

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." Galations 5:1

NEWS LETTER

October 2020

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:17-21

Content

Sermon: Godly Character- Godly Conduct

by Bro. Doyal Thomas, page 2

The Christian's Confidence in an Election Year

by Bro. Lewis Kiger, page 7

The Antichrist by Bro. Luke Austin, page 8

No Delusions and No Despairs!

By Bro. Donnie Burford, page 9

The Biblical Call for Strangers, Pilgrims, Exiles

by Bro. Jason Shults, page 9

Historical Marker: "The Candle"

by Charles Spurgeon, page 12

The Greatest Kindness Among Mankind

by Bro. Luke Austin, page 20

Repentance of Sinners and Saints!

By Bro. Donnie Burford, page 20

The Christian Crowns

written by Bro. Milburn Cockrell

(1941 – 2002)

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There are five mentioned in the New Testament which are promised to God's children upon certain conditions. They may be won or lost (**Rev. 3:11**). They are made of gold (**Rev. 4:4**).

1. The Incorruptible Crown (**I Cor. 9:25**). This crown will be given to those who are temperate in all things, to those who have not let "the cares of this life" interfere with their Father's business.
2. The Crown of Rejoicing (**I Thess. 2:19**). This is the soul winner's crown. Those who win souls for Christ, whether by personal work, by preaching the gospel, or by distributing the gospel in print, will receive this crown. (See also **Phil. 4:1; Dan. 12:3**).
3. The Crown of Glory (**I Pet. 5:4**). This is the pastor or elder's crown, given to those who have willingly cared for the flock of God as overseers not as lords and not for the sake of financial gain, but as a shepherd who cares for his sheep.
4. The Crown of Righteousness (**II Tim. 4:8**). This crown is given to all those who love the appearing of Christ. These dear people are not only trusting Christ for salvation, but they are looking for His soon return to the clouds of Heaven. Because of this blessed hope, they endure afflictions, fight the good fight of faith, and speak the truth in love. They are loyal and faithful to Christ at all times (**I John 3:3**).
5. The Crown of Life (**Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10**). This is the martyr's crown which is given to those who "loved not their lives unto the death" (**Rev. 12:11**). Many such as Stephen, James, John, Peter, Paul, Tyndale and countless others will receive this crown.

Sermon: Godly Character - Godly Conduct

Sermon delivered by
Elder Wm. Doyal Thomas
(1932 – 2018)
Originally published in
The Baptist Herald.



"Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah. But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety."
(Psalm 4)

Oh, how grand is this Psalm! What a great comfort it is to read that God sets apart His people, and works in them the traits of godly character that they then exhibit in their conduct as His children. How we should meditate upon every precious word of the Bible so as to be nurtured, strengthened, and comforted by its declarations. How we should rejoice and be glad as we learn that He has purposed our complete salvation, and is constantly working His will so as to conform us to the image of His dear Son and our only Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is working in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

As we begin to speak on the announced subject of Godly Character - Godly Conduct, please look to verse 3 of this Psalm, and read again: "But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him."

The LORD has surely set apart, for Himself, him that is godly. The LORD has a people, each of whom He has chosen to be His people, and to be made godly, and enabled to walk in a godly manner before Him. There are many texts of Scripture that teach the Lord's people that

He requires of them that they then live godly lives before Him, and before men as well. And remember the walk is demonstrative of the life. The conduct is a direct reflection of the character. Man does what man is. So, it appears to me that professed believers in Christ should concentrate on being the person one ought to be, and the doing of what one ought to do will be the inevitable outcome. Praise God, he is working in us to will AND to do of His good pleasure.

Let's look at two texts relative to this matter:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." **(Titus 2:11-15)**

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found in him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

(II Pet. 3:10-14)

Clearly and distinctly, the Bible lays before us the mind of God, as concerns His will for His people. This is an indisputable fact, and this consistent teaching has been directed to men of previous times the same as in these present times. The Lord has been pleased to speak His mind through His Word, and to reveal Himself by His Spirit to His people so that they may know and be instructed in His ways and in His will.

What is the will of God for His people? Listen as He speaks: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what

commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit." **(I Thes. 4:1-8)**

What is the will of God for His people?

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, . . . (verse 3). Note also: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." (verse 7). And this also: "He therefore that despiseth (holds in contempt, or belittles) despiseth not man, but God, who also hath given unto us his holy spirit." (verse 8).

When we read these texts, we are all utterly without excuse, and none of us can in any wise plead ignorance. God has stated His will, and God's will, when stated, becomes an evident and unmistakable command. Thus we see, man is commanded to live a godly life in this present age. And this command does not become one of obligation off out there somewhere in the future, but it is obligatory NOW, at this present time!

This clearly and distinctly stated will of God for His people, which is also His command, becomes the death knell to the heretical teaching of past day and present day antinomians, by whatever stripe they seek to identify themselves. And antinomians are numerous, among all religious groups perhaps, but especially among those who proclaim that they believe that salvation is of grace.

Professing Baptists - yea, even professing sovereign grace Baptists are hereby censured and rebuked for their antinomian stand, and for their heretical teaching. "No sin but a doctrinal sin?" What a rank heresy this is! And to seek to spiritualize away the moral sins of professing believers, even when depravity is being pleaded in an attempt to justify men in their evil walk is not allowed by the teaching of the Scriptures.

God demands of His people that they conduct themselves in a godly and God honoring manner. Nothing short of true godliness can display the holiness of God in men, and since He has given unto us His Holy Spirit, we possess Him, even now. And "even now" is prior to the final and ultimate glorification to which each and every one of God's dear children will be brought in

the coming day.

There are, and will continue to be some obstacles in the path of every child of God however, in his or her walk, conversation, or manner of life. God's arch-enemy, Satan himself, through his agents, lays many minefields of danger in the path of every Christian. We must expect this opposition, for God has clearly warned us: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." **(II Tim. 3:12)**

But, praise God, He has also given His people full assurance, even in the face of Satan's opposition, and man's natural weakness. Listen as God speaks: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished." **(II Pet. 2:9)** "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." **(I Cor. 10:13,14)**

And listen to this assurance of the ultimate and final victory; "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." **(I John 4:4)**

And what about **Psalms 32:1-11** ? Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. [2] Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. [3] When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. [4] For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. [5] I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. [6] For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. [7] Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. [8] I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. [9] Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. [10] Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. [11] Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in

heart. Please take note of verse 6. "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." Every one that is godly shall pray in this manner and with this attitude, knowing that, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." (verse 1) And this is the assurance we have that "God is nigh."

Everyone that is godly shall pray, "Thy will be done, in all things." The godly shall not pray, "If it be thy will," as if we do not know what God's stated will is, or, as if we doubt that God is willing and able to see that His stated will is carried out to His satisfaction. When godly souls pray, they should acknowledge that God is truly God, and that He is in the business of conforming each of His children to the image of His dear Son. And He does this thusly: "For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (**Phil. 2:13**) And, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (**Phil. 1:6**)

Now, how shall the godly walk so as to reflect in that walk the character which God has worked in them? How shall men who are godly walk? How shall godly women walk? How shall the children be taught, encouraged, and required to walk as the parents acknowledge the responsibility that God has laid on them to lead them: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (**Eph. 6:4**)

GODLY MEN WALK IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD

How should godly men walk? What should be their manner of life, or their conversation as they live out their allotted span of time on this earth, before God and men, reflecting the character that their having been made a new creation in Christ has placed in them, thus enabling them to respond to this new nature that they now possess, by grace? Remember now: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new." (**II Cor. 5:17**)

To begin with, godly men walk in obedience to God. The walk may be somewhat halting, uncertain, and feeble, yet, it will show forth some degree of obedience to the teaching of God's Word. There will be some evidence of a new relationship with God which was not there previous to the marvelous act that God performed, which He identifies as regeneration. The fruit may be scant, but

there will be some fruit. When there is NO fruit, there is NO LIFE!

Godly men will walk so as to acknowledge by the walk, and as evidence presented by the walk, that they have been born from above. Thus, they will begin to exhibit a submissive life and attitude that declares a desire to become even more submissive, more fruitful, and more obedient. This submission will show forth the willingness to walk in the manner that will honor His Headship and direction for the order and decency of men as they bring glory to God. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (**I Cor. 11:3**)

Whatever God commands man to do, man is to obey. And, he is to teach his household, including his wife, his children, his employees, and all that are under his God assigned authority to obey God in everything that He has commanded. He is commissioned as the head of his household and of his business enterprises, and is fully and unmistakably accountable to God for the conduct of himself and all that are under his Bible declared, God ordered, and Holy Spirit sanctioned headship.

Godly man is responsible, before God, to leave his father and his mother (Not forsake them) and establish a new family structure according to God's ordained order, and to then lead this new family to obey and honor God. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (**Gen. 2:24**)

Surely, all who will read this command and for a moment meditate on what is here said, and examine the context in which it is said, will come to some wonderful and amazing truth. Here, God is laying down for Adam, and for all men, for all time, a precept of order that has come directly from God without intermediate input or influence. And precept never is set aside, nor is it changed. It is fixed in God's order.

No modern or ancient interpretation is needed, nor is any allowed. No modification to God's divinely mandated principle is to be considered, encouraged, or permitted. This is a clearly stated, "Thus saith the Lord," and any attempt to alter or lay aside this stated precept, which is also a command, is not obedience to God. Rather, it is open rebellion against Him, and against His divine order.

Now, brethren, and all who shall read these words, know something for sure. God did not speak these words in Genesis 2:24 to instruct Adam and Eve ONLY in this

matter. You see, Adam and Eve were created directly by God and did not appear on this earth as the product of their progenitors. Therefore, they, having no earthly parents could not leave non-existent parents and establish a new family structure. They were a family, duly constituted by God Himself when He wedded them in heaven sanctioned union so that they became one again. These did not come by natural generation from their predecessors, for they had no predecessors.

What is the meaning here? Clearly, God is declaring His eternal and infinitely wise counsel in laying before all men and women who would follow Adam and Eve this infallible, underived, and unchanging order of things as pertained to the first human institution that He established on earth, that is, the family.

The precept has not changed, nor will it change in the affairs of human kind in this age, or throughout marked out time, to include the Tribulation span, and the 1,000 years Millennial reign of Christ upon this earth. God does not change, nor does He alter that which has gone out of His mouth. The precept of family and God ordained headship has not been rescinded, in spite of all the attempts of Satan, through his many and various implements, i.e. modernism, humanism, feminism, etc. to set aside God's order. ERA movements, and all other such "equalization" movements are of the Devil, and their work is hurtful - but, it is not final. God rules!

How does godly man walk? Godly man walks so as to require, by moral leadership and Bible order, the acknowledgment of the headship duty and privilege over the family which God has given him. He conducts himself honorably in all matters, before God and men. He loves his family and he leads them. He provides for the needs of his family, including, but not limited to their needs for food, shelter, clothing, safety, and protection, and all other human needs He DOES NOT neglect the greater needs, that is, those needs that relate to spiritual matters, and of the necessity that God lays upon all His creatures to honor Him, and to serve Him in accordance with His specifications as to what constitutes acceptable service, adoration, worship, and praise. The family must be taught and led into the submissive conduct that pleases God, as declared in His Word.

Godly man is responsible before God to lead his family in the worship and praise of God, and of their service to Him only. The man, who is the head of the family, is the principal teacher in all matters, and the principal disciplinarian. He is the principal leader in daily Bible

reading, meditation, and devotion. He is, therefore, the principal leader in the private worship that the family engages in, at all times. He is the principal leader in the public worship also, which is in reality, just an extension of the private worship. (Is it any wonder that so much public worship is cold, empty, formal, or perhaps nonexistent?) Man is the principal leader in service to God and in the returning the tithe and also the offerings and gifts to God and to His cause. God's work goes on, and godly man is used of God to further that work, and to teach others also in this matter.

Godly man is responsible, before God to obey civil magistrates whom God has appointed over him, and to teach his family and household to do likewise. He is to seek, by all scriptural and lawful means to live peaceably with all men, and to be above reproach in his civil life and conduct.

Godly man is responsible, before God to lead his family in citizenship in the home, seeing as how God has arranged the government of that home. Likewise, in the Lord's church there is an order of polity that God has set in place that produces honor toward God and good for His church and for his people. In the community and in the nation, God has commanded that His people are to be law abiding, decent, honorable, and above reproach. May God enable all men to walk godly.

GODLY WOMEN WALK IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD

How should godly women walk? What should be the manner of their lives and of their conversation?

Godly woman is to be obedient to God in acknowledging Him as God, and in complete submission to His Headship over the family THROUGH the man. Thus, godly woman will be, and will always desire to be in submission to the man, the head of the family. It is in this state that she will find completeness in her God given assignment. No other order, or rather, "disorder" will honor God and produce results that are joyous for all to behold and to be a part of.

Godly woman is responsible, before God, to leave her previous family connection (not forsake) and become one with her husband in forming and fostering a new godly home, and a new godly family. Then, this godly woman is responsible to become the "keeper at home", of all those godly duties and privileges that become hers. She is to teach, by word and by example godly principles to her children, under her husband's authority, as an extension of that authority. In order to properly teach, she must

submit herself to those principles and precepts.

Godly woman is to be the applier and the enforcer of daily disciplinary demands, in order to train herself (self-discipline) and her children to walk obediently. She is to be chaste, gentle, loving, kind, firm, determined and consistently able to present herself in this most awesome, yet rewarding role.

Godly woman is to honor God in all things, and to demonstrate by her life a due respect for the position that the only wise God has been pleased to assign her to occupy. It is the most wonderful position that a godly woman can ever properly occupy, and the godly woman who has found that place is happy indeed, and those, generally who are unhappy and depressed have either failed to find that place, or are in rebellion against God. Godly woman is to never seek to remove herself from her assigned position, nor is she to be rebellious in that position. To rebel against the position is to rebel against the only wise God who has assigned the position.

Godly woman is to teach her children their position as being one of obedience and submission to parents, thus obeying God's command for them. It is her duty and privilege to teach, nurture, guide, love, and shield her children each and every day that God allows them to be under her care and tutelage. They are a blessing from God for the parents and for the home, and the godly woman who recognizes it to be so is indeed a happy and contented woman, wife, and mother.

CHILDREN ARE TO BE IN OBEDIENCE

Children must be taught, and they must be required to submit to their duties and privileges. They must be trained, or disciplined to fulfill those duties so as to enjoy the privileges.

Children are to obey their parents, and to honor them by their obedience. In so doing, the children will receive many benefits as God's providential care over all His works produce for these children these benefits and blessings. And God's Word teaches that this required obedience will insure that the children will enjoy long and happy days on the earth.

Children must be encouraged by the testimony of parents and others to give ear to the Word of God, and to seek to learn of Him who is Creator, Sustainer, and Saviour. The children are not to be coerced nor forced to a particular belief, but rather are to be encouraged and guided toward truth and its glorious results.

Without doubt, these present evil days in which we live

lend themselves to presenting before all, especially the young, so many, and so different seeming options for living. Our children, therefore, are being bombarded with lies, deceptions, and false teachings, and it becomes so vital that they be reared in a disciplined, controlled, truthful home. They can not properly defend themselves against all, or any of the error that they are constantly being subjected to in every area of human life and enterprise.

The family, and the home, therefore are the only safe haven in which children can be protected, nurtured, guided, and taught the things that will enable them to grow into the kinds of adults that they must be in order for them in turn to teach their children also. We must shield them against the onslaughts of Satan and his allies, and we must teach them the truth about all things. Only truth can withstand error, and only the God established family can, when the family itself is properly functioning, provide for the little ones that which they must have so that they can grow into God honoring and Bible believing adults. Brethren, pray for our families, that they come back to God's ways and see their duty, and commit themselves to being the persons that they should be before God, and before man.

BENEDICTION

And now, our Father, we pray that your will be done in the lives of all your people so that we who are yours, by grace, through the shed blood of Thy Son and Saviour may become the godly men, women, and children that will bring honor, and glory, and praise to your matchless Name, Person, and work. May we truly become such disciples as becometh saints of the Most High God. May we be godly in all our thoughts, acts, attitudes, and testimonies. Amen.



The Christian's Confidence in an Election Year

Written by Bro. Lewis Kiger
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(expositoronline.wordpress.com/)
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I'd like to begin this article by asking a series of questions:

Are you concerned about the direction of our nation?
Does it grieve you to turn on the nightly news and see all this ugliness unfold? Or how about this play on words ...
Do you really want to MAGA – that is, Make America Godly Again? Would you truly like to see God blessing, rather than judging America? If your answer to these questions are yes, then I implore you to think seriously about where you place your hopes.

Although the Bible warns us repeatedly about putting too much confidence in men, specifically in earthly leaders, it seems like every election cycle we convince ourselves – if we can only get the right person in office then everything will be okay?! When all the while, God's Word repeatedly warns against trusting in men. For example, **Psalms 118:8-9** states, "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes." So again, I ask, Christian where have you placed your hopes for the future of our country? In men? In fallen, fickle men? In politicians, princes or presidents? I hope not. It never ceases to amaze me every election cycle we hear these same words over and over again, "this is the most important election of our lifetime." That is, until the next one rolls around. Now, don't proverbially put words in my mouth. I am not saying it doesn't matter who gets elected. I am not suggesting Christians should stay home on election day. No not at all. I am however stating, that those who confess to be Christians need to relearn two important truths.

First, according to **Daniel 2:21**, God is the One who sets us kings (presidents and others) and takes down kings. Whether we like who wins or not, we must learn to submit to God's design and not our own. Furthermore, Romans 14:1 clearly teaches every single person placed in a role of civil leadership, are put there by the

immutable counsel of the Omnipotent God. In other words, the Lord is not disinterested into the political process. In fact, He is sovereignly working every affair of men, including elections, for His own preordained purposes. Yes, we cast our votes. Yes, we carry our Christian morals and ethics into the voting booth. Yet, when all is said and done, "the lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD (**Proverbs 16:33**). Faith compels the Christian to trust that God is doing what is best. Our only duty is to do what is right.

Secondly Christians, in particular American Evangelicals, need to rethink where their primary citizenship lies. I want to emphasize this because I believe it to be a Biblical teaching nearly absent from most pulpits in America. If you are indeed a born-again believer, **Colossians 1:13** makes it clear, you belong to the kingdom of Christ. It is to this heavenly kingdom, not any earthly one, where your primary allegiance must remain.

Again, let me give a disclaimer, because we live in a society of sound-bites rather than serious thought ... I thank God for the privilege of being an American citizen. Every single American owes a debt of gratitude to those who have served, or are now serving this nation. We are indeed, the land of the free because we are the home of the brave.



Having said that, nations come and go. Empires rise and fall. Kings and kingdoms seize world power, then crumble off into nothingness. This is the history of the world. Whether we like it or not, there is no guarantee, Biblical or otherwise, America will exist for generations to come.

Truly, the only hope for our nation is that Christians live the way Christians ought to live, and once again spread the Gospel across this country.

We are no longer a Christian nation – stop fooling yourself. America needs God. America needs God's people to live out the Christian faith in such a way as to serve as salt and light in this society. Without this, there is no hope for our country.

21st century conservative Evangelicals need to be reminded — loving and supporting America is not equivalent to loving and supporting the kingdom of Christ. Wrapping the Bible in an American flag and unequally yoking the sacred Scriptures and the Constitution, makes a mess of true Christianity. Follower

The Antichrist

Written by Bro. Luke Austin of Cadillac, MI

of Jesus, it is not our duty to “restore again the kingdom to America.” It is our duty to honor our King. Putting all our eggs in the broken basket at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is unwise.

Christian, we disgrace our King when we place our confidence in the political process, and not in the plans and purposes of the Almighty. We dishonor our King when we put more emphasis on making America great, rather than seeking to make America godly. We fail to represent our King well, when we overlook lewdness and make excuses for obscenity, just because we support a certain political party. Christians reveal where their allegiance lies, when they are angered by players kneeling for the national anthem, but sit emotionally unmoved when the Gospel of Christ is preached. The kingdom citizen does a disservice to their King, when they wrongly suggest the hope for America is the right Supreme Court justice, rather than faithfully encouraging Americans to bow the Judge of all the Earth. Frankly, if you want to honestly evaluate where one’s allegiance lies, look at their social media page. Or listen to their conversations. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks and Facebook posts are made. If God grants national repentance and we once again turn back to the God who has so greatly blessed us, then wonderful. If not, let us find comfort in knowing the kingdom of Christ has not been shaken. Friends, disciples of Jesus may be American citizens, or citizens of Canada or Nigeria or Albania – or any country on earth. However, and more importantly, those trusting in Christ are citizens of His kingdom, and are instructed to seek His kingdom first, above all others. Unfortunately, far too few Christians think this way. We think first and foremost of our earthly citizenship, rather than our heavenly one. When in truth, followers of Christ would serve themselves and their homeland far better if they placed their loyalties to their Lord ahead of their allegiance to any nation! While I am not downplaying the privilege of being an American, the believer’s first and foremost commitment must be to the kingdom of Christ. The Christian’s confidence in an election year, should be the same as every other year. That is, the Lord is in control of all things, including elections. Secondly, regardless of who is in the White House, King Jesus is ruling and reigning and of His kingdom there shall be no end. This is the Christian’s only unshakable certainty.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 KJV [3] *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; [4] Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

I usually stay away from prophecy and things that have yet to come to pass because it opens the door for debate. If you want to debate theology I’m not your guy. Debate grates on my nerves, it’s not my thing.

With that out of the way I wanted to address something about the antichrist. Every time a politician or a president gets elected that opposes Christian values the masses cry “it’s the antichrist “! Well your world view is too narrow and has no basis in scripture.

Consider this “man of sin” in the text above. He shows himself in the temple as God. You see the Jews are still looking for the conquering king to restore the kingdom to Israel. Humanly speaking it’s why they missed Jesus. They were looking for the Lion of the tribe of Judah but what they got was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Even the Apostles didn’t understand until the Holy Spirit illuminated their understanding.

Acts 1:6 KJV [6] *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*

So this “man of sin” this antichrist will come to Jerusalem and enter into the temple and show himself as God. Would the Jews accept anything other than a Jew? Could the antichrist that will deceive Israel do so without being a Jew himself? The Jews of today still regard the gentiles as less than and not the people of God. There’s no way that the antichrist could be anything other than a Jew.

So Obama is not the antichrist. Biden if elected is not the antichrist. Now there is a spirit of antichrist that works in the world. And if you want to make that application, go for it.

But a gentile in America cannot be the antichrist as far as I can tell from scripture.

1 John 4:3 KJV [3] *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

In the end I would give you this one piece of advice. Repent and believe the gospel. Trust in Jesus Christ. Read the end of the good book. Jesus wins. Stop worrying about all the extras and bow to the King of Glory now.

No Delusions and No Despairs!

Written by Bro. Donnie Burford
Pastor of South Irvine Baptist church
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I have no confidence in mankind, knowing the messes we are in are all the result of men/women, past and present creating them, and I have no expectation the future will be any different.

I have no confidence in Conservative or Liberal agendas, with their vain promises, Purposes and hopes. They have been making them for centuries now and here we are!

I gain no ultimate assurance in building walls or increasing military might to safeguard and preserve our well-being and freedoms.

I have no hope in Science stopping the inevitable of my physical demise, remembering they haven't even cured the common cold.

In fact, I have an ever-increasing lack of general optimism in Churches, preachers and professed Christians becoming more of what they should be towards one another, and even more specifically towards Christ. This seems especially true in seeing so little of the foundational principals and truth revealed by Him being fostered and adhered to by many, if not most today!

(Love One another!)

I even have well founded reason(S) to doubt in myself of ever becoming all I know I should or even want to be in this life!

And Yet I have more Hope than I have ever had for my assurance today, tomorrow and forever is in The Lord! If you have Delusions and Despairs about life and the World or even yourself, it is because you are Hoping and trusting in the wrong things and persons!

Only in Christ can you find true hope and assurance!

Romans 15:13; *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”*

Psalms 42:11; *“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”*

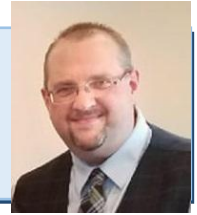
Proverbs 10:28; *“The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.”*

Mark 11:22; *“And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.”*

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.”*

The Biblical Call for Strangers, Pilgrims, Exiles

Written by Bro. Jason Shults
Pastor at Beverly Manor Baptist Church



While in route to the American continent to settle in New England in 1630, the Puritan preacher John Winthrop delivered an oft-quoted sermon to the pilgrims aboard the ship Arbella. He titled the sermon, “A Model of Christian Charity,” and most famously among its contents is this sentence: “For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.”¹

Winthrop was, of course, referring to the words of our Lord Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

Winthrop quoted the Lord's metaphor as a source of encouragement to each individual coming to the new colonies. His desire was that each person would be a model of Christian charity – and that the colony he would govern would corporately be a model for the world. His sentiment continued to be passed down to an American nation which Winthrop could have hardly foreseen. President Ronald Reagan famously alluded to Winthrop's sermon in his election-eve address in 1980, “And let us resolve they will say of our day and our generation that we did keep faith with our God, that we did act worthy of ourselves; that we did protect and pass on lovingly that shining city on a hill.”²

What the Lord Jesus commanded – and to which both Winthrop and Reagan aspired – was a life open to the inspection of all the world. The visual picture of a city on a mountain, giving light and direction for the highway's travelers, is the very picture of falling under the scrutiny of others. For Winthrop, the colony would be scrutinized. For Reagan, his generation was under the inspection. For Christ, most importantly, it was His disciples. (Hence the Lord's use of the plural “ye” in verse 14 meaning “you

¹ https://www.winthropsociety.com/doc_charity.php

² <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/11-3-80>

all” and the identifying mark of that group being that they are children of “your Father” in verse 16.)

How are Christians to be a light in the world, argued Winthrop, if not by acting as model of Christian charity? And the message especially rang true to those on the little ship Arbella, hearing Winthrop’s original message, ready to embark (or disembark!) into a new world to live as pilgrims.

My Christian friends, I write this to remind you, we’re all pilgrims. And our Heavenly Father, in divine providence and foresight, has left us instructions on how to live our lives as pilgrims on earth.

Strangers and Pilgrims

Few of us have the option of choosing where we’ll live as the vast majority of individuals remain as lifelong citizens to the country of their birth. Assuming you’re a citizen of the United States, let us stop for just a moment, Dear Reader, and thank the Lord above for that undeserved blessing. Without a doubt, God has blessed America – not merely through its influence, affluence and dominance of world affairs – but through the precious Constitutional concepts of free speech and free religion and free assembly. Each of those rights, as well as others, are blessings which should be used to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to establish churches who uphold the truths of God’s Word.

In my opinion, there is no better country on this earth. There is no other country I would desire to have citizenship. I have a special affection for the United States of America and thus a desire for my fellow citizens to be saved. Yet, having said that, let’s put it in the proper perspective. If you’ve repented of your sin and looked to Jesus as Savior, you should be able to say with me, “I am a citizen of an even greater country than the United States.”

Do you not want to agree with me? Then perhaps the Apostle Paul can persuade you.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Colossians 1:12–13

If you’ve been saved from the power of darkness, that also comes with a transfer out of that kingdom and into the kingdom where God’s Son Jesus is King.

Here’s how the New Testament writers describe it. In Hebrews, as the writer points us in the Old Testament to the great examples of faith for us to follow, he says:

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Hebrews 11:13–16

Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah were all strangers and exiles on earth. In some cases that is clearer than others. When God told Abraham to move to a land that He would later promise to Abraham’s children, that Old Testament saint moved there and lived among the inhabitants of another country. He was a stranger and pilgrim in the most literal sense. And yet the writer of Hebrews lists more than Abraham.

The principle to learn is the attitude and experience of each of those saints was that they were looking for a country, not the one they came from, but the one to which they’re going. A better country, one prepared by God, he said. So as they lived in this world, every place they might call home was also not yet home. They embraced the promises of God in obedience as a light to those around them. That’s an example to follow.

The Apostle Peter picks up the same theme and writes this:

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

1 Peter 2:11–12

He appeals for his fellow believers to live like “strangers and pilgrims” or, literally, foreigners and sojourners. Did Peter imagine that life as a stranger and pilgrim also meant life as a “city on a hill”? It seems he did, since he also alludes to the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the

Mount, (see Matthew 5:16) that the world around you might, “by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God.”

The Apostle Paul wrote it very simply to the church at Philippi. Phillip was a Roman colony – and so the people were Roman citizens and proud of it. Paul reminded them:

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: **Philippians 3:20**

The Greek word for conversation is POLITEUMA which literally means “citizenship.” Our citizenship is in heaven. The saints at the church in Philippi were free to embrace their Roman citizenship, but to always remember it was secondary to their citizenship in Christ’s kingdom.

Life in Exile

As the New Testament writers reflect back on the Old Testament saints for their picture of “strangers and pilgrims,” telling us to live in that light, we should ask ourselves exactly what examples they’re pointing to. Obviously, Hebrews points to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, et al. But that isn’t the end of the Biblical instruction for living as a stranger and pilgrim.

The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah is extremely instructive when it comes to this kind of life. Poor Jeremiah had the unfortunate task of telling his nation and countrymen that God was about to judge their sin. Actually, in one of the saddest passages in Scripture, it is summarized this way:

And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. **2 Chronicles 36:15–16**

As a side note, Jeremiah’s life is also potentially instructive for modern day Christians who declare God’s coming judgments on the sins of America. I do not necessarily believe that we’ve reached a point of no return or “no remedy” as Chronicles calls it, but nothing in Scripture suggests to us that God will forever show blessing and mercy on a nation that murders children, promotes homosexuality, overlooks gender roles and condones greed. Jeremiah’s experience with declaring God’s Word was that his fellow citizens called him unpatriotic while many false prophets assured the nation

God would continue to overlook sin. He did not overlook the sins of Judah. And call me unpatriotic if you like, but He will not overlook the sins of America either.

But Jeremiah’s message was not only one of judgment. He also got to declare divine hope for his countrymen. Even though they would be carried away into Babylonian slavery – and thus find themselves as literal strangers and pilgrims – Jeremiah gave instructions on how to live their life in exile.

Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. **Jeremiah 29:5–7**

Build houses. Plant gardens. Live your lives. Get married. Have Children. Flourish while in exile! And, he says, as you’re there in Babylon, pray for the peace of Babylon. “Pray unto the Lord for it,” he says. Not pray “about” it, but pray “for” it. There’s a difference. Pray for the good of Babylon.

Keep that in mind as you read the stories of those in exile like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (you might know that last three by their Babylonian names Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego). How did they live as strangers and pilgrims? They sought the best for Babylon. They even served in Babylonian government, but always represented what a covenant relationship with Yahweh looked like. There were lines they would not cross. Daniel would not pray to the king. His three friends would not bow down to the king’s statue. They were God’s people – at home, but not quite home – seeking the good of Babylon but making their service to God primary.

Life in Christ

Is this not what we’re called to as well? As New Testament Christians we’re strangers and pilgrims. We’re living in this country as citizens of a different country. Our Lord Jesus even applied those principles from Jeremiah to the disciples of His day living under the specter of Roman occupation. What was His message to the Jewish people about their Roman occupiers? Go ahead and pay your taxes and give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar because that’s merely a part of living your life to show it belongs to God.

Paul extended that lesson in Romans 13:1-7 telling us to be good citizens of the world government we find ourselves under. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." The fact that Paul wrote that while a citizen of Rome under Emperor Nero should be a compelling argument that the standard is not left to our own wisdom. God will judge all world rulers by His holy standard, we are called to be obedient citizens regardless of our opinion of the leadership. The only exception is found in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Unless we are commanded to do what the Bible forbids, or are forbidden to do what the Bible commands, obedience to authority is obedience to God Himself.

Biblically, there is evidence that God is sometimes displeased with a nation's choice of leadership. He does not always grant us a leader after His own heart. For example, in Hosea 8:4 God says, "They have set up kings, but not by me! They have made princes and I knew it not!" The unrighteous behavior of the world's leaders will be judged. Yet no matter who wins this coming election, the Lord God omnipotent reigns and living as a stranger and pilgrim is His command on your life.

In addition to strangers, pilgrims and exiles, there's one other term I want to note in the same vein. Listen to the Apostle Paul again:

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. **2 Corinthians 5:20**

An ambassador is a representative of his home country, living in a foreign land. In this case, Paul pictures a land at war with God, but the ambassador has brought the message of Christ – the message of the Gospel – and says "here are the terms of peace. Be reconciled to God!" And declaring that message of peace is the very epitome of "seeking the peace" of our nation. There would be nothing better for the United State of America than for all of our citizens to repent of our sin and submit to the ultimate authority of King Jesus.

Dear Reader, fellow Christian, let's make an effort daily to adjust our mindset. You're home, but not yet home. You're a stranger, a pilgrim, an exile, an ambassador. If we aspire to be the "city on a hill" that Winthrop and Reagan and, most importantly, our Savior Jesus called us to be, it will not be accomplished through spite, anger, name-calling, finger-pointing or any other of the common

expressions of partisan politics. It is not our calling to sink into the culture in which we find ourselves, but to rise above it by our "good works," which Jesus said would "glorify your Father which is in Heaven." The overriding attitude of a Christian during election time should not be to express "who I'm for," but to show people "where I'm from" and "Whose I am."

Historical Marker: "The Candle"

Sermon delivered April 24th, 1881
by C. H. Spurgeon

"Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." **Matthew 5:15, 16.**

OUR Savior was speaking of the influence of His disciples upon their fellow men and He, first of all, mentioned that secret but powerful influence which He describes under the figure of salt—"You are the salt of the earth." No sooner is a man born unto God than he begins to influence men with an influence which is rather felt than seen. The very existence of a Believer operates upon unbelievers. He is like a handful of salt cast upon flesh—he has a savor in himself and this penetrate those who are in contact with him.

The unobserved, almost unconscious influence, of a holy life is most effectual to serving society and the prevention of moral putrefaction. May there be salt in every one of us, for, "salt is good." Have salt in yourselves and then you will become a blessing to all around you.

But there is about every true Christian a manifest and visible trait which he is bound to exercise and this our Lord sets forth under the figure of light—"You are the light of the world. A city that is on a hill cannot be hid." In any case the genuine Christian will manifest the silent and unseen salting influence upon those who come into immediate contact with him, but let him also labor to possess the second, or illuminating influence, which covers a far larger area and deals more with real life—for salt is for dead flesh and light for living men. *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."*

Saltiness and light are the power of a Christian! I do not believe that any man gives forth light if he has not, first, received salt and yet some have an abundance of salt who

are none too liberal with their light. May God grant us Grace to balance the inward and the outward. May we have serving salt and the diffusive light! Our thoughts will now run on giving light and I pray that I may be helped to move the more and less active among us to exert their influence upon others to this extent—to crown the silent testimonies of their humble faith by an outspoken witness-bearing for their Lord and Savior.

All who have salt will now be urged to show their light. The figure which our Savior uses is a homely one, borrowed from the eastern tent and house. He speaks of a candle, or, more accurately, of a lamp. We should read the passage— *“Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light unto all that are in the house.”* I shall use the figure both in its eastern and in its western dress and sometimes we will make a lamp of it and sometimes a candle. Perhaps we shall see all the better with both a lamp and a candle and, though we may confuse the metaphor, we shall not confuse anybody’s mind upon the important Truth of God which it sets forth.

Three things are in the text. The first is the lighting, the second is the placing and the third is the shining. The first two are both intended to produce the third. May He who alone can create light, illuminate our minds while we dwell on His Word.

I. First let us consider THE LIGHTING.

“Neither do men light a candle.” What is this lighting up of the souls of men? They are without light by nature, *“having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.”*

What, then, is this lighting? It is, first of all, a Divine work. God began His creating work of old by saying, *“Let there be light”* and there was light. And as in the old creation, so in the new—the first thing that God works in the heart of man is light—*“the entrance of Your Word gives light.”* Well said David, *“The Lord is my light and my salvation.”*

The Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding so that the man perceives the desperateness of his own condition and his inability to win salvation by his own works. The Lord pours light into the soul so that Christ is seen by faith and, at the sight of Him, the heart catches fire and light takes hold upon the inner man so that he not only sees light but has light. The light not only shines upon the heart but from the heart.

“You were sometime darkness”—not only in the dark, but darkness! *“But now you are light in the Lord”*—not only have you light from the Lord, but you are light—

your souls having caught the flame. The Holy Spirit, alone, can accomplish this work. No human being will ever have light within himself till God who spoke the fiat at Creation shall, by the same Word, create light in the soul. The Apostle Paul says of all the saints, *“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”* This lighting is a separating work. When this Light of God comes, it separates a man from those around him who are as darkness. It does not take him away from his surroundings. It does not shut him up in a monastery, but the separation is complete, for to set a division between a candle and the darkness all that is needed is to light it. The tiniest spark will, by its very existence, be distinguished from the darkness.

There is no need to label light to prevent its being confused with darkness and there is no need for it to sound a trumpet before itself, saying, *“Here I am.”* What fellowship has light with darkness? No sooner comes the light into a man’s heart than he is separate from those who are round about him—he is called, by the Grace of God, to a vocation which at once sets a difference between the called ones and the rest of the sons of men. The darkness could not have created the light, for it does not even comprehend it, *“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.”*

Those that are round about the Christian man cannot make him out, for his life is hid with Christ in God. At his conversion they perceive that a strange alteration has come over him and, as Dr. Watts says, they gaze and admire and hate the change, but they know no more about it than owls do of the sun! At first they set the change down to melancholy, until the man’s experience flashes into delight and then they call it fanaticism or a kind of madness—a sort of twist of the mind. Oh, blessed twist! Would God that those who know it not could be twisted after the same fashion! It is the kindling of the candle, so that where all was darkness before, there may now be the heavenly Light of God!

The darkness, though it does not understand or love the light, is, nevertheless, compelled to yield to it, for the battle between light and darkness is short and decisive. Up to the measure of the light is the measure of its conquest. Though only a few beams should irradiate the eastern sky, yet so far the arrows of the sun have pierced the heart of the night and as that light shall glow into high noon, all traces of darkness must fly before it. Beloved, if God has given light to us, He has put within us a principle that shall go forth conquering and to conquer! Let the darkness be as dense as that which plagued the Egyptians, yet must it yield to light.

A conflict is to be expected, but a conquest is guaranteed. We must not dream that the darkness will put forth its black arms to embrace our light, nor may we imagine that it will come cowering at the foot of our candlestick and ask to make a league with us. Light cannot dwell side by side with the darkness, making a covenant, for it is written, "God divided the light from the darkness, and God called the light day, and the darkness He called night"—thus giving to each its own distinguishing name—that none might confuse them. No man shall ever be able to mingle the two—they are and must be forever distinct. To the end of time there shall be two seeds—the heirs of light and the children of darkness—and these two cannot be one.

The light shall war with the darkness till the eternal light has fully risen and reached its zenith—and then the earth shall be filled with the light of the Glory of God! Till then, you children of light, see to it that you have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. This lighting up of the candle takes place at regeneration and you perceive it in enlightenment, conviction, conversion. The question is, have you ever been lit, dear Friend? Have you ever received that Divine Light of God? Have you ever felt the touch of the heavenly torch of the Word of God by which the Light has come to you and now dwells within you, so that you have become a light and are shining to the Glory of God?

Furthermore, this light giving is a personal work to every man who is the subject of it. The text says, "Let your light so shine before men." When a man lights a candle, the light does not belong to the candle, at first. But when once the candle has accepted the flame, the light becomes the candle's own light and the candle begins to shine by its own light. So, Beloved, the Grace of God, the Light from Heaven, must come to each one of us individually from the Divine hand and we must personally receive it. Light is not inherent in any one of us and, therefore, it must be bestowed. Its bestowal necessitates a personal acceptance. It is not bestowed upon us as part of a nation or family.

In its enlightening operations, Divine Grace does not deal with men in the gross, but with each man by himself. Sin is personal and so must Grace be. We are individually in the darkness and must be individually kindled into light. One by one, each man must accept the Light of God, permitting it, as it were, to kindle upon him, so that the very wick of his being, that innermost life which goes through the very center of his nature shall embrace the flame and begin to burn with it! There must be an individual appropriation of the light so that to each one of

you it becomes your own. "Let YOUR light so shine before men."

Do not deceive yourselves with the notion of national Christianity or hereditary Christianity—the only true religion is personal godliness. We cannot light these candles by the pound at a time, nor heap up lamps in a pile and light them in a mass. We have, nowadays, wonderful lights which can be all lit in an instant by a single touch of electricity—but even then each one of the lights has to receive a flame for itself—which becomes all its own. There is no way by which individuality can be destroyed and men saved en masse. In each man the light is peculiar and distinct. The light that burns in one true minister of Christ is the same which shines forth from another and yet one star differs from another star in Glory—Peter is not John, Paul is not James, Whitefield is not Wesley.

You shall examine the whole range of God's lamps and candlesticks and you shall not find two exactly alike. Many artists exhaust themselves and then repeat themselves, but God is inexhaustibly original—no two touches of His pencil are the same. Light is one and its glory is one—and yet there is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars. There is a difference in the lights of various oils and gases and so there is in your light, my Brothers and Sisters, and my light. It is very possible that you would like to put my candle in order—you may do so if you can—but do not snuff me out!

Your own light is, however, your main concern and you had better ask for special Grace that it may not fail. Your light is distinct from mine—as distinct as your life is from mine—though, in another sense, it is true that your spiritual light is one with all the light that ever shone in this world. There is in the lighting, a personal appropriation of the Divine flame and afterwards a personal and distinct sending forth of the sacred Light in the individual's own way. Look you well to this, lest you be mistaken and suppose yourselves to be lighted from Heaven when you are the mere will-o'-the-wisps of delusion.

I like our translator's reading the word candle—"Neither do men light a candle," for nowadays a candle is the smallest of all lights. We almost despise a candle in these days of the electric light, yet small lights are useful and tiny lamps have their sphere. God has many small lights. In His great house He has candles as well as stars and He would not have even a small light wasted. Even the most twinkling ray of light is of God's kindling—think of that, you who cannot do more than talk to a child or give away a tract for love of His dear name. You are a little light, but if the Lord has given you even a spark of the sacred

fire, He means that you should shine!
In this world there are many lights, but none too many. We could not spare the sun and it would be a calamity if the smallest star were quenched. We cannot spare those modern inventions which so cheer us by turning our city's night into day, but I know we should miss even the glowworm from its dewy haunt in the quiet lane! We cannot afford to lose a ray of light in this misty, foggy, all-beclouded sky of ours. The Church and the world need all the light that has been provided and much more. I, therefore, would press upon all my Brothers and Sisters here who may happen to have but one talent, the necessity of their putting it out to interest! Your light, my Friend, may be but a farthing rushlight, but you must not hide it, for all lights are of God and are sent with a kind and gracious purpose by the great Father of Lights.

Note further that lighting is a work which needs sustaining. While lighting is a process performed in a moment, it is also, as a matter of fact, prolonged, for the lamp needs to be trimmed and it would be worthless to light a lamp and leave it to itself. The lamp must have fresh oil, from time to time, since by shining it consumes its fuel. Do not, any of you, think, therefore, if you can fix upon a certain time and say, "I was converted then," that you may live as you like afterwards. God forbid! The saints prove their conversion by their perseverance—and that perseverance comes from a continual supply of Divine Grace to their souls. Judge, then, yourselves by this—not so much whether on a certain special occasion you were turned from darkness to light—but are you still, "light in the Lord"?

Have you oil in your vessel with your lamp? Are you looking unto Jesus? It was well that you looked, but are you looking? That is the great thing! Remember, it is a present business, this looking. It is well that you came to Jesus, but that is merely the beginning—it is "to whom coming," coming continually as unto a living stone. Our lungs must have, as we all know, fresh supplies of air. It will avail me nothing that I breathed yesterday. I am dead unless I breathe today.

We must have constant food—you ate yesterday—but could you, without hunger and weakness, go without food today?

We continually need to be built up as to our bodies and it is just the same with our souls! And if we neglect this—if we fancy that something done 20 years ago is all that is needed—we shall make a great mistake. There must be the frequent trimming of the lamp, which is, in effect, a continuation of the lighting.

Once again, let me say that this work of lighting is a work which, when it is done upon a man, consecrates him

entirely to the service of giving light. A candle once lit, if it continues alight, will be all consumed in giving light. It is what it was made for, not to be laid by in a glass case and looked at, but to be burned away. Blessed is the man who can say, "My zeal has consumed me." You will say that in the case of the lamp—the lamp itself is not consumed. No, but it is consecrated to the one purpose of lighting the house and it contains the supply of oil by which the flame is fed. The whole of the lamp, whether it is of gold or silver or clay, or whatever it may be—is dedicated to the one purpose of giving light—and if God ever comes and lights you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, you are, from now on, separated from all other purpose and appointed to the one calling.

You may be a great many other things according to your human calling, but these must be subordinate. I wish that some men kept earthly things much more subordinate than they do. The first thing in a Christian is his Christianity. The chief business of one whom God has called is that he should live as the elect of God. Look at Christ Jesus—He was a carpenter, but I confess I seldom think of Him as such. It is as the Savior of men and, the Servant of God that He comes before my mind. And thus a Christian man ought to live so, if he is a carpenter, the Christian swallows up the carpenter! And if he is a businessman, or a man of letters, or an orator, he ought so to live that the most conspicuous fact about him is that he is a Christian!

He is a lamp and his one business is to shine. You may use a candle for many purposes. I saw a man grease a saw with one the other day and another made his boots fit for walking in the snow in like manner. But still, these are not the objectives for which a candle is designed—it has missed the purpose of its existence if it does not give light. I suppose, on occasions, you might use a lamp for a weight, or for some other purposes, but it would not be, then, a fit instrument for any purpose except that of giving light. Everything is best when fulfilling its proper purpose. Have you ever seen a swan out of water? How ungainly is its walk! What an unwieldy bird it seems! But look at him on the water. What a fine model for a ship! What Grace! What beauty! So is it with the Christian!

His beauty is best seen in its proper element. Give him any other aim and he is awkward and uncomely. When seeking to instruct and save his fellow man, he is where God would have him and then all the lines of creating wisdom and all the beauties of Divine Grace are manifested in him. Let us take care, then, about this lighting—that it is lighting from above, that it is a lighting such as makes the light our own and that it is a lighting which takes possession of us and consecrates us

entirely—and is perpetually sustained by the visitation of the Spirit of God. So much on the first point.

II. We will now, in the second place, consider THE PLACING. “No man lights a candle and puts it under a bushel.”

It is a great point, this placing of a man—it may hide his light or send it further afield. The chief matter is the lighting him and getting him to have light to give. But the next most important thing is where to put him when he is alight. For some men, when they first find Christ, are in the wrong place altogether. How can a lamp shine if it is dropped into a river? After the conversion of certain persons their removal becomes necessary. It is significant that when God called Abraham He did not let him stop in Ur of the Chaldees—the place for Abraham to shine was not even in Haran, but he must get in to the chosen country and wander as a shepherd prince—for only there and in that character could Abraham shine to the Glory of God.

Most men will be wise to stay where they are and shine, but others must undergo a great change of position before they will be able to scatter their light to the extent which the Lord intends for them. That may account, my Friend, for your having more trouble since you were converted than you ever had before. You have been left to lie still till now, but you are needed and so you are fetched out from your hiding place. It did not matter where you were when you gave no light—you were just as well behind a box or in a closet as anywhere else! But now that you are lighted you must be put on a lamp stand and, therefore, you are undergoing processes of Providence that are somewhat painful to you. Our placing, whether it has necessitated removal or not, is largely done by the Providence of God—one man is placed here and another there—and it is well for us to look at our position from this point of view.

God puts us where we can best serve His cause and bless our age. If you had your choice, perhaps, if you had to be a streetlamp, you would like to be a lamp in Hyde Park to shine upon the nobles who pass that way. But the poor souls need lights far more down that blind alley; down that den of a court where wild Irish are quarrelling, or drunks murdering their wives. He that loves God, if he had his choice, might sooner choose to shine in the worse place than in the better. “Oh that I lived in the midst of a warm-hearted Church!” one says. If you are an earnest, thorough-going man or woman, I am glad that you are placed in that dreary village where the people are pretty nearly starved for spiritual life!

“What?” cries one, “are you glad that I have to suffer so much?” No, not for that, but because if you are a strong man, you will not suffer, but you will make other people

suffer—that is to say—make it hard for the minister, the deacons and the Church to remain in their wretched condition of lukewarmness! I hope you will be the means of awakening them and bringing them nearer to Christ. How often a place which appears undesirable will become desirable if we regard it in this light. Providence puts us where we can give the most light and if our lamp is set up in the midst of darkness, where else should it be?

This Tabernacle reminds me of those frames on wheels, filled with lamps, which are used at our railway stations—here we have scores of lamps all burning together—and when first one and then another is dropped through the roof into a carriage and whisked away along the line, though it is to Australia, or America, or India, I am sorry to lose you, but I am glad that you are going where you will do more good than you will do here. Why should you not be scattered abroad like the first Believers? Why should not the candles be carried where the darkness is? Why should we keep up an everlasting illumination upon this particular spot just to gladden our own eyes instead of lending light to all the world?

It is ours to say to others, “Here is a candle, let it shine in your houses.” Or, “Here is a lamp, set it up in your tents, that God may bless you.” But though I have thus spoken of Providence, a good deal of our placing is in our own hands.

There are ways of placing yourselves—for instance, that mentioned in the text, which may be as ruinous to our influence as if a candle were placed under a bushel! Or you can put yourself in a place of advantage, as when a lamp is set upon a lamp stand. First, note the word in the negative—“Neither do men place it under a bushel.” A bushel is a good and useful article. In almost every eastern house there was a corn-measure, here called a bushel, though it did not generally measure much more than a peck.

This measure was commonly in every house because they ground their own corn and so were generally dealing with the neighbors. That useful corn-measure, to me, represents the pursuits of ordinary life—the proper and natural avocations of the household. Many men and women hide the candle that God has lit under the bushel of business and domestic cares. But you ask, “Is not a housewife to be a housewife?” Certainly, but not so a housewife as to conceal her godliness!

Is not the laboring man to work with his hands? Certainly, but not so to work for the bread that he perishes as to miss Eternal Life. Is not the man of business to give his best attention to his business? Of course he is, but he must see to it that he does not lose his soul, or injure the souls of others.

Take care of your bushel—nobody asks you to burn it—but keep it in its place. Subordinate all worldly things to the Glory of God. Suffer not your possessions or your desires, your pleasures or your cares to act as a bushel hiding His Light. This happens with a great many. I must ask Conscience to be so kind as to preach for me for a minute or two. Will you look at home, dear Friends, and see where you place your business and your religion? Which is uppermost? Which is foremost? Is religion your business, or is business your religion? Does your candle shine on the bushel, or does the bushel hide the candle? I will not dwell upon the question because it will be well for you to answer it in quiet, each man for himself.

I know how a minister can put his light under a bushel. He can be a mere official and perform services, being nothing more than a performer. The worst thing to do with the Gospel is to parsonificate it. As soon as we preach as mere officials, we have lost all power—we must speak as men to men! A brother minister said to me one day, “The moment I shut the pulpit door, I shut out my natural self.” This will never do! A man must be all there when He is serving God and if ever he is himself, it must be in preaching. We can also cover the candle by using difficult words—words which are not difficult to educated people, but to the bulk of our hearers.

We can also use technical creed words, such as we might use in the class room or in the discussion hall and these may conceal our meaning from the people. I know some Christians who put their light under a bushel by being excessively bashful and shamefaced. They are not so dreadfully retiring when five-pound notes are to be made, but if anything is to be said for Christ, then they blush and stammer! Oh that they could overcome this hindrance! Others put their light under a bushel by inconsistency—they do not act as Christians should act—and when people see their bad works they do not glorify God. God forbid that our darkness in the house should be more conspicuous than our light!

Some, I fear, cover their light under the bushel of indifference—they do not seem to care how things go with the cause and Kingdom of Christ. They look well to the state of their flocks and herds, but for the House of the Lord they have small concern. I pray you, dear Friends, do not hide your light in any way! Let not your lawful callings, your relationships, your sicknesses, your literary pursuits, or your personal sorrows become so exaggerated as to conceal the Divine Light within your soul.

The text is, however, positive. Put yourself on a candlestick or on a lamp stand.

What must that be? A candlestick is an appropriate exhibitor of the light and each man should make an appropriate confession of his faith. The best way is prescribed in God’s Word. It is written, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Take care that when you have faith, you declare it in the ordained manner, for he that with his heart believes and with his mouth makes confession of Him shall be saved. O Lamp, do not say, “I will shine, but I will lie upon the floor and do it.” No, your place is on the stand which is provided!

Dear Christian Friend, join the Church that you may be placed where you will be in order with the arrangements of the Divine household. A lamp stand should also be something which makes the lamp sufficiently visible. If you do not come out and exhibit your light willingly and cheerfully, it is very likely the Master of the house will fetch you out.

Providence will arrange that the light shall not be hidden. See what the Lord did for His Church years ago—He allowed her to be persecuted into publicity! What a lamp stand was found for Christianity in the martyrdoms of the Coliseum, in the public burnings by pagans and papists and in all the other modes by which Believers in Christ were forced into fame!

When there was no printing press; when there were scanty opportunities of making the Gospel public compared with those of today, the Lord caused His witnesses to stand before rulers and kings and there publish, in the most public places the Word of His salvation. Persecution built the lighthouse and Divine Love set aloft the burning and shining Light of the sacred Truth of God! You may find that God will make such a candlestick for you. You shall be forced into testimony in your family by the opposition of those about you unless you take other and happier methods.

We ought to be valiant for the Truth of God and speak of it with all prudence and without limit! I long for the day when the precepts of the Christian religion shall be the rule among all classes of men, in all transactions! I often hear it said, “Do not bring religion into politics.” This is precisely where it ought to be brought and set there in the face of all men as on a candle stick! I would have the Cabinet and the Members of Parliament do the work of the nation as before the Lord and I would have the nation, either in making war or peace, consider the matter by the light of righteousness. We are to deal with other nations about this or that upon the principles of the New Testament. I thank God that I have lived to see the attempt made in one or two instances and I pray that the principle may become dominant and permanent! We have had enough of clever men without consciences—let us

now see what honest, God-fearing men will do!

But we are told that we must study, “British interests,” as if it were not always to a nation’s truest interest to do right! “But we must follow out our policy.”

I say, No! Let the policies which are founded on wrong be cast. like idols. to the moles and to the bats! Stand to that most admirable of policies—“As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise.” Whether we are kings, or queens, or prime ministers, or members of Parliament, or crossing sweepers, this is our rule if we are Christians! Yes, and bring religion into your business and let the Light of God shine in the factory and in the counting-house! Then we shall not have quite so much China clay in the calicoes with which to cheat the foreigner—nor shall we see cheap and nasty articles described as of best quality, nor any other of the dodges in trade that everybody seems to practice nowadays.

You trades people and manufacturers are very much one like the other in this—there are tricks in all trades and one sees it everywhere. I believe everybody to be honest in all England, Scotland and Ireland until he is found out. But whether there are any so incorruptible that they will never be found wanting, this witness says not, for I am not a judge.

Do not put your candle under a bushel, but let it shine, for it was intended that it should be seen. Religion ought to be as much seen at our own table as at the Lord’s Table. Godliness should as much influence the House of Commons as the Assembly of Divines. God grant that the day may come when the mischievous division between secular and religious things shall no more be heard of, for in all things Christians are to glorify God, according to the precept, “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the Glory of God.”

III. Our time has gone, but I must detain you a little while I speak upon the SHINING—“Let your light so shine before men.” When a candle shines, it is because it cannot help it. Shining is the natural result of possessing light and I want you, dear Brothers and Sisters, to exert a holy influence upon others because the Grace of God is really in you.

Some men made desperate attempts to appear good—they would be far more successful if they would seek to be good.

Grace must be in a man as a living fountain and then rivers of Living Water will flow from him. The natural result of a renewed heart is a renewed life and the natural result of a renewed life is that men see it and glorify God.

Shining, however, is not altogether a thing of necessity so as to forbid our attention to it, for the text demands care of us. “Let your light so shine.” I must ask the printer to put the two letters—“s, o”—in very large capitals. “Let your light SO shine—let it SO shine that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” You will not shine in the best manner though you may have Grace in your heart unless you abound in prayerful, watchful, earnest care. You must guard heart and lips and hands or your light will not so shine before men as could be desired.

Your light will need trimming. Neglect it not.

The shining which comes from the Christian is here described as, “good works.” Good talk is very well, but it takes a great deal of talk to light a room! Good works are the splendor of the Light of God. What works are good works? I would answer—upright actions, honest dealings, sincere behavior. When a man is scrupulously true and sternly faithful, all right-minded persons admit that His works are good works. Good works are works of love, unselfish works, works done for the benefit of others and the Glory of God. Deeds of charity, kindness and brotherly love are good works. As also careful attendance to duty and all service honestly done, together with all courses which promote the moral and spiritual good of our fellow men.

Works of devotion in which you prove that you love God and His Christ, that you love the Gospel, that you desire to spread the Kingdom of Christ—these may not be so highly valued by ordinary people—but are eminently good works.

Let these good and true things abound in you and shine out from you! Do them not out of flamboyance, but still, without shame. Good works, like the shining of a candle, have good effects. A candle cheers the gloom. What a comfort it is when you have long been wandering in the dark, to spy out a twinkling candle in a cottage window! A candle directs and guides men and by its illumination it instructs them. In its light they see, discern, and discover. He who acts teaches. The man who lives Christianity preaches it. He is the true evangelist whose life brings Glory to God and goodwill to men.

But note, it is said, “it gives light to all that are in the house,” so that when we are lit from on High, we are first to shine at home. It is not only abroad that we should make our Christianity known, but chiefly at the fireside to those who are in the house. Some have a very little house—they live in a couple of rooms with a small family—let them take care that they have Grace enough to make a few thoroughly happy, which is not always the easiest thing in the world. Others have a large family—may they have Grace enough to influence the whole. A

few have large workshops and employ many hands—and these ought to exercise a holy influence over all their employees.

Some of us are preachers of the Gospel and have a large house in which to shine—we shall need more of the oil of Grace than others, that we may give light to the whole of our house—and that Grace is to be had. The whole world is a house in which the Church is the candle and, therefore, the members of the Church should so shine, each one in his place, that the whole world shall be filled with the knowledge of the Glory of God! The text says that the candle gives light to all that are in the house. Some professors give light only to a part of the house. I have known women very good to all but their husbands and these they nag from morning to night so that they give no light to them! I have known husbands so often out at meetings that they neglect home and thus their wives miss the Light of God. I have known employers who are utterly indifferent about their employees and mistresses who quite forget to seek the good of their maids. If our light is in good order, it will illuminate the parlor and the kitchen, the drawing room and the pantry—shining upon all that are in the house!

Candles do not shed all their light either that way or this, but they shine in all directions. A Christian should be an “all-around man,” blessing all, both great and small, who come in contact with him. The objective of our shining is not that men may see how good we are, nor even see us at all—but that they may see God’s Grace in us and God in us and cry, “What a Father these people must have!” Is not this the first time in the New Testament that God is called our Father? Is it not amazing that the first time it peeps out should be when men are seeing the good works of His children?

The Fatherhood of God is best seen in the holiness of saints. When men see that the Light of God is good, they bless the Source of that Light and, seeing that it comes from the Father of Lights, they glorify His name! I have had to hasten over all this, but I pray God to make it, none the less, effectual for the stirring up of every Christian here to use all the Light he has. It is a dark world and it seems to get darker, for the emissaries of Satan are going about thirsting to quench every light. Look well to your lamps—look well to your lamps, you virgin souls! Trim well the flame and go forth even into the black night to meet the Bridegroom. Lift high your torches into the very face of darkness and make men see that God the Father is still in the midst of His people!

The venerable Bede, when he was interpreting this text, said that Christ Jesus brought the light of Deity into the poor lantern of our humanity and then set it upon the

candlestick of His Church that the whole house of the world might be lit thereby. So, indeed, it is! The reason why there is light in the Church is that those who are in the dark may see.

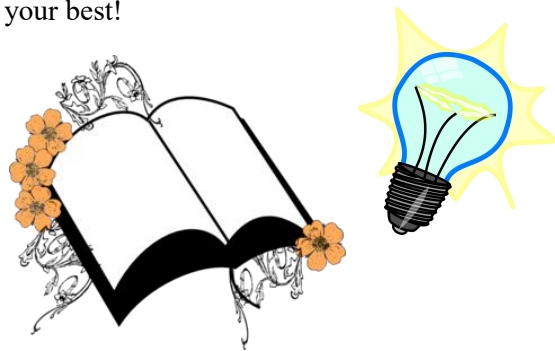
Churches do not exist for themselves, but for the world at large. Have you thought of this, Brothers and Sisters? You are blessed that you may be a blessing! Take heed that you behave aright. You go to Christ’s wedding feast and you are glad to hear that He turns water into wine and you are ready to bless Him that He has kept the best wine until now. But oh, servants of God, remember what is said, “Draw out now and bear.”

These are your orders. There is the God-made wine—“Draw out now and bear.” Receive from Christ’s fullness and distribute to others! Neglect not your duty as servitors at your Lord’s great feast. Your Master has taken the bread and has blessed and broken it and then He has given it to you. Is that the end of the process? Do you stand there and munch your own personal morsel with a miserable self-satisfaction?

No, if you are, indeed, disciples of Christ, you will remember that the next words, in another like incident, are, “and the disciples to the multitude, and they did eat.” Break, then, your bread among the hungry that surround you! Take the whole loaf of Christ and rightly divide and distribute it—and you shall have as much left as at the first—yes, more! You shall gather of the fragments many baskets full.

Only see to it that you freely give what you have freely received, lest hoarded manna breeds corruption! Lest a canker come upon your hoarded gold and silver!

And lest your very souls grow moldy even to reeking rotteness before God because you have not drawn out your souls unto the hungry, nor sought to teach those who are perishing for lack of knowledge! The Baptist Missionary Society will enable you to teach the heathen. Take a share in it. There, make the collection! Do your best!



The Greatest Kindness Among Mankind

Written by Bro. Luke Austin of Cadillac, MI

Oh how sin blinds our eyes. Tell a man he is a sinner and justly condemned to hell and his wounded pride will rise up in anger. Yet the greatest kindness any man ever did for me was to tell me I'm a condemned sinner. Then and only then could I seek Christ. Would you be saved? Then you must come to Christ a pauper, a beggar, a thief, a vile rotten sinner. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. To make the guilty innocent. To make the blind see. To make the lame walk. To make the deaf hear. To make the dumb speak. He came to save from a helpless, hopeless condition. Don't you see? If you are good, whole, well, and without need then Christ will do you no good. He always transforms from one condition to another. You must be a sinner to be made a saint. From darkness unto light. The greatest kindness I can show you is to tell you now while you are on this earth that yes, you are a sinner. "There is none that doeth good, no not one" (**Romans 3:12**). Without exception, without loophole, you are a sinner. Now if you can believe that flee to Christ.

Repentance of Sinners and Saints!

Written by Bro. Donnie Burford

Repentance is necessary for the lost sinner in coming to experience new and eternal life.
Repentance is also necessary for the saved sinner is coming to experience the life they have been given more fully!

In the Repentance of a lost sinner they experience Justification from the guilt and penalty of sin.

In the Repentance of a Saint, they experience sanctification from the power of sin over their life.

In a Sinners repentance unto Salvation, one is brought to experience a personal relationship with God.

In Repentance of a Saint we have our Fellowship maintained in that relationship with God.
If you have never repented unto God for your sins, you have never experienced the true saving grace of God in the New Birth.

If you as a child of God don't repent of known sin, your fellowship is broken, and it is only regained through repentance.

One Born of God can never lose their relationship with Him as their Holy Father.

But as His child who sins, your sin does break your fellowship, and its only regained as you repent of your known sin.

Of the Lost Sinners need of Repentance in Salvation;
Mark 1:14-15; *"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."*

Acts 17:30-31; *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."*

Of the Saints need of Repentance in Sanctification;
1 John 1:7-10; *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

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. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Baptists For Liberty

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

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