

Duties are ours; events are God's

"...Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"--2 Corinthians 3:17

The Baptist Examiner™

Baptist Is Our Middle Name

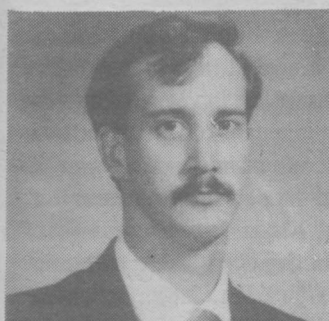
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"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is not light in them"--Isaiah 8:20

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TREATING THE WELL INSTEAD OF THE SICK

By Pastor Rick Presley, Gethsemane Baptist Church, Columbus, Ohio



"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance". (Matt. 9:10-13).

What do you think it would be like if you went to a doctor all covered in huge purplish-red blotches, your eyes were yellow, you had a racking cough that made your breath come in gasps and wheezes and when the physician shows up he takes one startled look at you and says, "I can't treat you. You're sick! Get out of my office at once!" We would consider such a medical practitioner to be woefully misguided about his role in the health care field. Jesus ran into a similar problem with the religious leaders of His day in the text cited above. He was seen associating with people who were spiritual hotbeds of contagion. Their lives were infested with parasitic depravity and their bodies racked with the effects of a debauched

lasciviousness. Their spiritual health was abominable. When the Pharisees criticized Him for associating with such people He responded with rebuke that contrasted their hypocrisy with His own submissive humility and compassion. Jesus told them that these were exactly the people He came to this world to save.

Imagine attending the office of a doctor who only treats the well. A visit to his office would allow you to sit in comfort and safety knowing that you wouldn't catch some horrid, debilitating disease from his patients. The clientele would be much more pleasant and attractive than a waiting room full of people struggling with sickness and infirmity. Most emergency room waiting areas are not cheerful places where people gather cheerfully for social intercourse. In an office of well people the atmosphere would be

much more upbeat and positive than a typical emergency room. The working conditions for the doctor would be more pleasant and attractive for him too. His patients would be much more socially acceptable inside and out of the office. Not only that, but they would also be much easier to get along with and would be more sympathetic to the doctor's needs.

Sick people are generally more concerned with their own feelings than the doctor's feelings. They tend to be insensitive toward the doctor and are quite demanding of his time and require his undivided attention to their every little complaint. They expect him to listen patiently and carefully to their list of symptoms. Illness makes people cranky and critical of the doctor if he doesn't give them what they consider to be the proper amount of care. All in all,

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Interim Pastor Jack C. Whitt



SPIRITUAL DIAGNOSIS

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5). Webster's dictionary defines the word, Diagnosis as; 1) The art of identifying a disease from its signs or symptoms, 2) Investigation or

analysis of the cause or nature of a condition. Perhaps the more common thoughts on this word are associated with the medical diagnosis of a person relative to his state of physical health or maybe the mechanical diagnosis of an automobile to determine why its not running right.

In our text verse another kind of

diagnosis is implied when it says: **"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith."** This examination has to do with the spiritual state of man. In comparison to the other two mentioned, it has by far a greater need in heeding and a far greater benefit to all who would seriously

(Continued on page 2)

FOLLY OF MORTAL UNBELIEF

Part I

By Ray Waugh, Sr.
(Now with the Lord)



First of all, we can know that any of the so-called "Churches that array themselves against the plain teaching of the Holy Infallible Word of God have never been, are not now, and never will be Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. Second, those who align themselves as members of the so-called "Churches" and whose faith has never been placed in the Lord Jesus Christ have never been saved, are not now saved, and unless they place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ while they live in their mortal bodies, they never will be saved.

The Scriptures are very plain, and they are most exact that, **"It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment"** (Hebrews 9:27). Therefore, anyone who supposes that there is something they can do or something any one else can do for the deceased after the mortal breath of a person has ceased and the blood no longer flows quite obviously does not understand the Word of God. We need to realize that according to the Word of God, anyone who has died already has determined his or her destiny to be eternity in "Heaven" with God and the Lord Jesus Christ, or in "Hell" that was **"prepared for the devil and his angels"** (Matt. 25:41).

Our President of these United States may come on national radio

and television and ask the people of America to pray for those who have died in the explosion in Oklahoma. We can know, however, that his words are unscriptural, and that they really are "wasted air." In the face of the tragedy that has transpired, he may suppose that with such words he is providing a measure of personal comfort for many. Our President may be most sincere in attempting to lead those who have survived this tragedy to presume that there is something they can do or that there is something that others can do for them after they have died.

God's Holy Infallible and Immutable Word, thankfully, assures us that only while we abide in our fleshly mortality can we do anything that will effect our eternal destiny. The Word of God is absolute, and as we already have noted, it is truth that is forever unmistakable, **"It is appointed unto man [or woman] once to die, but after this the judgment"** (Heb. 9:27).

Amazingly, but understandably, Satan, even now is **"the prince and the power of the air"** (Eph. 2:2). Therefore, though we may look for and find some mortal culprits upon whom we may lay blame for such tragedy, we can know that Satan always is involved in all such tragedies. Too, we learn in the Word of God that as **"The god of this world,"** Satan **"hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"** (2 Cor. 4:4). Therefore, Satan has been able to take advantage even of the Oklahoma terrorist tragedy and the mind of our President of these United States for his own evil purposes.

By his use of the words of an
(Continued on page 6)

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

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THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

JULY 1, 1997

PAGE TWO

Editor's Update

By Interim Pastor Jack C. Whitt

Greetings to one and all in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. It is again my privilege to bring to you our July edition of TBE. I truly hope the articles contained herein will be a blessing to all our readers. I wish especially to say to all those who submit articles featured each month, to our forum writers and others who send us poems, how much I appreciate them taking time out from their busy schedules in writing us and helping us maintain the high standards and reputation our paper has enjoyed. Because of the efforts and study of God's Word, which these writers have shown, many people have benefited over the years. I know this to be true from the mail I receive.

This month's mailing list will be greatly reduced, as I have been announcing in the past several issues. This, of course, being due to those who failed to renew subscriptions. Also, we have not heard from many on our list who have life-time subscriptions. We have learned that some of such have been deceased. For this reason, we are trying to bring our mailing list up to date, and would request that anyone now receiving TBE for a deceased life-time subscriber would please let us know this so that we may correct our records accordingly. If our paper is being received by anyone such as stated or if for any reason the paper is no longer desired, please let us know. We want our paper to come to all who want it, but if it is not being read or is thrown out with the junk mail, we are wasting our resources in sending it.

"The Baptist Examiner" is a mission outreach of our church and I don't mind saying, I believe it is worthy of support from all who receive it. In fact, I am asking that some of you, especially pastors, encourage your churches to begin supporting this work. It would be much appreciated and I think God would bless you for it. We do so much appreciate those individuals and the few churches that do support this work. To those who may be interested or desire a financial disclosure of the cost for publication of TBE, we would gladly provide such statement on request. The work here at Calvary Baptist Church is going very well. Visitors continue to come and we continue seeking God's will, that He will be glorified in every service. Until next time, God be with you all!

SPIRITUAL DIAGNOSIS

(Continued from page 1)

follow through with all that is implied and commanded.

Most people today spend lots of time (and money) on physical examinations, they want to live as long as they can, and to have good health while they are living. Nothing wrong with that. Doctor's offices are crowded and people seem willing to wait whatever time it takes, hoping the doctor will provide that assurance of a clean bill of health or a medication that will make them feel better. Now, I am in no way degrading the need for doctors, nurses, and hospitals. In fact, they are a vital need in the world and I thank God for all truly dedicated medical professionals. It is however, unfortunate, so many

people concerned for their physical state of health, take so little thought of their spiritual need. While doctors' offices are crowded, most of our church houses are not. Thousands gladly receive counsel and medicines from their physician but want little or nothing to do with the greatest counselor and physician of all time, that is, Jesus Christ, the Righteous One who comforts and heals His people. Jesus spoke these words in the gospel of Luke: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18,19). How many

PASTOR REQUESTS HELP

Pastor Lonnie Badger of Mud Creek Baptist Church Stanville, Ky. is requesting some financial assistance for the purpose of moving into a building that he and his church have purchased through a financial arrangement with a local bank. The building is located in Tram, Ky. off US Hwy. 23. Their financial need is for repairs to the building which is estimated at \$5000.00. Another church has almost new pews that they can buy for \$2400.00. If anyone can help out, it would be greatly appreciated. This building has been the answer to their prayers. Brother Badger is a sound Baptist preacher. He may be contacted by phone: (606) 478-2772 or (606) 478-5277. Church address: Mud Creek Baptist Church, P.O. Box 101, Stanville, KY 41659

people are there today who need the healing hand of Jesus? The One who can heal that broken heart, the One who can deliver those still captive to sin, who can open blind eyes to see their need of salvation and to be born again through the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

God's Holy Word has the answer for man's sickness and unlike medical doctors that cost money, His prescription is free. Listen! "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." (Isa. 55:1,2). How many people today are laboring in vain, spending money on things that satisfy not, when all the while, the only one thing can satisfy is to trust Jesus and be saved? Yes, physical health is good to have but is only temporary. To be spiritually healthy is so much greater; to know Jesus has saved us and to experience daily His love, mercy and grace, what could be more important?

Again, our text calls for a self-examination: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." Yes, if we would concern ourselves with our spiritual state of health, as much as our physical, men and women would be getting right with God. The Lord's houses would start filling up with repenting sinners, both of those being saved and many, though

already saved, but living for the world and denying God His rightful place in their lives. Just as Peter speaks of Lot: "For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." (2 Pet. 2:8). A serious self-examination would provoke all of us to praying more, loving more, finding more reasons to live for just causes, more reasons to praise God for His mercy and grace. Spiritual diagnosis might make some realize they have need to stop living in sin. The man and woman living outside the bonds of marriage will want to marry. The married couple may see the need to show more love to each other, to take their proper places in the home, to start raising their children in the FEAR AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD. Self-examination may make pastors more concerned with their flock and to preach with Holy Spirit conviction as they exhort and encourage the members to obedience to live godly lives. Friend, I ask in true concern for you soul: Have you had a self-examination lately? There is one diagnosis that is common to all mankind: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). Reader, both you and I have been diagnosed with the disease of sin. Because of sin we will die physically, but thanks be to God, because of Jesus Christ, we can have eternal life in believing He died in our place on the cross at Calvary, and that He rose from the grave for our justification.

Friend, how does your spiritual diagnosis read?



The Baptist Examiner Bible Study Lesson

By Kirk R. Everman
Member Calvary Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee

"Study to shew
thyself approved
unto God..."
2 Tim. 2:15

Studies in Genesis Housecleaning (Gen. 35:1-15)

Our last study concluded with Jacob expressing his concern of the consequences of his sons' massacre of the inhabitants of Shechem in response to Shechem's attack on their sister Dinah. The plan executed by Simeon and Levi considered the possibility of retaliation by the men of the city. However, as voiced by Jacob, the neighboring inhabitants of the land would likely rise up and attack Jacob and his family. There is an important lesson presented here: regardless of details and planning, it is impossible to control all of the consequential effects that ripple outward from our actions.

It is at this point that God intervenes, providing direction to Jacob: **"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother"** (v.1).

In response to God's message, Jacob prepares his people to worship God. **"Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went"** (v. 2-3).

It is pleasing to observe their obedience to Jacob's direction. **"And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem"** (v. 4). We must note, however, that it requires dire circumstances for Jacob to remove their objects of idolatry and vain worship.

"And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the

sons of Jacob" (v. 4-5). As Jacob and his camp travel to Bethel, it appears that Jacob's concern about retaliation from the surrounding cities was valid. God provides for their safe journey. This serves as an encouraging and challenging reminder that our primary responsibility is obedience to that which God has instructed. It is not to solve situations or to conquer circumstances.

"So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother" (v. 6-7). If we recall from our study of Genesis 28, Jacob worships El-bethel, meaning the God of Bethel (or the God of the house of God). For indeed, God who had promised to bring Jacob back safely to this land has been faithful to do it (see Gen. 28:15).

Verse 8 describes additional significance for this place Bethel. It says that Deborah, who previously was mentioned in Gen. 24:59 as the nurse to Rebekah, Jacob's mother, died and **"was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth,"** meaning "oak of weeping."

Next, there is the reminder of God's blessing to Jacob at Peniel. **"And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel"** (v. 9-10).

At this new altar, Almighty God (El Shaddai) further reveals additional details to the promises he had given to Jacob in Gen. 28:13-15). **"And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the land**

which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him" (v. 11-13).

Jacob establishes a memorial of the place where God gave him the promises established previously with Abraham and Isaac. **"And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel"** (v. 14-15).

No Substitutions

This passage begins following a period of darkness within Jacob's household including acts of violence and revenge. It begins with God speaking to Jacob providing him with instructions for a journey to take and actions to perform at the destination. It begins with God, whose presence is a holy and unfading light which exposes completely.

Jacob leads his family on the instructed journey. First, however, he directs his household to put off their old ways and to be cleansed. As they bury their articles of worship toward strange gods, there is probably an automatic response in the heart of the believer that practically shouts "Good thing! It should have been done sooner." The fact that Jacob failed for so long to either recognize or take action regarding this behavior is bothersome. We must take into account that Jacob's life preceded God's explicit commandment against idolatry that He gave to Moses at Mt. Sinai (see Ex. 20:3-5).

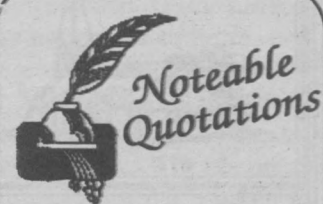
Yet, even without this commandment we can see a very practical recognition of this principle from Jacob's experience. Jacob's household found themselves in a desperate situation. There is only one God who hears the cry of His people, who delivers His people, and who establishes and fulfills His promises. There is only one God!

To worship and to trust in creations instead of the Creator is, at the very least, foolishness and vanity. God compares such behavior to the painful wrong of unfaithfulness within the marriage commitment. (Rom. 1:18-25; Ezek. 16; Hosea 4).

From this we see that God is concerned with whom, or what, we worship. In our lives we may not carry around carved images, but as it has been recognized often before, we may put other things in the place of honor and preeminence in our hearts and lives. God is also concerned with how we worship Him. In the life of a believer seeking to grow in the Lord, there is danger that we substitute the busyness of Christian activities with worshipping God. This is not a call to laziness; rather it is a reminder that the balanced life of a believer must include time where we sit at the feet of the Master without distraction of the heart's attention. To "run, and not be weary" and to "walk, and not faint" result not from building endurance and stamina, but are actions proceeding from and intertwined with the leading of God.

Finally, we take note of God's conversation with Jacob at Bethel. He did not give Jacob entirely new promises, but he reminded and added detail to those which had already been established. This time, however, it was in the presence of Jacob's household who had not previously been to Bethel, where God first revealed himself to Jacob. Sometimes it is not new knowledge that we require, but a reminder of what we already know. Perhaps in the coming days, you will have the opportunity to share with someone an old, old story concerning an old, rugged cross through which you became a new creation.

*Prayer is not the least
but the most
we can do for another
human being.*



Posterity-You will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it...JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

What we obtain too cheaply, we esteem too lightly, it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a price upon its goods, and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.
-THOMAS PAYNE, 1776

For the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of the Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor...DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The propitious smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which heaven itself has ordained. -GEORGE WASHINGTON, 1789

My God! how little do my countrymen know what precious blessings they are in possession of, and which no other people on earth enjoy!
-THOMAS JEFFERSON

The spirit of man is more important than mere physical strength, and the spiritual fiber of a nation than its wealth... DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

The moral principles and precepts contained in the Scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws. All the miseries and evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery, and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible.
-NOAH WEBSTER

When a man enters Christian work for money, there is the devil to pay



The Baptist Examiner Pulpit Forum

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT
THE BAPTIST EXAMINER, P.O. BOX 60, ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060



Will the return of Jesus (His second advent) be noisy and spectacular and witnessed by all mankind or will it be secret, known only to the saved?

EDITOR'S NOTE -

Due to illness, Bro. Lenegar was unable to submit his forum answer in this issue. Please pray that God would improve his health allowing his ministry of pastoring and writing to continue.

GEORGE R. SLEDD

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"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." (Rev. 1:7 AV) This scripture is part of the opening statements of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It sets the tone for the whole revelation of the last times. So at the commencement of this apocalypse, it states that Christ is to return to the earth and **"EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM."** It is so evident that the Jewish nation shall see Him returning. This is simply the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." (Zech. 12:9-10 AV). This will be a day of great salvation for Israel. The Apostle Paul refers to this in relation to the second coming of the Lord. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away godliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Rom. 11:26-27 AV). So we know that many unconverted Jews will see Him coming and be saved. The unsaved will see Him coming and "wail because of Him." I believe this coming of Christ corresponds with the opening of the sixth seal in Revelation 6:15-17. **"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every**

bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountain; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6 AV). It is the beginning of God's wrath being poured out upon the earth and mankind.

What kind of corporeal manifestations will attend this momentous event? Jesus described it this way: **"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."** (Matt. 24:29-30 AV). The connection of the words of the Lord Jesus, Paul, and John the Revelator, certainly indicate that this coming of Christ to earth will be dramatic. There will be earthquakes, stars falling from the sky,

and signs in the heavens. This does not sound like something only the elect will see. I believe everyone on earth will definitely know that the end has arrived. They will know that the Sovereign King Jesus is coming back. The best part of this is that God's children will be caught up to meet him in the air. They will return with him at the final judgment. Praise God, they will not endure the final outpouring of the wrath of God.

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The second advent of Christ or the return of Jesus Christ, while spoken of as one event, will actually be a series of events.

First it will be the return of Christ in the air for His people, Second will be the seven (7) year tribulation period and third the return of Christ on the earth to sit on the throne of David to reign for one thousand (1000) years. (There will be many things take place during these three events such as

the wedding feast, the marriage of the lamb, the saints' judgment and receiving of awards, etc.).

Obviously when Christ returns as King it will be well known as He will bring His army with Him and the battle of Armeggedon will take place and He will reign and rule over the entire world.

I'm sure the question is concerning the return of Christ in the air for his people at the time known as the rapture. The account of this is easily seen as described in 1 Thess. 4:13-18. Verse 16 says, **"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."** Now, this is when the saved will be raised (both the dead and the living) and the rest of the world will be left to go through the tribulation period (when God's wrath will be poured out). Yes indeed it will be heard but, as it was when Paul was saved, no one will understand what it was. The scientists and liberal media will come up with an explanation that will satisfy everyone and thus be able to explain away what happened and answer the question about the numbers of people who suddenly turned up missing.

CLOSE TO THE FENCE By Irene Orrick

I liked to go to Granny's house for several reasons. Probably the biggest reason was that Cousin Yvonne, two years older than I, lived with Granny. Though Yvonne was more lady than I and didn't like the rougher games that I chose, there were some things we mutually enjoyed. We liked playing dolls and house, or paper people, for example. Too, we each had a weakness for candy, chocolate drops, to be specific., And Yvonne was allowed to go to the Leedy General Store almost any afternoon. That was another thing that drew me to Granny's.

I would get cleaned up in the galvanized wash tub if it was on a Saturday, in the white enameled wash pan if it was a weekday, put on a clean feedsack dress, beg a nickel for my pocket, and go over the hill to Granny's., After playing a little while with the dolls, Cousin and I would head for the store. That may sound tame and uneventful to those who were brought up in the city and had only to watch out for cars on the way to get candy. But between Granny's house and Wick Leedy's store there was a right sizeable woods. In the woods Wick pastured a small herd of cows and a not-so-small bull. Anyone reared in the country knows that a bull merits about the same respect as an African lion. I would point out, however, that a bull is much bigger. Why would I risk going through a woods where a mean bull, much bigger than a lion, might turn up at any time? The drawing power of a nickel bag of penny chocolate drops is tremendous. Why would Granny allow it? Well, a fence ran through the woods at a pretty good angle for us to stay reasonably close to. Also the woods was full of good climbing trees. As we left the yard each time and set out on the path that led past the spring house, then down the hill and into the woods, Granny would call after us, "Stay close to the fence!"

Let me tell you, the possibility that at any turn in the path we might come head to horn with that big bull discouraged any stopping to build a playhouse, or engaging in even a quick game of hide and seek through the trees. The dread of the bull kept us straight on the path and close to the fence.

Satan serves much the same function in life as that mean bull did in the woods. We Christians can't look ourselves in the house or church to keep from meeting Satan and temptation. To be of any service to Christ, to have the sheer joy of living in Him, we must get out into the world. Certainly we can expect to encounter Satan around any twist in the path or behind any tree. He will be there more than once. But we have some good climbing trees: the Word, prayer, and fellowship with other Christians. Most very presence and power of Christ, Satan may catch us on his horns and give us a good spiritual goring.

"Keep close to the Fence!"

TREATING THE

(Continued from page 1)

the sick are generally unpleasant to deal with compared to people who are well. While an office with no sick people might be more pleasant and easier on the doctor, the main difficulty with this scenario is that the doctor isn't doing what he was called to do. His whole training, career and desire should be to treat the sick and if that isn't what he is doing, why should he be a doctor at all?

We can easily see why this makes perfect sense for the medical profession, but too often we fail to apply such a common sense approach to our view of the ministry and Christian service. I once had a pastor complain to me about his congregation making all sorts of demands on his time. His people actually expected him to make visits to all the church members who were in the hospital! He was expected to counsel those who were experiencing spiritual difficulties and attend to their needs. He confided that they were wearing him out with all the things they expected him to do and he still had to make time to prepare his sermons. It wasn't long after voicing these complaints that he left that particular church for a much less demanding ministry. Imagine the effrontery of a congregation who expected their pastor to actually make visits. These same people probably expected their doctors to treat sick people too.

Jesus addressed three areas of concern in His reply to the legalistic detractors He and His disciples faced. His first concern was the need of the people, the second was the attitude of the people providing the care. The

third area that Jesus addressed was concerning the purpose of his work here on this earth. It is important that we not only recognize Jesus' purpose for coming to this world but in doing so to formulate a proper purpose for our efforts. If we decline our ministries primarily to make ourselves comfortable, then we run afoul of the ministry of the Lord we claim to be serving.

The Expectation of Service

As the text indicates, Jesus did not come to this earth to treat the well. He associated Himself with those who were in need of healing. This put Him in contact with the blind, lame and crippled in society. None of these people were able to provide incomes for themselves and subsided on begging for handouts. Consequently, they were not acceptable in the social circle of many of the Pharisees and other religious types in Jesus' day. Jesus also associated with those who were lepers and demon possessed, the pariahs and outcasts, people scrabbling for an existence on the fringes of society. Certainly these people were unlikely to associate with the religious elite of orthodox Jewry nor would they be welcomed by such pious men. Because of Jewish superstition, it was widely held by the general populace that God had withheld His blessings from these people because they were sinners or because of some terrible sin that their parents had committed and as such rated the epithet of "unclean". These weren't the worst people that Jesus chose to include in His circle of acquaintances according to the righteous of His day. It was the tax collectors and other public servants that drew such vituperative criticism from the

Pharisees. They were trained and certainly unworthy of the Lord's attention. They were traitors to the Jewish people who were profiteering off hard earned tax money immorally raised under the authority of the imperial Roman dictatorship. The Pharisees hated these government officials with a passion only a Zionist would understand. They were incensed when Jesus failed to mirror their concerns and attitudes. Yet these despised sinners were the very people Jesus came to save.

The first thing we need to recognize in Jesus' reply is the group of people who are most in need of God's help. The medical teams that specialize in trauma have a term for the practice of rating the severity of an accident victim's wounds called *triage*. In a triage setting, those patients with a worse condition get treated ahead of those in a better condition so that the patient with chest pains and shortness of breath gets treated ahead of a person with a splinter in his finger. Jesus applies this same principle to the spiritual realm in the text above. Those in the worst spiritual shape get the earliest and most aggressive treatment while those in relatively better shape wait their turn. This is not to say that the self-righteous are going to get to heaven. Usually Jesus' response to them was to treat them as if they DOA (Dead on Arrival) because they were unlikely to respond to any kind of treatment. To put the situation of spiritual triage in a medical context, response to treatment is the rule of thumb. It is more likely that a person who just lost his leg in a motorcycle accident is going to seek immediate medical attention than someone who is suffering from a

mild case of hypertension and slight dizziness. It is also more likely that someone who is in spiritually desperate condition is more likely to respond to the gospel than someone who is a "good" person and feels that he is in pretty good standing with God. The task for us then, is to ask ourselves the question, "Who are we trying to treat?" Are we looking for the patients who only need bandages or the ones who need a trauma team? Are we practicing spiritual triage by seeking out those who are vile sinners about to drop into the pits of hell or wasting our efforts with trying to treat those who feel they don't need to see a spiritual doctor, let alone the Great Physician?

The Excuse of Service

Jesus follows His commitment to the sick with a reference to the Old Testament that seems almost cryptic in context. When the first king of Israel, Saul, disobeyed God's command by keeping the best of the Amalekites' animals for sacrifice instead of destroying them, Samuel the prophet asked him, "Does the Lord have as great a delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as he does in obeying the Lord's voice? Look, obedience is better than sacrifice and listening is better than the fat of rams." Saul lost his right to be king because he felt that sacrifice was more important than obeying what God had to say. The Psalmist reinforces this message by declaring the obedience to God is seen in our willingness to extend mercy to those who are in need. Too often though, we would rather be like Namaan and do some great thing rather than simply obey what God says. What are some reasons that we tend to elevate sacrifice above service?

Sacrifice is easier than obedience to God. On the surface it may not appear to be so, but because of the nature of human pride, our predispositions incline us more easily to sacrifice than to godly obedience. The reason is because sacrifice has a personal focus. We can take pride in our sacrifices. We can receive admiration from others for the great sacrifices we make in the name of God. Our sacrifices are usually offered on our terms, not God's. Improper sacrifice focuses attention on what we have done for God instead of what He has done for us. Because of these pride-elevating reasons we have a natural tendency to overestimate the place of sacrifice in our lives. The irony of it all is that even with God's lack of emphasis on sacrifice and our tendency toward elevating it, we do a pitifully small amount of real sacrifice in the final analysis.

Sacrifice may appear to be more impressive in the eyes of others but it has many superiors in the Word of God. It is below obedience to clear commands (1 Samuel 15:22). It follows a broken contrite spirit (Psalm 51:16, 17). Sacrifice is subordinate to repentance (Isaiah 1:11, 18-20) and showing mercy (Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:22; Micah 6:6; Matthew 12:7). With so many things more important than sacrifice, what emphasis should we place on it in relation to godly obedience? Sacrifice needs to be kept in a proper perspective. While it is an essential part of Christian service, it is no substitute for other more important areas of service, namely loving mercy and doing justly.

Are we trying to substitute sacrifice in our lives in the place of treating the sick? I have heard some say, "God didn't call me to be successful. He called me to be faithful." This phrase summarizes the sentiment of someone who is willing to make the sacrifice of personal success in order to avoid the obedience of taking the Word of God to those who really need it. We will make the sacrifice of our time and efforts to reach the unchurched who are clean and respectable but religiously avoid the company and association of those who really need the salvation that the Lord has to offer. Imagine the disappointment of a

(Continued on page 8)

THE SIN OF GOSSIP

- Gossip is the tool of the coward, Christian courage never resorts to the baseness of gossip to achieve its end.
- Gossip is the product of shallow minds. They try to impress others with what they pretend to know.
- Gossip is the diversion of the fool. Wisdom is gainfully employed in the application of knowledge.
- Gossip is like a muddy stream that seeks to find its own level. Sincerity and love will have no part of it.
- Gossip is really lower than a viper; only it strikes without warning.
- Gossip associates itself with lying; and thrives on half truths.
- Gossip is best recognized as sham and pretense, and the effort to seem sincere.
- Gossip is the cruel enemy of homes, destroyer of self-respect, and lacks every element of Christian faith.
- Gossip is the enemy of every godly, consecrated, truth-seeking preacher. He can feel its slimy influence, although it may sometimes be difficult to locate the peddler of its venom.
- Gossip is beneath the real Spirit-filled Christian. Love and gossip never dwell in the same breast.
- Gossip is most productive in the life of the idle. The gossipier and the doer do not exist in the same body.
- No gossipier is friend of the church, an asset to the pastor, or an honor to God.
- Every gossipier is an enemy of the right, an ally of the devil, and a foe of Jesus Christ.

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THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

JULY 1, 1997

PAGE FIVE

FOLLY OF

(Continued from page 1)

apparently-uninformed mortal with respect to the Scriptures, Satan has been able to deceive both the lost and saved. Satan obviously has been able to use the words of Scripturally-uninformed mortal, even our President. Consequently, millions who have been deceived by our President's seemingly-sincere words may suppose that our prayers can help those who have died in that awful explosion. It is no marvel, then, that confusion even more intensely burdens the hearts and the lives of all of the lost who suppose there is something they can do for those who have died.

Spokesman

Sadly, one of the foremost spokesmen of the so-called "Churches of Christ" has similarly and dramatically demonstrated his misunderstanding of the Word of God from another perspective. As a multitude of other leaders of so-called "Churches," he has openly rejected the Holy Word of God and the words of the Apostle Paul. He has done this over his very influential nationwide radio and television program that is called, "In Search of the Lord's Way; a thought with which most religious leaders of the so-called "Churches" doubtless would agree. Despite all of the plain teaching in the Holy Word of God, this mortal man has boldly, brazenly, and with the brashness of a helpless unbeliever said,

"Does the spirit go immediately to its eternal destiny, to Heaven or to Hell? Perhaps you have heard preachers at the funeral of a loved one say something to the effect, 'Your dear mother is right now in Heaven singing in the angel's choir.' Well, I'm sorry, that is a mistake. In the first place, it isn't within him to say where mother is. Funerals are not for the purpose of determining the destiny of the departed spirit or where the deceased will spend eternity. And next, the spirit doesn't go directly into Heaven, if by 'Heaven' one means the eternal dwelling place of God."

Deception

The initial deception in the words of this nationwide spokesman for the so-called "Churches of Christ" is his reference to a redeemed mother singing in "the angels' choir." If

this man and others with a similar opinion had any real understanding of the Word of God and of the redemption that we have by our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they would know that the angels cannot join with the redeemed in the singing in heaven. The angels have never experienced the redemption story that we are "saved by grace through faith" (Eph. 2:8) by means of the blood of the crucified, dead, buried, and resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, as we shall note a little later. The second deception that these cause their millions of parishioners to accept is the thought, "it isn't within him to say where mother is."

The problem that this famed spokesman of the so-called "Churches of Christ" and the leaders in other so-called "Churches" are experiencing is that they have just refused to believe the very plain teaching of the Holy Infallible Word of God. They obviously have determined in their hearts and in their minds that they will not accept the teaching of Jesus, "...Where I am, there ye may also" (John 14:3). They certainly have not come to the place in their thinking where they can accede to the testimony of the dying Stephen who declared most specifically, "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55-56).

Believing

If this famed spokesman of the so-called "Churches of Christ" and those others of a similar mind could simply believe the inspired words that are written of Jesus and of Stephen at the time the unbelieving Jews were stoning Stephen to death, they then could go on and believe the words of the Apostle Paul who was standing there when Stephen died. Apparently, however, these do not believe that the Apostle Paul was taught by the Lord Jesus Christ - not by any mortal or earthly man. Therefore, they apparently can have no confidence in the very plain and the very exact teaching of the Apostle Paul that we shall reference.

Had this man and those others who think similarly simply believed the Apostle Paul, they never should question the fact that

a redeemed mother would go immediately to heaven at the time of her death. Neither would they ever have occasion to question the words of the minister who made this positive declaration. Were they ready to hear and ready to heed the words of the Apostle Paul, they would have been rejoicing in the fact that he said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21) and "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). Surely, the teaching of God concerning the departure of the redeemed from this earth could not have been made any plainer or any more simple for this Church Age! (to be continued next month)

The home is the basic unit
of a civilized society.
A society is only as strong as the
homes within that society.

THE BIBLE



This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is regained, heaven opened, and the gates of hell closed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its delight, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be open at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents.

-author unknown

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH

Jesus told a story in Matthew twenty-five
About five foolish virgins and five who were wise;
They went out with their lamps lit, the Bridegroom to meet,
But he delayed his coming and they all fell asleep.
And then they heard the midnight cry,
Behold, the Bridegroom draweth nigh!

The virgins rose up quickly, their lamps had all burned out,
They must at once relight them and there was no doubt;
The wise ones had brought oil to make sure of their light,
And soon they had them burning, and shining, oh, so bright!
For they had heard the midnight cry,
Behold, the Bridegroom draweth nigh!

The foolish virgins told them, no oil have we brought,
Oh, give us some of your oil, for we are distraught;
The wise ones promptly answered, we have no oil to spare,
But go ye to the sellers, for you can buy some there.
Ready were the wise ones for the midnight cry,
Behold, the Bridegroom draweth nigh!

But while the foolish virgins went to buy again,
The Bridegroom and the Bride came - the wise ones went in;
The foolish ones returned, then, and knocked upon the door,
The Bridegroom said, I know you not, depart forever more!
They had watched for him but what a shame,
They were not ready when he came!

This story has a lesson which we all should learn,
That we should all be ready when Jesus returns;
Be sure you're trusting Jesus, for His own life He gave,
No other way is given whereby we must be saved.
Oh, be ready for the midnight cry,
Behold, the Bridegroom draweth nigh!

-Kathryn Parrish



WHICH WAY, AMERICA?

"One nation...under God!"

What does this mean?

It means that we have this land, this flag, this government as a gift from the Great God Almighty.

It means that this did not become "the land of the free and the home of the brave" by blind fate or a happy set of coincidences, but that a wise and benevolent God was hovering over us from the very hour of conception... and long before.

When Columbus discovered this land, he took a cross in his own hands, and planted it upon the new soil, fell upon his knees, and kissing the earth, took possession of this continent for God.

Faith in God hung the lanterns of the prow of the "Mayflower" as it charted the treacherous Atlantic.

That frail vessel was laden with deathless destiny: The pioneers of a powerful nation...the heralds of new freedoms...the trailblazers of a new epoch in human history.

Later, during those difficult but decisive days of the Revolution when a handful of common people won their freedom from a mighty world empire, through the crucible of a Civil War, through two World Wars and a number of smaller wars, through a great panic and a ravaging depression, none but the fool could fail to see the hand of a sovereign God upon this golden land of the free.

But today America faces a danger point.

We must confess with troubled heart that America has forgotten God.

She is rolling in luxuries, reveling in excesses, rollicking in pleasure, revolting in morals, and rotting in sin.

What can we expect of a society in which passions are riderless horses: in which there is a desolation of decency; in which love has become a jungle emotion, lust is exalted to lordship, sin elevated to sovereignty, Satan worshipped as a saint, and man magnified above his Maker?

Today, the bleak winds of destiny are howling in protest to the way we are living.

It is sheer folly to suppose that the strength and security of America lies in its vast economic resources... industrial prowess... scientific ingenuity... diplomatic skill or military might.

Our real defense as a nation rests in the spiritual convictions, character and commitment of our citizenry.

Our forefathers founded this nation upon the Christian faith

and will live so long as the Lord is our God.

The Pilgrim Fathers left a land where they were persecuted to find a land wherein every man, through countless ages, would have the right to worship God in his own way.

When these strong and stalwart champions of a new order landed at Plymouth Rock, they knelt upon the shore and dedicated this country to God.

When the Constitutional Convention met at Philadelphia to organize the nation and write a constitution, venerable old Benjamin Franklin called on the members of the convention to fall upon their knees and pray for divine wisdom.

Today, as of old, each of the coins of our pockets bears the inscription, "In God we trust."

This same principle of dependence upon God is embodied in our National Anthem: "Blest with victory and peace, May the heaven-rescued land, Praise the Power that hath made And preserved us a nation!"

Sin separates a nation from God!

Sin separates this nation from God!

But we are not without hope.

I agree that the picture has a dark background but I would like to place a crimson cross and bursting tomb and a glowing sky in the foreground.

From the very throne of God there comes this message to us:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

We must return to the Faith of our Fathers.

We must go to our knees in humility and prayer, in contrition and confession, in repentance and the forsaking of sin.

We must go back to the cross, where the incarnate Son of God was cursed, condemned, crucified for man - the creature's sin.

The crisis is acute.

The danger is imminent.

Time is running out.

Something miraculous must happen in the heart and souls of America... now, before it is too late.

The choice is clear.

It is repent or perish, revival or ruin, Christ or chaos.

The question for the hour is: Which Way, America?

- from "The Rebirth of America"

God has put enough money in the pockets of Christians to do everything He expects the church to do.

TREATING THE

(Continued from page 5)

heart surgeon who can't find any patients at a health club because everyone there is in good shape and has no need of his services. Yet we fail to understand the cause of why we see so few people saved in our services and our efforts at soul winning go unrewarded. We aren't treating the people who are sick. We are making sacrifices to treat those people who don't feel like going to the doctor and then claim that we are spiritual for doing it.

The Experience of Service

Jesus closes His commentary with the phrase, "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." While we have no personal difficulties with Jesus calling sinners to repentance because He called us when we were still sinners, and we recognize the truth in a general way, it becomes more difficult for us to recognize that Jesus does the same for the particular sinners in our communities. We have a bit of difficulty with the fact that Jesus saves the people across the street or down at the bar who are detestable sinners. A brief but honest assessment shows us that it was when we were sinners that Christ died for us. It was while we were sinners that He loved us.

It was while we were sinners that He called us to repentance. A short list of our guilty deeds should cause us to repent in dust and ashes not just to God but to the sinners we have self-righteously spurned and to whom we have never taken the gospel. Honesty forces us to be humble before both God and our fellow sinners.

Our next task is to seek out those who are most in need of salvation. This list includes a great number of people around whom we may not feel comfortable. They may remind us of the past we escaped. They may cause us to realize how tenuously we hold on to what little righteousness we have. Certainly they cause us to say, "There but for the grace of God, go I." And then we need to realize that because of the same grace from the same God, we have the remedy for their condition. We must practice the preaching of repentance to the lost if we are to emulate the ministry of our Lord when He walked this earth. Is it possible that one of the reasons many of our ministries seem ineffective or unsuccessful is that we are trying to treat patients who really don't feel like they need a doctor? In the final analysis, do our efforts to reach the lost center around taking the Gospel message to the righteous or sinners?

THE DUMB BEGGAR

By C.H. Spurgeon

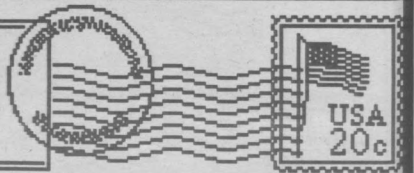
"The dumb beggar gets an alms at Christ's gate if he can but make signs, when his tongue cannot plead for him."

This is a cheering sentence for the many poor souls who feel that they cannot find words wherewith to pray. Sit down at mercy's gate, and show your sores, and groan, and sigh. Let your rags ask for raiment, and your hunger plead for bread. Wounds are eloquent orators with a tender-hearted surgeon; expose your wounds to Jesus, and He will bind them up. Misery is mercy's best constraint. When the Psalmist could not pray a set prayer, he says, "I opened my mouth and panted." He declares in another place that he panted like a thirsty hart: there is nothing articulate in panting, and yet no one ever misunderstood the meaning of the act. Come, then, ye dumb beggars, and learn the language of signs. Come and pant, come and spread your misery before the eyes of mercy, and doubt not that He who knows the thoughts of the heart will readily understand you and speedily grant your desires.

*Pray for the
unsaved!*

We'd like to
hear from you!

Letters to
the Editor



The Baptist Examiner • P.O. Box 60 • Ashland, KY 41105-0060

To the Editor,

I am thankful for TBE again, and may the Lord continue to bless you in the work of Christ.

Bro. K.G., Glasgow, KY

Dear Brother,

Enclosed is \$---- for TBE. I have received it for many years and never been billed for my subscription as I am a lifetime subscriber but want to pay my fair share for the many fine sermons and articles.

Bro. R.B., Rosedale, WV

Dear TBE,

As I sit and reflect back on the wonderful articles in your April issue....I know that it is only by God's mercy that you have blessed myself and others here with TBE....Thank you once again and may God richly bless your ministry.

Bro. M.G.,
Allendale Correctional
Institution, Fairfax, SC

NEW AMERICAN MEANINGS FOR OLD WORDS

- America gave murder a new name, it's called, "Abortion"
- God calls it "drunkenness." We call it alcoholism...a social disease.
- God calls it "Sodomy." We call it "homosexuality"...gay rights, an alternate lifestyle.
- God calls it "Perversion." We call it "pornography"...adult entertainment.
- God calls it "Immorality." We call it the "new morality."



**GOD LOVES
A CHEERFUL
GIVER**

2 Corinthians 9:7

"UNENTITLED TITLES" OF MEN

Title names of "Reverend" and "Father" taken by men are not only unscriptural but implies equality with God. Just another indication of man's desire for self-exaltation. The Psalmist speaking of God says, "Holy and Reverend is (His) name." (Ps. 111:9). and in (Matt. 23:9) "And call no man father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in Heaven."