

Psm. 11:3 **Baptists For Liberty** Prov. 29:2  
"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,  
and be not entangle a again with the yoke of bondage." Gal. 5:1

## NEWS LETTER

Issue #1

September 2012

Verse of the month: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." - Romans 12:2

### "My People"



By Bro. Steve McCool Sr.

II Chronicles 7:14

*"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."*

This is one of the most understood verses from the bible that is commonly miss-used by Christians today. Many will use this verse and say that if God's people will pray and seek him then He will heal our land. They leave out the three most important parts 1. "If my people", 2. "shall humble themselves", and 3. "turn from their wicked ways". These three pieces of this verse are just as important as the other parts.

1. *If my people*": first and foremost here He is speaking to a specific group. He is not talking to the whole world or all religions. God is speaking to His people, those called by His name. There is a great misnomer amongst the religious world today that all are the children of God. No where in the scripture does God refer to all the world as His children. On the contrary, He says He has a remnant of the world as His children. With this being the case then those who are not His people are not called by His name and therefore cannot and will not pray and seek His face. Only those that are called by His name can pray to him and seek His face. Romans 10:14 *"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"* The sad thing is that there are many in churches today who think they are His people.

They have been feed a false gospel and have trusted in a false Christ.

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2. *"Shall humble themselves"*: second we see where His people are to humble themselves. This seems to be the most difficult act for Christians today. We are taught by our society that we should be proud of ourselves and should hold our heads high when facing judgment or when going through trials. Yet God commanded us to be humble. He taught us to humble ourselves when coming before Him in prayer. That is why we bow our heads when we pray. That is why when we are alone with our Heavenly Father we should be on our knees or on our face before him. Many times in the Old Testament God's people would be on their face or their knees before Him in prayer for their nation. We here in the United States are too proud for this. Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." The sin we are seeing in our nation today is a direct result of God's people not humbling themselves before Him in prayer. The greatest sin we as God's people have committed is the sin of pride. A proud and haughty spirit toward our Heavenly Father.

3. *"Turn from their wicked ways"*: Third and final thought here is the one part of this verse that is probably the most miss-understood or just plain forgotten or left out by most who quote this verse. He is not telling the nation to turn from their wicked ways. He is telling the children of God to turn from their wicked ways. His people, who are called by His name are to turn from their wicked ways. It is very hard to find a Christian today who will admit that there is wickedness in their life. We all think we have our sin under control and are living the "holy life". Yet I challenge the reader of this article to carefully and prayerfully to examine their life. We all have certain areas of our lives that need improvement. Now understand here I believe in this verse when He refers to wicked He is talking about the sins that have consumed the nation. In the day that this verse was written God's people in the nation of Israel had strayed from God and were following after strange gods and were consumed with self. They had stopped obeying the commandments and were seeking after the things that pleased the flesh. Are we not there today? Have not God's people in the United States forsaken their God and are now following after other gods and self. Look at our churches, who is worshiped there? Our Heavenly Father or the gods of self and money.

**In closing**: Where are God's people today? Well, most of them are not humbling themselves before God nor are they praying and seeking His face much less turning from their wicked ways. We are a people consumed by the wickedness of this world. A world that thinks we belong to the same god they do and have convinced many of God's children that that is true. Remember we are God's elect, the remnant. He has called out of this world to be His children. We are not of this world and should not give into the god of this world.

## Sermon: "The Wrath Of Man"



By Bro. Todd Bryant

It is not uncommon to hear preachers speak on the wrath of God. That has, historically, been a subject that accompanied good gospel preaching. However, there is generally little said on the practical matter of "the wrath of man." It is that which I will deal with in this article today.

*"For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God"* (Jam. 1:20).

The verse before us today is found in the first chapter of the most practical book in the New Testament. James has just instructed us to be *"swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"* (Jam. 1:19). The subject of the wrath of man is directly related to speech. I am afraid that we often get James' instructions reversed and we are slow to listen, swift to speak, and swift to wrath. James implies that we should be doing far more listening than we are speaking. I have heard many "compliments" given to a person because they always "spoke their mind." Dear friends, that is no compliment. That shows a lack of spiritual maturity (Jam. 3:2). If we are ever to grow up out of infant Christianity into adulthood, we must get a hold on our proudest member—our tongue. It is with this member that friendships are lost, churches are split, witnesses are lost, and wounds opened that might never be completely healed.

Many think it is a matter of boldness to speak your mind on everything. That is not the case. Ecclesiastes 3:7 tells us that there is *"a time to keep silence."* Oh how many times have we spoken up and ruined our opportunity God has given because we *"spoke the truth"* in anger and bitterness. It is this subject that we wish to elaborate on today. It is referred to in our text as *"the wrath of man"* and James was inspired to say it *"worketh not the righteousness of God."* In modern terms we might say that speaking the truth with a bad attitude doesn't accomplish anything as far as the work God has called us unto is concerned. We need to make sure that we strive to have a good attitude when we represent the Lord and our church. If you are a child of God, this should be constantly on your mind.

If *"the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness"*

of God" then religion is nothing to get angry over. If you are a child of God and you get angry over the things you believe, you are not doing God's work. When you, as a child of God, are full of bitterness against those you should be trying to help, you are not doing the work of God. According to this verse, God doesn't bless work done out of anger. We are to love all men. You might say, "Well, God hates the workers of iniquity and I do to." You are not God and have no right to hate anyone. Jesus said, in Matthew 5:44, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." This is not an option, this is a commandment. You are to love those who don't love you. "That's not fair" one might say. "I treat people the way they deserve. I give them the love they earn from me." Aren't you glad God didn't treat you the way you treat others?

James again was inspired to instruct us in James 3:17-18 that "the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." If you are looking to mature in your Christian walk, here's a verse to challenge you. God's gift to us begins pure. God doesn't give imperfect gifts as man does. The walk of a child of God is to be full of peace and gentleness. We are to be easy to get along with. We are to be merciful. We are to treat all men well despite how they treat us. There can be no doubt that this isn't easy for the flesh. However, it is still the commandment of God and should be kept.

Matthew 5:9 says, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." It is one thing to call one's self a Christian. It is quite another thing for somebody else to refer to someone as that. Do you have a desire to be called a child of God? Do you have a desire for people to see Jesus in your life? The Bible says you will be seen as such if you are a peacemaker. I have known many a person who I dreaded to see coming because I knew they caused turmoil every time I was around them. They were not very peaceable. The flesh leads us to be bitter and angry. The Spirit leads us to be peaceable and gentle. Do we sow the "fruit of righteousness...in peace?" Perhaps we should simply ask if we sow the fruit of righteousness at all. It seems our Sovereign Grace Baptist people are so afraid that they might be called an Arminian that they leave off the things God has plainly instructed. One of these things is that we should be a good witness. We need to be striving daily to tell people the Good News. Our mouths ought to be full of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). When we do sow this fruit of righteousness, it should be sown in peace. Two times the Good News is referred to as the "gospel of peace" (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15). When we witness, we are to do so in peace. When we instruct, we are to do so in peace. When we disagree, we are to do so in peace. Remember, "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be

gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (II Tim. 2:24,25). This verse is related to James 3:17-18. We must not strive. That is, we must not be brawlers or fighters. We must not be brawlers with our fists or with our mouths. I have witnessed a number of "fights" in which a punch was never thrown. We must be gentle. We must be able to teach people. You may say, "Well, I'm just not a good teacher." You must learn to teach if you want to serve God. I don't mean in a class at church, I mean to the people you see regularly in your daily routine. We must learn to have patient. Don't be like the man who said, "Lord, please grant me patience and grant it to me today please." Patience is learned through trials. We must realize that everybody hasn't been given the opportunity that we have to know the blessed truths that we do. Knowing that, however, should be a driving force that pushes us to get the truth out to people in a way that they can understand it. In this, I am not necessarily speaking about the lost (though they can be included to some degree). I am speaking of those who bear the fruits of regeneration, but have a lack of maturity in their Christian life especially in the area of theology. Lastly, we need to witness to people in hopes that God "will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." Do you witness to people just because God said to? Again, maybe the question should be "Do you witness to people?" You should witness because God told you to. However, you should also witness because you have a desire to see the person saved that you are speaking to. You need to love the people you share the gospel with. Therefore, we must love everybody and act as though we do.

"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (I Tim. 2:8). We are to constantly lift up hands of prayer. We are to do this without wrath and doubting. When we gather for worship, it shouldn't be out of wrath, but, out of love. I have heard sermons preached that sounded like an old farmer driving a lazy mule after about 10 hours in the sun. In other words, I've heard sermons preached out of, what seemed like, anger. According to our text verse, this is not accomplishing the work of God. We shouldn't "preach mad." Our worship services should be filled with love—for our Savior, for His truth, for the membership, for the visitors, and for the lost.

People of God, we are not to be a wrathful people. It seems some people think it's right to "lose your religion" while trying to defend it. How sad. We have the example of our Savior who was always full of love and was never a respecter of persons. He treated everybody with love as the law demands (Mat. 22:37-40). We, as Christians (and Baptists for that matter) need to be known as peacemakers. We need to be known as a people full of love. We should have a love for our Savior first and foremost which should be seen in our daily lives. We should have a love for the work that God has called us unto. We should have a love for the people God has called us to minister unto. As long as we are doing God's work with wrath and anger in our heart, we aren't doing God's work.

## News

**Civil rights:** On August 23rd the Rutherford Institute made this media release regarding a case that received wide attention on the internet; "In an unexpected ruling handed down today by Circuit Court Judge Allan Sharrett, the judge dismissed the government's case against Brandon Raub, the Marine who was arrested by local police and FBI agents, detained in a psychiatric ward and forced to undergo psychological evaluations based solely on the controversial nature of lines from song lyrics, political messages and virtual card games which he posted to his private Facebook page. Judge Sharrett dismissed the petition for involuntary commitment on the grounds that the petition "is so devoid of any factual allegations that it could not be reasonably expected to give rise to a case or controversy." Raub is expected to be released immediately.

"This is a great victory for the First Amendment and the rule of law," said John W. Whitehead, president of The Rutherford Institute. "Brandon Raub was arrested with no warning, targeted for doing nothing more than speaking out against the government, detained against his will, and isolated from his family, friends and attorneys. These are the kinds of things that take place in totalitarian societies. Today, at least, Judge Allan Sharrett proved that justice can still prevail in America." Brandon Raub, a former Marine who has served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, was detained by FBI agents and police officers at his home in Chesterfield County based upon the nature of content posted to his Facebook page in recent months. Like many Facebook users, Raub uses his Facebook page to post song lyrics and air his political opinions, as well as engage in virtual online games with other users. On Thursday, August 16, 2012, police and FBI agents arrived at Raub's home, asking to speak with him about his Facebook posts. They did not provide Raub with a search warrant. Raub was cooperative and agreed to speak with them. Without providing any explanation, levying any charges against Raub or reading him his rights, law enforcement officials then handcuffed Raub and transported him first to the police headquarters, then to John Randolph Medical Center, where he was held against his will due to alleged concerns that his Facebook posts were "terrorist in nature." Outraged onlookers filmed the arrest and posted the footage to YouTube.

In a hearing before Special Justice Walter Douglas Stokes on August 20, government officials again pointed to Raub's Facebook posts as the sole reason for their concern and for his continued incarceration. Ignoring Raub's explanations about the fact that the FB posts were being read out of context and his attorney's First Amendment defense, Stokes sentenced the former Marine to up to 30 days' further confinement in a psychiatric ward and signed a court order for Raub's involuntary admission to the Veterans Hospital in Salem. In coming to Raub's defense, attorneys for The Rutherford Institute challenged the actions of Chesterfield County, Va. as procedurally improper, legally unjustified, and in violation of Raub's First Amendment rights. Institute attorneys appeared

before the Circuit Court on August 23 to request that Raub be transferred back to John Randolph Medical Center while Institute attorneys attempted to secure his release. However, Judge Allan Sharrett declared the government's case to be lacking in factual allegations and ordered Raub immediately released." You can read more about this and other cases at [Rutherford.org](http://Rutherford.org)

**Politics:** This month officially kicked off the election season as the primaries came to a close and each of the two major parties held their conventions. Republican and Democrat delegates were disenfranchised by party leaders who read from teleprompter the outcomes of votes and ignored shouts of protest and demands for a written vote to be taken. Republican's rule change was especially grievous as it blocks all future grass root activism within the party from having any effect in the party.

Congressman Ron Paul from Texas wrote a statement on September 11th demanding the end to taxpayer funded party conventions, especially with voters not being allowed to have a voice at through their elected delegates. According to Paul's statement "\$18 million in tax dollars was granted to each party for these lavish ordeals, an additional \$50 million each was needed for security in anticipation of the inevitable protests at each event. This amounts to a total of \$136 million in taxpayer funds for strictly partisan activities a drop in the bucket relative to our disastrous fiscal situation, but disgraceful nonetheless. Parties should fund their own parties, not the taxpayer."

He went on to say "Democracy is majority rule at the expense of the minority. Our system has certain democratic elements, but the founders never mentioned democracy in the Constitution, the Bill Of Rights, or the Declaration of Independence. In fact, our most important protections are decidedly undemocratic. For example, the First Amendment protects free speech. It doesn't or shouldn't matter if that speech is abhorrent to 51% or even 99% of the people. Speech is not subject to majority approval. Under our republican form of government, the individual, the smallest of minorities, is protected from the mob."

Free & Equal who held a live presidential debate between Third Party and Independent candidates broadcast on C-Span back in 2008 has announced they are having another open presidential debate. All presidential candidates who are on enough state ballots to hypothetically win the electoral college have been invited, including President Obama, Republican candidate Mitt Romney, Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson, Jill Stein of the Green Party and Virgil Good of the Constitution Party. Mr. Goode still has a few ballot access battles, however it looks likely that he will win these challenges, therefore Free & Equal has gone ahead and invited him to their debate. While the smaller party candidates have been gracious enough to except Free & Equal's invitation it isn't likely that the Democrat & Republican candidates will, when invited to the 2008 debate their candidates refused. The debate is scheduled for October 23rd in Chicago, the day after the last

Commission on Presidential Debates event is held.

**Wars & Foreign Affairs;** September 11th marked the eleventh anniversary of the attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, it also began a series of attacks on American embassies in multiple middle eastern countries starting with Libya. While many American news outlets are reporting that the attacks are because of an inflammatory video insulting to Muslims there are other reports from international media that the Libyan embassy attack which left four dead American citizens, including our Ambassador to Libya, Christopher Stephens, was actually a premeditated strike by a terrorist cell there, possibly al Qaeda. Other countries such as Egypt, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Iraq may very well be spontaneous. One report states that Iraqis demand that American personal leave their country.

## **Point of View: "Ruthie McLellan Home again"**

Ruthie McLellan this past Summer has moved from Glasgow which is located in the west of Scotland back home in Poteau, Oklahoma. Currently still a member of The Sovereign Grace Baptist Gathering in Filiasi, Romania, Pastor Raul Enyedi. Her membership will soon be moved to the mission in Poteau, Oklahoma - out of Grace Bible Baptist Church in Denham Springs, Louisiana. The missionary in Poteau is Bro. Curtis Pugh, Sis. Ruthie's father.



Her story in her own words:

I'm 45 years young. Bob is 54 years young. My husband paid for me to train as a jewelry designer and bench jeweler. He bought my tools for me and encouraged me all along the way. I am the Mother of two sons; Ruben and Eli by a previous marriage. (I was married, divorced and remarried before my salvation.) I am the very blessed Granny Mac of two beautiful children, Andrew James and Kaedence Ruth. Now that I'm back in The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Lord willing I will be starting up my business formally - also adding the authentic Native American Bead Work creations I design and make to my line of pretties.

I moved to Scotland in 2001 to marry the Scotsman of my dreams. He had the better job with local government there and a much better pension scheme, so Scotland was the obvious choice for us as to where to make our home. We both agreed that

upon his retirement we would move to the US.

Things I liked about Scotland, the countryside. I loved it. It was lush and green - a shade of green I've never seen anywhere else before. It's absolutely gorgeous. I liked the way the arts are important to people there. The architecture of some of the old buildings was pretty interesting.

I was in Scotland about 5 or 6 years before the Lord regenerated me. I had only the highest of hopes for a wonderfully full life there. Full of American enthusiasm and can-do attitude, willing to work from can until can't, I disembarked at Glasgow Airport in the rain. I would come to understand that rain would be my constant companion there after my initial two months of residency.

Housing costs in the entire United Kingdom are outrageous. Therefore most people live in "housing estates" better known locally as "schemes" and are comprised of literally hundreds of high rise buildings containing apartments. These are owned by local housing associations and are actually rent controlled. Private rents are extortionate, so, we had to live in a "scheme."

The first building we lived in together was in a rather notorious area for violence and drug use. Just before my immigration, a city council in England paid the city of Glasgow to take several thousand immigrants off its hands. As a result, many doctors, lawyers, nurses etc from Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, The Sudan etc were moved into the buildings in our area. They were not allowed to work for 2 years and given everything, even luxury items that most folks had to spend years working to get. Of course this did not sit well with the local drug and alcohol laden populace and there was violence. Besides the violence there was literal filth in those buildings and I don't think I shall ever forget coming home one evening to find the police there investigating a murder.

The problems were rarely caused by the immigrants. The problems were caused by those who had been so affected by socialism that they could not stand to see non-citizens get things they did not have themselves. No, it wasn't fair but it was far less fair to house those immigrants in such a dire place.

***All of this, socialism at its finest.***

Because of my Native American heritage, everyone there knew I was "something" other than pasty Scottish white person. The Asian ladies thought me Turkish. The locals just thought me another Asian immigrant. That being the case, I suffered through being yelled at to go home to my own country and once a man screamed in my face that "I got too much given to me." Frankly, it was a nightmare. I soon figured out that shorter and lighter hair would help me blend in better and had less of a hard time in that area.

Most of the immigrants we knew found ways to volunteer their time to worthy causes in minority neighborhoods. They knew more about giving back than the local citizens. We had the opportunity to visit with one woman in particular who was from The Sudan. She cooked a delicious meal and had us over to visit. She was so content with the things she had. She didn't understand the level of discontent in Scotland and one day asked me, "Why are these

people so upset? If they need clean water all they have to do is turn on a tap." She was a lawyer and volunteered her time in an ethnic minority law firm. The immigrants that had been there long enough to be allowed to work were sending money to their families back home.

One gentleman I met worked 2 jobs and was wanting to learn English better so he could get another even better job. (Most Scots would NEVER consider working more than one job.) I remember an Iraqi gentleman was waiting on the same bus as I was one morning - he was on his way to work. He asked me where I was from and I hesitantly told him. His reaction was the best belly laugh I've ever seen or heard. When he could finally speak he asked, "WHAT are you doing HERE?" I was beginning to wonder the same thing.

I got work quickly with a local power supplier and it was here I learned just how Europe does NOT work and what they truly think of Americans. It was here I was advised I was a "stupid American" that "America is dumb" that we are war mongers and the worst terrorists in the world. This wasn't just a few random comments. I got something like this EVERY day for the 10 1/2 months I worked at that company.

I came to understand that the ONLY thing Scots like about Americans or the USA is the tourist money they get from us as we are the largest source of tourism for their country.

Later I worked for an American owned company and things were a bit better. The sentiments were the same but they did not dare voice them too loudly. The day I watched my country's flag and an effigy of our then President being burned in the city square brought the depths of hatred towards Americans home to me fully. I no longer felt safe. I think it's important (to me) to mention my experiences weren't isolated; that other American women had similar problems. Also, I need to give credit to my wonderful husband who did his best to protect me and make my life with him beautiful. I cannot count the number of times he threw his hands over my eyes to keep me from witnessing violence or pulled me close to him so I would not smell the human feces people left on staircases or lifts (elevators.).

We lived in that building about a year and a half. It came to pass that the local government decided these buildings were hazardous due to the dampness they held. Damp was an understatement. The heating was under floor heating and too expensive for anyone to use so we had one electric heater in the living room THAT was our only source of heat, period.

So one day we got a letter from the housing association stating we were being moved. Due to being forced to move, they were giving us 2500.00 pounds. I couldn't stop laughing. I would have moved for free! The 2500 pounds was government money. In US dollars it would have been about 5000.00 US dollars. It took EVERY penny to redecorate the place we moved into. You see, they strip apartments down to bare boards and bare walls when people move out over there. Refurbishing costs! We had to buy everything - and my sweet husband, knowing how my feet had stayed

so cold in our old apartment, purchased underlay for the new place. My feet never were freezing in the new place.

Time went on and I became more and more depressed. I was heavily involved in the occult and nothing it had to offer was easing any of my misery. Nothing held any joy for me anymore. I was homesick beyond belief, unwell and well, miserable. It was like sinking into a deep, dark pit and not being able to get out of it.

I kept in fairly good contact with my folks even before the Lord saved me and it was on one of those occasions that my Dad told me about the forum that Brother Todd started. He sent me a link to it that took me directly to the forum. If I had seen the page where it stated I needed to be a SGLMB to take part, I'd have never signed up. God knew what He was doing!

It became part of my daily routine to read on the forum and I even began to write on it. One day I realized I needed a Bible, so I logged on to the internet and ordered one from Tabernacle Baptist Church book store in London. I remember thinking it would be interesting to order from the church Spurgeon once pastored.

When the Bible arrived, I began reading it in earnest. Then Brother Todd Bryant told me about their sermon CD ministry and the church at Northport began sending me sermons. I began to listen to these.

Late one night, I began telling God how unfair He had been to me and how I deserved better than what I'd been given in life. In less than a second - just out of seemingly nowhere, it hit me and I saw differently - that I did not deserve better, that I deserved hell - that I was vile and wretched and in need of salvation and that was the night of my regeneration.

My life has not been the same since, I'm very thankful to say. At first I thought I could keep it all a secret from my dear husband. It's so laughable. I had gone to bed an occult practitioner and in the middle of the night been saved - but I thought I could just keep it quiet from him and gradually let him in on it. That lasted all of 10 minutes. I was regenerated sometime around September about 7 or 8 years ago. It's strange but I didn't write the date down. Yet every year when it gets to be about that time, I'm reminded another earthly year I've been given knowing my Heavenly Father.

There are two primary religious groups in Scotland - Catholics and Protestants. The state church of Scotland is Presbyterian. The schools in Glasgow are separate - protestant and catholic. There is one or two, I recently learned, that anyone could attend but the problem was the same there as throughout the city; sectarian violence. Sectarian violence is the name they give to the physical fighting between people - catholics verses protestants and vice versa. It has been a very big problem in Scotland for a long time - even football teams (we would call them soccer teams) are divided - 1 main one for the catholics; 1 main one for the protestants.

There is what is known as "Marching Season" there. The Catholics hold "Hibernian Marches" and play their drums, fifes and flutes as they march through



the protestant areas of the city. Likewise, the Orange Order (aka as Orangemen) gather and march in their boller hats and sashes through catholic areas of the city along with their big bands, wives and children in tow. Of course it's all to annoy the other side and start trouble.

The Catholics there are usually from an Irish background and want an Independent Ireland - no division. The Protestants usually are Unionists and don't want a divided United Kingdom. Of course there will be exceptions to that rule, but in the main, this holds true.

The tunes to old hymns I grew up singing have been turned into football songs sung at games or in support of one's favourite team - the original words of praise and awe replaced by often less than savoury lyrics. Due to the belief in infant baptism saving souls - both the protestants and the catholics think they're ok with regard to their souls. They were baptised as infants so they'll go to heaven, or at least some place nice. I never quite received clear answers on these matters.

Darwinism began to be taught in Scotland in my husband's lifetime. I'm not sure how the "religious" crowd let it happen but it was taught nonetheless and there are a large number of atheists now - though some were still baptized as babies so they've got all bases covered - they think.

Being without a church was hard. I had tons of support from Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Northport, Alabama. They sent me CDs for several years and my soul was fed and blessed by their kind efforts. I could never thank that precious church or their Pastor, Brother Todd Bryant, enough for their generosity towards me in that matter! I received lots of encouragement, fellowship and teaching from my Dad and Mom, Curtis and (the late) Janet Pugh. I don't know what I would have done without all these people, their efforts on my behalf and their prayer!

Because of the hate crime laws where I lived, it became impossible to witness openly to people or to pass out gospel tracts of any sort. My life had to be my testimony. Where I went. Where I did not go. The holidays I did not celebrate, the drunken parties I refused to attend or take part in - all these things that I did not do, had to speak louder than words. I'm not sure how to adequately explain what the absence or near absence of the Gospel does to an entire country. There is an air of hopelessness about it, alcohol consumption and drunkenness are common place. Violence is the norm. Part of it stems from economic hopelessness but I firmly believe the heart of the matter is the lack of God's Word being taught there.

I'm so very thankful to be back in the USA! For the first time since the Lord regenerated me, I was able to invite someone to church last week! It was such a blessing to be able to do that. I hope they will come and worship with us. If not, I'll just go back and invite them again.

I'm not sure if there anything I was able to do there that I couldn't have done here - but I grew up a lot there. My entire world changed and I'm not sure if that was for the better or not. However, had I not

lived there, I would have not ever met the dear brethren in Romania.

I had of course visited Romania before the Lord regenerated me. I was impressed with Raul and Aurel and their seriousness about serving the Lord. Here were two young men, nearer my own sons' ages than my own, but mature in the Lord and who lived their lives to please Him. Sometimes I wonder if they ever realized how closely I watched them and their behavior.

Over a few visits, I got to know them better and grew to love them dearly. I saw first their love for God, their love for God's people, their love for one another and for my parents. They had something I did not have and I remember feeling very empty inside when I realized this. Perhaps God gave me my wonderful husband and dictated that we had to live in Scotland so that I would get to go to Romania and know them and meet other Romanian Baptists who have suffered much for their faith. If so, I am the richer for it.

## **Historical Marker**

History has so much to teach us if only we are willing to learn. This month we're actually going to get a history & spiritual lesson from a historical figure. a humble preacher and writer from England by the name of Charles Spurgeon. The following article was published July 1876 in *Sword and Trowel*.

### **“The Power Of Nonconformity”** By C.H. Spurgeon

NONCONFORMITY in England was at first a protest against the errors of the church established by law, it is at the present time a protest against the establishment of any church whatever by the state. In the enlarged area of its protesting it is driven to use other weapons than it employed at first, and to give greater prominence than it once did to matters aforesaid regarded as of small moment: our fear is lest the baser weapons should put the nobler out of fashion, and the secondary aims should overshadow the primary intents. We think it right to struggle earnestly against the unhallowed alliance of church and state, and to use the political power with which we are entrusted to promote the principles of religious equality. May the best success attend the exertions of those who devote their lives to this object in their own way. We wish them God speed with all our heart. Still the real power of Nonconformity will never be increased at the hustings; it may be displayed there ever and anon for noble ends, but it is not gained there nor fostered there. Ministers do well to give their votes, and to express their opinions for the guidance of their people, but in proportion as the preaching becomes political, and the pastor sinks the spiritual in the temporal, strength is lost and not gained. Romanists obtain power by various maneuvers, and devices which we would not use if we could; their kingdom is of this world, and they are not slow to use all the methods of the children of this world in gaining their ends; Dissenters will never be powerful in this fashion. There will we hope never be a Nonconformist brass band in the House of Commons ready to side with either party in order to obtain

fresh privileges for their clan, nor will men in office be secretly influenced and induced to patronize Dissent by the hope of quieting secret societies of Nonconforming rebels. The Church of England also has not scrupled for its own purposes to ally itself with the partisans of the liquor traffic, and write upon its banners "Beer and Bible": to this also it is to be hoped Dissent will never come; neither will it ever be supported by the landed interest, the nobility, and the vast army of persons whose positions are more or less mixed up with the conservation of things as they are. We are to a very large extent shut out from the use of instrumentalities which others possess in abundance, and it is well that it is so, at least we think it well, and many others agree with us in the opinion.

Our forefathers left the Church of England because of the serious errors of her prayer-book, her form of church government, and her manner of ecclesiastical procedure. Upon *spiritual* grounds they left her, and suffered the loss of all things. They could not be true men and subscribe to her doctrines, nor honest pastors if they sanctioned her laxity of discipline, nor faithful to their convictions if they yielded allegiance to her prelates. Their piety as much as their creed drove them out, and made them a power in the land despite the persecution which they endured. Very few of them objected to a state-church, as such; probably most of them agreed with an ideal church of the nation, though the actual embodiment of it was obnoxious to them; in this we have outrun them, and we ought to be grateful for our greater light. But the narrowness of their protest may greatly have tended to increase its force. They fixed their eye on doctrinal and practical evils of the first magnitude, and turned their undivided energy in that direction; we would not obscure what we have added, but we wish the first original things were more tenaciously held. Spirituality of mind was the Puritan's weapon against religious formality, sound doctrinal teaching was his shield against Popery; by watchful discipline in the church he protested against an all-comprehending establishment, and by a careful maintenance of household devotion, every man being a priest in his own home, he superseded the daily services of the steeple-house and the pretensions of the parish priest. The life and power of the gospel made the meeting-house the resort of devout men, and made it impossible for the State-paid parson with informers, bailiffs, and county magistrates at his back, to put down Dissent. These holy men had no influence at the polling-booth, but they were mighty at the mercy-seat; they were nowhere on an election-day, but they went everywhere preaching the word. Hence came their acknowledged power, *and hence must ours come also.*

Alas, there were times of wretched blight, when Nonconformity became respectable, intellectual, cold, and worldly. Her great antagonist and herself alike felt the deadly power of Arianism, and then it is true she sought to justify her position rather by appealing to the rights of man than to the truth of God. Small enough was her success. The uprising of Methodism under Whitefield and Wesley did more for Nonconformity than all the agitators for religious liberty that ever lived. The object aimed at was the glory of God and the conversion of souls, the end gained was the arousing of the churches and the revival of evangelical doctrine, but as a remoter consequence the entire position of Dissenters was elevated, and it became impossible to keep them down. Like a volcanic force which cannot be kept in check, but moves all things according to its will, the power of vital godliness caused a general upheaval, and hurled to the ground institutions of persecution which seemed to have been built upon a rock. The awakened church of God began again to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and other things were added unto her, for which she had scarcely hoped. She grasped no longer the wooden weapon of mere intellect, but took for her watchword "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon," and her victories were sure.

At this time we deem it needful to insist upon it that the real power of Nonconformity must still be found in true doctrine, holy living, burning zeal, and simple faith. Agitate by all means for those just reforms which will give religious equality to all men, but do not neglect the weightier matters; "these things ought ye to have done, but not to have left the other undone." If our pulpits become infected with errors which becloud the atonement, if our members grow worldly and lukewarm, and if the life of piety and the power of prayer become weak in our churches, the essential force of Nonconformity will be gone. The subscriptions to the Liberation Society may not be diminished for a generation, and the funds of our various institutions may even show an increase, but the worm is at the root, and in a few years decay will assuredly appear, if spirituality shall be at a discount and truth be undervalued. Nothing can serve the ends of our semipious established church so much as unspiritual Dissent. "I was driven to the parish church," said a devout Baptist to us the other day, "because the only dissenting place near me was an Independent chapel, where the minister did not preach the gospel as I had been accustomed to hear it; no, nor the gospel at all. I found more food for my soul under an evangelical clergyman than at the chapel, and so I went to church, sorely against my will." We have heard others say "The people at the Baptist chapel were so dead, and of such high doctrine, that I could not join them. I went several miles to hear a pious curate in a little church, and much as I dislike a form of prayer, I put up with it for the sake of the gospel which the good man gave us." Such things ought not to be; but we fear such things are becoming far too common. Where the old orthodox faith is preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and errors are pointed out plainly and the truth declared, our people become Nonconformists to the backbone; but no true man of God will sacrifice the vital doctrines of the word of God, and the good of his soul and the hope of seeing his children converted, to what is an important, but still a secondary matter. We fear that in certain quarters Nonconformity has need to cry, "Save me from my friends." The "modern culture" men are undermining the structure which they profess to build up, the pretenders to intellectual preaching are clouding the gospel which they are supposed to



proclaim, and the gentlemen of aesthetic taste are aping the ritualism against which it should have been their first business to protest. We confess we do not understand why certain persons are with us at all, they would be more in their places in the opposite camp. A Nonconformist, and yet use a liturgy! If a man can bring his mind to a liturgical service it is a mere whim which makes him seek an improvement on that of our National Church. A Dissenter who knows not why he dissents, and only does so from political motives, or from the force of education, is a weakness to those among whom he is classed; but a Dissenter who actually leads others towards the very church from which he professes to dissent is far worse, he is a traitor in the camp and ought not to be endured. If we had a writ to serve upon the parties here intended we should not be long in finding them.

We need at this time to make our spiritual and doctrinal protest more clear than it has been. A powerful society represents our political demands, but we have no organization whatever to promote our far higher designs. Why is this? Dissent is represented politically, but not doctrinally. How comes this to be the case? Surely the second is by far the more important. If the present Anglican church were disestablished to-morrow we should conscientiously dissent from her as much as ever, for our differences are solemn, grave, vital, and are not at all confined to her being a state-church. It is a pity that this fact should be so little remembered. How is it that Nonconformists are so little instructed in the great religious principles by which they justify their distinctive position? How is it that they take so little trouble to instruct others in the same? Is it more pleasant to talk politics than to preach Christ? Are there more charms in warring against flesh and blood than in wrestling with spiritual wickednesses in high places? Our call is for old-fashioned Dissenters, for doctrinal Protesters, for godly Nonconformity to the world, for deeper piety and more sound doctrine; we must have them or the cause will go down, and deserves to go down. The life of God in the soul is a force which nothing can baffle, and it has power, like the cherub's flaming sword at the gates of Eden, to turn every way: "There is none like it, give it me." We may be misunderstood in this article, and some may suppose that we are shifting our ground, but they will greatly err if they think so. We have aforetime urged every Christian to exercise the franchise and use his political privileges as in the sight of God, and we do so still with equal energy; but this is by no means so vital, or so essential to the best interests of Nonconformity as soundness in the faith, and depth of piety.

We value the agency which protests against the unrighteousness which patronizes a sect, but we believe that this is not all; there ought to be a powerful organization for spiritual objects, whose one business should be to expose the original sins of the Anglican body, and to lay bare the ever-growing errors within her pale. If ever this work needed doing it is now. It would lay the ax at the root of the tree, and accomplish far more towards disestablishment than any other imaginable agency, with the one exception of the church herself, which

is doing all it can for its own overthrow. For our part, we should like to see a vigorous, evangelical Episcopal church in this land, free of the State, and purged of Popery; we have no enmity in our heart towards any branch of the true church of Christ, but desire to see it flourish and fill the land with fruit; but the present hodge-podge must be ended or mended. It cannot be described by any one term, it is good and evil, light and darkness, Popery and Protestantism, and while the evil neutralizes the good, the good assists the evil to do its mischievous work. O Lord, how long! Souls are being ruined wholesale by high church and broad-church teaching, and the low church lends the aid of its association to the deadly work: this moves our very soul. Party ends we have none; but God's gospel, the good of souls, the honor of Jesus, all demand of us that this evil corporation should not go unrebuked, but should be resisted with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Are there none who think with us, and are able and willing to make our suggestion a fact?

## **"The Christian Voter's Guide"**

By Jeff Short

*"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn" (Proverbs 29:2).*

As Christian citizens, we sometimes wonder what the extent of our involvement with the civil government of our country should be. Usually, election time sparks a renewed interest in this issue. In this article I would like to consider especially one aspect of civil involvement - voting. Voting is one means by which we may be involved and help to elect leaders that will cause "the people" to "rejoice."

Our text makes it obvious that we have a certain interest in the government of our land. The people can be made to "rejoice" or "mourn" by those in authority.

Our government can affect us positively or negatively. In fact, our leaders have a profound power to impact our lives morally, socially, and economically. They can affect us as citizens, as churches, and as families. The government can encroach on our freedoms through expansive government, complex regulations, and burdensome taxes, or we may enjoy more liberty with a small, limited government that stays within its proper jurisdiction.

In America, we have a representative republic. The magistrates are elected to office by the citizenry of this country. This means that every adult citizen has the privilege of voting in elections. In light of our text, it would be foolish not to vote because of apathy or irresponsibility.

Perhaps, some do not make use of this privilege because voting can seem to be such an overwhelming endeavor. There are so many candidates and offices and it is hard to find reliable information. We can simplify things somewhat when we consider that each voter elects roughly about

sixteen key candidates to public office on the national, state, and local levels combined. The overall number may vary given a person's exact location, e.g. if a person lives outside of an incorporated city, he will not vote for a mayor, city councilman, etc.

We can elect five candidates on the national level - a president, a vice president, two senators, and a congressman. We can elect about five candidates on the state level - a governor, a lieutenant governor, an attorney general, a senator, and one or more representatives. Depending on the place of residence, we may elect about six candidates on the local level - a mayor, a city councilman, a city attorney, the school board, a county supervisor, and a sheriff.

These are the key public office holders that we may vote for. We elect them and pay their salaries with our taxes. They are supposed to be servants of the public and representative of their constituency. They should especially represent us morally. When we consider the number of offices that we are responsible for, it is not such a large task to be informed of this small number of people. This brings us to

the question of how we are to determine a candidate's suitability for office. Is there some reliable guide by which we can make determinations of how fit a candidate is for the office he seeks? Yes, there is such a guide; the Bible is the best Christian voter's guide.

Let us now look into our guide and see if we can find help for the voting dilemma.

Let us consider two main questions and as we proceed, I will also try to address some common questions and difficulties we meet with as Christians trying to vote with a clear conscience.

### **I. In the first place, how may we determine a candidate's suitability for office?**

Certainly, we seek more than just opinion in this matter. What does the Bible have to say about qualifications for government leaders? Or perhaps we might ask, *"Should a Christian even vote at all or even be concerned with politics?"* We probably all share a degree of disgust with politics on all levels. Does that mean we should just stay away from the whole issue? What does the Bible have to say on this matter?

Moses prepared the people of Israel for the time when they would occupy the land of Canaan. He instructed them, "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment" (Deuteronomy 16:18). Moses taught the people that they would be responsible for choosing their civil officers. Their form of government made the people responsible to make their own judges and officers. This was not always the case in Israel's varied history, nor is it the case in all the world today. In some countries, the citizens cannot elect their officials in free elections.

So, I suppose that Christians in those countries do not have to face this issue of voting. However, in the United States, we still can vote and

we should. Considering our text, it would be foolish, at best, not to vote. If all Christians would quit voting, our country would move from a moral decline to a free-fall. When Israel was self-governed, they were responsible to choose their leaders. Along with this charge, they were also given guidelines as to the type of men they should choose. There are two primary texts that bear on this subject, from which, we will note *seven marks of qualified candidates*. There are actually many verses that seem to speak to us on this subject, but we will stick with the two primary passages in Exodus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 1:13.

After Israel was delivered from Egypt, they had grown to a very large multitude. Moses was the chief magistrate of the civil government of the nation. He was the only judge, and the people would come to him for judgment from morning until night. Moses' father-in-law was concerned that Moses was going to wear himself out and the people too. He wisely advised that lesser judges should be chosen to help in governing the people. Jethro also told him what types of men were fit to be civil officers.

"Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens" (Exodus 18:21). The first qualification mentioned is that they should be "able men." "Able" refers to strength and especially strength of character. This speaks of men of ability, integrity, virtue, and courage. These must be men who will act from principle, even in the face of opposition.

He next says that these men should "fear God." They must have a reverence for God and His Word. They would not be atheist or agnostic. They would not advocate the removal of God's Word from all public life, nor would they advocate the transcendence of man's law to God's law. They must "fear God" for *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction"* (Proverbs 1:7).

Next, they should be "men of truth." They should love truth and hate falsehood. They should not be perpetual prevaricators or supporters of those who are. They must love truth and seek it even when it is not convenient.

These should also be men "hating covetousness." They should not be greedy for unjust gain. They should not seek to use their office for enriching themselves or their friends. They would also not allow others to use the government for getting unjust gain through frivolous lawsuits and massive redistribution of wealth programs. These four qualifications are given in this passage.

We find three additional qualifications in Deuteronomy 1:13: *"Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you."* In this passage, Moses referred to the time in Exodus 18 when, forty years prior, Jethro counseled him to have other judges to help him.

Notice that Moses told Israel they were to “take,” or choose, the men fit for these offices, and he would “make them rulers over you.”

The fifth mark of those fit for office is they should be “wise men.” This means they should be skillful and intelligent. This speaks of a natural ability and a wisdom that is gained through experience. No fools need apply.

Next, they should be “understanding” men. This does not refer to some sappy sentimentalism, rather they should be able to deal wisely and discern. They must be able to make proper moral and ethical decisions. By the nature of their position they must make tough decisions, decide on legislation, etc. A fit candidate should be able to give a definite answer concerning issues such as abortion, sodomite marriages, etc.

The seventh qualification given is that they should be “known among your tribes.” This indicates that these men had proven themselves among the people. They have a track record in their homes, church, community, and business. These would not be novices, but men who have earned respect in other spheres of life and labor. This probably eliminates the carpetbagger from consideration for office.

Though these verses deal with the nation of Israel, *the passages are relevant for us today*. The authority for all civil government comes from God, whether in Israel, Rome, or the United States. God defines the purpose and responsibility of the government. Regardless of whether they acknowledge Him or not, they will be held accountable by God for how they fulfilled their responsibility.

Consider the passage in Romans 13:1-6. There we have the purpose of the civil government defined and the Apostle was talking about the Roman government at that time. If we compare this and other New Testament passages with Old Testament passages related to Israel, we find that the purpose of the government is the same. We can safely conclude that if the civil government authority is the same, the purpose is the same, and the jurisdiction is the same, then the qualifications for officers in the government are also the same. Therefore, we must use these guidelines to determine the suitability of candidates today and tomorrow in the US as well as any other country.

## **II. Secondly, we must consider another important question on this subject: Should Christians vote for a woman for public office?**

*A woman holding public office is an accepted fact in our day.* We do not even hear this subject being debated in the public arena. For most, it is not even a consideration. In fact, probably few Christians even think about it or seriously consider whether this is acceptable by Scripture.

In America, this has been a reality since the 19th century. Susanna Medora Salter was the first woman in the history of this country to be elected to a public office. She was elected mayor of Argonia, KS in 1887. Different women had run for office

before this time, but she was the first to win an election and hold a public office. Since that time, we have been used to women as mayors, governors, senators, representatives, judges, and eventually even president.

For conscientious Christians, *voting for a woman can be a dilemma when it appears that a woman is the most fit candidate for the office*. We cannot deny that this is the case at different times. A woman may be running unopposed or she may just simply be the most conservative and moral candidate by far. However, this question must be brought first of all to the Scripture. Before we even consider a woman’s qualifications, i.e. her ability, wisdom, integrity, moral and spiritual condition, we must find out if a woman can hold public office according to God’s Word. If she is not permitted by the Word, her suitability for office is irrelevant. If she is permitted, then we must determine her suitability by Scripture just as we would for a man.

The answer to this question in brief is that *the Bible does not permit women to bear rule over men in any sphere*. They are not permitted to rule over the man in the home, in the church, or in the public arena. It is not a question of her abilities, nor is it a question of history where a woman has held a public office and done well, or even where women have done good things for the country by their office.

When the question is put to the Scriptures alone, the position of authority over men is not given to women by God.

Let us now consider some reasons for this conclusion from the Word. If we go back to the qualification passages referenced earlier, we can see that these verses have men in view. The word “men” in these verses is gender specific, meaning the male gender as opposed to the female gender. The context will also bear this out that men were to be selected for positions of civil leadership. Women holding public office would also violate the doctrine of headship taught throughout the Bible - from beginning to end. The order of authority given by God is God-Christ-man-woman (I Corinthians 11:3). We have no authority to change the chain of command established in ante-antiquity by the eternal God. This order is seen in the first three chapters of Genesis, the second chapter of I Timothy, Ephesians chapter five, and other passages. This order is never overturned by any precept in the Bible.

Paul taught Timothy that women should “learn in silence with all subjection” and they should not “teach,” neither should they “usurp authority over the man” (I Timothy 2:11-12). He went on to support this saying, “*For Adam was first formed, then Eve*” (I Timothy 2:13). He goes right back to the beginning and sets forth the order not to be violated: “*For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man*” (I Corinthians 11:8-9).

We have been so conditioned by our society of humanist/feminist rebellion against God that to say these things is shocking. However, the question is not one to be determined by our feelings, opinions,

preferences, etc. The question is rather: What does God require? The Bible tells us plainly that God requires men to take leadership in all spheres. He requires men to be men, not the whining, whimpering, in touch with his inner child or feminine side, feminized pretty boy of our day. Biblical manliness has been lost today in a quagmire of touchy-feely, spineless manhood that is subject to political sensitivity and correctness. The question that should perplex us is where are the men, the real men?

We do not deny that women have been in positions of authority over men at different times in history, and even in Bible times. This fact should not surprise us, for men, women, and children have been violating God's Word since Adam and Eve did so in the Garden of Eden. In the Bible when women were ruling over men, rather than condoning or commending it, the words are plain that it was an error and even a curse. We have this lament in Isaiah 3:12, "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." This was a sad situation, even an error. It was also a judgment against the men of that day who abdicated their God given responsibility.

Notice also that *ambition for public office was unknown to the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31*. In this chapter, we have the inspired description of a godly and virtuous woman. It is a beautiful description of biblical womanhood.

An examination of this chapter reveals, "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land" (Proverbs 31:23). In ancient times, "the gates" was the place where the elders and judges would sit and conduct official public business.

It would be similar to speak of the courthouse, capitol building, town hall, or some other municipal building where the affairs of civil government are handled. It was this woman's "husband" who was known and sat "among the elders of the land." She had no thought or desire of taking his place.

The virtuous woman is the central focus of this passage, and we see that her interests and work were centered in her home (v. 27). She was industrious (vv. 13, 16-19). She worked to feed her household (vv. 14-15). She labored to clothe her household (vv. 21-22). She performed important community service (v. 20). She excelled in her God-given opportunity so much that her works praised "her in the gates" (Proverbs 31:31), but she never sat there in a public office.

She was a manifold blessing to others, using well her opportunity as a wife and mother (v. 26). Her husband dealt with matters of civil government and was blessed to have her as his most trusted counselor (vv. 11-12). This woman is styled as one who "feareth the LORD" (Proverbs 31:30). She was not misguided by seeking the deceitful favor or vain beauty of a powerful "public woman."

Additionally, the virtuous woman is not unfulfilled or unproductive and unhappy because she is not contributing to society in a meaningful way by living

her life as a man. On the contrary, she is strong and honorable (v. 25), wise and kind (v. 26), happy and fulfilled (v. 25), well respected and honored (vv. 28-31). This woman was not trying to find herself; rather she found God and great joy in serving Him and others through her home.

I am sure that by this time, someone is ready to protest, "*But, what about Deborah?*" The conventional wisdom is that she was a judge in Israel and certainly, this must be an argument for women holding public office. Let us now consider Deborah and see if her case is such that would commend the practice of women running for and holding offices in the civil government.

What we know of Deborah, we read in Judges Chapters 4 and 5. At this period of time, Israel was in a state of civil confusion. They were passing in and out of enemy occupation. The "judges" that Israel had at this time were more military leaders than they were judicial bench sitters. These men were warriors who led the people into battle and delivered them from the strong hands of their enemies. This

forms the context for when Deborah came on the scene.

We are introduced to Deborah in the fourth chapter of Judges. "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment" (Judges 4:4-5). We learn that she was "a prophetess" and that "she judged Israel." The Hebrew word *shaphat* is here rendered "judged." *Shaphat* is a verb that means primarily to judge or decide. The word itself in its primary meaning and usage does not necessarily indicate judging in an official sense. The word refers to a third party who sits over two parties at odds with one another, hears their side of the story or complaints, and then gives a judgment or a decision. The word does not require that this is an authoritative or official judgment.

We may think of it this way. A man has two neighbors who have a squabble over something and they both respect and trust this man. So, they both come and spread the matter before him and he gives them his opinion (judgment) in the matter. His opinion is not legally binding because he is not acting in any official capacity, but he has judged his neighbors. Just so, the language of the verses in Judges 4 does not require that she was an official judge in Israel.

The context of these two chapters in Judges is actually against the idea that she was a judge in the official sense as Gideon, Samson, Jephthah, etc. During Deborah's time, there was a man named Barak who was the leader of Israel.

Consider the heroes mentioned in Hebrews 11. Not all judges are mentioned, but the writer does say, "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets" (Hebrews 11:32). He mentions

four judges from the book of Judges in a group -

Gedeon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthae. It is not Deborah that is foisted to the spotlight here but Barak, who led Israel to victory at the time when Deborah was a prophetess.

We come to the fifth chapter and read, "Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day" (Judges 5:1). Deborah and Barak sang a song of victory after Israel was delivered from victory. This was a song of praise to God for His mercy and deliverance in battle. This song also contains some words that do not support the idea that Deborah was an official judge. By her own declaration, Deborah "arose a mother in Israel" (Judges 5:7). It is significant that she called herself a mother and not a father. The father is the head of the home and the Hebrews knew that very well. She considered herself a mother who has a very important role in the home but it is supportive and subordinate to the father. This is consistent with her being a "prophetess." She spoke of, but did not number herself among, "the governors of Israel" (Judges 5:9). These governors were lawgivers and the term refers to the elders and rulers of the tribes. This reinforces the idea that the judges of this period were more military leaders than civil magistrates. Deborah was outside of this group.

The roles of Deborah and Barak at this time were spoken of clearly in Judges 5:12: "Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam." Deborah was called on to "awake" and "utter a song." Barak was called on to "arise . . . and lead." Barak was the official judge and Deborah's role was supportive.

A casual reading of verse 13 may suggest to us that Deborah was bearing rule in some way. "Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty" (Judges 5:13). Does the last phrase of this verse teach that Deborah had dominion, or was a public office holder?

First of all, we must remember that this song was sang by both Deborah and Barak (Judges 5:1). So, it is not clear that Deborah speaks this personally of herself. Secondly, in light of the context, this passage refers to their victory in battle.

I am not saying that Deborah had no role; she certainly did have a role. She was a prophetess. She encouraged Barak to go up to battle saying, "the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand" (Judges 4:14). We also find that another woman had a hand in Israel's deliverance. Her name was Jael. It was by her hand that the mighty Sisera was slain (Judges 4:21-22).

What we understand about Deborah is that she was a prophetess. She was more like Miriam who was a leader of women in her day (Exodus 15:20-21). Miriam's role was supportive and when she tried to lead men (Aaron), she was punished (Numbers 12:10, 14-15). We have no such stain on Deborah's record though. She was a godly woman and the people of Israel sought her wisdom. This is a commendation of her and a condemnation of the low state of the men of Israel at this time. She was not appointed a civil judge over Israel and her case is

certainly not an argument for going against plain Scripture and having women rulers.

*Conclusion*—Let us now take up a few final considerations. The guidelines we have considered from the Bible admittedly set a very high standard. *Does this high standard for civil magistrates make it impossible for us to vote at all?* I think we have to realize that no man will ever meet these standards perfectly. This does not mean that we should just forget these guidelines and vote for anyone we want.

There were obviously men in Israel made judges by the people and Moses. So, they must have reasonably conformed to the standard. We should not lower the bar to accommodate men of low degree, but we should demand a high standard for those that we will elect and pay their salary. We should seek men for office who have a reasonable conformance to this standard.

*Using the Bible as the Christian voter's guide does eliminate some candidates from consideration.* The amoral humanists, for example, would be eliminated. These are the evolutionists, feminists, sodomites, abortionists, etc. The Christian could not vote for such candidates according to their voting guide—the Bible.

We may also eliminate any woman from our consideration, because they are not permitted by the Bible to hold public offices. This certainly does not equate all women with amoral humanists. In fact, this does not take into account their morals or abilities at all. We cannot help elect them simply because the Bible forbids women from ruling over men.

At this point, *the pickin's are beginning to look mighty slim.* There are only a few candidates that we could vote for, if this is going to be our policy. I certainly agree that our current selection is whittled down greatly. The lack of suitable candidates is a situation that is not helped by Christians who will not vote for a reasonable candidate when he does run. Usually, we will not vote for him because we think there is no way he can win. He will not be backed by the liberal media or morally bankrupt politicians already in office. He will not gain widespread popularity among the special interest groups that seem to be driving our modern public thought and he will be at a distinct disadvantage financially. We figure this would just be a wasted vote.

This brings us to consider *the common philosophy of the day.* There are two prevailing thoughts about voting in our day that we hear repeatedly. For all practical purposes in our day, we have a two party system in this country. And, it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell them apart. So, we really only see two candidates in the race for an office. Essentially, in these two, we have the bad and the worse. We have the candidate that we do not want and the candidate that we really do not want.

The first common thought is this: To vote for a candidate other than the two mainliners is to vote for the candidate that we really do not want. In other words, say the two mainliners are candidates

A and B. We are not thrilled with candidate A, but we are terrified at the thought of having candidate B. The common thought is that to vote for a candidate C, who is not a member of the main two parties, is really a vote for candidate B - our worst nightmare. I cannot understand this logic. As an individual citizen, I have one vote. If I cast that one vote *for* candidate C, then I voted *for* C and not A or B. When the votes are tabulated, my vote is put in the column for candidate C and not B. I suppose that we are assuming that we are taking a vote away from candidate A and thereby giving candidate B a better chance of winning.

What does God require of us as Christian citizens? Are we responsible to become pollsters, political strategists, or statisticians? Are we to calculate the odds and try to play them? Are we in some way responsible for what everyone else does and therefore we have to try to counteract their vote with ours? This is all a hopeless game that we cannot win. We are responsible to God for our thoughts and actions. We are responsible to take His Word as the final rule of all faith and practice. We are responsible to follow His Word and to have a clear conscience before Him. When we vote *for* a candidate, we are voting *for* that candidate and not *for* someone else.

The next common thought is also based on the presupposition that only one of the two main party candidates has any hope of winning. We reason that since only one of the two main candidates has any chance at winning, we have to pick the lesser of two evils to keep the worst candidate from being elected. This logic admits that we are not voting for a suitable candidate. In order to mollify our conscience, we reason, "The man is going to get in office that God puts there anyway, so I'll just pick the lesser of two evils and hope everything turns out all right." We justify voting for an unsuitable candidate by appealing to the sovereignty of God. When we boil it all down, we just vote for whomever we want because of the party and our belief in the greatest economic benefit through them. So, we basically choose our candidate based on some personal preference - whatever pet issue we have - and then figure everything is all right because of God's sovereignty. This whole line of thinking ends with God's sovereignty, when God's sovereignty should be at the beginning of our thoughts.

Let me explain what I mean by that. God is absolutely sovereign and "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth" (Daniel 4:35). He reigns in the affairs of men and even in the civil governments of the nations. We are told that God "changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (Daniel 2:21). "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Psalms 75:6-7).

Beginning with a proper view of God's almighty power, we have no need to play games or strategize. Through faith, we may look to Him and follow His Word to vote for qualified men and leave the

disposing of the whole matter in His hands (Proverbs 16:33). We may take our stand with the Apostle Paul who said, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward

God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). Let us vote for a suitable candidate with a clear conscience and where we cannot vote with a clear conscience, let us refrain from voting and "mourn" unto the Lord that He will work for us that we may rejoice "When the righteous are in authority."

## **Closing remarks from the Editor**

Instead of writing an editorial as originally planned I just like to say that this paper didn't come together at all as I had planned, but I pray it came out as God would have it to. It Amazes me how a strand of thought sort of emerged out of these articles as I began to put them together, and so I'll leave you with these three verses:

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. Romans 12:1-3 - God bless.*