

IN THIS ISSUE

- . **America's Founders on Homosexuality**.....Page 1
Dave Miller
- . **All of Grace**.....Page 6
A. W. Pink
- . **Christian Woman Tied To a Tree**.....Page 7
Anugrah Kumar
- . **Erastus Inscription**.....Page 9
Titus Kennedy
- . **The Lord's Day (Part 2)**.....Page 10
Troy Sheppard
- . **Christ's Unanswerable Question**Page 18
John R. Gilpin
- . **The New Birth**.....Page 27
John Bunyan

Please send all requests regarding this work, such as address changes, cancellations, orders, etc., to **Indmrk-bapt@juno.com** or our Goose Creek, SC addresses shown below.

Please do not send checks, money orders etc., to the Goose Creek, SC address.

The Landmark Baptist is published under the authority of

Grace Baptist Church, Gladwin, Michigan.

Although we do not solicit them, financial contributions for the work of *The Landmark Baptist* may be mailed to:

Grace Baptist Church, 1490 N Spring Street, Gladwin, MI 48624

We can be reached at **989-701-5564** or on **sam_the_baptist@yahoo.com**.

We extend a warm welcome to you.

The Landmark Baptist is published by:

Sovereign Grace Baptist Mission, PO Box 1205, Goose Creek, SC 29445

Worship services: Sunday 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The Landmark Baptist is sent free to all who may desire it. We also supply free bulk packs and tracts to churches. All addresses are kept strictly confidential and are not given out without permission. Glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ and soundness of biblical doctrine is our sole objective for the edification of the saints and salvation of sinners.

The Landmark Baptist

"MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD."—John 1:23

Volume 24 Number 2

March/April 2023



America's Founders on Homosexuality

Dave Miller, Ph.D

Of those living today in America who were alive 50 years ago, few could have imagined, let alone predicted, that homosexuality (Sodomites) would encroach on our culture as it has. In fact, it would have been unthinkable. The rapidity with which homosexual activists continue successfully to bully the nation to normalize what once was universally considered abnormal is astonishing. And toleration has not satisfied them. Allowing their views to be taught in public schools has not appeased them. No, they insist that societal endorsement extend to redefining marriage to include same-sex couples.

A pernicious plague of sexual insanity is creeping insidiously through American civilization. Far more deadly than the external threat of terrorism, or even the inevitable dilution of traditional American values caused by the infiltration of illegal immigrants and the influx of those who do not

share the Christian worldview, this domino effect will ultimately end in the moral implosion of America. Indeed, America is being held captive by moral terrorists. The social engineers of "political correctness" have been working overtime for decades to restructure public morality.

The Founding Fathers of these United States would be incredulous, incensed, and outraged. **They understood that acceptance of homosexuality would undermine and erode the moral foundations of civilization. Sodomy, the longtime historical term for same-sex relations, was a capital crime under British common law.** Sir William Blackstone, British attorney, jurist, law professor, and political philosopher, authored his monumental *Commentaries on the Laws of England* from 1765-1769. These commentaries became the premier legal source admired

(Continued page 2)

and used by America's Founding Fathers. In Book the Fourth, Chapter the Fifteenth, "Of Offences Against the Persons of Individuals," Blackstone stated:



Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780)

IV. What has been here observed..., which ought to be the more clear in proportion **as the crime is the more detestable**, may be applied to another offence, of **a still deeper malignity; the infamous crime against nature**, committed either with man or beast.... But it is **an offence of so dark a nature**...that the accusation should be clearly made out....

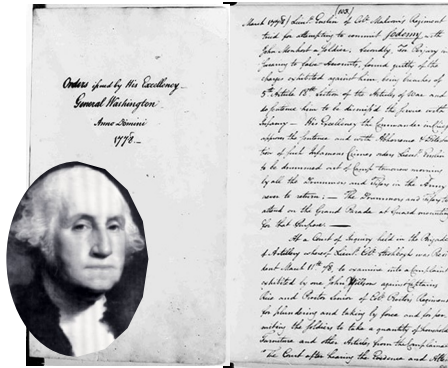
I will not act so disagreeable part, to my readers as well as myself, as to dwell any longer upon a subject, **the very mention of which is a disgrace to human nature**. It will be more eligible to imitate in this respect the delicacy of our English law, which treats it, in it's very indictments, as a crime not fit to be named; *peccatum illud horribile, inter christianos non nominandum* [**that horrible sin not to be named among Christians**—DM]. A taciturnity observed likewise by the edict of Constantius and Constantians: *ubi fcelus est id, quod non proficit fcire, jubemus infurgere leges, armari jura gladio ultore, ut exquisitis poenis fubdantur infames, qui funt, vel qui futuri funt, rei* [**When that crime is found, which is not profita-**

ble to know, we order the law to bring forth, to provide justice by force of arms with an avenging sword, that the infamous men be subjected to the due punishment, those who are found, or those who future will be found, in the deed—DM]. Which leads me to add a word concerning its punishment.

This the voice of nature and of reason, and the express law of God, determine to be **capital**. Of which we have a signal instance, long before the Jewish dispensation, by the destruction of two cities by fire from heaven: so that this is an universal, not merely a provincial, precept. And our ancient law in some degree imitated this punishment, by **commanding such miscreants to be burnt to death**; though Fleta says they should be **buried alive**: either of which punishments was indifferently used for this crime among the ancient Goths. But now the general punishment of all felonies is the same, namely, **by hanging**: and this offence (being in the times of popery only subject to ecclesiastical censures) was made single felony by the statute 25 Hen. VIII. c. 6. and felony without benefit of clergy by statute 5 Eliz. c. 17. And the rule of law herein is, that, if both are arrived at years of discretion, *agentes et confitentur pari poena plectantur* ["advocates and conspirators should be punished with like punishment"—DM] (1769, 4.15.215-216, emp. added).

Here was the law of England—common law under which Americans lived prior to achieving independence. That law did not change after gaining independence. To say the least, such thinking is hardly “politically correct” by today’s standards.

How many Americans realize that while serving as the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, the Father of our country was apprised of a homosexual in the army. The response of General Washington was immediate and decisive. He issued “General Orders” from Army Headquarters at Valley Forge on Saturday, March 14, 1778:



Images courtesy of Library of Congress, Manuscript Division

At a General Court Martial whereof Colo. Tupper was President (10th March 1778) Lieutt. Enslin of Colo. Malcolm’s Regiment tried for attempting to commit sodomy, with John Monhort a soldier; Secondly, For Perjury in swearing to false Accounts, found guilty of the charges exhibited against him, being breaches of 5th Article 18th

Section of the Articles of War **and do sentence him to be dismiss’d the service with Infamy.**

His Excellency the Commander in Chief approves the sentence and **with Abhorrence and Detestation of such Infamous Crimes** orders Lieutt. Enslin **to be drummed out of Camp** tomorrow morning by all the Drummers and Fifers in the Army **never to return;** The Drummers and Fifers to attend on the Grand Parade at Guard mounting for that Purpose (“George...,” underline in orig., emp. added).



Dave Miller

Observe that the Father of our country viewed “sodomy” (the 18th-century word for homosexual relations) “with **Abhorrence and Detestation.**”

Homosexuality was treated as a criminal offense in all of the original thirteen colonies, and eventually every one of the fifty states (see Robinson, 2003; “Sodomy Laws...,” 2003). Severe penalties were invoked for those who engaged in homosexuality. In fact, few Americans know that the penalty for homosexuality in several states was **death**—including New York, Vermont, Connecticut, and South Carolina (Barton, 2000, pp. 306,482). Most people nowadays would be shocked to learn that Thomas Jefferson advocated “dismemberment” as the penalty for homosexuality in his home state of

Virginia, and even authored a swer is—the Bible. As “Tradi-
bill to that effect (1781, Query tional” (i.e., biblical) marriage
14; cf. 1903, 1:226-227). in this country has always

I. Crimes whose punishment extends to LIFE.		
1. High treason.	Death by hanging.	
	Forfeiture of lands and goods to the commonwealth.	
2. Petty treason.	Death by hanging. Dissection.	
	Forfeiture of half the lands and goods to the representatives of the party slain.	
3. Murder.	1. by poison. Death by poison.	
	Forfeiture of one half, as before.	
	2. in duel. Death by hanging. Gibbeting, if the challenger.	
	Forfeiture of one half as before, unless it be the party challenged, then the forfei- [ture is to the commonwealth.]	
	3. in any other way. Death by hanging.	
	Forfeiture of one half as before.	
	4. Manslaughter. The second offence is murder.	
II. Crimes whose punishment goes to LIMBS.		
1. Rape.	} Dismemberment.	
2. Sodomy.		
3. Maiming.		
4. Disfiguring.		Retaliation, and the forfeiture of half of the lands and goods to the sufferer.
III. Crimes punishable by LABOUR.		
1. Manslaughter, 1st offence.	Labour VII. years for the public.	Forfeiture of half, as in murder.
2. Counterfeiting money.	Labour VI. years.	Forfeiture of lands and goods to the [commonwealth.]
3. Arson,	} Labour V. years,	Reparation three fold.
4. Asportation of vessels,		
5. Robbery,	} Labour IV. years.	Reparation double.
6. Burglary,		
7. House-breaking,	} Labour III. years,	Reparation.
8. Horse-stealing,		
9. Grand larceny,	Labour II. years,	Reparation. Pillory.
10. Petty larceny,	Labour I. year,	Reparation. Pillory.
11. Pretensions to witchcraft, &c.	Ducking.	Stripes.
12. Excusable homicide,	} To be pitied, not punished.	
13. Suicide,		
14. Apostacy. Heresy.		

152



Image courtesy of Library of Congress, General Collections

In the greater scheme of human history, as civilizations have proceeded down the usual pathway of moral deterioration and eventual demise, the acceptance of same-sex relations has typically triggered the final stages of impending social implosion. America is being brought to the very brink of moral destruction. The warning issued by God to the Israelites regarding their own ability to sustain their national existence in the Promised Land is equally apropos for America: Where did the Founding Fathers and early American citizenry derive their views on homosexuality? The historically unequivocal an-
been between a man and a woman. In the words of Jesus: **“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’** and said, **‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?’**” (Matt. 19:4-5, emp. added). He was merely quoting the statement made by God regarding His creation of the first man and woman (Genesis 1:27; 2:24). God created Adam and Eve—not Adam and Steve, or Eve and Ellen. And throughout the rest of biblical history, God’s attitude toward same-sex relations remained the same.

(Miller, et al., 2003).

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.... Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations...lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you (Leviticus 18:22-28, emp. Add-ed).

Mark it down: THE GOD OF THE BIBLE WILL NOT ALLOW THE ABOMINATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY TO GO UNCHALLENGED AND UNPUNISHED. Unless something is done to stop the moral degeneration, America would do well to prepare for the inevitable, divine expulsion.

REFERENCES

Barton, David (2002), Original Intent (Aledo, TX: Wall-builders), 3rd edition.

Blackstone, William (1769), Commentaries on the Laws of England, [On-line], URL: <http://www.yale.edu/law-web/avalon/blackstone/bk4ch15.htm>.

George Washington, March

14, 1778, General Orders" The George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799, from ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799, [On-line], URL: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgibin/query/r?ammemmgw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(gw110081\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgibin/query/r?ammemmgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(gw110081))).

Jefferson, Thomas (1781) Notes on the State of Virginia, The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, [On-line], URL: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/jevifram.htm>.

Miller, Dave, et al.(2003), "An Investigation of the Biblical Evidence Against Homosexuality," Reason & Revelation, 24[9]:81, December, [On-line], URL: <https://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/2577>.

Robinson, B.A. (2003), "Criminalizing Same-Sex Behavior,"[On-line], URL: http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_laws1.htm.

"Sodomy Laws in the United States" (2003), [On-line], URL: <http://www.sodomylaws.org/usa/usa.htm>.

Published August 10, 2008

For catalog, samples, or further information, contact:
Apologetics Press
230 Landmark Drive
Montgomery, Alabama 36117
U.S.A.
Phone (334) 272-8558

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."— Jude 7

All of GRACE

Arthur W. Pink
(1886-1952)

We are living in the Dispensation of Grace (John 1:17; Eph. 3:2) and that every blessing we enjoy is **a gift of Divine clemency**. We are justified by grace (Rom. 3:24). We are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8). The Holy Scriptures are termed "The Word of His Grace" (Acts 20:32). The Third Person of the Holy Trinity is denominated "The Spirit of Grace" (Heb. 10:29). God is seated upon a Throne of Grace (Heb. 4:16). And, the Good Hope which is given us is "through grace" (2 Thess. 2:16). **It is all of Grace from first to last.** It is all of Grace from beginning to end. It was grace that predestinated us before the world began (2 Tim. 1:9), and it will be grace that makes us like Christ at the consummation of our salvation. Thank God for such a "Blessed Hope."

Our salvation will not be consummated until the Return of our blessed Saviour, that not until then shall we be completely "conformed" to the

image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29). It is not until Christ's second advent that the purpose of our predestination will be fully realized,



for it is not until then we shall be "glorified" (Rom. 8:30). If then salvation is by grace and if Christ is our Saviour—our Saviour from the presence of sin as well as from its penalty and power—then our own works (our obedience, faithfulness, service, etc.) are not the determining factor, nor even a contributing factor. Salvation is not partly of grace and partly of works, if it were we should have ground for "boasting" and Christ would be robbed of at least a part of His glory. Once we see that the time of our Lord's Return is the time when our salvation is consummated, and once we see that salvation is by grace, through faith, and not of works, then it will be clear that it cannot, in anywise, be determined by our personal worthiness.

From:
The Redeemer's Return

SOVEREIGN GRACE

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." — Gen. 6:8

"Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me . . ." (Lot) — Gen. 19:19

"For thou (Moses) hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. . . . will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."

— Ex. 33:17 & 19

Does present-day Baptist persecution exist? Can you tell me why the Catholic Church has not said a word about the many Catholics who have illegally invaded America? Is this what non-Catholics can eventually expect here as Catholics take over our land? See below. — Editor

Christian woman tied to a tree, beaten by village leaders in Mexico

By Anugrah Kumar



Houses destroyed in Chiapas by "Traditionalist Catholics."

—El Universal

A Christian woman who suffered severe internal injuries after being tied to a tree and beaten by traditionalist Catholic elders in her village in Mexico's Hidalgo State is now hospitalized in critical condition. Police have made no arrests, according to a report.

The victim, identified as Maria Concepcion Hernandez Hernandez **from the Great Commission Baptist Church** in the community of Rancho Nuevo in Huejutla de los Reyes Municipality, was attacked on Dec. 21 by a group of people, all belonging to the Roman Catholic majority in the village, the U.K.-based group Christian Solidarity Worldwide reported last week.

Immediately before the

attack, the bells of the local Roman Catholic church were ringing, CSW continued.

She was visiting her land as a neighbor had asked her to remove two trees because the local authorities had prohibited members of the religious minority from accessing or using their land for cultivating crops, the group said.

The pastor of the woman's church, Rogelio Hernandez Baltazar, was also detained for two hours after he sought to intervene to stop the attack, and threatened by the same authorities who declared they will not allow the victim's body to be buried in the village if she does not recover from her injuries.

The pastor and other villagers are prohibited from meeting her, the group said, adding that no arrests had been made despite complaints having been filed with the Hidalgo State Human Rights Commission and the Hidalgo State Prosecutor's Office.

The attackers have been identified as Benito Rocha, Ferman Hernandez Hernandez, Octaviano Gutierrez Hernandez, Margarito Gutierrez

Hernandez, Francisco Wenses, and catechist Juan Hernandez Hernandez.

The life of a woman hangs in the balance and a community is living in fear because, despite ample evidence of serious violations of freedom of religion or belief in Rancho Nuevo for more than seven years, the Mexican authorities have failed to intervene, CSW's Head of Advocacy, Anna Lee Stangl, said.

Instead, Hidalgo State government officials, under the previous governor, have for years publicly denied the existence of cases of religious intolerance in the state, Stangl continued.

This is not a one-of incident of Christian persecution in Mexico, which has risen due to drug cartel violence, persecution by traditionalist Catholics and violent discrimination by anti-Christian left-wing groups, Open Doors USA previously reported.

In rural indigenous communities, anyone who turns away from traditional religious beliefs can face rejection and punishment in the form of fines, imprisonment, and forced displacement. Non-discrimination laws mean that any links between Christian faith and politics are placed under very strict legal scrutiny, says the ministry on its website.

Unlike Christianity, traditionalist Catholicism relies on giving gifts to pagan gods in exchange for health, good fortune and protection from evil. They often participate in animal sacrifices to the gods and

worship saints, incorporating practices from pagan Aztec beliefs.

In areas controlled by criminal groups or drug cartels, young men are exposed to indoctrination and forced recruitment. Those who do not accept it "for reasons of Christian faith or otherwise" face threats, potential abduction and even death, says Open Doors USA.

Families, too, are bribed and intimidated to force their children to obey the gangs. Church leaders are often victims of extortion because they are assumed to have access to church funds. Mexico also has the highest rate of human trafficking in the world, and women are easy targets for illegal armed groups to recruit or abduct.

Last May, 16 indigenous Protestant Christian families in the southern state of Chiapas were pressured to pay illegal fines for the fourth consecutive year for not participating in a syncretic Roman Catholic festival that involves alcohol, CSW reported at the time.

In September 2021, two evangelical families from the First Baptist Church in the La Mesa Limantitla area in Hidalgo state's Huejutla de los Reyes Municipality were threatened with being cut off from essential services or expelled from the community if they continued to refuse to deny their faith and pay a fine illegally levied against them, CSW reported at the time. Ω

*Submitted by
Teresa Williams Haugan*

Erastus Inscription BY TITUS KENNEDY



The Erastus Inscription reads:
"Erastus in return for his aedileship laid the pavement at his own expense."

"Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you."— Rom 16:23.

"So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus."—Acts 19:22

"Erastus abode at Corinth."—2Tim. 4:20

During the reign of Emperor Claudius, around the middle of the 1st century AD and perhaps just before 50 AD, an official named Erastus paid for an area near the theater to be paved with stone at Corinth, capital of the Roman province of Achaia. The government did not always have the funds to pay for new construction, so wealthy citizens often financed or contributed to projects. To honor the patron who funded the pavement, a section of stone might be inscribed with a name, title, act, and occasionally additional information or reference to an Emperor or

deity. In 1929, excavations at Corinth discovered a Latin inscription carved deep into the pavement with 7-inch-tall letters which were originally filled with bronze. *Erastus pro aedilitate sua pecunia stravit*. It translates as "Erastus in return for his aedileship laid [the pavement] at his own expense." The office of aedile (Roman magistrate) was a high-ranking public office in a city which functioned as the commissioner of public works. This commemorative inscription on the pavement mentions Erastus, his city office of aedile, and that he paid for the section of pavement himself. One other inscription from 2nd century AD Corinth was discovered which also mentions an Erastus, but it was a very uncommon name. After the Apostle Paul moved to Corinth in about 50 AD, he met a man named Erastus who soon became a Christian and a friend, and this Erastus was noted as the city manager of Corinth using a Greek description equivalent to the Latin *aedile* (Romans 16:23; Acts 19:21-22; 2 Timothy 4:20). The convergence of chronology, the uncommon name, the location, and his position as a high-ranking city official of Corinth indicates that this inscription names the Erastus recorded in Acts and two letters of Paul. Therefore, this inscription confirms the existence, position, and home of Erastus of Corinth, a Christian and friend of Paul. However, the inscription also indicates that early Christianity was not a movement which was only

followed by the poor or those of low social status. Rather, evidence from the New Testament and 1st century inscriptions demonstrates that there were people from many regions, linguistic groups, religious backgrounds, financial means, and political status who became Christians. Ω



THE LORD'S DAY

(Part 2)

Pastor Wm. Troy Sheppard
Citrus Missionary Baptist Church
Inverness, Florida

As we look again at the subject matter of The Lord's day let's go to Hebrews 3:1. I'm just going to read that because this sets up the context. **"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."**

At the outset the apostle is going to instruct us and move us to look to the Lord Jesus Christ. We're going to learn **about Him and about what He has accomplished**, and that's really what you find beginning here in chapter three, and moving on through the rest of the book. That is the general thrust of the book, to consider Him and His work as our Apostle and High Priest. An apostle is one that is sent and a High Priest is one that speaks to God for us.

And then in Hebrews 4:1-11, we read **"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit**

them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which had believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, if they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief. Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

Now in discussing the Lord's Day, this chapter mentions "another day" of rest in verse 8, which says, "**For if Jesus** (i.e., Joshua of the Old Testament) **had given them rest, then would he** (i.e., David) **not afterward have spoken of another day.**" Having read that, now let me a read our confession of faith again and then I will get into the message. "We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day. That it is to be kept sacred to commemorate the resurrection and the finished work of Christ. That believer's should use this day for religious purposes and refrain from secular labor and recreation."

Previously we saw from this text some misconceptions about the Lord's Day. The Lord's Day of course is not the seventh day Sabbath, not the creation Sabbath, and the apostle lays this out here very clearly in Hebrews chapter 4, where he contrasts the creation seventh day Sabbath or rest with this other Sabbath or "other rest." He also contrasts Canaan where the Israelites had been delivered from Egyptian bondage and were on the verge of going into the promise land. They had gone in the land and came back with the report that what God had said was true but He didn't tell us about the giants there. So, in great fear they did not want to go in, and they did not enter into the rest that was promised them in Canaan. Then, later on, Joshua (v:8) took them into the promised land but, again,

he did not provide the kind of rest that was promised. The proof of that is that David later spoke of "another day" of rest, and I really believe the emphasis is not so much the day of rest as *who* we rest in. We're going to see that also as we go through this study.

The emphasis all through-out this text is that *in* Jesus Christ, in Him and through Him *we find rest*. The creation rest is not where we find rest because what happened in creation is that God rested on the seventh day and Adam rebelled. So whatever rest that Adam enjoyed with God, he lost in his rebellion. This is the reason that we are in the mess that we are in as human beings because of Adam's rebellion against the God of heaven. So the creation rest Adam did not enjoy. Note that all through the book of Genesis you will never find anyone observing the seventh day Sabbath rest. This was astonishing to me as I studied the Scriptures. I know some people say you can't use the silence of scripture to establish a doctrine, and that is true. However, you can't establish the seventh day worship in the book of Genesis because *it is just not there*. We find that God himself rested on the seventh day, but none else did. We don't find anybody resting on the seventh day Sabbath *until God gave it to the nation of Israel in the book of Exodus*.

Now some may say, "Preacher, why do you make a big thing about that?" Because Seventh Day Adventists and

other seventh day worshippers believe that the Sabbath was given to mankind at creation. Now I am not saying that God did not establish that day, but I am saying from Scriptural authority that there is *no evidence* that anybody rested that day in particular until you come to the book of Exodus, then it was in response to the giving of the manna and became a *covenant obligation* that they had because it was a sign of the covenant with them. And so the seventh day Sabbath certainly is not the Lord's Day of the New Testament. The seventh day Sabbath is never called the Lord's Day in the Old Testament; that is a misconception.

Next, we want to look at the identity of the Lord's Day. You will notice, very carefully, and verse 8 there is the rest that is found in Christ and there is also a day mentioned. Now some believe that this is an eternal day. Some believe that it is the gospel day in which we live, and some believe that is just the rest in Christ that we have. I believe the Bible teaches that the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, is a day of rest. I believe it is a day of rest because it is a commemoration of the rest that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, which we will look at later on.

I do not believe that the Lord set aside the seventh day Sabbath for a time of rest and worship in the New Testament. The New Testament day of rest, the day of remembrance or worship, is expressly identified in this text and is

called "another day" in contrast to all of the other days. Now let's look at it again in verse 8, "**For if Jesus (Joshua) given them rest, then would he (David) not afterward have spoken of another day.**" And so we know it is a day. Now a day can be a 24 hour day or a timeframe, but nevertheless we will lay that aside for this point just to say that he did at least say, "not another *person*, but another day. So there is a day of rest, there is a day of Sabbath. In verse 9 it says, "**There remaineth therefore a rest.**" The Greek word here translated rest means "a Sabbath keeping"; and here is the only time it is used in the New Testament. Now let us look at this.

First of all the "first day of the week" is the Lord's Day. This is the day that the Lord made by His resurrection, and I want to establish this point: the Lord Jesus arose on this day having accomplished His work. Just like it says in verse 4, "**For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.**" So what day of the week did God in creation rest from all his works? Well, He rested on the seventh day. Again, notice verse 8: "**For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he (David) not afterward have spoken of another day.**" So there is one day, but then there is "another day". We find and identify that day (v:9-10), "**There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he (Christ) that is**

entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." So Christ entered into His work like as God entered into His work and He did that on a certain day. This is what we are going to identify.

We find in Mark chapter 16 what day Jesus Christ rested from His works. Some might say, "He rested in the grave for He was in there for three days." But Scripture did not identify that as the day of His rest. When God rested on the seventh day does that mean that God did not do anything else? No, it just means He did not do anything in relation to creation. God has been active all the time and is still active today in His providence and working. He rules over the nations, and every once a week He does not take a rest; He is *always* active. But (on the seventh day of creation) He ceased from that labor; that is the idea. So the Lord Jesus Christ cease from the labor of redemption and it was manifested that He did that in the Resurrection. He has proven that His work is finished, and He has proven that His work is a work that we can rest in; and I believe that is the emphasis.

Returning to Mark 16:9 the Bible says, "**Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.**" Now the Greek here for the word "week" is Sabbath. As a matter of fact every time the word week appears in the New Testament it is the word Sabbath (*Sabbaton*), and here

it is a "primary Sabbath". And so on the first of the week or the primary Sabbath Jesus arose. So in what day did Jesus arise? He arose the first day of the week and not on the seventh day of the week. We know this as we calculate things from Scripture. In John chapter 20:1 is further evidence that Jesus arose not on a Saturday but on Sunday or the first day of the week: "**The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher.**" So when Mary got there early in that morning it was still dark but the stone was rolled away. This means that He had already risen by the time she arrived there, but we also know from Mark's (account) that it was the first day of the week that He arose.

In John 20:17 we read, "**Jesus saith unto her (Mary), Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father; and to my God, and your God.**"

Now we know that Christ ascended 40 days later, but that does not mean that he doesn't ascend even on this particular day. When we compare all the Scriptures there is an indication that Christ went even that very day into the presence of the Father and then came back in this same time period.

Again, in John 20:19, "**Then the same day** (It is early in the morning before dawn, before the sun comes up.) **at evening, being the first day of the**

week. And so, it can be established very easily that it was still dark outside. You might call that twilight when Mary got there and Jesus was already gone. But on what day did He rise? Well, Mark says, "On the first day of the week." That first day of the week was the dark part of the morning, and it was the first day or the evening when they had gathered together in the upper room. So what you have in your Bible is a Jewish day of reckoning which is the evening and morning, but you also have a Roman day of reckoning. It is sometimes complex to find which one it is talking about, but laying that all aside I say this, that Jesus arose on the first day of the week. He did not arise on Saturday; He arose on our day that we call Sunday. This is the "other day" that we find in our text in the book of Hebrews.

Does it really matter upon which day he arose? Yes it matters, because it is a prophetic day. As a matter-of-fact Jesus gives a testimony about Himself while He was on this earth to prove that He is the Son of God, by being resurrected; not only resurrected but resurrected on a certain day. He said, "**For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whales belly; so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth**" (Matt. 12:40). Repeatedly He said He will arise on the "third day." The third day is an expression that is used all through the New Testament by the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our text in Hebrews (tells us), "**Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David,**" What is meant by "in David"? That is, "in the psalms", because the psalms are written by David. David spoke of "another day"; i.e., a day after Joshua lived, a day after the day that David lived, another day. What day did David speak of? He spoke of the Resurrection Day.

And so Jesus Christ entered into this ministry work of being our great High Priest which is being established in the book of Hebrews. It is going to be established that Jesus is "better". Jesus is better than angels, Jesus is better than Moses, and Jesus is better than Aaron; Aaron was the high priest. Jesus' order of being High Priest is better than Aaron's high priest order because it is a different, better, and greater. It provides spiritual rest, it provides eternal rest. God in creation did not provide us an eternal rest. As great and wonderful as creation is, that creation rest that God enjoyed, Adam didn't and we don't. We lost it all, we have no rest in God because of the seventh day Sabbath. We have no rest in God because of what happened there in Canaan. There is no rest in God anywhere to be found outside of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the emphasis here (in Hebrews). And so when we talk about the day however, it points to that specific day in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ that He arose from the grave. Now the Psalm that is used here is

Psalm 95:7 where David prophetically says, **"To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart."** Today you can enter into my rest. So he looked back to Canaan, but he also looks forward to Christ. God had told them they were going to a rest, but they didn't go into that rest because those were *typical rests*; this is a *real rest*.

One might say, "This doesn't matter to me." Well, it should matter to you because there is a rest that is provided that was *proven*, that was worked out on a certain day, and that rest is the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are weary, if you are heavy laden, Jesus says, **"Come unto me,....and I will give you rest"** (Matt. 11:28). So there is rest in Him.

As I said, it is a *prophetic day*, but that is not the only time that David or the psalms speak of this day. In Psalm 2:7 the day is identified, **"I will declare the decree."** (Now the decrees of God are eternal, but the declaration of those decrees come in time). And so prophetically, **"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."** What is this day that Jesus Christ was begotten? Now there are those who believe that this day is an eternal day. They believe that Jesus Christ is eternally generated as the Son. Now, I believe that Jesus Christ is eternal. I believe that He is the eternal Word, but I do not believe that God created a god, I don't believe that. I don't be-

lieve that God generated another god; I don't believe that at all. But what I do believe you'll find in Scripture is that this verse is not an eternal begetting, is not about the creation or the bringing forth of Jesus Christ in an eternal day, but in the New Testament it is always connected with the *resurrection*.

So we're going to identify the day. The day is the resurrection day, it is not an eternal day— though it leads into an eternal day. It gives us eternal hope, and we have eternal rest in the Lord Jesus Christ. But there was a specific day. It is just like Jesus dying on the cross: the Bible speaks of Him as being the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, but Jesus actually died on one day. Jesus became a man on a day because the Bible says, **"And the Word was made flesh."** He wasn't flesh before that, but He was *made* flesh. There are a lot of things the Bible says that Jesus was made, so the Eternal Word became flesh, and He was made flesh, and was done so in the womb of a virgin. He lived a literal day in and day out life and was literally nailed to a tree on a certain day. So though the Scriptures call Him the Lamb **"slain from the foundation of the world,"** that's all in the mind and heart of God. The reality of it happened on a certain day and so it is with the resurrection.

In the book of Acts chapter 13 we find that Psalm 2 is interpreted. You know when you want a commentary on

the Old Testament, get a New Testament, and you will have a commentary on the Old Testament. As a matter-of-fact we have a divinely inspired commentary. In Acts 13:29-33, notice what we find here in this wonderful message by the Apostle Paul. He says this: **"And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him (Christ), they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher. But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, *this day* have I begotten thee."** What day was He begotten? He was begotten on the resurrection day. To be "begotten" means to be brought to life. Now being brought to life can be through the natural process of generation, as when parents have a child. But in this text it is used in the sense of being *brought back from the grave*. Again it is used in Hebrews chapter one. Here this Scripture is interpreted by the Holy Ghost, through His apostles to mean "a certain time," not an eternal day, not somewhere far off in eternity where God begets another god. I don't believe that, and again I stress this because some folks will turn their heads and say, "You don't believe in the eternity of the Son." The Bible

teaches the eternity of the Son and He is identified as "the Word." But I definitely do not believe that the Father gave birth to another god; that is a demigod and that is the idea of Catholicism. That is how their trinity differs from our Trinity.

In Hebrews 1:1-6 it says, **"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world's; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made is so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance attained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angel said he at any time, Thou art my Son, *this day* have I begotten thee? (This is rhetorical; He didn't say this to angels.) And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."** So the identity of the One that is resurrected is the Lord Jesus Christ. This should suffice as to the day. The day is clearly the resurrection day. This is the day that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God.

Now I know that during the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ He was declared to be the Son of God.

He was declared to be so to the virgin. He said, **"That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God . . . the Son of the Highest"** (Luke 1:5 & 32). At His baptism a Voice from heaven declared Him to be **"My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"** (Matt. 3:17). At the mount of the transfiguration He was declared **"My beloved Son...hear ye him."** But He was declared to be the Son of God *in power* which happened at the resurrection. This was a special day identifying Him as the Son. Let me show you this in the book of Romans. This is very important to lay out this truth as to why we worship on Sunday, the first day of the week. We worship on the first of the week because it is *the Lord's Day*, and *it is His day that He made* by His resurrection. Reading in Romans 1:3-4, **"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness."** Here's how: **"by the resurrection from the dead."** Always, this declaration of

Christ being the Son is attributed to the resurrection. ***The resurrection is that point in time that the Lord designates as the most powerful display that He is the Son of God.*** And so it is this day that Jesus entered into His high priestly work. Hebrews 5:5-6 says, **"So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I be gotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisidec."** So God declared "This is my Son," and Jesus Christ entered into this office, this work as our High Priest on this day. This is why in Psalm 118 it says that He has **"become the head stone of the corner,"** and then it says, **"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."** So this is the day, this Lord's day, the day that the Lord sanctified by His resurrection, that He established by His resurrection, that is called in the Scriptures "the other day." It is also called "to day," "the Lord's day." It is the Lord's Day because He made the day by His resurrection.

"One man traveling on the road saw a poor man in distress, and having but seven shillings, the generous person gave the poor man six. But when the wretch had scrambled to his feet, he followed his benefactor to knock him down and steal the seventh shilling from him. How many do this! The Lord's Day is their day for sport, for amusement, for anything but the service of God. They rob God of His day, though it be but one in seven. This is base unthankfulness."



C. H. Spurgeon

Christ's Unanswerable Question

John R. Gilpin
(1904-1974)



"What think ye of Christ?"

This question should be of interest to every Catholic, Protestant, or Baptist in all the world. It should be of interest to Jew and Gentile alike. It should be of world-wide interest in view of the fact that we are considering the character of a world-wide figure—the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the day proceeding the time when Jesus asked this question, He had Himself been asked three questions. Early in the day, the Pharisees came with a question hoping to be able to entrap Him with His talk. It was the old question of church and state: **"Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not."** (Mt.22:17) When Jesus had routed this first group of enemies, the Sadducees next came with the same purpose in mind. They did not believe in the resurrection nor in a future life. They did not believe in angels nor spirits. Hence, they came asking Him about the details of the future life saying, **"In the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven?"** (Mt.22:28) Still later in the same day, the Pharisees put forward one of their number, a lawyer, to ask Jesus a question of theology:

"Which is the great commandment in the law?" (Mt. 22:36).

Shrewdly, Jesus answered each of these groups of His enemies. He gave them an evasive, but a truthful answer on each of the questions concerning church and state, the details of the future life, and this theological question as to the great commandment of the law. It was said that the Pharisees marveled and the Sadducees were astonished at His answers. Then with these groups of His enemies already marveling and astonished at his teachings, Jesus put forth a question unto them: **"What think ye of Christ?"**

This is the question which I present to each of you tonight. It is my desire to call up reputable witnesses that I might ask each of them this question.

I

We shall first ask that innumerable horde of Old Testament Prophets our question: **"What think ye of Christ?"**

"Moses, you wrote the first five books of the Bible—the Pentateuch. You wrote that part which every Jew accedes to today. You led the Jews through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan for forty years, and naturally you are

still interested in their experiences and success just as of old. Greater honor perhaps came to you than the honor which came to any Old Testament Prophet for we read that God scooped out a grave with his hand in 'Nebo's lonely mountain,' which served as your last resting place. Then in the days of Jesus flesh you were called from your resting place and along with Elijah, you appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration to talk with Him about the death which He was soon to experience at Jerusalem. Therefore Moses, in view of your interest in the Jewish people, your wide experience with the Jews, the fact that you wrote under Divine inspiration so much of the Bible, and that you came down to earth to talk with Jesus, I ask you, **"What think ye of Christ?"** Without a moment's hesitation, Moses answers, **"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come."** (Gen. 49:10) **"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth."** (Num. 24:17)

"Isaiah, the Jewish people love you and respect you possibly on a par with Moses, for your marvelous influence upon their nation in days gone by. You had a wide experience extending over the period of the reign of four of Judah's greatest Kings; you lived in Judah's Golden Age. Your

words are still preached by their Rabbis, and revered by the thousands who adhere to Judaism. Eight hundred years before Jesus came to earth you lived. Since you spoke much of the person of the Messiah, I ask you, **'What think ye of Christ?'** **"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel."** (Isa. 7:14) **"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."** (Isa.9:6) **"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows yet we did esteem him stricken smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."** (Isa. 53:1-6)

"Jeremiah, you were called the weeping prophet since you

wept because of the sins of Judah. The inhabitants of Jerusalem mocked your tears, and made fun of your sermons; they scoffed at your words; they persecuted you because of your preaching; they put you into a miry pit where you well-nigh famished, and had it not been for a colored man of Ethiopia, you might have expired there. In spite of all that was done to you, and in view of the fact that you have long since forgiven those who were your enemies I ask you for the benefit of my Jewish friends today, 'What think ye of Christ?' **"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness."** (Jer.23:5, 6).

"Micah, to the average Gentile; you are but poorly known. You lived in that day long gone by, having prophesied better than 26 centuries ago. Though very few Gentiles have more than a passing acquaintance with you, there is no Jew but what considers you as having spoken by direct inspiration from God. We are often told that you foreknew the very place of Jesus' birth to be that of Bethlehem. Is it true? 'What think ye of Christ?' **"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be a ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of**

old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2).

"Zechariah, you are even less eminently known to Gentiles than is Micah. Though my Gentile audience may know but little of you, my Jewish friends particularly remember your prophesy to the remnant that came back from Babylonian captivity after their seventy years exile there. My Jewish friends will recall that you, as one of the last of the prophets being even next to Malachi, encouraged that remnant with your prophesies. In less than 500 years after your prophesy, a man called Jesus was born. This same Jesus rode into Jerusalem one day seated on the back of a donkey claiming to be the Messiah of the Jews. In view of His claims, and since you lived nearer to Him than practically any of the remainder of the prophets, I ask you, 'What think ye of Christ?'" **"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."** (Zech. 9:9)

"Daniel, there is no Jew but what loves you. In the days of their exile into Babylon it was you who encouraged them with your prophetic messages; it was through your life and your example that they were blessed in the Babylonian captivity, and were preserved from the wrath of the king of Babylon; your pious example caused their minds to be set on God and it

was through your praying that God eventually laid it upon the heart of the king whereby the remnant returned from this Babylonian exile. If you had not prayed concerning your people, perhaps the spirit of Cyrus, the king, would never have been stirred up in their behalf. Since you meant so much to the Jews in that day of suffering, I ask you, "What think ye of Christ?" **"I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."** (Dan. 7:13,14)

Time would fail me to call each of the prophets one by one. Your patience would not permit that I should examine them individually, and ask them personally, "What think ye of Christ." In a combined aggregate may we ask the entire group, "What think ye of Christ?"

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43).

II

Instructive as it is to listen to the testimony of the prophets, we turn now to the angels of God. In the Old Testament, the angels played an important part concerning the history of the Jews. The Father of the Jewish people once entertained angels unawares.

When the Jews were in need of a great judge to deliver them from the Philistines, it was an angel which appeared to a family of the tribe of Dan telling them of the birth of a deliverer, Samson by name. When the Assyrians under Sennacherib, came down upon the city of Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, it was an angel who killed 185,000 of the Assyrians in a sight's time.

It is to these angels who played such an important part in the life, and times, and history of the Jewish people of the Old Testament that we now appeal with our question, "What think ye of Christ?" Gabriel, who announced the birth of Jesus to Mary says, **"Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."** (Lk. 1:30-33)

The unnamed angel, who counselled Joseph to marry Mary when he was contemplating divorcing her thinking that she had played the harlot against him, says, **"Joseph thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet**

saying Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel which being interpreted is, God with us." (Mt.1:20-23)

On the night of all nights, when Jesus was born, it was an angel who preached the first gospel sermon preaching it to the shepherds. Listen: **"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."** (Lk.2:9-11) On that memorable night the first Christian hymn was sung, being the seraphic melodies of the angels. **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."** (Luke 2:14)

III

Has it been interesting to you to hear the testimony of the prophets and to listen to the songs of the angels? Then surely the testimony of the friends of Jesus should be interesting also.

"Simeon, you were an old man when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It was written of you that you were a devout follower of the religion of the Jews. When Mary and her husband Joseph brought the child Jesus into the Temple, you took Him up into your arms. Tell us, 'What think ye of Christ?'" **"Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For**

mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (Lk.2:29-32)

"Wise men, surely if anyone could be called the friends of Jesus, it must be you. It must have been genuine interest and friendship which could cause you to travel from the far east following a star in order to worship Him. It must have been genuine friendship which caused you to present to Him your gifts and then depart secretly in order that you might not betray His whereabouts to Herod, knowing his murderous intentions. Wise men, you told Herod the town of Jesus' birth. 'What think ye of Christ?' Tell us where he should be born.' **"And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."** (Mt.2:5, 6)

"John the Baptist, you were one of the strangest characters that ever stalked across the pages of human history. You were the last of the Old Testament prophets, and at the same time, the beginning of the New Testament. You were like the landing on a flight of stairs— you were higher than those before you, and yet lower than those that should come after you. You were the first Baptist preacher we ever read of in history. You baptized this man Jesus, although with a great

deal of reluctance on your part. You denounced the Jews for their hypocritical professions of religion. Tell us, 'What think ye of Christ?'" **Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."**

(John 1:29)

"Nicodemus, I am glad that you came to Jesus one night; I am glad that we have evidence of your profession of faith in Him; I am happy not only because it means your salvation, but since you were a fine high type moral man—a preacher of religion—you stand as an example to tell us that regardless of how good and moral one may be he still needs Jesus. Nineteen hundred years ago you came to Him by night to talk with Him relative to His miracles and His theological teachings of religion. Do you remember that night? Do you recall that He emphatically declared the necessity of the new birth when He said to you, '**Ye must be born again?**' Since you were a Jew and He was a Jew, and since many of my audience tonight are Jews, I ask you, 'What think ye of Christ?'" **"Rabbi we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."** (John 3:2)

"Woman of Samaria, I speak to you as I spoke to Nicodemus. I am glad that you were saved and that your character found a place in the Word of God even if your name were omitted. To be sure, first of all I am glad that you are saved, but especially am I glad to recognize you as

one of Jesus' friends in view of the example which you present. You had had five husbands and you were living with a man in open sin when Jesus came to you. You were ostracized from society in that day. It is too bad you were born 1900 years too soon, for if you had lived today, you would be the "belle" of society in every town. With your ways with men, you would be much sought after today. Your name would grace the society page of every modern daily newspaper. Since you were redeemed from all your sin, you serve as an example, and by your conversion you tell the world that none can be too low nor too vile to come into the Kingdom of God. That must have been an eventful day in your life when you came out to Jacob's well to draw water and found Jesus seated there. Whether you recall how he looked or not, I am sure that you remember many of the things which He said. When He began to talk with you about the 'water of life', you thought he was talking about natural water didn't you? You even admitted to Him that you were expecting the Messiah. What you said to the men of the city of Sychar I would be happy to consider as an answer to my question, 'What think ye of Christ?'" **"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"** (John 4:29)

"Pau!, you never had the honor of seeing Him face to face; you never walked with Him in the days of His flesh;

you were a stiff-necked, proud -hearted disbeliever for years after others had received Jesus as Saviour. The first thing I remember hearing of you, you were opposing those who had believed on Him. It was then that you were assisting in the stoning of a young man who claimed that Jesus was the Messiah. Later on, after your great experience on the roadway to Damascus, you became one of His followers. As you yourself said, "You were one born out of due time." (ICor.15:8). You walked with Him in service for 30 years; you preached the Bible for 25 years. After you had been in His service nearly 30 years, you wrote to the church at Rome relative to the theological problems which center in and about the life of Jesus. Tell me now, after you have had these 30 years of experience with Him, 'What think ye of Christ?'" **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."**

(Rom. 1:16)

IV

Lest I become tedious by calling in too many of those whom He had befriended, and who became His friends, I call in His disciples and ask them the same question: "What think ye of Christ?"

"Andrew, it looks like you had a "knack" for personal work. You were the one who found the lad with some loaves and fishes and brought him to Jesus whereby a great miracle was wrought through His hands. You were one of

those who told Jesus about the Greeks who had said, '**Sir, we would see Jesus.**' (John 12:21) On the day when you first saw Jesus, you hurried away to begin your personal work by going to your own brother in the flesh, Simon Peter. What did you say to Peter in order to interest him in Jesus?" 'What think ye of Christ?' **"We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."**(John 1:41)

"Philip, the world knows but little of you, yet you were close enough to Jesus that you felt at liberty to talk with Him, and you thus went with Andrew on the day when he told you about the Greeks who desired to see Him. Philip, 'What think ye of Christ?' **"We have found him, of whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."** (John 1:45)

"Nathaniel, you surely were the skeptic of the twelve apostles. Do you remember that when your friend Philip first spoke to you about Jesus, that you even doubted that anyone good, or anything worthwhile could come out of the city of Nazareth? Well, Nathaniel, after you saw Him, and had had fellowship with Him 'What think ye of Christ?' **"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."** (John 1:49)

"Thomas, your skepticism never manifested itself until after Jesus was taken from you. I imagine your doubt was only natural though, and that it was an easy matter for you to question the resurrection, in view of the fact that you were so discouraged because

of His death. Thomas, you saw Him not only alive, but you saw Him after He came forth from the grave; tell us, 'What think ye of Christ?' **"My Lord and my God."** (John 20:28).

"Simon Peter, we are sure that if you were here today, you would deny many of the things that have been said about you relative to your primacy and the fact that you were the first pope. We just don't believe this, for you told us yourself that you were only an elder— just a preacher. You were so careful when you wrote your first letter to disclaim all superiority over any of the rest of the disciples. **"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder."** (I Pet. 5:1) Since you were so careful in that you did not want men to mistake you for the Christ, tell us, who is Christ? 'What think ye of Christ?'" **"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."**(Mt. 16:16)

V

My Jewish friends, in the main, are as far from infidelity as they are from Christ. They believe in God. Though they may reject Jesus as His son, still they believe in God the Father. Twice during the ministry of Jesus on earth, the Father broke the Heavenly silence with His voice: when Jesus was baptized, and when He was transfigured, the Father spoke. May each Jew and Gentile as well, in my invisible audience lift his eyes heavenward tonight and say, "Oh, God, what think ye of Christ?" Listen: **"And there came a**

voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him." (Luke 9:3, 5)

VI

Since we have accepted the words of God the Father, and have taken His testimony in answer to this question, we likewise turn to the enemy of our souls. We even appeal to Satan. It isn't often that I would be willing to accept the words of the Devil; it isn't often that I would want to accept anything that he would say, or that I would want to parley long in talking with him; yet beloved, the Devil knows more about Jesus than any preacher living today. Did not James write, **"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble"**(Jam. 2:19). In view of this fact, I ask Satan, "What think ye of Christ?", and he immediately answers back, **"What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not."** (Luke 8:28)

VII

I realize that there are those listening to this broadcast who desire that we shall convict Jesus. Since they have rejected Him, nothing could please them more than that we should find whereof to convict Him. Since the Old Testament prophets, the angels, His friends, His disciples, even God the Father, and the Devil of Hell have all testified in His behalf; we now call upon His enemies to see what they have to say concerning Jesus.

"Judas, you betrayed Him; you loved 30 pieces of silver (\$15.95) more than you loved Jesus. Even though you followed with Him for three years, still you betrayed Him. Of all ungrateful wretches, you are the worst. The basest ingratitude I have seen in any man appears in you. But tell us, 'What think you of Christ?' **"I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood"** (Mt. 27:4).

"Pilate, this Jesus came before you for questioning and for trial. You were the one who sat upon the bench; you had sworn to uphold the law; you washed your hands of the whole matter on the day of the trial, but what you needed was that God might have washed your heart. It is true that you did wash your hands in water, but it requires more than water to wash away the guilt and the enormity of your sin— your passing judgment on one when even the witnesses disagreed, and when you yourself knew He wasn't guilty. Pilate, 'What think ye of Christ?'" **"I find no fault in this man."** (Lk. 23:4) **"I am innocent of the blood of this just person see ye to it."** (Mt. 27:24)

And now beloved, to you of my audience, I ask the question, "What think ye of Christ?" To both my Jewish and Gentile friends I present this question, "What think ye of Christ?" We would expect His disciples, and His friends to testify in His behalf; yet in this instance, we have even the Devil, along with the an-

gels, and prophets, and the Father speaking well of Him. Even Judas and Pilate in their testimony laud and praise His character. In view of all of these testimonies, I ask you, **"What think ye of Christ?"**

*"What think you of Christ?
is the test*

*To try both your state
and your scheme;*

*You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him.*

*As Jesus appears in your view,
As He is loved or not;*

*So God is disposed to you,
And mercy or wrath is your lot.*

*Some take Him a creature to be,
A man, or an angel at most;*

*Sure these have not
feelings like me,*

*Nor know themselves
wretched and lost;*

*So guilty, so helpless am I,
I durst not confide in His blood,*

*Nor on His protection rely,
Unless I was sure He is God,*

*If ask'd what of Jesus I think,
Though still my best thoughts
are but poor,*

*I'll say He's my meat
and my drink,*

*My Life, and my Strength
and my Store;*

*My Shepherd, my Husband,
my Friend,*

*My Saviour from sin
and from thrall;*

*My hope from beginning to end,
My portion, my Lord, and my All."*

May God grant that you shall receive Him by faith and that He shall become your All in All. **Ω**

From *The Baptist Examiner*
Feb. 4, 1939

The New Birth

John Bunyan
(1628-1688)

These words have a dependence on what goes before, and therefore I must direct you to it for the right understanding of them. You have it thus: "**He (Christ) came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**" (John 1:11-13)

In the words before us, you have two things.

1. Some of Christ's own nation rejecting Him when He offered himself to them.

2. Others of His own receiving Him, and making Him welcome. Those that reject Him, He also passes by; but those "that receive him, *he gives them power* to become the sons of God." Now, lest any one should look upon it as good luck or fortune, He says, They were "**born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**" They that did not receive Him, were only born of flesh and blood; but those that did receive Him, they that receive the doctrine of Christ with a vehement desire, they have God to their father.

The Origin of the New Birth.
"**Not of blood,**" etc.

I'll show you what he means by blood. They that be-

lieve are born to it, as an heir is to an inheritance; they are born of God, not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Not of blood, that is, not by generation, not born to the kingdom of heaven by the flesh; not because I am the son of a godly man or woman. That is meant by blood (Acts 17:26). "**He hath made of one blood all nations.**" But when he says here, "Not of blood," he also rejects all carnal privileges they did boast of. They boasted they were Abraham's seed: "No, no," says he, "it is not of blood. Think not to say you have Abraham to your father," You must be born of God, if you go to the kingdom of heaven.

"Nor of the will of the flesh":
What must we understand by that? It is taken often for those vehement inclinations that are in man, to all manner of looseness; "fulfilling the desires of the flesh." But that must not be understood here. Men are not made the children of God by fulfilling their lustful desires. It must be understood here in the best sense. There is not only in carnal men a will to be vile, but there is in them a will to be saved also, a will to go to heaven also. But this will not do: it will not privilege a man in the things of the kingdom of God. Natural desires after the things of another world, are not an argument to prove a man shall go to



heaven whenever he dies. I am not a free-willer, I do abhor it, yet there is not the wickedest man, but he desires some time or other to be saved; he will read some time or other, or it may be, pray; but this will not do. "It is not in him that wills, nor in him that runs, but in God that shows mercy"; there is willing and running, and yet to no purpose (Rom. 9:16). **"Israel which followed after the law of righteousness have not obtained it."** Here I do not understand, as if the apostle had denied a virtuous course of life to be the way to heaven; but that a man without grace, though he have natural gifts, yet he shall not obtain privilege to go to heaven, and be a son of God. Though a man without grace may have a will to be saved, yet he cannot have that will in God's way; nature cannot know any thing but the things of nature; the things of God knows no man, but by the Spirit of God (1Cor. 2:14). Unless the Spirit of God be in you, it will leave you on this side the gates of heaven.

"Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It may be some may have a will, a desire that Ishmael may be saved (Gen.17:18); know this, it will not save thy child. If it was of our will, I would have you all go to heaven. How many are there in the world that pray for their children, and cry, and are ready to die for them, and all this will not do? **God's will is the rule of all.** It is only through Jesus Christ. **"Which were born not**

of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Now I come to the doctrine.

Men that believe in Jesus Christ to the effectual receiving of Jesus Christ, are born to it. He does not say they *shall* be born to it, but they *are born to it*. A man is born of God unto God, and the things of God, before he receives Christ to eternal salvation. **"Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."** Now unless he be *born of God* he cannot see it. Suppose the kingdom of God be what it will, he cannot see it before he be begotten of God; suppose it be the gospel, he cannot see it before he be brought into a state of regeneration; believing is the consequence of the new birth: **"Not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God."**

I will give you a clear description of this New Birth under a similitude or two:

A child before it be born into the world is in the dark dungeon of its mother's womb; so a child of God before he be born again is in the dark dungeon of sin, and sees nothing of the kingdom of God. Therefore it is called a new birth. The same soul has love one way in its carnal condition, another way when it is born again.

As it is compared to a birth, resembling a child in his mother's womb; so it is compared to a man being raised out of the grave; and to be born again, is the same as to be raised out of the grave of sin, **"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead,**

and Christ shall give thee light." To be raised from the grave of sin, is by a figure to be begotten and born. There is a famous instance of Christ: He is "**the first-begotten from the dead**" (Rev. 1:5), He is "the first-born from the dead," unto which our regeneration alludeth, that is, if you be born again by seeing those things that are above. Then there is a similitude betwixt Christ's resurrection and the new birth. "Which were born," which were restored out of this dark world, and translated out of the kingdom of this dark world into the kingdom of His dear Son. This makes us live a new life; this is to be born again. As he that is delivered from the mother's womb, it is by the help of the mother; so he that is born of God, it is by the Spirit of God.

I must give you a few consequences of a New Birth.

A child you know is incident to cry as soon as it comes into the world; for if there be no noise, they say it is dead. You that are called born of God, and Christians, if you be not criers, there is no spiritual life in you; if you be born of God, you are crying ones; as soon as He has raised you out of the dark dungeon of sin, you cannot but cry to God, "**What must I do to be saved?**" As soon as ever God had touched the jailer he cries out, "**Men and brethren what must I do to be saved?**" Oh! how many prayer-less professors are there in London, that never pray? Coffee-houses will not let you

pray, trades will not let you pray, looking-glasses (mirrors) will not let you pray; but if you were born of God, you would.

It is not only natural for a child to cry, but it must crave the breast, it cannot live without the breast. Therefore Peter makes it the true trial of a new-born babe. The new-born babe desires the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby; if you be born of God, make it manifest by desiring the breast of God. Do you long for the milk of the promises? A man lives one way when he is in the world, another way when he is brought unto Jesus Christ. So Isaiah: "**They shall suck and be satisfied, with the breasts of consolation.**" If you be born again, there is no satisfaction until you get the milk of God's word into your souls (Isa. 66: 11). O what is a promise of God to a carnal man! a harlot's song, it may be, is more sweet to him. But if you be born again you cannot live without the milk of God's word. What is a woman's breast to a horse? But what is it to a child? there is its comfort night and day. O how loath are they it should be taken from them! Minding heavenly things, says a carnal man, is but vanity, but to a child of God, there is his comfort.

A child that is newly born, if it have not other comforts to keep it warm, than it had in its mother's womb, dies; it must have something got for its succor. So at his birth Christ had swaddling clothes

prepared for him. So those that are born again, must have some promise of Christ to keep them alive. Those that are in a carnal state, warm them selves with other things; but those that are born again, cannot live without some promise of Christ to keep them alive, as he did the poor infant in Ezekiel 16. **"I have covered thee with embroidered gold."** When women are with child, what fine things will they prepare for their child! O but what fine things has Christ prepared to wrap all in that are born again! O what wrappings of gold has Christ prepared for all that are born again! Women will dress their children, that every one may see them, how fine they are. So he says in Ezekiel 16:11, **"I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thine hands, and a chain on thy neck, and I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head"**; and he adds in the 13th verse, **"Thou didst prosper to a kingdom."** This is to set out nothing in the world; but the righteousness of Christ and the graces of the Spirit, without which a new born babe cannot live. They perish unless they have the golden righteousness of Christ.

A child when it is born, is nursed in its mother's lap. The mother takes great delight to have that which will be for its comfort. So it is with God's children; they shall be kept on his knee (Isa. 66: 11), they shall **"suck and be satisfied with the breasts of consolations."** Again, verse 13, **"As**

one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." There is a similitude in these things that nobody knows of, but those that are born again.

There is usually some similitude betwixt the father and the child; it may be the child looks like its father. So those that are born again have a new similitude, they have the image of Jesus Christ (Gal. 4). Every one that is born of God, has something of the features of heaven upon him. Men love those children that are likest them, most usually; so does God his children, therefore they are called the children of God: but others do not look like him; therefore they are called Sodomites. Christ describes children of the devil by their features; the children of the devil, his works they will do. All works of unrighteousness, are the devil's works. If you are earthly, you have borne the image of the earthly, if heavenly, you have borne the image of the heavenly.

When a man has a child, he trains him up to his own liking; "they have learned the custom of their father's house." So those that are born of God, have learned the custom of the true church of God; there they learn to cry, "My Father and my God." They are brought up in God's house; they learn the method and form of God's house, for regulating their lives in this world.

Children! it is natural for them to depend upon their father for what they want. If they want a pair of shoes,

they go and tell him; if they want bread, they go and tell him. So should the children of God do. Do you want spiritual bread? go tell God of it. Do you want strength of grace? ask it of God. Do you want strength against Satan's temptations? go and tell God of it. When the devil tempts you, run home and tell your heavenly Father; go pour out your complaints to God. This also is natural to children; if any wrong them, they go and tell their father; so do those that are born of God, when they meet with temptations, go and tell God of them.

1. The first use of the subject is this; to make a strict inquiry, whether you be born of God or not. Examine by those things I laid down before, of a child of nature, and a child of grace. Are you brought out of the dark dungeon of this world into Christ? Have you learned to cry "My Father"? "And I said, thou shalt call me thy Father" (Jer. 3:19). All God's children are criers. Cannot you be quiet without you have your fill of the milk of God's word? Cannot you be satisfied without you have peace with God? Pray you consider it, and be serious with yourselves. If you have not these marks, you will fall short of the kingdom of God, you shall never have an interest there; there is no intruding: they will say, "Lord, Lord, open to us"; and he will say, "**I know you not.**"

2. No child of God, no heavenly inheritance. We sometimes give something to those that are not our children, but not

our lands. O do not flatter yourselves with a portion among the sons, unless you live like sons. When we see a king's son play with a beggar, this is unbecoming. So if you be the king's children, live like the king's children; if you be risen with Christ, set your affections on things above, and not on things below. When you come together, talk of what your Father has promised you. You should all love your Father's will, and be content, and be pleased with the exercises you meet with in the world.

3. If you are children of God, live together lovingly; if the world quarrel with you, it is no matter; but it is sad if you quarrel together. If this be amongst you, it's a sign of ill breeding; it is not according to rules you have in the word of God. Dost thou see a soul that has the image of God in him? love him, love him; say, "this man and I must go to heaven one day." Serve one another, do good for one another, and if any wrong you, pray to God to right you; and love the brotherhood.

Lastly, If you be the children of God, learn that lesson, "**Gird up the loins of your mind as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former conversation, but be ye holy in all manner of conversation.**" Consider that the holy God is your Father, and let this oblige you to live like the children of God, that you may look your Father in the face with comfort another day. **Ω**