

The Biblical Examiner

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The Biblical Examiner. 5130 Danville Rd, Lynchburg, OH 45142

540.255.2243--facebook.com/ovid.need

www.biblicalexaminer.org/tbe@biblicalexaminer.org/ovid.need@biblicalexaminer.org

Holding to the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith

ELECTION REFLECTION

As I was considering this past election, some thoughts came into my head upon my bed!

Though “The King is dead, long live the King!”, the new king is simply the old king of humanism dressed in new clothing. The new king still has “no clothes”.

I must admit that I would rather have a conservative humanistic king than a liberal humanistic king. However, God has pronounced many woes upon every form of humanism. Thus, they both lead down the same broad road to destruction.

Franklyn Sanders:

Contrary to some of the email I am getting, Donald Trump is not Jesus, not even remotely close. I really don't understand what folks are thinking. Trump announces a plan to spend \$500 billion and boost the national debt by \$5.3 trillion, a plan worthy of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, & people think the millennium has arrived? That's progress? Pardon my suspicions, but although Trump ran as an “outsider,” nobody has explained to me how a man who made a billion dollars in New York real estate classifies as an “outsider.” He had no bank financing? Worst blow to Trump's credibility came today, with the rumor -- only a rumor as yet -- that he would name JP Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon Treasury Secretary. Let's see, the POSTER BOY for crony capitalism, big bank contempt for the law, and the head of the largest criminal organization in the US, JP Morgan. If Trump does that, y'all will know the fix is in.

But lay all that aside a moment, & recall what I told y'all on election day: you are dealing with a SYSTEM. You can't change anything by changing one element in the system, you must change the system. Let's see if Trump makes any systemic changes.

Floating on Trump's announcement he would spend gobs of government money to spark the economy, financial stocks & stocks related to building have soared while medical stocks & gun manufacturers have tanked. US dollar index rose again today & is threatening the 2015 high at 100. Silver & gold were smashed today but palladium is rising. (The Moneychanger. Keep an eye on the

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names of his cabinet members, particularly for the names of big banksters.)

Obamacare dead. In our dreams! “WSJ: Trump Says He's Considering Keeping Parts of Obamacare”

Trump's promise of “good” jobs will not be from manufacturing, though if less government regulations does come to pass, that might increase manufacturing; rather, they will come from an astounding amount of new government spending.

KEYNESIANISM

“Donald Trump is a Keynesian on Steroids”. (<http://www.pragcap.com/donald-trump-is-a-keynesian-on-steroids/>)

Keynesianism - the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), English economist, and his advocates, especially his emphasis upon deficit spending by government to stimulate business investment and employment.

Keynesian Economics vs Austrian Economics

I make no claim of being any kind of an economist, but I can read. Let me sum it up as short as possible:

*** KE=the theory that spending drives economic growth, while savings decrease growth. Thus, the GDP is the main determining factor in the strength of an economy

*** AE=the theory that savings and production drive economic growth. Accordingly, interest rates determine the amount of private capital, savings that is available to grow the economy.

(Draw your own conclusions. <http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2016-01-01/keynesian-vs-austrian-econom->

ics-infographic)

On the positive side of the election:

Romans 13:1 *be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. 8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

It goes without saying that the “higher powers” cannot be higher than the Most High God, Who rules from His throne on high. Romans 13 is given on the human level, so the “higher powers” must be human authority. Let me give some simple observations from vv. 1-8.

First: every soul is under authority, and the highest human authority is under God's authority whether or not he will admit to that fact. (It is equally clear that all souls are under God's Higher Power.)

Second: we learn from places such as Daniel chapter 4 that there is no human power “*but of God*”. God alone establishes all human power and authority, and he determined in ages past what should be done and who should do it in order to accomplish his everlasting purpose:

Isa 40:13 *Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? (Romans 11:34) Isa 46:10* *Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Ac 2:23* *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Ac 4:28* *For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. Eph 1:11* *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

Only fools try to understand the secret things of God; that is, His providential workings, for,

The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but

those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. (De 29:29)

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isa 55:8)

Only by faith can we understand how the everlasting counsels of God are accomplished through the “free will” of man. We are not God, so we must leave the secret things in the hand of God. Only in thy light can we see light. (Ps 36:9)

Our calling is not to try to discover the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God, but our calling is to do all the words of this law. There have been and are many false prophets who claim that they can understand the secret things of the Lord our God, and they enrich themselves from those who want to know the unknowable secret things of God.

Third: the purpose of human authority is to provide conditions for those under that authority to obey “*all the words of this law*”. The “sword” that God authorizes human authority to use is to “*execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*” as he protects those who seek to do “*all the words of this law*”.

Fourth: Pay ye tribute also. Accordingly, righteous taxation is for the support of the civil authority, as that authority seeks to enforce justice throughout his realm of authority.

Fifth: Owe no man anything.

They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. (Mt 22:21, Mr 12:17, Lu 20:25)

Matthew 22:21 is a message all in itself, and identifies the root problem. We are a debtor people, having placed ourselves in unbelievable debt-bondage in order to either make a good appearance, or to keep up an appearance, as we seek to live above our “station” in life. It is impossible for a borrower to be a servant of the Living God, for he is the debt-servant to a lender:

Pr 22:7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. (Isa 24:2)

Sixth: as we “render therefore to all their dues”, the first one the debt-slave must render to is the bank, as one must “work” to please his master.

More than a few have told me the reason they cannot quit a job they hate and move to something they love is

because of the bondage they are in to a bank. The same goes especially for the “religious tradesmen”, for if he would be called by God to go to a lower paying area, his bondage to the creditor would prevent his following God.

Rather than being a bond-servant to the Lord God, we have chosen to be a bond-servant to a lender. (At every opportunity, my dad told me to stay out of debt. My first wife and I determined to purchase with cash only, so we always drove a used car, some of them quite “scrappy”. Our “long term” mortgages were for no more than six years, as we tried to live within the “law” of the year of release from bondage. I certainly **am not implying** that this law is still in effect, but common sense tells us that it is a good “law” to practice. There are “legitimate” loans, which we will not discuss at this time.)

Our root problem is that we have **not** “*rendered unto God the things that are God’s*”, as clearly defined in “*all the words of this law*.”

Seventh: the passage in Romans does not require that authority to be “Christian”, though a Christian authority is the ideal. All that is required of human authority is for that authority to provide conditions for good to prosper, and evil to be justly dealt with. Good and evil are clearly defined by God’s word.

Eighth: “Wrath”. Not only the wrath of civil authority, but the wrath of Divine Authority as he works His Providence.

How does this apply to this past election?

One: I am not going to try to make Trump a Christian; such an attempt would be foolish, though it seems many Christian leaders have tried to do so.

Ray of Hope?

I have a good pastor friend in Indiana who has told me that he personally has met with Mike Pence several times for prayer in his office. He told me that Mr. Pence’s Christian testimony is above reproach. Regardless of the reason that Mr. Trump might have chosen Mr. Pence as his Vice President, I believe we can be assured that there is a consistent Christian by his side.

Our prayer at this point needs to be that God would make Mr. Trump’s heart receptive to the gospel, and that Mr. Pence would seize upon the opportunity to present the gospel.

Two: If Mr. Trump will fulfill his promises to see that righteous justice is enforced, then he will make just decisions that will provide an open the door for preaching the gospel to the Muslim and Spanish pagans that God

is sending into this country.

If Christians failed to take the advantage of the opportunity that seems to be before us, then we deserve far worse than Hillary Clinton could ever have been.

Have we been given a short reprieve to the utter destruction of this nation?

Three: We must remember the Old Testament examples that have been preserved for our instruction, as well as warning. Though there were kings who tried to bring about godliness in Judah and Israel from the top down, the hearts of the people would not turn to repentance and godliness.

This nation is under numerous “woes” from God. We must use this opportunity to turn the hearts of the people back to the Lord God of our salvation. God’s men must faithfully proclaim His total word to God’s people.

I am reminded of these words to Esther, “Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews.”

WOES UPON THIS NATION.

Paul told Timothy that All Scripture—context, Old Testament---has been given for instruction in righteous living. In addition, the things that happened to the Old Testament saints are recorded for our examples and admonitions. These “woes” are as much a warning for us today as they were for those to whom they were spoken.

The Hillary defeat! Now we will see if Trump will keep his many promises. But even if he does, our hope cannot lie in a man.

Woe: An interjection, usually of lamentation. It occurs fifty times in the prophets and once elsewhere. Six usages refer to mourning for the dead, {as #1Ki 13:30} and forty involve negative warnings or threats of God’s physical chastisement. But in #Isa 55:1 it introduces a positive invitation to come and buy good things without money or price. {cf. #Zec 2:6-7}{TWOT}

Isaiah 3:9 *Woe unto their soul.* They shall bring woe upon themselves; they deserve punishment. This is an expression denoting the highest abhorrence of their crimes. (Barnes)

Woe; “Misery, suffering, wretchedness.”

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. (Ho 13:9)

Thus, the sinner brings the woes upon himself. God does not have to send the miseries, for they are the natural results of rebellion against God. They shall take place unless the merciful God intervenes, and man the sinner has not no reason to expect His intervention.

But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. (Pro 8:36)

The nations of the world love and are wishing for death. Our nation, and the whole world, is under many “woes” pronounced by the Word of the Lord in just the book of Isaiah:

3:9, woe to the sodomite, as he makes no attempt to conceal his wickedness: “*they have rewarded evil unto themselves.*” Their sinning is self-destructive and willful suicide; **11, woe to the wicked**, for as he has done to others, it shall be done unto him; **5:8, woe unto them that covet** and swallow up all the land for themselves, e.g. bankers who use fiat printed paper money to take property from the poor; **11, woe unto the drunkard** – it seems that the love of strong drink has consumed our society. From the time of Viet Nam, strong drink and drugs have gained more and more hold, to where there are now few young men willing and capable of a good day’s work; **18, woe to those who are bound with vanity** – emptiness, worthlessness, falsehood – and sin. Jack Hyles had a message, “Cobwebs to Cartropes”. He got caught in that cobweb; **20, woe unto them that turn the Word upside down** by calling good evil, and evil good, who call light darkness and darkness light, and who call bitter sweet and the sweet bitter – they prefer erroneous and false doctrine to the truth; **21, woe unto the proud** who consider themselves to be “the people, and wisdom will die with them”. They are self-confident, conceited and consider themselves to be beyond instruction, especially instructions from the man and Word of God; **22, woe unto the drunken judges** who fail to render just judgment; **10:1, woe unto them who use the power of the magistrate** to take advantage of the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the helpless; **17:12, woe to the multitude of many people** – that is, the many nations or peoples of all languages who gather together against the “Lord and his Anointed” (against Judah in the context); **28:1, woe to the proud** – that is, those who are drunk with pride, and in their drunkenness, rush to their own destruction; **29:1, woe to Ariel**, that is, Jerusalem because they abandoned the only Hope for false hope that could not deliver them from the coming destruction; **15, woe unto them who vainly** imagine that they can hide their hypocrisy and secret wickedness in the dark from God. (Eze 8:12) They think they can deceive both God and man with their external piety; **30:1, woe unto those who forget their promised** obedience to the Lord God, and seek help from the ungodly; **33:1, woe upon those who seek to destroy** the Church. (Context, Sen-

nacherib and his army. Geneva, Poole); **45:9, woe unto those who strive** (contend, murmur and complain) against the works of the hands of their Maker, “You had no skill when You made me thus”; **10, woe unto those who complain** about the circumstances into which they were born – the prophet rebukes the spirit of complaining against the allotments of Providence.

How the above “woes” apply to modern times. Now is the time for all good men to proclaim sound, doctrinal truth from the entire Word of God; now is the time to live what we profess; now is the time to remember the name of the Lord our God (Ps 20:7 *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.*).

In the midst of the many woes of Isaiah, we are given this promise: *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.* (Isa 3:10)

A pastor friend sent the following to me.

In his classic work *The Law*, first published in June 1850, Frederic Bastiat wrote:

When it is time to vote . . . the voter is not to be asked for any guarantee of his wisdom. His will and capacity to choose wisely are taken for granted. Can the people be mistaken? Are we not living in an age of enlightenment? What! Are the people always to be kept on leashes? Have they not won their rights by great effort and sacrifice? Have they not given ample proof of their intelligence and wisdom? Are they not adults? Are they not capable of judging for themselves? Do they not know what is best for them? Is there a class or a man who would be so bold as to set himself above the people and judge and act for them? No, no, the people are and should be free. They desire to manage their own affairs, and they shall do so.

But when the legislator is finally elected — ah! then indeed does the tone of his speech undergo a radical change. The people are returned to passiveness, inertness, and unconsciousness; the legislator enters into omnipotence. Now it is for him to initiate, to direct, to propel, and to organize. Mankind has only to submit; the hour of despotism has struck. We now observe this fatal idea: The people, who, during the election, were so wise, so moral, and so perfect, now have no tendencies whatever; or if they have any, they are tendencies that lead downward into degradation. ~Frederic Bastiat [1801-1850], French economist, statesman, and author.

Book Review

17TH CENTURY BAPTIST CHURCH DISCIPLINE

By Thomas Williamson

The book "Bye-Paths in Baptist History" by J.J. Goadby, published in London in 1871, contains a lengthy section on the subject of how English Baptist churches practiced church discipline in the 17th and early 18th centuries.

Goadby noted that the discipline was strict. "The oversight of the several members was minute and persistent. Their general conduct, their domestic life, their business, their connections in civil society, their recreations, and even their dress, were all deemed legitimate subjects for the strictest supervision." Some early Baptists discouraged the formation of large churches, since it would be easier to keep tabs on members in small churches. (I know people who prefer large churches because they can get lost in the crowd. Their conscience is soothed about going to church, but no one really knows them. Ed.)

Goadby stated that "there was a degree of oversight of the whole members, which appears little less than inquisitorial. The muster-roll of the members was called over on certain days, with almost military strictness, as if they were an army campaigning." Members who were absent from worship without sufficient cause were visited, reproved, and in danger of being proceeded against

There was a long list of offenses which could get a Baptist church member in hot water.

HERESY: There were big problems with Baptist church members who adopted Quakerism, which taught reliance on the "light within" rather than on the Bible, and on Socinianism, which denied the Trinity and the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit. In the mid-17th Century, some Baptists were led away into the error of the Ranters, who basically denied the entire Christian faith. (Scofield put in his notes the thoughts of Darby concerning the "light within". Darby called it the "indwelling spirit" which directs our paths without the need of the law of God. Ed.)

When the Wesleyan movement arose, Baptist members were reproved for attending the meetings of John Wesley and for adopting the errors of "general redemption, falling from grace, and sinless perfection in this life." Meanwhile, Calvinists were subject to expulsion from General Baptist churches; likewise, Arminians

could be excluded from Particular Baptist churches.

Baptist church members were discouraged from attending the worship or preaching at any Quaker gathering or at the meetings of the established Church of England (Anglican). One church resolved "that it is unlawful for any members of the congregation to hear the teachers of the Church of England, except it be to reprove them."

A General Baptist association resolved that "It is agreed that the members of churches in our communion may not join in the worship of God with those that are not, And we do advise all members of the several churches of our communion to keep themselves pure in the separation; and if any shall transgress therein, we advise the churches unto whom they belong carefully and speedily to admonish them of the evil and danger that do attend it."

AMUSEMENTS: Friends of a Pastor Ingello were "troubled and offended because of his being given so much to music, not only at his owne house, but at houses of entertainment out of the town; sometimes with some of his relations, and gentry of ye city of his acquaintance, he would be at his favourite recreation." Ingello responded with words that many rebellious 21st Century teenagers could identify with: "Take away my music, and you take away my life."

John Blowes was disciplined for playing football on a day set apart for fasting and prayer, as well as for borrowing money and not paying it back. Others were censured for playing at cards, dancing and cockfighting.

DRESS: Baptists took the position that "flaunting apparel" should be forbidden, and that members should avoid the "vain fashions" of the day. There was some criticism of long hair on men, expensive clothing, and excessive ornaments on women, although some ornamentation was allowed. Plainness of dress was commended, but there is no mention of any specific dress codes for believers.

INTERMARRIAGE WITH NON-BAPTISTS. The practice of Baptists marrying non-Baptists was frowned upon and heavily debated. Some took the position that Baptists must marry only other Baptists, while others felt that it was okay to take a non-Baptist spouse as long as he/she was at least a Christian. Concern was expressed for Baptist women who could not find a mate within the Baptist community, and might have no other possibility of marriage if they could not marry a non-Baptist.

WHEN THY JUDGMENTS ARE IN THE EARTH,
THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD WILL
LEARN RIGHTOUSNESS. ISA. 26:9

ABUSIVE HUSBANDS: The early Baptist records tell of one husband who was excommunicated for “beating his wife in the open street,” and another who was “cast out” because he was “about 10 days since, was much in drinke, and very rude, fighting in ye street, and that he had given his wife some blows.”

Yet another member was kicked out of a church “for not loving his wife as he ought, and for speaking hateful and despising words against her, giving her occasion to depart from him for his unkindness.”

On one occasion, a husband and wife were both re-proved, the wife for “going from her husband from place to place, and speaking reproachful words against him,” and the husband “for being churlish to his wife, and not allowing her needful things.”

DRUNKENNESS: Goadby uncovered numerous cases of members being disciplined for drunkenness.

The charge against one member was that he “neglected ye assembling of himself with the congregation, only Lord’s dayes, but very seldom on ye week-days meeting, or at dayes of prayer. And also he had been observed to have drunck too much soe that he did reel, and was drunck more than twice, kept bad company, and proceeded to bad words in his drink.” He narrowly avoided excommunication after submitting to rebuke.

Some vendors of alcohol were denied membership - one woman was excluded because she “sold strong water, and let persons drink to excess.”

MONEY MATTERS: Church members who borrowed money and did not pay it back would find themselves in hot water. Congregations would investigate such offenders, and exclude them. (Not repaying a debt is certainly worth discipline. Ed.) Goadby makes no mention of anyone being charged or excluded for failure to tithe. Surprisingly, he also makes almost no mention at all of sexual offenses, which certainly must have been a problem in that day and age.

Lessons For Today - How Should We Practice Church Discipline in the 21st Century?

First, we should take note of an article from the “Confession of the Seven Churches” or London Confession of Baptist churches, published in 1644: “Christ hath given power to His church to receive and cast out any member that deserves it; and this power is given to every congregation, and not to one particular person, either member or officer, but in relation to the whole body, in reference to their faith and fellowship; that every particular member of each church, how excellent, great, or learned

soever, is subject to this censure and judgment: and that the church ought not, without great care and tenderness, and due advice, but by the rule of faith, to proceed against her members.”

It is taught here that church discipline was to be exercised by the entire body of members, not by one person, not even the senior pastor. The idea that a pastor can remove anyone from the membership on his own authority, without a vote of the congregation, should be resisted. Such would be contrary not only to historic Baptist practice, but also to the spirit of Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 2:6 that church discipline was to be exercised by “many,” which implies a vote of the entire congregation.

As for practical issues concerning the circumstances for which church discipline should be exercised, the following is my personal opinion. Some readers will disagree with some of my conclusions, and that is okay.

In my opinion, Baptist churches should continue to excommunicate members for heresy and for causing doctrinal division and discord in the church. Paul made this clear when he advised the church in Rome to “avoid” those who caused doctrinal divisions and offenses, Romans 16:17-18, and urged Titus to “reject” heretics, Titus 3:10.

The position of the old English Baptists, in warning believers against the false teachings of the Quakers, Anglicans, Socinians (Unitarians) and other groups, is commendable, and we need to continue to warn our people against false teachers in our day and age. However, it is probably not practical to threaten church discipline against Baptist members who attend meetings of non-Baptistic groups.

In my opinion, it is not practical or appropriate to threaten church discipline over such matters as amusements, music preferences or dress. While we may find the preferences of some of our brethren on these issues to be outlandish and obnoxious, we may have to tolerate such differences under the general principle of Christian liberty.

The issue of dress codes for women is one that is often preached upon today, with special emphasis on banning the wearing of slacks by women. I did not find any mention in Goadby’s book of any detailed dress codes for women, nor does the Bible spell out specific female dress codes. The emphasis in the Bible, as well as among 17th Century Baptists, appears to be on avoiding ostentatious displays of wealth in one’s manner of dress,

without specifying prescribed or forbidden articles of clothing.

My perception is that the restrictive codes of dress and conduct for females, that have been propagated from such sources as Bill Gothard and the now-defunct Vision Forum movement, are rejected not only by the general public but even by most women of fundamentalist Baptist background.

Any attempt to enforce these rules would result in large numbers of young women of child-bearing age leaving such churches, which would result in fewer births within the movement, then a demographic crash, and finally the drastic decline or even disbanding of such churches. While respecting the convictions of those who see strict dress codes as “a hill to die on,” I do not share those convictions and do not see a scriptural basis for them.

Concerning drunkenness and substance abuse of various kinds, Baptist churches should continue to exercise church discipline as a last resort, on members who habitually indulge in such excesses. The stand of the old English Baptists, at a time when alcohol consumption was considered more generally acceptable than it is today, is commendable.

Another commendable stand of the English Baptists was their use of church discipline against husbands who physically abused their wives. We should continue that stand today.

From time to time, we hear disturbing reports of battered or abused wives who are threatened with church discipline because they separated from abusive husbands, while the husbands are not held responsible, and no discipline is used against them. This ought not to be.

Abused women should be able to rely on their congregations to take their side against brutal husbands, but sometimes they are asked to take the blame because they were not submissive enough to an unreasonable mate. It is time for us to stop blaming the victims of abuse, and to take action against the perpetrators. Of course, this would apply equally to wives who are physically or verbally abusive to their husbands. (I personally know a lady who “suffered” at the hands of her church’s elders because she refused to live with an abusive husband. The church did not seek to discipline him, but her for her stand. They did not divorce, but did separate from the church. Since then, the church desolved. Ed.)

How about the practice of discipline against members who miss too many church services? Goadby described the attitude of some English churches to those who

missed services as “inquisitorial.” Is this something that we should imitate today?

My personal opinion is that we need to exercise some tolerance to members who are less than totally ideal and perfect on such matters as attendance and Christian stewardship. If we hound our people over such issues, it is really easy for them to move on to another church or just stay home on Sunday mornings. It seems that it would be better to deal with less than perfect members on the level that they are, rather than demand perfection from them and thus run them off.

Sociologists of religion tell us that whereas in the good old days, church members could be counted on to attend services regularly 2 or 3 times a week, now the new normal is more like 2 or 3 times a month. Younger church members are also giving less than their parents give, and less than their parents gave when they were young. Of course we do not endorse or excuse these trends, but we will have to decide whether to deal with the younger generation on these terms, or else threaten them with discipline and thus drive them away.

Able-bodied resident church members who never show up for church at all should, at some point, be removed from the membership rolls, one way or another. But in my opinion, members who continue to show up on a fairly regular basis should be tolerated, while we preach to them and pray that they will grow into a more dedicated and consistent pattern of attendance and devotion to the lordship of Christ.

In the brave new world of the future, it may be necessary for churches to have more members and adherents than they do now, perhaps twice as many, just to stay even with current attendance and offerings. We can learn to live with that, or we can be impatient with members who do not meet our standards of absolute perfection, and run them off, thus losing any opportunity we may have had to minister to them.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE SHOULD BE CONTINUED TODAY, BUT WITH BALANCE. Some Baptists and non-Baptist groups have, for all practical purposes, abandoned the practice of church discipline. Other churches have gone too far in the other direction, exercising harsh punishments and excommunications over issues of honest, non-divisive disagreements with the leadership, or issues that should come under the umbrella of Christian liberty.

We should continue to exercise church discipline in cases of sexual immorality, divisive troublemaking, and

the kind of offenses listed in such passages as 1 Corinthians 5:11, Galatians 5:19-21, etc. At all times, church discipline should be exercised with a generous dose of compassion, common sense, and desire for the restoration of the offender.

THANKSGIVING

Quote from a Confederate Chaplain

“At the close of the meeting General Lee came to me and said, with more than his usual warmth: I wish, sir, to thank you for your address; it was just what we needed. Our great want is a revival which shall bring these young men to Christ.”

Chaplain J. William Jones, 13th Virginia Infantry

• EDITORIAL

Fellow Compatriots in the Chaplains' Corps and Friends of the Cause:

This month we celebrate a national Thanksgiving Day. Few today actually know what that means I'm sad to say. Many think of football, turkey and dressing, and over-eating. We in the South have been greatly blessed and should, like our forefathers, be first in thankfulness to God. Over four hundred years ago in Jamestown there were devout prayers of thanksgiving for safe deliverance in a tedious ocean crossing on May 13, 1607.

There were many firsts in the history of Thanksgiving in this land and among its inhabitants. Please consider some of them with me!

America's first official Thanksgiving was at Berkeley Plantation on the James River in Virginia. When the colonists reached Berkeley Hundred on December 4, 1619, in what is now Charles City County, they held a religious service on shore to thank the Almighty God for safety and good health. The service was simple in form and was held under the pine trees. The captain of the *Margaret* was charged by the London Company with the injunction,

“Wee ordaine the day of our ship's arrival at the place assigned for plantacon in the land of Virginia shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God.”

The first presidential proclamation was by a Southerner, a Virginian, the father of our country, on January 1, 1795,

“I, George Washington, President of the United States do recommend to all religious societies and denominations, and to all persons whomsoever, within the United States, to set apart and observe Thursday, the 19th day of

February next, as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, and on that day to meet together and render sincere and hearty thanks to the great Ruler of nations for the manifold and signal mercies which distinguish our lot as a nation ... and at the same time humbly and fervently beseech the [same] kind Author of these blessings graciously to prolong them to us; to imprint on our hearts a deep and solemn sense of our obligations to him....”

President Jefferson Davis of the Confederate States of America gave *A Thanksgiving Proclamation* in 1861,

“WHEREAS, it hath pleased Almighty God, the Sovereign Disposer of events, to protect and defend us hitherto in our conflicts with our enemies as to be unto them a shield.

And whereas, with grateful thanks we recognize His hand and acknowledge that not unto us, but unto Him, belongeth the victory, and in humble dependence upon His almighty strength, and trusting in the justness of our purpose, we appeal to Him that He may set at naught the efforts of our enemies, and humble them to confusion and shame.

Now therefore, I, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States, in view of impending conflict, do hereby set apart Friday, the 15th day of November, as a day of national humiliation and prayer, and do hereby invite the reverend clergy and the people of these Confederate States to repair on that day to their homes and usual places of public worship, and to implore blessing of Almighty God upon our people, that he may give us victory over our enemies, preserve our homes and altars from pollution, and secure to us the restoration of peace and prosperity.

Given under hand and seal of the Confederate States at Richmond, this the 31st day of October, year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty one.

By the President, JEFFERSON DAVIS”

Southern history is replete with public and private expressions of thanksgiving to the Triune God of the Bible. The Apostle Paul reminds us, “*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*” (1 Thess. 5:18). How do we describe or define thanksgiving? Thomas Brooks, a minister in the 1600's, wrote a definitive statement,

“Thanksgiving is a self-denying grace; it is an uncrowning ourselves and the creatures, to set the crown upon the head of our Creator; it is the making ourselves a footstool, that God may be lifted up upon His throne, and ride in holy triumph over all; it is a grace that gives God the supremacy in all our hearts, thoughts, desires, words, and works. Self-love, flesh and blood, and many low and carnal considerations may carry men to pray, and hear, and talk, etc. The whip may work a shame to beg, but thank-

fulness is the free will offering of a child. There is nothing that so clearly and so fully speaks out your sincerity and spiritual ingenuity, as thankfulness does. Therefore, weak saints, if you would have a substantial evidence of your sincerity and spiritual ingenuity, be thankful for a little grace. The little birds do not sip one drop of water, but they look up, as if they meant to give thanks, to shew us what we should do for every drop of grace, etc.”

“Stonewall” Jackson made it a practice in his Christian life to always give a prayer of thanks to the Lord when he lifted a drink of water to his lips. Paul said, *“in every thing give thanks.”* Do we have the attitude of thanks that we might show the Lord proper gratitude? We should be very thankful and give thanks especially for our Redeemer and King the Lord Jesus Christ. *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift”* (2 Cor. 9:15).

(Chaplains’ Corps Chronicles of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Nov 2016)

PERSONAL

I had my first follow-up for my pacemaker 11/10. It is “pacing” 40% of the time. I was also told that everything is healing well. My weight limit for my left arm is now the weight of a gallon of water, which is 6 pounds. I am not to lift my left arm at the shoulder above shoulder level for a couple more weeks. I cannot remember when I have felt this good, so the problem has been there for some years.

Life should return to normal as normal as life can be at 75 years old. I can resume using a chainsaw four weeks after surgery. I can use an ax in about 5 weeks. Lord willing, I will go to the VA cardiologist the 29th, and all my information that the pacemaker sends (out much like a cell phone) into the VA system.

The concern is that too much activity with my left side will cause the wires that are in that artery to move. We must give time for the arteries to form scar tissue around the wires that will help ensure that they stay in place.

Since the cataract surgery, there has been a swelling behind the retina of my left eye. We have been treating it for at least six months with two different drops four times a day. The VA is now referring me to a retina specialist to see what the next step might be. The swelling has not interfered with my vision to any great extent. The left eye is the one in which I had laser surgery for seepage behind the retina several years ago.

The medical abilities that the Lord has provided to

work on the body he created are absolutely astounding.

Thank you for your prayers.

Now it is time for my wife: She has been having “electrical” shocks on the left side of her neck (pinched nerve?). The doctor is trying to deal with that now. Also, on a previous visit to the doctor, he found a discrepancy in her heart beat. He sent her to a cardiologist to see what the problem might be. (The VA pays for my health care. But she is with Samaritan Ministries which will cover all the cost minus a very reasonable deductible. It takes several weeks for other members to send their shares to you after you submit your need to the ministry, but it will be cash made out to you. It is your responsibility to pay your medical bills. We have found that all those who provide the care will wait and even give good discounts for self-pay. They like not having to deal with the government. The cost in samaritanministries.org is a fraction of what insurance costs. If you check into that Christian Sharing program, be sure to mention bettie. need13@gmail.com sent you.)

Praise the Lord!!

• LETTERS

I read this week’s Hebrew study to my 13 year old son last night. You are making a difference. I wish you weren’t “Wearing out.” Larry Lewis, Norman Idaho

My staff and I are praying for your recovery. Your teaching is needed and your family needs you.

Warmly, Jerry Bernard, Middleton House Foundation

Pastor Need, Enjoy your teaching. We are bee keepers and doing well on the whole. We are working on a documentary on Lincoln’s terrible war. My life is flying by. Soon to see the Lord. Also, we still refer and commend your book *Death of Church Victorious* to friends. David R. Seppi, California.

• COMMUNITY

As I have mentioned before, my dad was a lay preacher. About the longest time he spent at any rural church was maybe three years. Obviously, that is not enough time to get to know people well. In addition, since I have been in the ministry, I have never experienced living in a “community”, where everyone, lost or saved, is concerned about everyone else. However, we now live in such a community.

The man from whom we bought our property seems to be related to everyone in our surrounding area. He was born on a “Century Farm”; that is, a farm that has been in the family for at least 100 years. We, as is everyone else in our community, are surrounded by flat

fields which contained corn or soybeans, so though we can see other houses around us now because the crops are in. It is a good distance between houses. All of our neighbors have been very generous to us in offering help in any way they can.

Sometime ago, someone placed us in contact with a “reformed” Christian family (11 children) a few minutes from us. About a year ago, the father started a home fellowship every other Sunday evening with one other family who was also fed up with “fundamentalist” type of Christianity and dictatorial leadership, regardless of denomination. We are finding that there is a significant undercurrent of young families who are fed up with the fluffy and empty churches and the lack of Biblical emphasis in them. Last Sunday night there were at least six families there, all young homeschooling families which meant there were probably 50 people in attendance. Each family knows several other families are also in the same situation with the “organized” churches, and who are just kind of floating around, looking for Biblically sound and godly leadership.

As I mentioned, previously, a neighbor gave us a good bit of wood, most of it already “bucked”, but not split. Knowing my heart problem, several older members of the “reformed” family, including the mother, came over and split probably 2 years worth of wood for us. That might have been half of what we were given. Most of the rest must be “bucked”, which I will start doing when the doctor premits.

“Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow!”

Our daughter and her family finally were able to get a house, so after a year with us, they are moving into their new house. We hope to soon be able to have a community gathering as we now try to move into our house. Someone said “You have not used what is in those boxes after all this time, so you should just take him to the auction or send them to the dump.” Well, that will not happen. We really do not know what kind of treasure is hidden on those boxes.

We know there are many things in those still unpack boxes that we have been looking for four year. But now is “cabinet painting” time for my wife.

MODERN PREACHING

While continuing my “sermons in Hebrews, which I send out upon request, I encountered this statement by Pink. I cannot get this close to dealing with the damnable curse of modern preaching and evangelism without

taking a “shot” at it:

“It is highly important that the closest attention be paid to the order of truth set forth in #He 11:24-28. If this be done, the defectiveness of much modern “evangelism” will at once be apparent. The keeping of the passover and the sprinkling of the blood is not the first thing recorded of Moses! No man can rightly value the blood of Christ while his heart is still wrapped up in the world, and to invite and exhort him to put his trust in the same, is being guilty of casting pearls before swine. No man can savingly believe in Christ while he is determined to “enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” Repentance precedes faith (#Mr 1:15; Ac 20:21): and repentance is a sorrowing over sin, a hatred of sin, and a turning from sin; and where there is no genuine repentance, there can be no “remission of sins”: #Mr 1:4. Let every preacher who reads this article carefully weigh all that is here recorded of Moses, and faithfully instruct his congregation that the different exercises of heart recorded in #He 11:24-27 must precede that which is stated in #11:28.

It is really deplorable that such elementary aspects of Truth as we have just pointed out above need to be stressed at this late date. Yet such is the tragic case. Laodicean Christendom is boasting of its riches, and knows not that it is poor and wretched and naked. Part of those “riches” which she boasts so loudly of today, is the “great increase of light” which it is supposed that the study of “prophetic” and “dispensational” truth has brought to us. Yet not only is that a subtle device of Satan’s coming as “an angel of light” (#2Co 11:14), to darken men’s understandings, and make them believe that his lies are “wonderful discoveries” and openings up of the Scriptures, but the present generation has far less real Light than Christendom enjoyed a century ago. By which we mean, there is far less faithful and fearless preaching of those things which make for practical godliness and holy living. But that is not the worst: Scriptural evangelism has well-nigh disappeared from the earth. The “Gospel” which is being preached today is only calculated to deceive souls and bolster them up in a false hope. To make men believe that God loves them, while they are under His wrath (see #Joh 3:36), is worse than a physician telling a diabetic subject that he may safely eat all he wishes. To withhold the preaching of the Law-its Divine authority, its inexorable demands, its spirituality (in requiring inward conformity to it:#Mt 5:22, 28), its awful curse is to omit that which alone conveys a true knowledge of sin: see #Ro 3:20, 7:7. To cry

“Believe, believe,” and say nothing about repentance, is to falsify the terms of salvation: #Lu 24:47; Ac 17:30. To invite sinners to receive Christ as their “Savior” before they surrender to Him as their Lord, is to present a false “way of salvation.” To bid the lost “come to Christ” without telling them they must first “forsake the world,” is to fill the “churches” with unconverted souls. To tell sinners they may find rest unto their souls without taking Christ’s YOKE upon them, is to give the lie unto the Master’s own teaching: #Mt 11:29.” (Pink)

I cannot think of sufficient words of condemnation for the modern and totally corrupt “gospel”, clearly identified by the Spirit as a doctrine of devils. (2 Cor 11:15, Gal 1:6) I must say with Pink, that I offer no apology for this seeming digression from our present subject in Hebrews. I encourage you to continue reading Pink on this text either his hard copy or on OnlineBible. But for those of you who do not have either, let me finish with his message to the lost:

“We offer no apology for this seeming digression from our present subject. Once again we would point out that it is our earnest desire in this series of articles to write something more than a “commentary” on Hebrews, or give a bare “exposition” of its text: rather do we seek (as the Holy Spirit is pleased to enable) to address ourselves directly to the hearts of our readers, and press upon them the personal and present application of each verse to their own souls. In all probability a large proportion of the readers of this magazine are deceived souls, and we do not want to have to answer for their blood in the Day to come. Many of them have been lulled to sleep by the chloroforming “evangelism” of the day. Therefore we earnestly beg each one who scans these paragraphs to seriously and solemnly ask, Is there anything in my own heart’s history which answers to that which is said of Moses in #He 11:24-27? If there is not, if you are not “crucified to the world” (#Ga 6:14), then Satan is fatally deluding you if you imagine that you are under the blood of Christ.

(Request a copy of “The Gospel Perverted”, by this author.)

THE HERETIC

Mr. Thomas Taylor (c. 1619) gives a good definition of a heretic. Commenting on Titus 3:10, he said:

1. Who is a heretic? A heretic is he who, professing Christ, yet invents or maintains any error against the foundations of religion, and holds such error with obstinacy. To open this description three things are to be noted.

(a) A heretic must profess Christ. Jews, Turks, or pagans cannot properly be heretics, though they fight against Christ and all religion in its foundations. These are more properly called heathens, infidels, and atheists, without God in the world. But the person with whom Titus has here to deal, is one within the church, who is cast off from a foundation upon which he seemed to stand.

(b) He must maintain an error in doctrine, for if men err in practice they are hypocrites and profane, but not heretical. This doctrinal error must be fundamental, that is, such a one as overturns some ground or article of our faith; for it will not make a heretic not to believe the fables of St Francis, though Pope Benedict IV so determined. But if any man shall maintain justification by works, a daily sacrifice for sin, or any other righteousness except Christ, the defence [sic] of these positions will easily proved heresy. And thereby the Popish doctrine is clearly proved heretical. (Exposition of Titus, Thomas Taylor, 525, 526. 1619, Cambridge. Klock and Klock Reprint, 1980.)

Comment: The heretic’s actions are completely proper, but his doctrine is fundamentally in error, e.g., justification through anything except by grace through faith; righteousness through other means than Christ, salvation by race rather than by grace and that grace available to all races, &c. Though clearly shown truth from God’s word, the heretic argues and continues in his error. Accordingly, adulterers, &c., who claim to love God are not heretics, but hypocrites of the worst order. The pastor who lives right in every area yet preaches error in adding something to faith in Christ for justification is an heretic when he refuses to change when confronted with the truth. Thomas Taylor continues:

(c) This error must be willfully and obstinately maintained; for he must reject admonition, and must strive after being convicted. This is what properly constitutes a man a heretic for everyone who holds a heretical opinion is not a heretic, but a man may through simplicity, levity, or rashness be drawn into such an opinion. But if, when admonished of his error, he does not contend, but is ready to yield himself up to the persuasion of truth, he is no heretic. For these three things make a heretic -- **error, conviction, and obstinacy.**

Note then what a grievous thing we charge a man with, when we brand him with the title of heretic. We charge him to be one who does not rest in the wholesome word, but maintains such an error as has turned him off his foundation; we charge him with scorning the judgment of the church, despising wholesome admonitions, and continuing in his damnable opinions against the light of his mind, against the check and accusation of his conscience. If we hastily pass this censure, we shall hardly avoid rash

judgment; for if every error in divinity made a heretic, the apostles themselves would have been no other, for at first they were erroneous and ignorant in many things of the greatest importance in religion...

Note also that there have been and shall be, to the end, heresies in the church. Christ was no sooner ascended than his blessed doctrine was assailed by heretics; and this seems to be the occasion for this precept. Yea, no sooner was there a church than heretics became its disease and corruption; the tares quickly came up with the good seed. (Ibid, 526, 527.)

Comment: Charges of heresy are serious, for we say the heretic though clearly instructed in God's Law-Word (truth), refuses to change. If we rashly pass a censure of heresy against a person, we also will be rashly judged. (See Mat. 7:1, Lk. 6:37, Jn. 7:24.) The apostles themselves were captive to gross errors, but they changed upon hearing the truth.

Certainly, errors abound, and many times they are presented by good, sincere men. William Law comments:

...[H]ow many have studied the words of Scripture for a lifetime, without receiving that humility of Christ which produces the very mind of Christ and turns fallen man into a son of God! Academic degrees they hold in plenty from the best centers of religious learning---but know so little of Spirit of Christ! What a paradox to see the professed Church of the Lamb filled with great numbers of champion disputants, who from age to age have been up in arms to support and defend a set of opinions, doctrines, and practices, all of which may be most cordially embraced without demanding the least degree of self-denial, and most firmly held fast without bestowing the least degree of humility!

Why is it that we see Bible scholars equally pleased with and contending for the errors and absurdities of every system of theology under which they happen to have taken their education? Because natural genius and human wisdom can feed on no other food than the deceptive fruit of that ancient tree of knowledge. What a gross ignorance, both of man's need and Christ's salvation, to run to Greek and Hebrew schools to learn how to put off Adam and to put on Christ! How absurd to seek to be wise in scholarship concerning the letter of Scripture in order to obey Christ's command that we must become like a little child to enter into His kingdom! How came the learned Greeks by their pride and vanity, and inability to come under the humility of the cross? It was because the false glory of their own cultivated abilities blinded them in the same way that a letter-learned knowledge blinded Jewish scribes and Pharisees. And so it often is in the Church today. (*Spirit*, 50, 51, 52.)

Comment: Law placed his finger upon a serious

problem among Christians where Scripture is professed to be the final rule for all faith and practice, *viz.*, though professing to be followers of the humble Lamb of God, many refuse to give up a system of theology when confronted with the clear teaching of the Lamb, because they happened to have taken their education under that system of theology. Though exalting the word of God with their mouths, they exalt friendships and traditions with their actions. They are thus identified with the "letter-learned knowledge blinded Jewish scribes and Pharisees," for whom Christ had no good words. They are heretics. (I tried to point out a clear fallacy in a pastor friend's theology. Though he admitted I was right, he refused to depart from the teachings of men he respected)

How can we know the errors from the truth? The best counter for error is consistent Christian living, and consistent searching of the word of TRUTH so one can obey the truth. The work of the Holy Spirit is to guide the serious seeker into more TRUTH, for in Him can we see TRUTH. (Jn 7:17, 16:13, Ps 36:9)

The Lord assures us that heresies are needed and will continue in the church, so his people must stay close to him in his word and in fellowship, or they will be caught up in heresies. Refusing to willingly submit to the clear teaching of God's word, heresies separate the sheep from the goats, the proud from the humble, the false teachers from the men of God, &c. Heresies show who belongs to the Lord and who does not. The sad result of heresies is that those who reject the truth give themselves over to serious error. (Ja. 1:22 - the man deludes no one but himself.) Patrick Fairbairn gives four reasons for the continued presence of heretics in the church:

(a) **As long as the causes of heresy remain**, it must needs itself continue; and the causes shall ever be in the church, namely ignorance of God, pride of heart, self-conceit, overweening [arrogant, ed.] of gifts, lack of love to Christ and his truth, Satan's malice, ambition, covetousness, flattery, and many more. In a word, as long as there is a mixture of good and bad, there will be a fight between them.

(b) **The Lord in his providence allows** false prophets and heretics to rise up among his people, to prove and try them, whether they will cleave unto him (Deut. 13:3). They are the Lord's fan brought into his threshing-floor, to separate between the wheat and the chaff, the faithful and the unfaithful. By this the wicked fall off, as being thrust away from the Lord; and the godly, who are accused by Satan and his instruments to be hypocrites, are manifested as sound at the heart, and faithful to the end.

“There must be heresies, that those who are approved of God may be known” (1 Cor. 11 -19).

(c) The Lord in his justice punishes by heretics the contempt of his truth, and the careless entertainment of his word. If men will not receive the truth in the love of it, justly are they given over to strong delusions in the believing of lies (2 Thess. 2:11,12). If Christ and his gospel will not be received, antichrist shall come in with all lying wonders, and shall prevail. If the truth in Micaiah's mouth is scorned, four hundred false prophets shall prevail with their lie. So we have seen that where a faithful pastor has been set lightly by, the Lord has in one way or another removed him, and after his departure has sent in some grievous wolf, who has not spared the flock. (Titus, p. 527.)

First, sin is the cause of heresies: pride, lust, greed, lack of love for God and his word, covetousness, &c. As long as sin remains, heresies will continue. Though converted, God's people are targets for heresies because sin still dwells in the flesh.

Second, false teachers, heretics, who change basic Bible doctrines ever so slightly are allowed to rise up “among his people.” The Lord allows them in order to prove who will cleave to him and his word over physical and emotional attachments. As Paul told Timothy, God's people must study all scripture so they will be grounded in sound doctrine, or they will be easy prey for the heretical teachers. (If people would spend as much time searching and studying Scripture under the influence and inspiration of the indwelling Spirit as they do studying the writings of other men, “secular” histories included, they would probably not get caught in the heretics' trap, *ed.*)

Third, through the means of heretics, those who reject God's word are cast off, being recognized by God's people.

Fourth, when the truth of the word of God is rejected, “antichrist shall come in with all lying wonders, and shall prevail.” Thus supernatural “wonders” did not cease with the Apostles -- false teachers with great influence and supernatural “lying wonders” are common when the truth of God's word is rejected, and the more God's word is rejected, the more common are lying wonders. Paul warned Timothy, that evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived (2 Tim. 3:13):

... Living in an element of deceit, they come to be themselves deceived; their sin becomes their snare and their punishment: so that, in so far as they are capable of progress, the progress is from bad to worse; and if their

manner of life is such as to save them from persecution at the hand of others, it brings recompenses of evil far more to be dreaded, and these prepared by their own hands... The unqualified use of such a term cannot justly be understood otherwise than as identifying them with the wily and unscrupulous professors of the magical art. (The Pastoral Epistles, Patrick Fairbairn, 1874. Klock & Klock reprint.)

Adam Clarke:

Verse 13. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse. They will yet get on for a season, deceiving themselves and deceiving others; but, by and by, their folly will become manifest to all, 2 Timothy 3:9. The word *γοητες*, which we render seducers, signifies jugglers, pretenders to magical arts; probably persons dealing in false miracles, with whom the Church in all ages has been not a little disgraced. (Adam Clarke, 1810-1826.)

Kurt Koch:

Dwight L. Moody, the great American evangelist, used to be accompanied on his tours by the singer, Henry Drummond. Originally Drummond was able to influence and hypnotize people at a distance of fifty miles. After his conversion, he had difficulty in overcoming these occult powers. While ministering at Moody's meetings, he occasionally noticed that the audience was being influenced by his psychic powers. He was very troubled about this and asked the Lord to free him from these occult powers. The Lord answered his prayer. (*Occult ABC, Kurt Koch, 297-298. Kregel Publications. Henry Drummond [1851-1897] accompanied Moody in his meetings. Thus one wonders how much of modern church growth is the Spirit's work, and how much are men using the spirits renounced by Drummond? See 2 Cor. 10:4, 5.*)

Comment: We must ask, How many today would do what Drummond did, and renounce the “magical arts” when those arts will draw a crowd? As “Christian” leaders depart from the word of God, the “magical arts” become more common; they are used to lead people to men and programs rather than to sound doctrine from God's word. (Note that Paul does not say Christianity will fall before those “arts.” Remember Moses! whose God was far more powerful than those who practiced the “arts.”)

Fifth, when people reject the truth from one godly man, e.g., Micaiah, the Lord removes him, and sends “grievous wolves” (more than one) to spoil the flock.

God blinds those whom he will judge. Quoting Salvian's (c. 440 AD) comments concerning the fall of Rome:

What resulted from all this? Through all that I have said they were fallen so low that in them was fulfilled the say-

ing of the Sacred Word: 41 'wine and women make men fall away from God.' For, while they drink, gamble, commit adultery, and are mad, they begin to deny Christ. And we wonder after all these things that they have suffered the ruin of their own property, they who long before have gone to pieces mentally! Therefore, let nobody think that city perished only at the time of its own ruin. Where such things are done, the inhabitants had already [morally] perished long before they [physically] perished.

(14) I have spoken about the most famous cities. What about other cities in other parts of Gaul? Have they not fallen because of similar vices of their inhabitants? Their crimes possessed them in such a way that they did not fear danger. Their captivity was foretold them and they were not afraid. Indeed, fear was taken away from the sinners to obviate the possibility of caution. Thus, when the barbarians were located almost in plain sight of all, there was neither fear of men nor protection of cities. So great was the blindness of soul, or rather so great was the blindness of sins, that, without doubt, nobody wished to perish, yet nobody did anything to prevent his perishing. Everything was carelessness and inactivity, negligence and gluttony. Drunkenness and sleep took hold of all, according to that which has been written about such men, 'because the sleep of the Lord had fallen on them. 42 Indeed, a sleep flowed in upon them that ruin might follow. For when, as it is written, his measure of iniquities being full and the sinner deserves to perish, foreknowledge is taken away from him, lest he escape perishing. 43 I have said enough about these things. I think I have proved clearly enough what I proposed. This was that the vices of the citizens never ceased, even to the critical moment of destruction of their cities.

(15) Perhaps you are saying that these things happened in the past, or no longer exist, or will forever cease. If today any city or province is struck down by heavenly blows, or is overrun, humbled, converted, and corrected by a hostile population, if practically all peoples who bear the Roman name prefer to perish rather than be corrected, it is easy to see they prefer to die rather than live without their vices. This can be proved in a few words by the fact that the greatest city of Gaul was destroyed three times by successive captures, and, when the whole city had been burned, evil increased after its destruction.

41 Eccli. 19.2. 42 1Kings 26.12. 43 Gen. 15.16. (*The Governance of God*, 176, 177.)

Comment: Given over to debauchery — By the time a nation perishes, the people have already perished in their sins, and no longer fear just retribution from God. Nobody wants to perish, but no one wants to repent and turn in order to avoid perishing.

Taylor continues describing the heretic:

(d) The wisdom of God permits it. Though it seems utterly to poison and destroy the truth, yet indeed he turns it to clear and confirm the truth, for by it the truth is further examined and looked into. As sparkles issue out of the striking of two flints together, so the truth discussed and disputed becomes more luminous and more victorious; yea, the gold comes no brighter out of the fire than the truth comes out of the trial of opposition and contradiction.

Use 1. Whenever Satan, according to his accustomed malice against sincerity, stirs up any troubles to stay the course of the gospel, to obscure the shining brightness of God's glory, and to bring confusion into the most wise orders and ordinances of God, then the Lord overrules the matter, and brings light out of darkness; he glorifies himself, purges his floor, proves his people, quickens their zeal, and trains them in humility and obedience. Let us not be discouraged, then, if our eyes see many trials; if we see the truth opposed, and doctrines of liberty broached far and wide; for surely, though the Lord may herein justly correct our manifest despite of the truth, yet he cannot and will not forget his own glory.

Use 2. Let us not trouble or hinder, but pray for, the peace of Jerusalem. Yet let us consider that though peace and truth ought to abide undivorced, yet (as one said) he who has magnified his truth above all things, has magnified it above peace as well (Ps. 138:2). (Titus, pp. 527, 528.)

Comments:

First, the Gospel Church--the New Jerusalem--is identified as the Jerusalem in Psalms 122:6. (See Heb. 12:22, Isa. 62:6, 7.) Christians are thus to work and pray for the peace of Jerusalem -- that is, peace among Believers, 2 Timothy 2:22. See also CHS, Treasury of David, and John Gill on Psalms 122. **Second, the Lord glorifies** himself through heresies -- he proves his people, trains his people in his word and trains them in humility, obedience, &c. **Third, God magnifies his word** above everything, including above peace. In other words, Christians are forbidden to seek peace at the cost of compromising the word of God. Taylor continued:

Use 3. Use means to avoid heresy, and to keep out of the degrees of such a distasteful fruit of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). The chief means to avoid heresy are:

(a) Lay your ground in humility, which alone cuts off contention, the eldest daughter of pride; yea, humility has a promise to be taught in the way of God.

(b) Be diligent in hearing and reading the word, and especially in obeying it; for this is the ready way to attain and contain yourself within the bounds of truth. "If any man will do his will, he shall know whether the doctrine be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

And whoever embraces the counsel and wisdom of the word walks in safety, and his foot shall not stumble (Prov. 3:21, 23).

(c) Grow up in seeking and loving the truth; and thus you shall grow in the hatred of falsehood (Ps. 119:113). David would never have come to such a hatred of vain inventions if it had not been for his singular love unto the law.

(d) Beware of heretical books and company. You can hardly get good out of the former, and hardly do good unto the latter, but can most easily receive harm from either, for both are leaven and infectious. The same may be said of sticking to philosophy in matters of faith; for even this will easily breed a heretic.

(e) Content yourself with your estate and portion, be it more or less; covetousness and ambition have thrown down a great number of the stars of heaven, and have been the seeds of most heresies, as history shows. Yea, in our days not a few have grown into dislike of their state, and in hope of better preferment have joined the heresy of Popery, and therein have drunk all manner of deadly poisons. (*Titus*, pp. 528, 529.)

Comments:

First, it is important that one confront the heretic, but it is more important that he avoid getting caught up in heresies.

Second, remember that every person — including ourselves, other Christians and non-Christian — is prone to heresies. Because of the Fall, every person has the propensity to love a lie, and accept it over the truth. (Rom. 1:25, 2 Thes. 2:9-12, Rev. 22:15.) In other words, we love heresies and heretics; we love to be told what we want to hear. (Pro. 16:25, 2 Tim. 4:3.)

Third, remain continually humble, ready to be taught by God's Spirit through his word. We must be willing to remain within the bounds established by all scripture, for it alone is given to instruct us in doctrine, reproof, correction and righteousness. (2 Tim. 3:16.) Those who try to establish doctrine, &c., from other sources --- including from friends, respected teachers, history and from traditions --- are identified as heretics to be avoided.

Fourth, learn to love God's word. In fact, those who do not love God's word and God's will above all else are not his. (See 1 Jn. chaps. 3, 4.)

Fifth, "beware of heretical books and company." Beware also of those who exalt philosophy over the practical aspects of the Christian faith:

Philosophy --- 1) love of wisdom 1a) used either of zeal for or skill in any art or science, any branch of knowledge.

Used once in the NT of the theology, or rather theosophy, of certain Jewish Christian ascetics, which busied itself with refined and speculative enquiries into the nature and classes of angels, into the ritual of the Mosaic law and the regulations of Jewish tradition respecting practical life. (Col. 2:8, Online Bible.)

Accordingly, even a thorough knowledge of Scripture is not a sign that one is sound in the Christian faith. Even the devils quote Scripture, and the religious leaders who confronted Christ quoted Scripture regularly as they sought to take the Lord in his own words.

Sixth, It is a well-known fact that the spirit of the authors of the book will come through, and affect the reader. Taylor continues by developing how Titus was to act toward "such men," the heretics, which we will not go into at this time. (See our web site for Taylor's complete comments on Titus 3:10.) The Spirit tells

Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease. (Pro. 22:10.)

When doctrinal errors in the fundamentals of the Christian faith are made clear, *e.g.*, "justification by faith plus works" rather than by faith alone, heresy is clearly present. The pure heart (2 Tim 2:22) is humble, and readily yields to godly admonitions and to the word of God. Does the person honestly love the Lord, and is he sincerely trying to serve him? If so, he needs to be humbly approached with the truth, and try to get along with him, and avoid arguments about the mysteries of God.

We would end our examination of this passage here, but notice Paul's warning, v. 26, *the snare of the devil*. So we will "work" our way to that warning. V. 24, servant of the Lord refers primarily to ministers, for their "occupation" is recovering those held captive by the devil. A major qualification of a minister is not a brawler. (1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7.) However, the same qualifications must be met by all who desire to see those captive to sin freed. [M]ust not strive, which is basically the same word as in v. 23. The servant of the Lord must not engage in quarrels and wars of words. However, he must confront those who would compromise the gospel, the heretic. (Jude 3.) The saints in Jude 3 are identified as the Old Testament saints. Though "hidden" from them, the gospel of grace and faith was delivered to and through them. As pointed out by Taylor, q.v., through the servant[s] of the Lord must be men of peace, peace cannot be obtained at the expense of compromise.

Must not strive -- should not engage in pointless and

profitless discussions. (PNT)

Apt to teach -- skillful in teaching.

V. 25, the ability to change someone's opinion is not found in the ability to argue; rather, it comes from proper use of the truth as given with a meek and quiet spirit. (See 1 Cor. chps. 1 & 2.) God is the one who must give repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. The key word here is TRUTH, or the word of God. The goal of the Christian, ministers especially, is to have his hearer acknowledge the truth with his actions, not acknowledge the speaker's opinions about the truth. All the truths and doctrines of Scripture have but one errand; to call men to Christ... (Power, p. 43. His proof text, Mat. 11:28, ed.)

Here again is one of the mysteries of the mind of God -- man is responsible, but God must give fallen man the spirit of repentance. The spirit of repentance causes one to accept the truth of God's word as the final authority, and then the Spirit changes his actions accordingly.

V. 26, God, in his sovereign purpose, must give the spirit of repentance, but man, with his "free will," is responsible to recover himself; such a «contradiction» can only be understood by faith. In addition, the one attempting the recovery is also responsible for his attitudes as well as his words. (And many times, God in his sovereignty moves despite the spirits of those involved.)

Snare of the devil. Snare is an interesting word. It refers to something that suddenly and unexpectedly entangles and catches birds and animals. It catches them unawares -- they think they are safe until they are caught.

Thus people reject the truth, the word of God, and because the sentence against that evil is not executed speedily, they think they have gotten away with it. (Ecc. 8:11.) Actually in rejecting the truth, they have accepted the antichrist. Snare implies also that the «victim» does not see the snare, or what lies ahead, and the one attempting the recovery must approach him carefully. Such action is the real «Operation Rescue» -- that is, rescuing those who are caught in devil's snare. (Gal. 6:1.)

When one willfully rejects the truth of God's word after being admonished, he must be rejected as a heretic: «If Christ and his gospel will not be received, antichrist shall come in with all lying wonders, and shall prevail.» (Titus, 527.) If the teacher is given over to the antichrist, Believer must withdraw from him if he does not want also to be caught in the snare of the devil. (See 1 Tim. 6:5, 2 Tim. 3:5.)

• CONCLUSION:

First, man's free will and God's sovereignty is, among many other things, one of the deep mysteries of the mind of God. We can only understand this mystery by faith. God says it, and I believe it. **Second, unity among Believers** is based upon the common determination to call on the Lord out of a pure heart. **Third, many are left** in the snare of the devil because those attempting the "recover" fail not only in good knowledge of the truth, but also they fail in the meekness of spirit. Many seem to think that the spiritual victory can be won by a loud, overbearing attitude along with overwhelming superior knowledge. Is it any wonder that the devil keeps so many in his snare?

Fourth: Joe Morecraft pointed out (<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=1113161056282>) that we now live in a new century as well as a radically different society. Sodomy, drunkenness, fornication, adultery, is not only now accepted among the population, but is accepted in the vast majority of churches. Though many may know the Truth, pastors desiring to draw this new generation will compromise their messages. The public moral conscience that once was so prevalent is now basically dead. As society continues to paganize, it will become more unlikely to hear and will become more openly hostile to the preaching of the dogmatic truths of God's word, especially when it speaks against the various works of iniquity, e.g., at one time in the not too far distant past, even the drunkard would admit he was on his way to hell. But now?

The 21st century brings with it a sin-hardened generation that hates any kind of a dogmatic Biblical standard in morality or in religion. This generation has been taught there can be no dogmatic moral standard in lifestyle nor in choices of religion. That is, every man must be able to follow what he feels is right in his own heart -- Muslim, Hindu, Humanism, State worship, and most of all Mammon. Accordingly all who will stand on the firm foundation of the inspired word of God will be scorned and mocked.

Regardless, The responsibility of the church in this new century remains the same: Matthew 28:18-20. That is Christianize the nations. Commenting on Matthew 28:19, Calvin comments on Matthew 28:

19. *Go out, therefore, and teach all nations.* Though Mark, after having related that Christ appeared to the eleven disciples, immediately subjoins the command to preach the gospel, he does not speak of these as an unbroken series of events, for we learn from the enumeration

of them which is given by Matthew, that the latter event did not take place before they had gone into Galilee. The meaning amounts to this, that by proclaiming the gospel everywhere, they should bring all **nations to the obedience of the faith**, and next, that they should seal and ratify their doctrine by the sign of the gospel. In Matthew, they are first taught simply to teach; but Mark expresses the kind of doctrine, that they should preach the gospel; and shortly afterwards Matthew himself adds this limitation, to teach them to observe all things whatsoever the Lord hath commanded.

Let us learn from this passage, that the apostleship is not an empty title, but a laborious office; and that, consequently, nothing is more absurd or intolerable than that this honor should be claimed by hypocrites, who live like kings at their ease, and disdainfully throw away from themselves the office of teaching. ...

Teach all nations. Here Christ, by removing the distinction, makes the Gentiles equal to the Jews, and admits both, indiscriminately to a participation in the covenant. Such is also the import of the term: go out... (Calvin. Online Bible)

As we minister the gospel of grace through faith to this sin-hardened generation, we know that the foundation of God standeth sure, (2Ti 2:19) and we work in the assurance given by Paul in 1 Co 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

We shall surely reap if we faint not in our efforts for the One to Whom all power has been given. Though the prophets of old, He promised that all nations would be subdued under the footstool of the King; subdued through the preaching of His Gospel of peace by grace through faith, and the prophecies of His world-wide and everlasting dominion will be fulfilled. Speaking of the glories of the Gospel age which was to come though the Mediation work of Christ, we read,

Ps 86:9 *All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. 10 For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.*

Isa 2:2 *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word*

of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Finally

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. (2 Tim 2)

EXTRA COMMENTS ABOUT "ERRORS, HERESIES AND BABBLINGS."

Though many readers may find the following un-interesting, I reproduce it for those who might like a little further examination of heresy.

William Law wrote hundreds of years ago, dealing with a very prevalent problem prevalent in the church from its very beginning. Hence, let me call attention to a few statements from *The Power of the Spirit* with the prayer that this may call some Christians to repentance. Anyone who has been around the Christian community for any length of time should recognize Law's warning against looking to human knowledge, wisdom and understanding instead of to the Spirit of God.

The idolatry that exalts education above the inner workings of the Spirit in accord with God's word is very prevalent today. By presenting the following, I am not implying that those who seek to serve the Lord should not get a good education; I am saying, however, that it appears that most "Christian" education seeks to replace God's Spirit Who alone can give wisdom, with human wisdom. If the result of exalting education 300 years ago was a church "in a fallen and apostate condition," (p. 64) then what has it devolved to today? Observe:

... [M]any profess a sound doctrinal understanding to the letter of Scripture, but at the same time they reject the very work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives to which the plainest meaning of the Scriptures they so zealously study and guard would point them. (P. 36. His proof texts, 1 Thess. 1:5, 1 Cor. 4:19, 20,ed.) ...

... What can this intellectual approach bring to the study of Scripture except that which the most wicked scholar could also boast through a knowledge of Greek and his

natural memory. A historical, intellectual or grammatical learning of the words of Scripture can do no more towards removing the fleshly nature and its works from the soul of man than the same human knowledge of mathematics or literature. (P. 37. His proof text, 1 Cor. 2:11, ed.)...

Yet Bible scholars are generally looked upon as having a divine knowledge when they are as ready at chapter and verse of Scripture as the learned philosopher is at every page of Plato or Aristotle. On the basis of a prescribed religious education, the clergyman is thought to be fully qualified to engage in that ministry for which the apostles had to receive an endowment of power from on high. This scholarly worship of the letter as greatly opposed the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and blinded men to the living reality which the gospel holds out to those who believe. The manner in which Greek and Hebrew scholarship is admired and sought after in the church would lead one to believe that a man has all the divine life and reality of a Paul if he can only say his epistles by heart. What could such a man truly be said to have, except the letter of the gospel without the Spirit? ... Such a man, while more thoroughly grounded in the letter, must remain just as empty of the reality of the gospel, unless he knows in his own experience an immediate inspiration and quickening power of the Holy Spirit. (P. 37, 38.)

Judas Iscariot knew Jesus Christ, and all that He said and did from the beginning of His ministry to His Crucifixion... And all knowledge of Christ except that which is from the divine inspiration of the indwelling Holy Spirit is as poor and profitless as was Judas' knowledge... (P. 38. His proof texts, Mat. 16:17, 1 Cor. 15:50, ed.)

What fuller argument is needed for this divine inspiration as being beyond the poor power of mere words, than the self-evident fact that the natural man is everywhere in the church singing of his love for Jesus and calling Him Lord with his lips, while betraying Him to the world with his life!... Men are more concerned about proving who had the right doctrinal interpretation of Scripture than they are concerned with whether or not the reality of the gospel is being demonstrated in their daily lives... (P. 39.)

... One can be so proud of his doctrinal soundness that the Holy Spirit cannot convict him of the unsoundness of his life. (P. 41.)

... As soon as any man trusts to intellectual abilities, skill in languages, or human wisdom as the true means of edification and divine knowledge, he gives himself up to certain delusion. He has sold his birthright in the gospel state of spiritual illumination for a name, to make a noise with the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals of the natural man. (P. 47. His proof text, 1 Cor. 2:4, ed.)

... Had Eve desired no knowledge but that which came from God, Paradise had still been the habitation of her and of all her offspring. If Christians had desired no

knowledge but that which comes alone from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Church had been a kingdom of God and communion of saints to this present day... (P. 52.)

And this love of human wisdom and knowledge so blinds man, that he cannot see that he is eating the same forbidden fruit and keeping up in himself all the death and separation from God which the first hunger for knowledge brought forth... (P. 53. His proof text, Ecc. 7:29, ed.) ... What vanity, then, to count progress in terms of numbers of new and lofty cathedrals, chapels, sanctuaries, mission stations, and multiplied new membership lists, when there is no change in this undeniable departure of men's hearts from the living God. Yea, let the whole world be converted to Christianity of this kind (that exalts human knowledge and wisdom above the Spirit's breath in the individual, ed.), and let every citizen be a member of some Protestant or Catholic church and mouth the creed every Lord's day; and no more would have been accomplished toward bringing the kingdom of God among men than if they had all joined this or that philosophical society or social fraternity. (Pp. 55, 56.)

(1 Cor. 2:14, ed.) is telling us in the plainest terms that it is just as essential for the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of Scripture to the reader today as it was necessary for Him to inspire the writers thereof in their day. (P. 61.) .. Therefore the Scriptures should only be read in an attitude of prayer, trusting to the inward working of the Holy Spirit to make their truths a living reality within us... (P. 62.) ...[W]here God is not, there is the Devil; and where the Spirit rules not, there is all the work of the flesh, though nothing be talked of but spiritual and Christian matters... (P. 63.)

How much is to be lamented that from one end of learned Christendom to the other little is thought of as the true and proper means of attaining divine knowledge, but that which every natural, selfish, proud, vain-glorious worldly man can do. The Scriptures are studied much as the arts and science, as though a learned comprehension of doctrines is everything, and the present inspiration of the Holy Spirit is nothing. Where is the divinity student who was ever taught to think of partaking of the light of the gospel in any other way than by doing with the Scriptures that which he does with pagan writers, whether poets, orators, or comedians: namely, exercise his logic, rhetoric, and critical skill in analyzing and expounding upon them? Having done these things, he is thought by himself and often by others to have a sufficiency of divine apostolic knowledge. So that there are Christian leaders in abundance who have become experts in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit without experiencing His leading and power in their lives. (Pp. 63, 64.)

... And the very "demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit" which Paul said made his preaching effective is not

only uncultivated and unknown by pastors and teachers, but more lamentable, those who claim to stand the most strongly for the truth of all that Paul wrote, deny and decry any thought of a manifestation of this power such as he experienced in his day... (P. 64.) Christian leaders are everywhere pursuing a learned, academic knowledge of Scripture words as the surest way to divine life... (as they follow Satan, ed.) to eat eagerly of this ancient tree of knowledge...(P. 70.) ...Need any more than this be known to explain why the Church of Christ today is in a fallen and apostate condition? (P. 64.)

Since calling Jesus Lord must be more than mere words, what could so fully oppose the Holy Spirit as that worship of the letter of Scripture that is so prevalent among Christians today? (Early 1700s, ed.) When this empty, powerless knowledge of the letter of spiritual truth is held to be the possession of the truth itself, then darkness, delusion, and death overshadow Christendom... Whatever is not of and from this life and governed by the Holy Spirit in possession of the heart, call it by what high name you will, is no more a part of the gospel state nor will better influence man's final end than a similar learned knowledge of secular history.

(Pp. 39, 49. *The Power of the Spirit*, William Law [1686-1761]. Edited by Dave Hunt. *Christian Literature Crusade*, Third printing, 1973.)

Bro Need

(See <http://biblicalexaminer.org/w200007.html#Errors & Heresies>)

WE SERVE DIVINE ROYALTY

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory."

Those who minister the Gospel are serving Him who is the King of glory. We know that Jesus was "born King." Thus our commission comes from heaven; it is authenticated by the call of God and ratified by God the Holy Spirit. Our service or ambassadorship for the King of glory is of greater importance than the economy of a country or the fate of an empire, because He is the Sovereign of the universe and His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. Also, eternal destiny rests with Him.

William Tyndale in *Tyndale's New Testament* (1526) translated 2 Corinthians 5:19-21 the following way (modern spelling is used): "For God was in Christ, and made agreement between the world

and himself, and imputed not their sins unto them: and has committed to us the preaching of the atonement. Now then are we messengers in the room of Christ: even as though God did beseech you through us: So pray we you in Christ's stead, that ye be at one with God: for he has made him to be sin for us, which knew no sin, that we by his means should be that righteousness which before God is allowed." We have "committed to us the preaching of the atonement" as "messengers in the room of Christ."

"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 Cor. 5:20). The word "ambassador" that Paul uses is a term when used in this context refers to great dignity. Jesus used the term when speaking of a king going to war appealing to consultants and said, "he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace" (Luke 14:32). Thus all God called ministers are His ambassadors to men from the Court of Heaven beseeching or pleading the cause of Christ before men, whom He has chosen and provided redemption. Yes, the minister pleads with men cut off by sin to be "reconciled to God" in Christ's behalf.

This royal service demands certain things of us. William Perkins, one of the fathers of Puritanism, in his *The Art of Prophecy* identified this, "To stand in God's presence, to enter into the holy of holies, to go between God and his people, to be God's mouth to his people, and the people's to God; to be the interpreter of the eternal law of the Old Testament and the everlasting gospel of the New; to stand in the place and even bear the office of Christ himself, to take the care and charge of souls – these considerations overwhelm the consciences of men who approach the sacred seat of the preacher with reverence and not with rashness."

Yes, what glorious royalty we represent. Also, what a wonderful ambassadorial message we bring—"be ye reconciled to God." The *Geneva Bible* has the following words about this message of reconciliation (in modern spelling): "He commends the excellency of the ministry of the Gospel, both by the authority of God himself, who is the author of that ministry, and also by the excellency of the doctrine of it: for it announces atonement with God, by free forgiveness of our sins, and justification offered unto us in Christ, and that so lovingly and liberally, that God himself does after a sort pray men by the mouth of

his ministers, to have consideration of themselves, and not to despise so great a benefit. And when he so says, he plainly reprehends them which falsely (claimed) to themselves the name of pastors.”

Ambassadors of the King of glory, who is the Christ, serve divine royalty in its highest form. With such a high calling and ministry we must eventually make our ambassadorial report to Christ our King.

“The delight of God in His faithful ministers will finally confer a dignity so supreme, that He refers to the heavenly luminaries as emblematical of their conspicuous luster; ‘they that be wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.’” *Author Unknown but quoted by Joseph Freeston, 1818.*

Pastor Ron Rumburg

DEBT SLAVERY

By R.J. Rushdoony.

(I reproduce the following because of the overwhelming modern commitment of “deficit financing” by both the civil governments, churches, and by individuals, even those who claim to be Faithful, Bible believing even “reformed” Christians. In my ending comments, I believe you will see the importance of paying attention to the following article.)

The modern system of commercial credit has been traced back to Babylon, the great source of modern financial enterprise. As against this system and history, another concept early made its appearance in man’s records, the biblical law. The biblical concept was subverted steadily after the Babylonian Captivity, revived by the Christian Church, and is now again in eclipse.

There was a developed system of commercial credit in Babylon, but no such system in ancient Israel.¹ In normative biblical culture, it was always the poor who borrowed.² These were then debts of emergency and hence speedily repaid³ when the emergency ended. The emergency might be, as with Judah, not a valid one, but only a temporary exigency normally led to debt. More usually, debts in Israel were the products of failures of crops and heavy foreign tribute.⁴ Borrower and lender were cited by Isaiah as types in the nation,⁵ but it is significant that the Hebrew had no clear-cut word for debtor, which fact appears in I Samuel 22:2. The reading here for debtor is “everyone that was in debt,” or, as the marginal reading gives it, “every one that had a creditor.” This would indicate that a debtor class did not exist, no word existing for it. Emergency situations, famines, wars, such things led to debt, and tragedy as well,⁶ but normal times were relatively debt-free times.

To borrow meant tragedy, and hence the necessity of graciousness on the part of the lender.⁷ The blessing of God meant a debt-free economy.⁸ Mercy toward the needy was to be exercised even when the jubilee year was nigh, loans being made despite the nearness of cancellation time.⁹

Debts were limited by the sabbatical year and jubilee. Debts of money, if not repaid, were cancelled on the seventh year, not of issue but in cycles of forty-nine. The fiftieth year, the jubilee, led to a restoration of foreclosed lands, so that foreclosures were valid to the middle and end of each century (when this law was observed). The land was to rest, to lie fallow, on each seventh year, this being the release of the land as well as of debts.¹⁰ (This following The Babylonian Captivity lasted seventy years because seventy sabbath years were due to the land,¹¹ the captivity coming “To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept the sabbath, to fulfill three-score and ten years.”¹² The release of debts every seventh year¹³ did not apply to foreigners, nor did the jubilee, foreigners here meaning unbelieving foreigners.

At this point, the biblical law is often severely criticized as being partial. The criticism is unjust. The law required justice to all men, Leviticus 19 making clear that our neighbor is every foreigner. To all such, the second table of the law is strictly applied. We must expect all men to keep it, and we must abide by it ourselves. To love our neighbor or enemy means to keep the second table of the law.¹⁴ To love in the biblical sense here used is not an emotional attitude but a keeping of the law in relation to our neighbor. This means respecting his right to life (Thou shalt not kill), the sanctity of his home (Thou shalt not commit adultery), and of his property (Thou shalt not steal), and of his reputation (Thou shalt not bear false witness), and finally, respecting these things in thought (Thou shalt not covet) as well as in deed.

This is the general law of justice. Beyond that, our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honor and justice to all men wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our own. This means first of all our families, for the man who fails to care for his own is worse than an infidel.¹⁵ No special gift could be dedicated to God and accounted acceptable if a man meanwhile failed to provide for his parents.¹⁶ Next in order of concern are fellow believers, true believers. Here, however, no false charity was allowed to

prevail.¹⁷ The biblical laws forbade false charity. But, to the deserving, in addition to gleaning permission, and emergency relief, non-interest loans were made. There was a duty of lending and of paying.¹⁸ Pledges or security could be required to protect the lender, but the law restricted the type of security which could be exacted.¹⁹ The creditor could not enter the home to remove the security but had to wait outside.²⁰ Some pious men required no pledge²³ or else would promptly restore it.²²

Biblical conduct is regulated by relationship, and to subvert this is to lead directly into welfare economics and socialism. If a man must exercise towards all men the same care, oversight, and charity he does towards his own family, then an impossible burden is placed on him. Statist foreign policy places this burden on men, a form of enslavement. Biblical ethics, by calling for justice to all men, brotherly love among believers, and full care for one's own, is an ethics of freedom and responsibility. Every system of "universal" ethics is at one and the same time a system of universal slavery. A man's relationship to his wife is ethically different from his relationship to all other women, and the same applies to his children, parents, and relatives. To universalize the relationship is to communize man and the family and to destroy the church. And today the family is weak, and the church very fragile, because of this unbiblical universalism.

Usury to the believer is forbidden²³ first, because this poor man belongs to the people of God and has lost a measure of freedom through troubles and needs help, and second, usury adds to his burden. The believer is to avoid debt, because, as God's servant, he cannot be men's servant. Leviticus 25:36, 37 held to no interest on loans to a believer, and no limitation on interest to an unbeliever. This is restated in Deuteronomy 23:19,20 with reference to foreigners, i.e., unbelievers.

Thus, years 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 49, and 50 of each fifty-year cycle called for sabbaths of the land and of debts. Two very important principles are clearly apparent here:

1. The believer cannot mortgage his future. His life belongs to God, and he cannot sell out his tomorrows to men, nor bind his family's or country's future. This means that long-term personal loans, deficit financing, and national debts involve paganism. What we cannot do to ourselves we cannot permit either our families or our fellow believers to do to themselves. A country which is Christian is similarly to be governed. But we cannot expect unbelievers to live by our faith or by

God's law; and to allow them the liberty of their way is no sin, providing we deal justly with them.

2. The land also belongs to God. As Scripture repeatedly affirms, "The earth is the Lord's." The land therefore must be used in conformity to His law.

The believer lives in a world of unbelievers, and commercial credit is the order of the day. Interest is not

condemned in the New Testament,²⁴ but debt on the part of believers is to be avoided.²⁵ However, the intrusion of Babylonian practices into the temple met with Christ's whip.²⁶ The believer must be in the world but not of the world.²⁷

The modern system of commercial credit is, like the Babylonian, a form of *slavery*. The Civil War saw the abolition of limited *private* slavery, involving three million people, and the imposition of slavery to the state and the furtherance of slavery to financial interests. Some people are by nature slaves, demanding total security of a master, employer, or of the state. But to impose slavery on our children is no less a sin.²⁸

The Sabbath and Jubilee Years again are central. These were types, as was the weekly Sabbath, of the restoration of paradise and the work of Christ. Man ceases from working because he knows it is God's work of grace that saves him. All days of rest in other religions are imitations of biblical faith. No day of rest existed otherwise. Other religions, Babylonian and Pharisaic, are in essence and practice *works* religions. Christianity, as was true Old Testament faith, is not; hence, it rests in worship to indicate that salvation is not man's work. The rest of the land involved confidence that God's bounty would more than replenish what was lost by man's inactivity. DeTocqueville commented on the importance of the Christian Sabbath in the American republic. The decline of that day of rest has gone hand in hand with the rise of a works religion and a credit economy which mortgages man's future. The deeper significance of this external parallel is that civil slavery is the analogue of spiritual blindness and bondage. But, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."²⁹

The difference between the Babylonian and biblical outlooks has been cited; it remains now to develop it briefly. Economic man had high authority in Babylonian culture. **War was seen in essentially economic terms and as a means to economic power.** To the Bab-

ylonians of Nebuchadnezzar's day, "What mattered to them, so far as the king's victories were concerned, was not the glory of battle so much as the fact that it was a means of consolidating their economic supremacy!"

The roots, however, lie deeper, back into the Old Babylonian period of Hammurabi and earlier. There was a class known as *tamkaru* (singular *tamkarum*). The word *tamkarum* can be translated as merchant, broker, merchant banker, money-lender, and government agent.³¹ Fulfilling all these functions, he was an able instrument of imperial power, in that, long before any armies marched, **he had bound foreign powers to himself both hand and foot.** This same policy characterized Assyria, and Nahum cited as a central sin of Assyria before God that it had "multiplied merchants above the stars of heaven,"³² i.e., **exercised economic slavery** in one area after another. The Babylonians were money-lenders not only out of dedicated policy but with fervor, zest, and relish. One of their proverbs expresses this outlook clearly: "The giving of a loan is like making love; the returning of a loan is like having a son born."³³ They were thus a breed of proud and happy Shylocks. **Their whole world of business moved in terms of credit financing, and their whole concept of social control and of imperialism rested on usury.** It is not surprising that Babylon the Great, the harlot, is the type in Revelation of the one-world order which shall seduce all nations.

For biblical economy, loans are not the basis of normal operation as with Babylon, but of abnormal circumstances. As such, and definitely as such, they have their place, but they operate in terms of implicit as well as explicit restrictions. Two kinds of loans were recognized: to the believer without usury but with security, and to the unbeliever, with usury and security. But in both instances the presupposition is that something *real*, in goods or in money, is transferred, a tangible asset involving only the two parties to the contract. Modern banking, however, is radically different. Banks "create" money by fiat and by the unilateral action of simply recording a loan and a deposit on their books. The consequence is, not the personal and limited action of a biblical loan, but inflation, the dilution of the prior relationship of money units to total goods and services. As a result, there is a dilution of all money, and such "loans" mean an element of robbery in that they reduce the value of all other money units previously in existence. Fractional reserves and modern central banking (i.e., the Federal Reserve System) are modern applica-

tions of the old Babylonian principles and are equally conducive to the dream of empire.

Prior to the introduction of central banking, the ability to create fiat money was relatively limited, and it depended in large measure on the confidence of individuals in the local bank. Today, the instrument of control has passed to the larger units, and the Federal Reserve System, its directors and stockholders, the Treasury Department, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and other agencies are engaged in manipulating the money supply. In 1959, "Federal Reserve notes comprised 90% of paper money in circulation and 84% of total money in circulation."³⁴

Biblical law is hostile to this pyramiding of credit. (Compounding interest, ed.) It is premised on immediate responsibility, whereas the Babylonian and modern systems evade immediate responsibility. Today, the law penalizes the individual with almost unlimited liabilities, so that every kind of insurance is necessary for the individual as homeowner, driver, and parent (in the event that his child blackens a bully's eyes). On the other hand, corporate irresponsibility is fostered by limited liability laws which, over a period of time, separate property from control, ownership from management, and **management from responsibility.** Social irresponsibility is thus furthered, and the responsible man hamstrung. Biblical faith declares that a personal God created every fact in the universe, so that every fact is a personal fact. Impersonality is thus ruled out of the universe. As we deal with ourselves and everything under the sun, we deal also with our very personal Creator. Any attempt to introduce impersonality into the universe is to that degree an attempt to separate the universe from the government of God.³⁵ The impersonal economics of Babylon and of today are thus anti-biblical and are attempts to substitute fiat "creations" of man for the absolute government of God. As such, they incur the wrath of God, whose advance judgment Scripture proclaims: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen... And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her..."³⁶ In terms of this comes the summons, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."³⁷

In conclusion, in Scripture interest was legal for loans which were not charity loans. Debt was not to be a normal thing or a way of life. Debt was an emergency, or "need," matter, not normally a consumption loan, and only a severely conservative production loan.

• END NOTES

¹ See W. H. Bennett, "Debt," in James Hastings, ed., *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 579f. ² Exodus 22:25. ³ Genesis 38:18. ⁴ Nehemiah 5:3, 4. ⁵ Isaiah 24:2. ⁶ II Kings 4:1-7. ⁷ Deut. 15:7-11. ⁸ Deut. 15:6; 28:12,44. ⁹ Ps. 37:26; 112:5; Prov. 19:17; Ex. 22:25; Deut. 23:19,20; Lev. 25:36,37; Ps. 15:5; Prov. 28:8; Ezek. 18:8-17; 22:12; Neh. 5. ¹⁰ See Ex. 23:10ff; Lev. 25:1ff. ¹¹ Jer. 25:9,12; 26:6,7. ¹² II Chron. 36:21. ¹³ Deut. 15:1-6. ¹⁴ Matt. 19:18,19; Rom. 13:8, 9. ¹⁵ I Timothy 5:8. ¹⁶ Matt. 15:4, 5, 6; Mark 7:11,12. ¹⁷ II Thess. 3:10, 11. ¹⁸ Luke 6:34,35; Rom. 13:8; cf. Matt. 6:12. ¹⁹ Deut. 24:17; 24:6; Job 24:3. ²⁰ Deut. 24:10-13. ²¹ Job 22:6; 24:9. ²² Ezek. 18:7-16; 33:15. ²³ Ex. 22:25. ²⁴ Luke 7:41,42; 19:11-27; Matt. 18:23-35; 25:14-30; Luke 16:1-13. ²⁵ Rom. 13:8,9. ²⁶ Matt. 21:12f; Mark. 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:12-17. ²⁷ John 17:14, 15. ²⁸ Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7. ²⁹ II Chron. 7:14. ³⁰ Albert Champdor: *Babylon*, (New York: J. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), 114. ³¹ H. W E Saggs: *The Greatness that Was Babylon*, p. 287f. New York: Hawthorn, 1962. ³² Nahum 3:16. ³³ Saggs, p. 290. ³⁴ Thomas C. Cochrane, Wayne Andrews, eds.: *Concise Dictionary of American History*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), 711. ³⁵ In 1664, Thomas Mun, in *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade*, espoused usury in terms of its purely impersonal values to England. This scientism and impersonalism were commended without any attempt to deal systematically with the Christian issues involved. Mun was republished in 1949 by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, and is an excellent example of good, non-theistic economic thought. ³⁶ Rev. 18:2, 11. ³⁷ Rev. 18:4.

(Emp added. "*Usury and Cosmic Impersonalism*". *The Politics of Guilt and Pity*, pp 246-253. *The Craig Press, 1970*. My first wife and I were able to live debt free on a very limited income of a church staff member. It can be done with serious determination and commitment. Bettie and I have been able to live debt free due to God's very real and gracious providential supply above all we could ask or think: acts of providence we do not wish on anyone. Death of spouses.)

Comments

We as a society are in this terrible "debt bondage" situation because religious leaders have failed to take seriously and develop the implications of Paul's words, "Owe no man anything". Debt bondage makes a society susceptible to literal and physical bondage.

1) Sabbath for the land... Though God promised better production by letting the land rest, debt and taxes forbids such a practice today. I spoke with a farmer recently who said that some years ago, his property tax was less than \$2,000. Today it is \$25,000. As I have mentioned in the past, when expensive, fancy new schools were built here, the old buildings were left standing. It is very common to see the one room buildings from the early 1900s still standing, and many are being used. The

larger buildings in local communities are still standing, and being used. The taxpayers have given their property to the local schools by approving the school levies "for the children" (to be taught serious antichrist doctrine, I should add).

2) Biblically, debt was a sign of poverty, or of tragic emergency.

3) The blessings of God meant a debt-free economy.

4) A welfare economy enslaves a man to the same responsibility to all men as he has toward his own family. God requires the first responsibility to man's own family.

5) "The believer is to avoid debt, because, as God's servant, he cannot be man's servant." Pro 22:7, "*the borrower is servant to the lender.*" for "*You cannot serve God and Mammon,*" Mat 6:24. Non-emergency debt, consumer debt, normally shows one is strongly influenced, if not controlled by covetousness. We certainly are not against "nice things", but Scripture is very much against "nice things" if "nice things require servitude to a lender. In Phil 4:11, 1 Tim 6:8, Heb 13:5, God defines covetousness as idolatry. Covetousness means we love those things enough to become a servant to another in order to obtain those unneeded items, Col 3:5. It is interesting to note how many times covetousness is listed with fornication: Rom 1:29, Eph 5:3, Colossians 3:5. Covetousness means that we are controlled by the lust of the eye and the pride of life.

War and Debt

6) Debt is a form of slavery just as sure as one is being taken captive in a battle. The "official" view of the Civil War is that it was to free the slaves. However, the North's cry against slavery was simply a smokescreen to control the Calvinistic South, and to establish a new, harsher slave master: Big Banks. (The North must get the credit for bringing in the slaves and selling them in the South.)

"*Blood Money: The Civil War and the Federal Reserve*". (By John Graham)

"The author chronicles how the divisive antagonisms between the North and South, finally erupting in the spring of 1861, were deliberately agitated by great international banking houses with the goal of provoking secession. According to Graham, these private interests fully succeeded and set up a huge financial empire centered on Wall Street, using public debt as the source of their wealth. This watershed book explores the economic causes of the Civil War, revealing how the Civil War would not have happened had it not been planned and fomented by Northern capitalists."

And they continue to use the public debt as their source of wealth.

For 75 years we have heard the abolitionist screaming for freedom from slavery to other men, but not a mention of slavery to the banks. Nor is there a public outcry against modern slavery that has produced more slaves than the South ever held. Furthermore, the fact that the Arabian Muslims have been and are the chief propagators of terrible slavery is never mentioned.

7) **Debt mortgages the future** of the believer, as he sells his tomorrows to men.

8) **Deficit financing has been the way of life** both for our nation and individuals since World War II.

9) **Along with debt bondage** comes spiritual blindness and bondage.

War was seen in economic terms as a means to centralize economic power in the hands of the state.

Before the ancient armies marched against their enemies, the pagan nations like Babylon and Assyria sent in the *Shylocks*, that is, ruthless moneylenders who provided easy money at exorbitant interest rates. These debt merchants persuaded the people to become slaves to the foreign lenders, and thus they were easily subdued; they were already slaves with a slave mentality.

The modern banks' ability to create money by fiat has given them great power to gather all real property under their control, and to also make the citizens slaves of the central government.

"The impersonal economics of Babylon and of today are thus anti-biblical and are attempts to substitute fiat "creations" of man for the absolute government of God. As such, they incur the wrath of God, whose advance judgment Scripture proclaims: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen... And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her... " In terms of this comes the summons, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." "

Come out of the Babylonian System:

2Ch 7:14 *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

What God requires of his people:

First, turn from pride and self-sufficiency. Turn to humble and faithful obedience to every word that proceeds out of the mouth of our God; that is, His total law-word. Prayer without turning from evil and to obe-

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dience is wasted breath.

Second, turn from covetousness. Learn to be content with such things as the Lord provides when we use our God-given abilities for the glory of God, and not for our own glory. Notice how Christians freely and glibly quote 2 Chronicles 7:14, yet they have no idea of what that means. They have no desire nor will to depart from the Babylonian system of debt bondage. Are we not told to come out from the Babylonian system (debt bondage), so we will not be partakers of her plagues. (Rev18:4) Can we expect the heathen to turn from their sin when God's people will not admit to, repent and turn from their sin?

Third, turn from servitude to men. Pay off all debt as soon and as much as possible, for that *system* is financed by compound interest on printing press money.

Fourth, turn from letting the Babylonians train our children. (Jer 10:2)

Bro Need

Please keep in touch, and let us know when you are address changes. Also, let us know if you want to be dropped from this mailing list.

MAY YOU HAVE A GENUINELY THANKFUL
THANKSGIVING, A CHRIST HONORING CHRISTMAS AND
A GLORIOUS NEW YEAR IN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. I
WILL SOON HAVE THE NEXT LESSON IN HEBREWS READY
TO SEND OUT. OTHERWISE, WE WILL BE BACK IN TOUCH
WITH THE REST OF YOU AFTER THE NEW YEAR.

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