the bestowal of blessing. Jacob is a cunning and sly one. His heart led him to conspire and to act as he did. But so are many of us and of our contemporaries.

And we could go on, but space and time are limitations upon our look. So, we just call your attention to the names of others, and ask you to consider their lives so that you will be able to affirm that what we are saying is true. Look at Moses, and Aaron, and David, and Solomon, and Peter, and you and I. Oh, to our shame, we too are included, the evidence is in. We too have deceitful hearts!

As we continue the examination of our hearts, so that we can better know ourselves, we see the truths of this text illustrated as our deceitful hearts are displayed. We would not want to admit to their depravity, but we find no avenue open to us that allows us to escape the truth. The picture is too clearly drawn for further evasion, and we are left to the stark reality that confronts us.

Our deceitful hearts must be viewed and acknowledged. We must see them as they present a picture of ourselves. Oh, how often are we deceived as our hearts flatter us by representing our state as being better than it actually is. How often we are led to imagine that all is well with us while all the time we are being further drugged by the opium of conceit and self pride.

We might admit to ourselves that the general wickedness that is all around us has some vague but remote effect upon us and upon our actions. We might even concede to the weakness and

feebleness that infects all of mankind. But we are so unwilling to even discuss our own personal sinfulness in any great detail. We are reluctant to even consider that our specific sins can be truly ours. Always someone else's. But surely not ours. We try to be examined and judged by the more favorable aspects of our character. We strive to magnify the benevolent and kind acts that we may perform, and to totally ignore, or at least to minimize, our short-comings and our failures.

Have you ever read a person's autobiography? I surely can not place each and every person's account of their lives into this exact mold, but generally, it can be said that man's account of himself reflects the same appraisals as he would give of himself were he to be asked. There are, of course, some exceptions. But as a rule, the autobiography of a person majors on good, while minimizing bad.

Then too, our hearts often deceive us by providing for us a veritable endless supply of excuses and extenuations for our particular sins. Our hearts plead as a cover-up for our constitution, that is, our physiological and psychological make up to always give us a way out, an escape path so as to avoid responsibility. And so it is also with our education, or our examples, or the general influences by our environmental surroundings.

It is so evident that sin and evil always finds other people, other things, other times, or other circumstances to place the blame for our sins upon. And it is our own deceitful hearts that conceive these excuses. We are mortally infected with this malady.

Our hearts so often prevent us from any in-depth consideration of the consequences for our sins. It is as if our consciences have literally been seared over with a hot iron, so as to eradicate any sensitivity. This opium effect causes our hearts to shut out from our view the certainty of death and judgment, and of eternity and loss. It even can cause God's people to imagine that there is no chastening hand of the Lord to be feared.

The inducement to put off until some other time the needed repentance and striving toward a corrective manner of life comes also from within the depths of our hearts. And yet the Scriptures teach the necessity of the repentance that we seek to delay or to avoid. There is no way out. We cannot escape. God requires men everywhere to repent. The lost are commanded to repent. The saved are commanded to repent. The Lord's churches are commanded to repent. But our hearts tell us, not now. Sometime, but not now.

The deceitfulness of our hearts are also shown when we consider our thoughts and our actions toward other men. Are there those who read these words who would dare to submit himself and his life to the test of permitting and inviting another man to take a long, searching, revealing look into his heart? Would you, or I, ask that every sin, overt or covert, be placed on public display, enumerated, labeled, and in every way, made known to others? Would you, or I, consent to the drawing back of the curtain that conceals from view our innermost thoughts?

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou

shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (Matthew 5:21-22). "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28).

Then, the deceitfulness of our hearts is shown when we consider our thoughts and actions toward God. As we take a correct and careful look at our heart dictated thoughts and actions toward God, we are found to be displaying utter and complete madness. To be, and to act deceitful toward God is the utmost folly.

So often we present to Him mere external service. In our foolishness, we present to Him our lips, our hands, our feet, our knees; even our PROFESSIONS. But, the spirit, the heart, the lowliness, the humility, the dedication, the DUTY are so frequently lacking. **"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." (Matthew 15:8). "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." (Ezekiel 33:31). "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).**

When we confess our sins, and follow with a vow of abandonment of those sins, and then persist in those same sins as if we had not confessed and vowed at all, we are so clearly demonstrating that our hearts are still filled with deceit and evil. Oh, dear one, please look carefully at your life! Please seek grace daily so as to be enabled to acknowledge and confess your sins, and then to come away from them. It is pleasing to God when we do so. It is folly on our part not to do so.

Our hearts also are shown in their true colors when we plead God's grace at the expense of His justice and His righteousness. We foolishly imagine that because **"where sin abounds, grace does much more abound"**, is an excuse to be claimed by us each time we sin. But, hear the Scriptures: **"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1,2).**

When we expect God's mercy, even when we are daily refusing His mercy, we are demonstrating the deceit that lies within our own hearts. **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:8,9).** We do not keep short accounts with God. We do not confess our sins as we should, thus the chastening hand of God is upon us, and will not be restrained. May we see our need, and act accordingly.

Just how deceitful is the heart of man? The text has declared, **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"** How deceitful is the heart? Superlatively deceitful! Deceitful above all things. There is nothing more deceitful than the heart of man. It is the epitome of deceitfulness, and has no peer.

The Scriptures announce, and confirm, that Satan is a deceiver. But, the heart, acting under the influence of evil, sins, even against the greatest love that any creature could know. For God's people, who are, and have eternally been the objects of God's love, sin against Him. This cannot be said of Satan; of the fallen angels; of the reprobate; nor of any other creature. God's love has never been upon these. But it is, and has always been upon God's elect, even when they were alien sinners. **"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"** (Ephesians 2:4,5).

Because Satan introduced sin to man, and is the originator of it, it is assumed by some that he is the continuing cause of it. But this is not the case. When Adam willfully sinned, he, being an accountable, responsible creature before God, now bears his own guilt. He cannot correctly plead, "the devil made me do it". Not so. His own will was to eat of the forbidden fruit. He was not deceived by Satan. Eve was. Adam was not. But when he sinned, the result is that his own heart is now irreconcilably darkened. He is sin. So, from that moment on, his ruined heart is the source of the on-going deceit. His heart is not repairable. It must be replaced. And only the Great Physician is qualified to perform that transplant.

The old, stony heart of man is now the source of deceit. The old heart is said to be the fullness, the fountain, the root, the womb of all deceit. **"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?"** (James 4:1).

Not only is the heart the source of deceit, it is also an instrument that is deceitful under all circumstances, and at all times. When prosperity is our portion, our hearts remain deceitful. When adversity is upon us, our hearts remain deceitful. When we are blessed with good health, or with sickness; when we face life or death; when in our youth or in old age, our hearts remain deceitful.

The heart is deceitful beyond our knowledge or description. We cannot, within the limits of our knowledge, and within the limits of human language, describe, nor fully know the awful depths of our depravity, and of the deceit that has permeated every fiber and particle of our human make-up. The Scriptures have asked, "... **who can know it?"**

Not the wisest and best among men can know the heart of man. God ONLY sees it and understands it. God ONLY knows the thoughts of men. All men. **"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."** (John 2:24,25). The heart is deceitful and wicked beyond our capacity to restore. It is **"desperately wicked"**. It is true that human influence and effort may, to some very limited degree,

restrain and modify. But God alone can heal and restore. God alone can renew. Desperately wicked hearts are outside the realm of control, so far as the power of man is concerned.

Therefore, we conclude, that what man whose heart as here described needs, is more than his resources are able to supply. What he needs is to have the stony heart taken out, and a new heart given to him. And he cannot perform such as is required. But, God can! **"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh."** (Ezekiel 36:26).

Truths Application

The text has addressed these profound truths, and they concern every one who hears, or reads these words. Not one of us can escape the stringent demands that are placed upon us, nor can we meet these just and righteous demands, which require us to serve God with no deceit or conceit in our hearts, or evidenced in our lives. Therefore, let none of us seek to evade what is declared. Rather, let **"every mouth be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God"**. (Romans 3:19). May we cry out, "Oh Lord, have mercy on me!"

Surely, we should be able to see that our hearts ought not to be trusted. **"He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife; but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered."** (Proverbs 28:25,26).

We could more safely trust in the deadly serpent than to trust in the deceitful heart of man. We could more safely trust in the deep darkness with its sure dangers than to trust in our hearts.

Let us not be satisfied with the performance of such hearts as we possess in our mortal flesh. Let us seek, rather, to take our case daily before the Lord so that we may there receive cleansing, and transformation, and continual sanctification. Let us lean hard upon the Lord, and trust Him, and put ourselves at His mercy so that we may be made pure.

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

Oh, my dear reader, let us know of our most desperate needs, and let us, with all haste and constancy flee to Him who knows us and knows our needs, and is able to meet. all those awesome needs. Let us flee to Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Let us look to Mount Calvary where the Prince of Glory died.

Jesus is willing, and He is able to save them that come unto Him. He has never been found to be lacking, at any time, under any circumstances. He is able to save. He will give new hearts, and then He will make those new hearts the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. He will fill those new hearts with His peace, and will never, never, ever leave, nor forsake His own.





Freedom from Religion?

by Bro. Jeff Short

(Continued from the cover page)

Secularists are clamoring for an entirely secular state, free from religion. We have to ask if this is even possible. Let's define our terms. Religion is adherence to a body of beliefs that dictates regular practices in the life of the individual adherent. Philosophy is any number of theoretical ideas a person holds that may be inconsistent but don't typically directly translate into a behavior. Political ideology is a set of beliefs of how things ought to be for all and the mandating of said ideals by the authority of government. We may quibble over these definitions but they are close enough.

Secularists claim to adhere only to science and reason. They allow for philosophy and their political ideology is to bare the arm of the state in order to forcibly coerce compliance. Of course, they claim to be free from any religion and often opine against religious zealots imposing their religion on the poor, beleaguered secularists. Ironically, religion is the least imposing and doesn't seek forcible coercion. Unless you're talking about Islam, which secularists rarely do. The late Hitchens was a notable exception to this.

Are they free from religion? No they are not. First, Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). We infer from this that total neutrality is not possible. We religiously hold and serve one or the other. While they may reject biblical Christianity, they religiously hold to evolution, human autonomy, and human solidarity. Secularist humanism is a religion. Statism is a religion. Naturalistic materialism is a religion. They are as zealous and fundamentalist as any.

Second, they aren't free from religion because they borrow much from the Christianity they hate. They love to express their moral indignation and talk about what people ought or ought not to do. Where does that come from? Naturalistic materialism provides no basis for moral outrage or imperative. If all we are and have is time and chance acting on matter, then there is no *ought*, there is only *is*. Darwinian evolution advanced the survival of the fittest, which has given rise to various eugenicists, ethnic cleansers, and baby murderers who came to be known as Planned Parenthood and such. Their outrage against slavery and racism on the one hand, and their full-throated support of abortion on the other is great gulf fixed in the middle of their worldview. Biblical Christianity compels us to abhor and oppose all those things, but naturalism's got nothing.

So how should things be concerning the freedom of religion in a mixed society? Our Baptist forebears in the time of the founding

of this country recognized the biblical principle of individual soul liberty. Men have to be free to think and worship according to their own consciences without coercion or interference from the State. They recognized the unjust monstrosity of state-mandated religion. Islam is one of those examples today. It would take more space, wisdom, and skill than I possess to explore all the aspects of Islam.

I believe we should be for religious liberty and that includes the secularist's religious liberty as well. When a person or group commits a crime, they should be tried by due process and justly punished. When you start singling out different groups for inclusion or exclusion in special protection status, you immediately infringe that liberty. In a truly free society, people have to be free to be wrong and Christians must be free to evangelize them.



In Health

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. ~ III John 1:2

with Bro. John Fry D.C.



Forward Head Posture

FHP (forward head posture) is one of the most common reasons for visits to medical professionals every year. This condition causes increased stress on the cervical spine and may lead to pain, spasm, and headache. In my own practice, I've found this to be a common condition among computer workers and younger adults that spend most of their day looking down at their phones. The medical route of treatment is usually a prescription of ibuprofen, muscle relaxers, and sometimes medication to "control stress". This route of care often appears to have success because it is covering up the symptoms, but because it never addresses the cause the condition remains.

The neck works like a bridge, holding the head which weighs 10-12 lbs on the shoulders. Like a bridge, it has a natural arch that helps distribute weight over each spinal segment. Whenever that arch becomes straighter, either by repetitive posture or injury, the weight of the head is no longer distributed correctly.

So what is a normal head position? The perfect posture exists when a straight line can be drawn through the opening of the ear through the center of the shoulder.

For every inch the neck moves forward, it is said that an extra 10 lbs of pressure is exerted on the muscles of the neck and upper back. To keep the head level and the chin up, many muscles of the neck must remain constantly contracted. This contraction can

cause irritation of the suboccipital nerves which may result in headaches.

If left untreated long enough, constant pressure of the head will lead to chronic stress on the upper back and may lead to an increase in thoracic curve. Most often, by the time that patient makes it to my office, they complain of a "big knot" at the base of his/her neck. Some exhibit tingling and numbness in the arms and hands at this point as well.

It is often common for women to present in my office with rounded shoulders, a slight increased thoracic curve and a forward head posture of two inches. This is like strapping a 20 lb weight on your head and walking around. After a while, you know problems are going to develop.

In order to fight FHP, one must take a good look at his/her work station. The ideal posture in the seated position is a straight line. Your monitor should be within arms reach so the head doesn't drift forward to look at the screen. Stretching of the neck is a wonderful thing to do every day. Isometric exercises of the head/neck can also help the forward progression of the head. Lastly, if you have already noticed you have FHP, then don't try to cover the symptoms up with more drugs that in the long run do nothing to correct the problem. Instead consider someone who will work to correct the problem such as a chiropractor or physical therapist.

If you have any questions you would like answered, I would love to hear from you. You can contact me at pastorjohnfry@att.net. Until next time I pray that you might be in health.

Labor In Love



"The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin."
Proverbs 10:16



Sis. Wendy Bryant the wife of Bro. Todd Bryant, mother of two boys, a member of Sovereign Grace Baptist church, Northport Alabama and an employ of The University of Alabama - The Center for Advanced Public Safety.

How did you come to work there?

WB: My mother-in-law called me one day and told me to go on my lunch break and apply to all the jobs listed. Her friend told her about a job opening. Needless to say I did not apply for that job because it hadn't been posted yet. So 17 years later I'm still here!!!

So do you stay there out of necessity, apathy, or love of the job?

WB: I stay mostly out of necessity. The University has good

benefits and good insurance. When I started at the university you could retire after 25 years of service regardless of age. Now you have to be retirement age and have 25 years of service. I only have 8 years left. I'm too close to retirement to quit now!!!

Were you working outside of your home before you went to the university?

WB: Yes, unfortunately.

What are your beliefs on working outside of the home?

WB: My belief-if it's possible it's best for the mom to not work outside the home. If you don't buy into the "American Dream" and buy into the "this life is not the end goal" we all would be better off. Not all that the world has to offer is worth the trouble. It's hard to go back to the way it's supposed to be once you've set your standard of living on a salary you have been living on.

How would you council a young lady who isn't sure if she should seek a secular job?

WB: If she's not married I would say having a job isn't a bad thing - as long as it doesn't take you away from serving the church. Have the end game of being a stay at home mom and wife. Also, don't let the world trick you into thinking all the stuff out there is so important that you need to work. Yes, you need a place to live, food, clothes and a car but not the best the world has to offer. So that way you don't have to work when the babies come.

Do you believe jobs are callings? Why do you think God has had you working at the university for 17 years?

WB: Some jobs are a calling. I don't think mine is. I have no idea why God has me working here for so long.

Would you change anything if you could?

WB: It's funny you ask this because Todd and I were talking this week how we would change things. Yes there is so much I would change. Pertaining to this conversation - I would have never started working and been happy with what we had and not wanted more.

Did your past jobs help prepare you for your current field of work?

WB: Each job I've had builds you up for the next job. I'm actually still using some skills I learned from my first office job!!!

What do you enjoy most about your present and past office work?

WB: My last office - I enjoyed the work more but there wasn't as much flexibility. My current office is more stressful but as long as I meet my deadlines it's very flexible. My current boss, though not a Baptist, is a professing Christian and we can have biblical discussions without anyone being afraid of going to HR!!!

What is it exactly that you do, do you have a fancy title? Did you go to school to learn how to do your job?

WB: My fancy title is Accounting Assistant. My not so fancy title is - make sure people get paid!!! My office runs off of state and federal grants so there is always paperwork to keep people

paid!!! I have had no formal education to do any job I've had. It's all been either shown to me or I figured it out myself

It seems like your career path has been all happenstance, how do you see God's leadership in all these things?

WB: It seems so. Starting from the beginning God was in control. I went to apply for a job that hadn't been posted. I also had to take a typing test. I have never nor will I ever type that fast again. Each time I move to a new office it's always for some growth. A public university is usually pretty liberal. I've been blessed to work in offices that had at the least people who respected that I had religious convictions. Some offices, like the one I am in now, I can have a biblical conversation (even if we disagree) and I don't feel like the liberal police is coming to get me!!!

Do you think the University of Alabama is less liberal in general compared to other colleges?

WB: I don't think they are any less liberal, maybe just not as obvious as other colleges.

Have you been able to witness to people through your work? Do you get to interact with a variety of people?

WB: I have been able to witness to people. Sadly, I haven't seen anything come of it but that doesn't mean it hasn't or won't. There are a wide variety of "religions" represented in my office. Mostly Christian denominations but there was a girl from India who is Hindu, one guy is Muslim, and I think another guy is Hindu - I'm not positive about him. They have given the Muslim guy a place to "pray" but it's also a nursing mothers room so it wasn't really set up for him. He was told he could use it as long as a mom wasn't in there.

Do you ever speak to your none Christian co-workers about God, Christ, or their beliefs?

WB: I have some. I'm always open when asked if I believe something or what I think. It's hard at times when you aren't able to have more than a passing "hello". But I try to be nice to people with the hopes they ask why I'm so happy.

Being at a university for 17 years have you observed changes in the higher education system even though you're not directly involved with teaching?

WB: I have noticed that the requirements to enroll into the university has gone up. Being in a non-academic office throughout my 17 years, it's harder and harder to get a "non-degreeed" job. More and more jobs are "degree preferred" that use to be a good straight from high school type job. The thought

process is we are a University and we want "degreeed" staff more than not. It makes it hard for those who are just not college material. And it makes the job market for the person who has a degree to be saturated with entry level jobs that pays less than they need to pay off their student loans.

Can you elaborate on the student standards?

WB: What I remember - ACT/SAT score requirements are higher than they use to be. The students with AP classes or take Early College classes seem to get more preference. Freshman students who are not local to the area or have family locally are required to live on campus. Fees like parking and meal have gone up. Also tuition has probably doubled since i started working at the university.

What kind of political policy do you see playing a part in these changes

WB: I'm sure there are some I just don't know of any. The one thing that Obama Care did change was insurance and how the university insurances the graduates students who have GRA/GTA jobs. Because there hasn't been a clear ruling for graduate students, the university now gives the students the cash equivalent of the services they use to just give the students. When you started Graduate school and took a GRA/GTA job the University said "we have a faculty/staff clinic, go enroll as a graduate student and we will provide medical care for you." Now they have to find their own insurance plan with the money provided. They can use the faculty/staff clinic - the money covers it but we have already seen some students take the money but not apply for insurance then get very sick and they don't have insurance and the university can't do anything to help them because its past the enrollment deadline.

Do you think higher education is a must these days?

WB: I don't think all levels of higher education is a must. If you don't know what you want to do for a living why take on \$50,000 worth of debt to work at minimum wage somewhere. If you want to be in the medical or legal field then you will need higher education. Sometimes a technical degree is perfect. If you are a hands on kind of person then technical degrees are for you. I'm not against high education, i'm against taking on a large debt because the world thinks its the thing to do

What do you think is the most important thing for people to know about your job?

WB: It's a tad stressful. My office is funded by state and federal grants-that makes for a lot of paperwork and if that paperwork doesn't get turned in on time people don't get paid on time. If I don't get paid on time bills don't get paid!!! It's a tad stressful!!

How do you handle your stress?

WB: I get to go home every day!!!! And I run!!!!

What would you recommend to a believer who is stressed out about work and seeking help? **WB:** Pray, read your bible, find a friend to talk to (or talk to your spouse) and exercise.

Sis. Wendy has written an article for Baptists For Liberty on “[Running](#)” which you can find in our May 2014 issue here, <http://baptistsforliberty.weebly.com/newsletter-archive/issue-20-may-2014>

She has also started her own blog & Facebook page “Running With the Pastor” to “document the day and life of a Pastor’s wife - her husband the Pastor, her family and friends.” Which you are invited to read at [this link on Facebook](#) and [here’s the website link](#) if you don’t have Facebook.

Historical Marker

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. Psalm 119:99-101



Believers Free From The Dominion Of Sin

By C. H. Spurgeon

Delivered on April 21st, 1878 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

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“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14.

Our constant hearers will remember that a Sabbath or so ago we spoke upon, “Submit yourselves unto God.” [#1408, The Reason Why Many Cannot Find Peace.]

It is both the way to peace and the way of peace to submit one’s whole self unto God. Nor is it an irksome task to a true believer, but the desire of his heart, the pleasure of his life. He shudders at the idea of yielding his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but according to the language of the verse which precedes our text, he yields himself unto God as one who has been made alive from the dead and his members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Complete consecration of every faculty of mind and body unto the Lord is our soul’s

deepest wish. We can sing most sincerely that sweet consecration hymn

*“Take my hands and let them move,
At the impulse of Your love.
Take my feet and let them be,
Swift and beautiful for Thee.
Take my voice and let me sing,
Always, only for my King!
Take my lips and let them be,
Filled with messages from Thee.
Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as You shall choose.
So that all my powers combine,
To adore Your grace divine,
Heart and soul a living flame,
Glorifying Your great name.”*

But, beloved, we find another law in our members warring against the law of our mind. To the full yielding up of all our members we find a hindrance in the sin which dwells in us, that sin which finds its haunt and hiding place in our mortal body, in the desires, passions and appetites of our animal nature. These within proper limits are right enough, it is right that we eat and drink, and so forth, but our natural instincts are apt to demand indulgence and so to become lusts. Our mortal body, in its natural desires, affords dens for the foxes of sin. The carnal mind also, readily leans to the indulgence of the body and thus there is presented a powerful opposition to the work of grace. Every true child of God must be conscious of the presence of the rebellious power and principle of sin within him. We strive to keep it under, to subdue and conquer it, and we hope to see it utterly exterminated at the last, for our case is like that of Israel with the Canaanites and we long for the day when, “There shall no more be the Canaanite in the house of the land.”

Sin is a domineering force. A man cannot sin up to a fixed point and then say to sin, “Up to here shall you come, but no farther.” It is an imperious power and where it dwells it is hungry for the mastery. Just as our Lord, when He enters the soul, will never be content with a divided dominion, so is it with sin, it labors to bring our entire manhood under subjection. Therefore we are compelled to strive daily against this ambitious principle. According to the working of the Spirit of God in us we wrestle against sin that it may not have dominion over us. It has unquestioned dominion over multitudes of human hearts and in some it has set up its horrid throne on high and keeps its seat with force of arms so that its empire is undisturbed. In others the throne is disputed, for conscience mutinies, but yet the tyrant is not dethroned. Over the whole world sin exercises a dreadful tyranny. It would hold us in the same bondage were it not for one who is stronger than sin, who has undertaken to deliver us out of its hand and will certainly perform the redeeming work. Here is the charter of our liberty, the security of our safety—“Sin shall not have dominion over you.” It reigns over those who abide in unbelief, but it shall not have dominion over you, “because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” The whole world lies in the wicked one, but “you are not of the

world” and therefore “sin shall not have dominion over you.” If we are distressed by the fear that sin will ultimately get the mastery over us, let us be comforted by our text. Holy jealousy leads us to fear that though we have for many years been enabled to maintain a spotless character before men, we may in some unguarded hour make shipwreck of faith and end our life voyage as castaways upon the rocks of shame. The flesh is frail and our strength is perfect weakness and therefore, we dread lest we should make some terrible fall and bring dishonor upon the holy name by which we are called. Under such feelings we may fly for comfort to the rich assurance of the text, “Sin shall not have dominion over you.”

Three things will demand our consideration and afford us consolation this morning. The first is the peculiar position of believers—“You are not under the law, but under grace.” Secondly, the special assurance made to them, “Sin shall not have dominion over you.” And thirdly, the remarkable reason given for this statement, “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.”

I. First, then, here is A PECULIAR POSITION

—“You are not under the law.” All men are under the law by nature and consequently, they are condemned by it because they have broken its commandments and apart from our Lord Jesus men are only reprieved criminals, respited from day to day, but still under sentence and waiting for the appointed hour when the warrant shall be solemnly executed upon them. But believers are regarded as having died in Christ and by that death they have escaped from under the law. They are clean delivered from the law by the fact that their Redeemer endured the penalty of the law on their behalf and at the same time honored the law by rendering perfect obedience to it. Thus in a two-fold manner, He met all the law’s requirements so that it has no more demands upon His people.

“Not under the law,” being interpreted, means that we are not trying to be saved by obedience to the law. We do not pretend to earn eternal life by merit, nor hope to claim anything of the Lord as due to us for good works. The principle which rules our life is not mercenary. We do not expect to earn a reward, neither are we flogged to duty by dread of punishment. We are under grace—that is to say, we are treated on the principle of mercy and love, and not on that of justice and desert. Freely, of His own undeserved favor, God has forgiven us for Christ’s sake. He has regarded us with favor, not because we deserved it, but simply because He willed to do so, according to that ancient declaration, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” The Lord did not choose us because of any goodness in us, but He has saved us and called us according to the purpose of His own will. Moreover, our continuance in a state of salvation depends upon the same grace which first placed us there. We do not stand or fall according to our personal merit, but because Jesus lives, we live. Because Jesus is accepted, we are accepted. Because Jesus is beloved, we are beloved. In a word, our standing is not based upon merit, but upon mercy, not upon our changeable character, but upon the immutable mercy of God. Grace is the tenure upon which we hold our position before the Lord. “For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of

yourself: it is the gift of God,” “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, the man that does them shall live in them.”

Let us endeavor to recount the privileges of this position by mentioning the evils from which it releases us. First, we no longer dread the curse of the law. Those who are under the law may well be horribly afraid because of the penalties which are due through their many failures and transgressions. They have broken the law and are therefore in constant danger of judgment and condemnation. The careless try to shake off the thought as much as possible by putting off the evil day, by forgetting death and by pretending to disbelieve in judgment and eternal wrath. But still more or less, this thought disturbs them, a dreadful sound is in their ears. When men are once awakened, the dread of punishment for sin haunts them day and night and fills them with terror. And well it may, for they are under the law and the law will soon cast them into its prison, from which they will never escape. Every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompense of reward. Now, believers have no fear as to the punishment of their sin, for our sin was by the Lord Himself laid upon Jesus, and the penalty was borne by Him.

“The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed.”

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” Substitution clears the Christian from all debt to justice and he dares to challenge the law itself with the question—who is he that condemns, since Christ has died? Yes, He goes further and challenges an accusation—who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect, since God has justified? No penalty do we dread, for we are forgiven and God will not pardon and then punish. *“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”* Will God punish those from whom He has removed transgression, or cast those into hell whose sins He has cast behind His back? Impossible. Therefore, when we see the stern array of the judgment seat and hear the threats of vengeance, we who are believers rejoice to feel that these terrors have nothing to do with us. The Great Surety has secured His people from all risk of wrath. The undying worm is not for them, the unquenchable fire is not for them, neither shall the pit shut her mouth upon them, for they are not under the law.

Then the believer ***no longer drudges in unwilling obedience, seeking to reach a certain point of merit.*** The man under the law, who is awakened and awakened very frequently, tries to keep the commands in order to attain, at any rate, a fair measure of goodness. For this He labors very hard, as men who tug at the oar to escape from a tempest. If he could but reach a certain degree of virtue he would feel safe. If he were equal to such a one he would be at rest. Alas, he has no power to attain even to his own ideal. He finds his resolutions written in water and his goodness vanishes like the morning mist. His servile works are ill done and fail to yield him peace of mind. Now, the believer is under no such drudgery. Christ has fulfilled the law for him and he rests in that finished work. He does not aim at high attainments in order to win the favor of God. He has that favor. It has come to him freely and undeserved and he rejoices in it. A high ambition moves him, but it is not that of saving himself by

his own works. He obeys out of love. He delights in the law after the inner man and confesses with Paul, "The law is holy, and just, and good." He wishes that he could live without sin, but he never dreams that even then he could make atonement for the past, nor does he fancy that by his own merit he is to obtain salvation for the future. The work through which he is saved is complete. It is not his own work, but the work of Jesus and therefore, when he sees his own shortcomings and iniquities, he does not doubt his salvation, but continues to rest in Jesus. He is no longer a slave, flogged with the whip of fear and made to labor for his very life and gather nothing for his pains. But he is free from the principle of law and works from a principle of love, not to secure divine favor, but because that favor has been freely manifested towards him.

The Christian man is now *no longer uncertain as to the continuance of divine love*. Under the law, no man's standing can be secure, since by a single sin he may forfeit his position. If a legalist should be able to persuade himself that he has reached a sufficient point of merit and is safe, yet he cannot be sure of continuing in his exalted position, for like the flower of the grass all human comeliness withers away. However meritorious a man may conceive himself to be, yet he may fall short of the standard even now. And if not, in the future he may spoil it all. The learned Bellarmine, one of the great antagonists of Martin Luther, once gave utterance to language which I cannot verbally remember, but which was to the following effect. Of course, being a Papist, he believed in justification by works, but yet he observed that, "nevertheless, seeing that even in the best of men good works are usually marred by sin and seeing that no man can know when he has performed quite enough good works to save him, it is upon the whole, safest to trust only in the merits of Jesus Christ." We agree with the cardinal and accept the safest way as good enough for us. Safest, indeed, it is to us, for it is the only way which we can tread, since all the good works we have ever done are defiled and polluted either in motive beforehand or in the spirit in which they were done, or by proud reflections afterwards. We dare not trust even in our prayers and devotions and almsgivings, or repentances, but must rest only upon the merits of Christ. The merits of Christ are always a constant and abiding quantity. If therefore, we rest thereon, our foundation is as secure at one time as at another. The merits of Jesus will be throughout eternity sweet before God on our behalf. Is He not "the same yesterday, today, and forever"? Therefore the confidence of the believer rests upon a foundation which will no more be shaken in the future than it is today. Glory be to God, He does not cast away His people whom He did foreknow. He does not love today and hate tomorrow, nor favor with His grace the child whom He has adopted and afterwards disown him. "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." We are clear from the bondage of the law, since we are no longer under the covenant of works, but have come under the covenant of grace, which is founded upon promises which nothing can disannul.

In consequence of this, the believer is no longer afraid of the last great day. Shall all our sins be read and published before an assembled universe? "If so," says the man who is under the law, "it will go

hard with me." Judgment is a terrible word to those who are hoping to save themselves, for if their doings are to be put into the balances, they will surely be found wanting. But judgment has no terror in it to a believer. He can sing with our poet

*"Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who anything to my charge shall lay?
While through Your blood absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame."*

Will the sins of believers be published at the last day? If it is to the glory of forgiving love, let them be. Who among us need be afraid since at the end of the whole list there shall be written, "And all these were blotted out for Jesus Christ's sake." And if not published at all because all our sins were cast behind Jehovah's back, and if instead thereof, the Judge shall only proclaim the good works of His people and say, "I was hungry and you gave Me meat, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; and inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, you have done it unto Me," then we may well welcome the last judgment and cry, "Welcome, welcome, Son of God." If the book of record shall be opened which might justly condemn us, yet it is written, "And another book was opened, which was the book of life." If our names are there we have nothing to fear.

One word may be added here, namely, that the believer, being no longer under the law, has no slavish dread of God. As long as I am at enmity with God, guilty of breaking His law and liable to His righteous wrath, I dread His name and shrink from His presence. The soul under the law stands as the Israelites did, far off from the mountain, with a barrier set between themselves and the glory of God. Distance and separation are the natural condition of all who are under the law. Far from there, cries the heart of man when it beholds God touching the hills so that they smoke, and when it hears the voice of God like a trumpet, waxing exceedingly loud and long, it pleads that it may not hear such words any more. Not so the believer, for his heart and his flesh cry out for the Lord and he pants to come and appear before God. We have access with boldness to the throne of the heavenly grace and we delight to avail ourselves of it. Through the Mediator we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has made us long to be brought nearer and nearer to our divine Father. Our God is a consuming fire, but that consuming fire has no terror for us since it will only melt the alloy from the gold and remove the dross from the silver. The law could only say to us, "Depart, you cursed," but grace says, "Come, you blessed." The law said, "Draw not near here: put off your shoes from off your feet," but grace cries with a voice of pity, "Whoever is thirsty, come and whoever will, let him come." We have accepted the call of grace and now we know the Lord and love Him. Perfect love has cast out fear, for fear has torment. We are not under the law, but we have "known and believed the love that God has to us."

Now I speak to you Christian people, even to you who believe in Christ, and I beg you to understand this freedom from the law and then to hold it fast. For there are some of you who return, in a measure, to the legal yoke, whereas the Apostle says, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Do you f

feel helpless, cold and heavy? Do you, therefore, conclude that you are not saved? Are you not coming under the law and measuring the power of the grace of God by your own merits or excellences? If you judge your standing before God by anything except your faith in His promise, you will bring yourself into bondage. You can walk by faith, but you will stumble if you try any other way. There is but one deliverance for me when I question my own state, and that is to fly to simple faith in Jesus. When Satan says, "You are no saint," do not argue with him, for he is too subtle for a poor soul like you. Yield the point and say, "It may be I am no saint, nor are you either." "No," he says, "you are deceived, you are a hypocrite." Reply to him, "If I am not a saint, I am a sinner. And being a sinner, I find it written that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I put myself in that list, O Satan, and even you cannot deny that I am such. I believe in Jesus and believing in Him I am justified before God by the righteousness of my Lord, and I have peace with God through Jesus Christ." Beloved, this is safe standing. If we are indeed, saved by the righteousness of another, why do we question the power of that righteousness to save us because of our own conscious feebleness, for we are not saved by our own strength or feebleness, but by the power of the Lord Jesus. If we are standing with one foot on the rock of Christ's finished work and the other upon the sand of our own doings, then we may well stand or totter according to which foot we are trusting at the moment. But if we set both feet upon the rock, then we may stand fast though the sea roars and the floods sweep the sand away. Mind you, do not try the double foundation, for it will never hold. Partly Christ and partly self will soon come to a failure. No, our great Redeemer cried, "It is finished," and it is finished, and those who rest on Him have a finished salvation, for they are not under the law, but under grace.

II. Now, secondly, we come to THE SPECIAL ASSURANCE of the text—"Sin shall not have dominion over you."

This is a very necessary assurance, especially at times. Sin is a great working power and all around us we see its hideous operations. It is an evil as incessant in its activity as it is deadly in its results. As we look at its forcible work, we cry in alarm, "It will surely drag me down one of these days." But the dread fear is removed by the cheering voice of the Holy Spirit who assures us, "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

Alas, we not only see the evil working in others, but it assails ourselves. Our eyes are drawn aside to look on vanity, our ears hearken to evil talk and our heart itself at times grows cold or wanders. Then we are apt to be cast down and to doubt. Here the sweet assurance cheers us—though you are tempted you shall not be led astray, for "sin shall not have dominion over you." "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Stand in the strength of faith and in the power of the precious blood and though you are beset with evil suggestions a thousand times a day, and every sense is assailed by the witcheries of evil, yet, "sin shall not have dominion over you." Cheered by such a word as this we remain on our watchtower and are not overcome with evil.

Sometimes sin forces its way into our souls and rouses our inward evil to an awful degree, so that the imagination sets fire to our lusts and the smoke of the conflagration blows in the eyes of the affections, almost choking the understanding. Yes, sin may

invade your soul and for a while, find a lodgment there, so as to be your plague and torment. It may even crush you down, rob you of your comfort, injure your graces and create war to the detriment of your peace, but it shall not have dominion over you. Those of you who are acquainted with John Bunyan's, "Holy War," will remember how wonderfully the glorious dreamer describes Diabolus besieging the town of Mansoul after it had been occupied by the Prince Immanuel. After many battles and cunning plots, the enemy entered into the city, filled all the streets with the yells of his followers and polluted the whole place with the presence of his hosts. But yet he could not take the castle in the center of the town, which held out for Immanuel. That castle was the heart and he could by no means, secure a footing in it. He beat his big hell drum almost day and night around the walls, so that those who had fled to the castle had a very terrible time of it. And he set all his huge machinery to work to batter down the walls, but he could not enter. No, sin may for a while, seem to prevail in the believer till he has no rest and is sorely beset, hearing nothing but the devil's tattoo sounding in his ears—"Sin, sin, sin," But nevertheless sin shall not have dominion over him. Sin may haunt your bed and board and follow you down the streets in your walks. It may enter the very room into which you withdraw to pray, but your inmost self shall still cry out against it, for, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Sin may vex you and thrust itself upon you, but it cannot become your lord. The devil has great wrath and rages horribly for a while, knowing that his time is short, but he shall be subdued and expelled, for the Lord our God gives us the victory through Jesus Christ.

Sometimes, alas, sin not only enters us, but prevails over us and we are forced, in deep anguish, to confess that we have fallen beneath its power. It is terrible that it should be so, even for a moment, and yet it would be idle to deny the mournful fact. Who among us can say, "I am clean, I have not sinned"? Still, a temporary defeat is not sufficient to effect a total subjugation. Sin shall not have dominion over the believer, for though he falls he shall rise again. The child of God, when he falls into the mire, is like the sheep which gets up and escapes from the ditch as quickly as possible. It is not his nature to lie there. The ungodly man is like the hog which rolls in the filth and wallows in it with delight. The mire has dominion over the swine, but it has none over the sheep. With many bleatings and outcries the sheep seeks the shepherd again, but not so the swine. Every child of God, weeps, mourns and bemoans his sin and he hates it even when for a while, he has been overtaken by it, and this is proof that sin has not dominion over him. It has an awful power, but it has not dominion, it casts us down, but it cannot make us take delight in its evil.

There are times when the believer greatly feels his danger. His feet have almost gone. His steps have well near slipped. Then how sweetly does this assurance come to the soul, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." The Lord is able to keep you from falling and you shall be preserved even to the end.

This assurance secures us from a very great danger, from the danger of being under the absolute sway of sin. What is meant by sin having dominion? Look and see. There are men who live in sin and yet they do not appear to know it. Sin has dominion over them by spreading a veil over their hearts, so that their

conscience is deadened. They are so enslaved as to be content in bondage. You shall not be so, you shall be enlightened and instructed so that when you sin you shall be well aware of it. Self-excuse shall be impossible for you. Many men live in gross sin and are not ashamed. They are at ease in it and all is quiet. But it shall not be so with you, in whom the life of God has been implanted. If you do wrong, you shall smart for it and your nest shall be stuffed with thorns. God has so changed your nature by His grace that when you sin you shall be like a fish on dry land. You shall be out of your element and long to get into a right state again. You cannot sin, for you love God. The sinner may drink sin down as the ox drinks down water, but to you it shall be as the brine of the sea. You may become as foolish as to try the pleasures of the world, but they shall be no pleasures to you, you shall cry out with Solomon, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." That marvelous man tried the world at its best and was disappointed. And you may be quite sure that where he failed, you will not succeed. If the Lord loves you, sin will never yield you satisfaction. In worldly company you shall be all the while like a man who sits upon thorns, or walks amid vipers and cobras. And in worldly amusement you shall feel as if the house would fall upon you. An ungodly man under the dominion of sin loves sin, but that you shall never do. He wishes he could sin more, for he has upon him the thirst of intoxication. But as for you, you shall never be made happy by evil, but shall groan under it if you ever yield to its power. You shall hate yourself to think you ever consented to its solicitations. You shall be wretched and unhappy and shall find no rest till you return to your Lord. Your nature has been so changed that you cannot give a moment's entertainment to sin without feeling like one who carries burning coals in his bosom, or thrusts thorns into his flesh. No, beloved, if you are indeed a believer in Christ, you must fight with sin till you die. And what is more, you must conquer it in the name of the Lord. You are sometimes afraid that it will vanquish you, but if you are of the true seed it cannot prevail. Like Samson, you shall break all its bands. You shall rise superior to habits which now enthrall you. You shall even forget those strong impulses which now sweep you before them. Your inward graces shall gather force, while the Holy Spirit shall help your infirmities and you shall be changed from glory to glory as by the presence of the Lord.

This assurance is confirmed by the context—"Sin shall not have dominion over you," because you are dead to it by virtue of your union to Christ. You died with Christ and you have been buried with Christ, how then shall sin have dominion over you? Besides, you live in Christ in newness of life by reason of His living in you. How can the new nature live in sin? How can that which is born of God live like that which is born of the devil? No, no, it cannot be. Christ has undertaken to save you from your sins and He will do it. He will keep you watchful, prayerful, and vigilant, He will instruct you in His Word, He will help you by His Spirit. He will perfect you in Himself. You are bound for victory and you shall have it. Thanks be unto God who gives it to you through Jesus Christ our Lord. "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

III. Now I come to my last head, which is THE REMARKABLE REASON that is given for sin's never having dominion: "For you are not under the law, but under grace." "There, there," says

many an unconverted man, "did you ever hear such doctrine as he has been preaching to us this morning? Not under the law! Well then, we may sin as we like." That is your logic. That is the way in which an evil heart sours the sweet milk of the Word of God. But it is not the argument of a child of God. Mark how Paul puts it—"What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." He flings away the inference with horror and detestation, crying, "God forbid!" Let me just show you why being under the law is not helpful to holiness, while being under grace is the great means of it. Those who are under the law will always be under the dominion of sin and it cannot be otherwise.

First, because the law puts a man under the dominion of sin, by pronouncing sentence of condemnation upon him, as soon as he has transgressed. What does the law say to him? "From this point on you are guilty and I condemn you. He that offends in one point is guilty of all." Thus the law shuts a man up to being a sinner and offers him no space for repentance.

It accuses, condemns and sentences, but affords no hope and offers no encouragement. It is not so with those who are under grace. To them grace says, "You are sinners, but you are freely forgiven. Your iniquity is pardoned; your transgression is put away. Go, and sin no more." Thus relieved, the penitent lifts up his head, and cries, "Enable me to praise You and grant that I may be upheld by grace in the way of uprightness." The amazing love of God, when shed abroad in the heart, creates a desire for better things and what the law could not do, grace accomplishes. A man under the law is by the law, driven to despair.

"What?" he asks, "Am I to keep this law in order to be saved? Alas, I have already broken it and if I had not, it is too high and holy for me to rise to its full height." Therefore he resolves that he will not attempt the task and he sinks into indifference or, in some cases, he thinks of the old proverb that you may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb and he resolves that he will take his fill of sin. Because there is no hope, he will plunge into iniquity. He vows that if hell must be his portion forever, he might as well enjoy the sweetness there is in sin while he may.

So the law, because of the evil heart it has to deal with, excites such a condition of heart that sin is confirmed in its dominion. Being threatened, the rebellious heart hardens itself, and defies the Lord. And then, concluding that peace is impossible, it continues more and more to fight against the Lord. Not so the child of God, he says, "God, for Christ's sake, has cast my sins behind His back and I am saved. Now, for the love I bear His name, I will serve Him with all my might, because of all that He has done for me." Thus the grace of our Lord Jesus, by its freeness and richness, breaks the dominion of sin which the law only served to establish and confirm. Not that the law is evil, God forbid, but because we are evil and rebel against the holy law.

A man under the law does not escape from the dominion of sin because the law wakes the opposition of the human heart. There are a great many things which people never wish to do, nor think of doing till they are forbidden. Lock up a closet in your house and say to your wife and children, "You must never enter that closet, nor even look into the keyhole." Perhaps they have never wanted to look into the dingy old corner before, but now they pine to inspect it.

A number of bylaws have lately been posted up as to the use of Clapham-Common and I am half afraid to read them for fear I should want to break them. I dare say that many things which I never desired to do are now strictly prohibited and I shall feel vexed with the commissioners for lessening my liberty. I should not wonder but what numbers of persons who never visited the common before, will now become sinners against the new laws. Law, by reason of our unruly nature, excites opposition and creates sin, for what a man may not do he immediately wants to do. He who is under the law will never escape from the dominion of sin, for sin comes by the law by reason of the iniquity of our hearts. But when we are not under the law, but under grace, we love God for His love to us and labor to please Him in all things. The law, moreover, affords a man no actual help. All it does is to say, "You shall" and "You shall not." It can do no more. But grace gives us what the law requires of us. The law says, "Make a new heart." Grace replies, "A new heart also, will I give you, and a right spirit will I put within you." The law says, "Keep My commandments." And grace answers, "You shall keep My commandments and do them." Grace brings the Holy Spirit into the soul to work in us holy affections and a hatred of sin and therefore what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, grace accomplishes for us by its own almighty power. Further, the law inspires no sentiment of love and love after all is the fulfilling of the law. If you are told you shall and you shall not, there is nothing in this to inspire love to the lawgiver. Law is hard and cold, like the two tables of Moses. Law does not change the heart or remove enmity. It tends rather the other way. Law never excites enthusiasm for that which is right.

It is too stern and chill to touch the heart. Mere law does not even raise in a man's heart a high ideal of what he ought to be. Look at the legalist, the man who hopes for salvation by the law, he looks upon religion as a task in which he has no delight. He is a bond slave and nothing more. He does as much or as little as he is forced to do, but his heart is not in it. The men who think they have kept the law of God are evidently very far from understanding its meaning. They have a very poor idea of the mind of God or they would not have thought that they had fulfilled the will of God with such a poor, miserable, hypocritical righteousness as theirs.

The Pharisee thought he had kept the law, for he fasted twice a week and paid tithes of all he possessed. And yet the same man could go and swallow a widow's house behind the door and do all sorts of abominable actions. It is clear that he had formed a shockingly low notion of true holiness. In fact, he had degraded the law into a mere external ordinance which took note of the outside of the cup and platter and left the inside full of filthiness. But see what grace does. It fires a man with enthusiasm and sets before him a lofty idea of excellence. It causes him to love the Lord and then it gives him a high idea of purity and holiness. Though he rises many grades beyond the Pharisee, yet the believer cries, "I am not what I should be." And if he becomes the most zealous, consecrated man that ever lived, the law is still beyond him and he still asks that he may be able to rise to greater heights of holiness and virtue. This grace does, but this the law can never do. The most pleasing service in the world is that which is done from

motives of affection and not for wages. The servant who only does his work for his pay is not valued like the old attached domestic who nursed you when you were a boy and waited on your father before you. No money can purchase such service as he renders, it is so thoroughly hearty and prompt. If you could not afford to pay his wages, he would still stay with you. And if anything goes awry, he puts up with it because he loves you. You prize such a man above rubies. So it is with the child of God. The mere legalist does what he ought, or at least thinks he does so. But as for heartiness and zeal, he knows nothing of such things. The child of God, with all his feebleness and his blunders, is far more accepted, for he does all he can out of pure love and then cries, "I am an unprofitable servant. I have done no more than was my duty to have done. Lord, help me to do more." God accepts heart service, but heart service the law never did produce and never will. The only true heart service in the world comes from those who are not under the law, but under grace and therefore, sin shall not have dominion over those who are not under the law. The spirit of the world is legal and its wise men tell us that we must preach to people that they must be virtuous or they will go to hell, and we must hold out heaven as the reward of morality. They believe in the principle of chain and whip. But what comes of such doctrine?

The more you preach it, the less virtue, the less obedience there is in the world. But when you preach love, the effect is very different—"Come," says God, "I forgive you freely. Trust My Son and I will save you outright, though in you there is nothing to merit My esteem. Accept My free favor and I will receive you graciously and love you freely." This looks at first sight, as if it gave a license to sin, but how does it turn out? Why, this wondrous grace taking possession of the human heart breeds love in return, which love becomes the fountain of purity and holiness, and such as receive it endeavor to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Beloved, do not get under the law, do not yield to legal threats or legal hopes, but live under the free grace gospel. Let the note that peals on your ear be no longer the thunder of Sinai, "Do and live," but let it be the sweet song of free grace and dying love. Ah, ring those charming bells from morn till eve. Let us hear their liquid music again and again. Live and do, not do and live—not work for salvation, but being saved, work. Being already delivered, go forth and prove, by your grateful affections and zealous actions, what the grace of God has done for you. "Whoever believes in Jesus Christ has everlasting life." "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned." Amen.

Baptists For Liberty

"And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts." Psalm 119:45

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