



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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A CURSE FOR US

By Bill Lee

A Sermon Preached at Central Baptist Church April 22, 2012

TEXT: “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*” Galatians 3:13

We are told in Matthew 1:21, “**He shall save His people from their sins**”. But how far we fall short in understanding what an enormous undertaking this was. Not enormous simply from the standpoint of the number of souls involved, for we know they were many. But enormous because of what must be done in order for one sinner to be saved.

Notice the three parts of our text verse: **1.** Christ has redeemed us. **2.** Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. **3.** Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. We just stand in awe of the magnitude of these words. We know it is so because we read it in the Scripture, but yet we are compelled to ask; “How can it be?” How can it be that the very Christ of God, the Holy One of Israel, would be made a curse for us?

There are several things I want us to consider.

First, I want us to note the context of our text. We certainly do not want to overlook the context. If you will, notice in chapter 3 and in verse 1, the saints of Galatia had become foolish. They had been bewitched. They had forsaken the truth concerning salvation. They had adopted the religion so many hold to in our generation. They had been deceived into believing that salvation was by works and by law keeping. And the apostle Paul, in seeking to

correct this error, immediately points them to the Lord Jesus Christ. The best way to correct error is to point people to the Lord Jesus Christ: To get them to look away from self, any self-worth, any works, anything at all other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

You will notice in verse 10 of Galatians 3, Paul points out the futility of seeking to be justified by the works of the law. He said, “**For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.**” Then he adds this in verse 11, “**But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.**”

Paul is putting the axe to the very root of the matter. If one would claim to be justified by the works of the law, by necessity, to remain justified, he must continue in everything that is written in the law with no failures, and no deviation. On the other hand, those who are justified by faith, as is mentioned in the latter

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part of verse 11, live by faith. Their very spiritual life, the very essence of their life, is not works which they have done, but it is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what sustains them in their life.

Now you will notice in verse 13 of Galatians 3, the Apostle is speaking about the curse of the law. The curse of the law! He said, "**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.**" Notice what the law is called in the Book of Romans, chapter 8, verse 2, "**For the law of the Spirit of life in**

Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Notice he refers to the law as "**the law of sin and death**". You might recall that when God gave the law at Sinai, He wrote it upon tables of stone. Have you ever wondered why He chose stone? He had everything at His disposal, but He chose stone. I do not know the mind of God, but it just could be to show us the law is hard. The law is cold. And if you violate God's law, that law will come down upon you and crush you. There is no mercy in God's law! If you search the law of God as it is written, you will not find mercy. You will not find any second chances. Again I will remind you, Paul referred to the law as "**the law of sin and death**". But what does this phrase, "**the law of sin death**" mean? Under God's law, if you sin, you die for it. That is exactly what it means. It is "the law of sin and death". There is no mercy. There is no appeal. There is never an acquittal.

And back in our text, Galatians 3:13, Paul speaks of "the curse of the law". And just a reminder, the Bible tells us in Romans 3:23, "**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.**" And this statement brings me to my first point concerning the "**curse of the law**". All have sinned, and therefore, by nature, all come under the curse of the law. The curse of the law is universal because sin is universal. **For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not",** of the curse goes beyond man's natura **Ecclesiastes 7:20.**

Now, people seem to have a problem with this. The universality I reasoning and logic. For it just seems as if it is just human nature for us to look upon murderers, adulterers, drunkards, child abusers, whoremongers and all of these terrible kinds of people, and to think it is right for them to be under the curse of the law. But, then we have a different view, it seems, of the individual who is outwardly morally upright, a good neighbor, a good father, a good husband, a very civic mind person, one you would have to search hard to find a flaw in his character. And for some reason we just do not think this kind of person ought to come under the same curse as that other group of sinners. But the fact is this, if

an individual is never born of the Spirit of God, he is under this universal curse, ***“the curse of the law”***.

The second thing I would remind you of concerning the curse of the law is that it is not only universal, but it is also just and holy. And this must be so for it is from a Holy God, I am going to read Galatians 3:10 & 11 once again; ***“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”***

The law of God, even as God Himself, is perfect. God gave a perfect law. It is perfect in every aspect. There are not too many laws, nor are there too few laws. The laws are not too strict, and are not too lenient. They uphold the divine justice of a Holy God, and as God is holy and righteous in all of His ways, so are the laws of God.

Some view sin in many different ways. As I have already mentioned, it is the fault of human nature to put sin in different categories. Some sins are considered as large sins, and some sins are considered as small sins. Some even view Adam’s sin as a very little thing. After all, they say, “All he did was just eat a piece of fruit. That is all he did.” Have you ever considered that just maybe, in what we would call little sins, and in the smallness of those sins, there might be the greater condemnation? For if it is, as some say, just a little thing, how easy it ought to be for us to avoid these “little sins”. But yet, when we go into that sin, do we not receive just condemnation? If, on one hand we say, “now this is just a little sin”, how easy it would be for us to just stay away from it! But, that “little sin” will receive as great condemnation, even as what we might characterize as a “large sin”. I would also remind you that in the eyes of the Almighty Judge, sin is sin! Sin is the transgression of God’s law, and ***“the wages of sin is death”***. And in this just condemnation, there is no distinction made of “little sins” and “large sins”.

If you have committed only one sin, that is enough to send you to hell. We know this is not

possible for an individual to commit only one sin, for we have all committed multitudes of sin. Just consider; one sin, that one sin of Adam, plunged the entirety of the human race into death and placed them under the curse of God. Just one sin! This is foreign to many, but none are going to escape this curse. The only means of avoiding the curse is to have the Lord Jesus Christ as your Redeemer and Savior. Our text verse states, ***“Christ hath redeemed us”***, and there is no other Redeemer. Salvation is in none other. And again, by nature, every individual stands condemned by God.

Let’s notice the words of Jesus as recorded in John 3:18. I have read this to you many times, and the Lord willing I will read it and preach from it many more times before the Lord takes me out of this world. It is something we must drive home. It is just like the carpenter hitting the nail with the hammer, we have to hit it, and hit it, and hit it. And we have to do this over and over again to remind ourselves that there is just condemnation on every unbeliever. Jesus said, ***“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already”***. He is condemned already! Why? ***“because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”***

While the sinner may be very active in his life upon this earth, his life may be very respectful in the eyes of all who know him. He may be highly thought of by family and acquaintances. But in the eyes of the Almighty, that sinner is dead in trespasses and sin, and has already been ***“weighed in the balances and found wanting”***. A parallel in some way might be one who has already been charged, condemned, and is sitting on death row waiting for the execution, still living, but condemned already. Go back to Galatians 3:13, and you will find a very sobering thought; the curse of the law. And, let me just mention this, I am sure you understand it, but just to be clear, I will mention it. It is not really so much the curse of the law as it is the curse from the Lawgiver. This curse has been decreed by God, and He is the One who will enforce this curse. It is the curse of the Lawgiver.

When I look at Galatians 3:13, I not only see

the curse, I also find the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I find the good news. I find the glad tidings. I find what we have been commissioned to go into the world to preach. The good news is, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law. You know, the best news you will ever hear is that you have a Redeemer. Once you hear that, it will be really good news to you. By this I mean, not just hearing with your natural ear, but once this gets into your heart it is the best news you will ever hear. You have a Redeemer! What a blessed thought.

In Galatians 3:13 there is also that fundamental, basic doctrine of salvation, which is substitution. This is one of the most misunderstood doctrines of Christianity—substitution. But you will never get away from it if you stick with the Word of God. Without substitution we have no Savior and no salvation! The curse is removed, but the question remains, “What happened to the curse?” If you are sitting here today and you know that you know that you are redeemed, you know that you are saved, the curse has been removed, answer the question: Where did the curse go? How was the curse removed? Did God simply just do away with it? Did God just decide that your sin would go unpunished? No! I think God would actually “undeify” Himself, He would lose His holiness, if He were to do such a thing.

The only plausible answer, the only Biblical answer, is substitution. Christ was made a curse for us. That is true substitution. He redeemed us from the curse of the Law by being made a curse for us. Without real, true substitution, there is no real, true redemption. This leads us back to the “good news”. We have a substitute! This goes to the very heart of the gospel. But it could not be just any substitute. Our substitute must be sinless. He must have perfection. And in this we speak of the impeccability of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had no sin, He did no sin, and He cannot sin! If our substitute were not sinless, if He had His own sins, then He would also be under the curse, for He was born under the law.

I mentioned earlier one being convicted and on death row. Consider this about our Substitute, how He must be sinless. Suppose there were two men on death row, both convicted of murder, both condemned to die.

And suppose one of them would speak up and say, “I will die in the place of my fellow prisoner”. Would he be qualified to do so? No! All he could do would be to die for his own crime. His death would be for his own crime. And he, being guilty of crime, could not die for another’s crime. It takes a perfect Redeemer, a perfect Substitute, One who is impeccable in every sense of the word.

In Galatians 3:13, **“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law”**. Jesus suffered and died, and when He did, it was the Just for the unjust. And why did the Just die for the unjust? The answer of course is, that He might bring us to God, **1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:** That was His purpose in dying for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Now, I am just simple-minded enough to believe that whatever the purpose of the Son of God was in dying for His people, will be accomplished. If the Just died for me, in my place, if He took my curse, I’ll never again have that curse. The very thundering of Sinai may come toward me, but I can stand and say, “I have a Substitute, you can’t touch me”. Why can’t the curse of the law condemn me? How is it that I do not fear condemnation? It is because it is Christ that died, and there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

Jesus did not come just to make salvation possible or a people savable. He came to save His people from their sins. He did this by being made a curse for us! I don’t have just any Tom, Dick, or Harry for a substitute. I have Christ. Christ hath redeemed us. Christ took our place. The Son of God came into this world to stand in our place and was made a curse for us. I cannot imagine the anguish of the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ when He was suspended between earth and Heaven, and cried out **“My God, My God, why hath Thou forsaken me?”**

Isaiah informs us, **“The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all”**, **Isaiah 53:6**. I can assure you Isaiah was not speaking of the universal redemption of all of Adam’s race, but for everyone for whom Christ died. Christ became a curse for all of those whom the

Father had given Him. All of their sins were placed or heaped upon Him.

Look in the Book of Hebrews, if you would. Hebrews 9:26, "**but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself**". By this putting away of sin, He by necessity put away the curse. Our text says He was made a curse for us. Let me read you a parallel statement found in II Corinthians 5:21, "**For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him**". The One who was made sin for us knew no sin. He had no sin. But He has made Him to be sin for us. He never became a sinner, and don't think for a moment this is what this verse of Scripture means. But when Jesus Christ was crucified divine justice looked at Him and He was viewed as sin. He was viewed as the embodiment of sin. What divine justice saw was sin, for He had been made sin for us. The One who knew no sin had been made a curse for us. And divine justice poured out its wrath upon our Substitute who was made a curse for us. Notice the words in II Corinthians 5:21, "**For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin**". How we rejoice in those two little words, "**for us**". Here is where our faith stands. Here is all of our hope. Our eternal salvation and our hope of glory will stand or fall with substitution. Jesus Christ took our place. Thereby He satisfied the demands of a Holy God. And He did this by being made a curse for us. Unimaginable grace, unfathomable love, shown in what our Savior Jesus Christ became for us!

SPURGEON ON THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

"Is there power in the gospel? Ay, there is, and he who has felt it must acknowledge it. There was a time when I lived in the strong old castle of my sins, and rested in my own works. There came a trumpeter to the door, and bade me open it. I with anger chide him from the porch, and said he ne'er should enter. Then there came a goodly Personage, with loving countenance; His hands were marked with

scars where nails had been driven, and His feet had nail-prints, too. He lifted up His cross, using it as a hammer; at the first blow, the gate of my prejudice shook; at the second, it trembled more; at the third, down it fell, and in He came; and He said, "Arise, and stand upon thy feet, for I have loved thee with an everlasting love." The gospel a thing of power! Ah! that it is. It always wears the dew of its youth; it glitters with morning's freshness, its strength and its glory abide for ever. I have felt its power in my own heart; I have the witness of the Spirit within my spirit, and I know it is a thing of might, because it has conquered me, and bowed my soul down." *Spurgeon's Autobiography*, Chapter XI. The Great Change – Conversion, pgs 101-102.

THERE IS AN END TO ALL YOUR TROUBLES, TRIALS, AND TEMPTATIONS

(James Smith, "1842)

"**Surely there is an end; and your expectation shall not be cut off.**" *Proverbs 23:18*

Christian! **There is an end to all your troubles, trials, and temptations**--you will survive them all, and rise superior to them.

There is an end to all your *enemies*, and their designs to injure you. They will either be converted to friends, or be everlastingly destroyed from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power.

There is an end to all your *disappointments and vexations*--you will soon be disappointed for the last time, and shall know vexation no more.

There is an end to your *sickness*--it is not eternal. Your *pains* are of short duration--but your *pleasures* shall forever flow!

Oh, think of this and be grateful! Your expectation of being forever . . . freed from sin, delivered from Satan, raised above the world, placed beyond the reach of sorrow, and of being forever with the Lord -- shall not be cut off!

Your *troubles* are confined to this howling wilderness--but can never enter the *paradise*

into which you will shortly dwell. There will be an *end* of all you complain of, mourn over, or seek deliverance from. There will be a *beginning*--but no end, to all that you ardently desire, long, and pray for! Jesus will soon complete His redemption, by eradicating *sin*, *sickness*, and *sorrow*--and by raising His saints incorruptible, and perfectly conformed to Himself!

Look beyond your present *sufferings*--and anticipate the *glory* that is to be revealed.

Time will soon fade away before the *unfading glories of eternity!*

Time bounds your trials--but only eternity bounds your possessions, pleasures, and glories!

Grace be swallowed up in *glory* forever!

GRACE VERSUS LEGALITY

By Augustus Toplady

It has been no less frequently than mistakenly, objected to the Doctrines of Grace, in general; and to the Doctrine of election in particular; that they tend to supersede the necessity of personal holiness, and to render men remiss in the duties of practical godliness. We might as reasonably charge the Sun in the firmament with being the cause of frost and darkness.

Not the reception, but the unbelieving rejection of those glorious doctrines, is the corroding worm that lies at the root both of virtue and happiness. Strange as it may sound in the ear of an unawakened person, it is still a most certain truth, that as long as we seek to hammer out a salvation for ourselves on the miserable anvil of free-will and legal strivings, we act like one who has lost his way on a journey, and who the farther he advances, the more widely he wanders from the place to which he is bound.

Legality, or the hope of Justification by works, whether in whole or in part, is far, very far, from promoting the interest of holiness, and from erecting a barrier against licentiousness; it rather acts as a remora on the keel, and as a contrary wind in the sails. Nor can fallen man ever know what it is to speed his way to the kingdom of heaven, and make large advances in Sanctification; till his progress is disembarassed, by a full submission to the righteousness of God

the Son, as the sole procuring cause of eternal blessedness.

We then, and then only, run the way of His commandments, when converting grace has set our hearts at liberty from legal dependencies of our own. We then become thoroughly furnished, and ready to every good word and work, when the Holy Spirit gives us the sense of interest in that ravishing declaration of God; Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee: drawn thee to a saving acquaintance with Myself, as thy friend and Father in Christ; drawn thee from the love of sin, to the love of holiness; and from the practice of evil to the pursuit of righteousness. Nothing so effectually tends to wean the soul from every undivine attachment, as the knowledge that our names are written in heaven.



FIVE STUDENTS GIVING BRO. CAMP A MASSAGE AT AIRPORT

THOSE WHO CAME TO SEE US OFF 3/1/2012



J. R. GRAVES LIFE-TIME POSITION ON CHURCH CONSTITUTION INVESTIGATED

By J.C. Settlemaier

INTRODUCTION

A number of Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist churches believe they are the direct descendants of those Landmark churches in the 1800s of which J.R. Graves was the most vociferous spokesman. It is affirmed by these present day churches (that is by their leading men) that Graves took the position that no Scriptural church could be formed without a mother church, which we call, *Essential Mother Daughter Authority* (EMDA). They also maintain that he opposed *Direct Authority* (DA). The question is posed that if these present day EMDA churches do not agree with Graves and the Landmark churches of his day, then how can they claim they are in agreement with Graves? If Graves taught EMDA then their position is in line with him and those churches of his day and they can walk together in agreement. But if Graves and those churches taught DA, then they will not company with him or those churches which agreed with him. (Am 3:3). We should be able to determine conclusively from Graves' works the position he held whether it was EMDA or DA. Either way this issue should be settled by honest investigation. Graves' position as the leading Landmark Baptist of his day should be ascertained and published. What was Graves' position?

GRAVES' POSITION 1855 – 1860

We will attempt to demonstrate from Graves' explicit statements that he held to DA during the period of 1855-1862. His first statement on this subject which we have seen is in *The Great Iron Wheel*. This is one of Graves' earliest books. The First edition was published in 1855. The last, the thirtieth edition, was published in 1860. The total number of volumes published before the cast iron plates were destroyed by the Union Army in 1862, was 50,000 volumes! [Cf. *The New Great Iron Wheel*, 10]. Graves' statement

on church constitution in this book is:

Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receiving its authority directly from Christ, it is accountable to him alone. [*Graves. Great Iron Wheel*. 552, 1855].

Analysis of this statement indicates the subject of the statement is *church constitution*, not some other issue. Graves is not here speaking of *succession, continuity* nor is he considering *perpetuity*. These synonymous terms do not indicate whether one believes in EMDA or DA. Graves is speaking of how a church becomes a church or how it receives *church-hood*. He excludes *all other bodies* as a source of a church's beginning. He makes the reader understand just what kind of bodies he excludes from the process of becoming a church. He asserts that a church does not obtain its *being* from any *civil* entity, that is, from any political institution. Now up to this point, EMDA men are in complete agreement with Graves. But when he goes further and says, *Each particular Church is independent of every...ecclesiastical body*, he expressly excludes any church as the source of church being, power, authority or existence and at this word they part company with him but not publicly! This means that in Graves' view no church depends upon another church for its being! This powerful statement of how a church obtains church status shakes the pillars of the EMDA temple and makes Graves a heretic in their eyes!

But Graves is not through. He goes further. He not only gives the negative which cuts off the EMDA branch in unequivocal terms but he positively affirms DA in these unmistakable words—*Each particular Church is independent of every other body... receiving its authority directly from Christ...*—which designates how a church is set up by DA. This authority, Graves

insists, is received *directly* from Christ! Not *indirectly* through a mother church, as EMDA mistakenly claims! Of course, because DA is so despised, detested and repudiated by EMDA men, this is an unacceptable statement for them. The mere term *DA* causes them to stop their ears (Ac 22:22; Ze 7:11; Ac 7:57). So far as anyone knows, they have never seen this statement! For not one EMDA man has ever attempted to explain it! They pretend it does not exist. This is an ox goad to their position. But so long as we allow words to carry any meaning, there can be no question that Graves held emphatically and tenaciously to DA during this time period (1855-1860). This cannot be denied!

GRAVES' POSITION 1860-1875

Of course during the Civil War Graves did not publish anything. *The Baptist* was suspended due to the war and Graves himself was a refugee. But soon after the Civil War in 1867 Graves was able to re-establish *The Baptist* and he began publishing again.

For the purpose of establishing Graves' position in this time period we will look at what he published in the *Great Carrollton Debate* (Carrollton, Mo) which was held with Jacob Ditzler in 1875. The book was published in 1876. In that discussion Graves said:

Each particular Church is independent of every other body, civil or ecclesiastical, and receives its authority directly from Christ." [Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*. 995-6, 1876].

This is a concrete assertion of DA and was made fifteen years after the publishing of the last edition of *The Great Iron Wheel* in 1860. His words are almost verbatim of those in 1855. The idea is identical. This demonstrates, to a remarkable degree, that Graves had not taken an inchoate posture on this subject in 1855 but rather DA was his settled position and he held it at least until the time of this debate, November 1875. DA, in these references, stands out like Mt Rushmore and those who do not see the physiognomy do not see it because they do not want to see it! (Jn 9:41). This is not only ignorance but it is a *willing* ignorance. Thus from

1855 to 1875 we have traced Graves' position on how a church is constituted and it was by DA and his position remained the same throughout those years, the words in 1875 being but an echo of those in 1855. Thus for twenty years we have certified Graves' position in his own words and that position was DA.

GRAVES' POSITION 1875-1884

Now we move forward another nine years to 1884. The next reference is found in *The New Great Iron Wheel* published in 1884. Graves wrote:

...each assembly was a complete Church, and being complete in itself, it was independent of all other like bodies in other localities, and being each independent it was divinely invested with all the powers and prerogatives of a Church of Christ. [Graves. *New Great Iron Wheel*. 125, 1884].

One sees instantly that this reference contains the very same idea in slightly different words as that in the previous statements. There is a studied and consistent DA declaration in Graves' expressions which cannot be misunderstood. He excludes *all other like bodies in other localities* as the source of church being or power. Then to make doubly sure his meaning was understood, he adds the phrase ***divinely invested***, and connects it with what it is that a group obtains by being so *invested*, which he says includes *all the powers and prerogatives of a Church of Christ!* This means that a group obtains everything it needs to be a church by divine investment! Graves is saying a church has nothing and can have nothing beside what Christ gives it! He is the source of *All the powers and prerogatives of a church of Christ!* *Divinely invested* is a powerful way to state DA and that according to Graves is all a group needs to become a church of Christ! In this statement he dares any man to attempt to twist his words (as some have done) into EMDA or to make a compromise with it! The two positions are mutually exclusive. They repudiate each other. Graves' DA position is so pronounced that were he living today, no EMDA

church would allow him in their pulpit! And yet most of them claim Graves as a supporter of the EMDA position!

In the same book, a few pages later Graves quoted Tertullian with approval:

Three are sufficient to form a church although they be laymen. [Graves. *The New Great Iron Wheel*. P. 136].

Of course Tertullian was referring to Mt 18:20 and Graves agreed with this ancient writer that this passage refers to church constitution. We know this because on the preceding page Graves stated his understanding of this verse in these words:

Christ said, where two or three are gathered in my name [authority], there am I in the midst of them. Matt. 18:20. [Graves. *The New Great Iron Wheel*, p. 135. The word in brackets was added by Graves-JC].

So Graves taught that Mt 18:20 referred to church constitution and this authority to constitute was given by DA from Christ out of Heaven—not from a mother church! This means that Graves believed that any two or three saints in gospel order (that is, saved and baptized) could organize a Baptist church and when they did so, they were as much a church as any church on earth! No reasonable man can question what Graves meant! Once again in the same book Graves expresses his position on this subject:

That each particular church was invested by its prime founder with all the functions, rights, powers and prerogatives necessary to its self-preservation and perpetuation, and for the discharge of all the trusts he designed it to execute, until he should come again. " [Graves. *NGIW*, p. 143].

Here Graves argues that a church is *invested by its prime founder* with everything essential for a church to come into being and to function as an independent church without any earthly help. That is, a group of saints become a church by receiving their commission from the **prime Founder**—the Lord Jesus Christ. This investment of power and authority are **direct** out of Heaven and not from any mother church

whether in Jerusalem, Antioch or Kentucky! Of course this is DA full throttle! His position cannot be made into EMDA without gainsaying!

In the light of these pertinent and consistent references for DA in Graves own words, it is amazing that EMDA men can and do quote Graves as believing EMDA! (See Bro Mark Fenison's book, *Great Commission Credentials*, pp. front cover, 90; 118, et. al.). But you will not read any explanation of these explicit statements by Graves for DA in this book—nor in any other EMDA writer. The question is not addressed in any of their papers. They do not even admit these specific references exist—much less have they attempted to explain them! Thus from 1875 to 1884 there can be no questions but that Graves taught DA!

GRAVES' POSITION 1884-1893

Now for this last period we need say but little. While some have suggested that Graves changed his position from DA to EMDA before his death in 1893, (Cf. *LUF* p. 168, Appendix I) the mere possibility of a theory without supporting evidence is worthless. *Quod gratis asseritur, gratis negatur*, i.e., "If no grounds have been given for an assertion, then there are no grounds needed to reject it." To believe something without evidence is conjecture; to believe it against the evidence is pure blindness. There is not the slightest evidence, in Graves' books nor in his paper, that he made any such change. Because these men have no support for this theory, what they lack in evidence they make up with repetition.

We have found many statements by Graves in the TN Baptist in which he specifically set forth DA. For example:

A body of baptized Christians can organize themselves into a church at pleasure, and no exterior body can organize them, much less can a Presbytery organize a body superior to itself. Can a stream rise higher than its fountain? [Graves. TN Baptist, Sept. 3, 1885, p.8].

Note especially these phrases: *A body of baptized Christians can organize themselves*

into a church at pleasure... no exterior body can organize them... One cannot imagine how any statement for DA could be more positive! Graves removes the right to organize a church from any exterior body—that is any church—and puts it in the hands of those who wish to form one. Of course, no man can question his meaning. DA was never expressed more forcefully!

The next reference we give was given by Jarrel in *Church Perpetuity*, p. 1. Some EMDA men questioned this reference suggesting it could not be trusted as Jarrel did not identify the source from which he took it. Jarrel says "Graves wrote," but gave no information as to where it was found. Jarrel published this book in 1894, the year after Graves died. Would Jarrel have published this statement by Graves if Graves had changed his position from DA to EMDA at any time after 1880? Of course not! This quote was taken from the TN Baptist *Querist*. These are Graves' words although slightly different from Jarrel's quote. Here is what Graves said in the TN Baptist:

Jarrel's quote brings Graves' latter years into clear focus indicating that Graves held DA until the end of his life. Jarrel quotes him in 1894 just after his death as still holding the identical position he had held from the beginning of his career. As this statement is now verified to be that of Graves himself, another EMDA theory goes in the round file! EMDA men did not believe these words when Jarrel quoted them and they do not accept them now, even though we have proved they were taken from Graves' paper! They cannot be satisfied! This statement fixes DA as the stated position of Graves in the latter period of his life.

CONCLUSION

We have looked at Graves' position on church constitution during four specific periods of his life and in each case his position was DA. There was no variation. He did not waver. In his early days it was DA. In his middle years it was DA and in his prime it was DA just as it was in his declining years. There can be no question as to what Graves believed during his whole life. He was a pronounced proponent of DA. This

has been documented by credible evidence.

When men attempt to enlist Graves under the EMDA banner (in their books, articles, sermons, or by their silence, etc.) as they do, and when it is proved beyond doubt that he held DA, can they be justified? Are they not responsible to speak the truth? (Ze 8:16). Is it not wrong to bend a man's statements to make them line up with a theory he did not believe? (Ex 20:16; Col 3:9). Is it not wrong to quote a man as supporting a position which he expressly denied? Is it not wrong to *pretend* a man held a position when it is known he held the contrary? Thus in the light of Graves' own statements on this subject, we must ask, is there an intentional effort to mislead people on what Graves believed on this subject? When churches hail Graves as a champion for EMDA and claim they are in the same line of churches he was, the facts given above indicate a major error on their part.

The cumulative effect of these statements given in Graves's own words on the specific subject of how a church is constituted* speaks like the trumpet of Sinai and with increasing volume. There can be no question where Graves stood. He held DA and this was his wonted position throughout his life. What should honest men and churches do with these facts? Comments welcome.

* If the reader desires more information on Graves' position he may order: *Direct Authority, Biblical & Historical*, for \$7.50 postage included. Order address is: 839 W. US Highway 136, Lizton, IN 46147.

TWO SIGNS

Richard Baxter

"The Saints' Everlasting Rest"

Let **DESERVED!** be written on the door of Hell; but on the door of Heaven, **THE FREE GIFT!**

**"For the wages of sin is death--
but the gift of God is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord!"
Romans 6:23**

IT SURELY WILL BE WORTH IT ALL

By Wayne Camp

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:14-25 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (15) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (17) And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (18) For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (19) For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. (20) For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, (21) Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (22) For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. (23) And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (24) For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? (25) But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

TEXT: Romans 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

INTRODUCTION

The song director recently led the congregation in the hymn, *It Surely Will Be Worth It All*. As we sang my mind went to the Scripture that I have used as a text for this

message. Paul said that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in those who love and know Jesus Christ. I thought of some e-mails that I received recently after sending out a report on the work in Thailand, especially the school work.

A Southern Baptist lady and dear friend wrote, "It is so amazing to read how you and Ruth are still going to Thailand and ministering to the students and others. Most couples your age would not be physically able or 'spiritually motivated' to do what you are doing. PTL (praying to the Lord) for your health and 'spiritual motivation.'"

A dear brother from Louisiana who served many years in Brazil as a missionary wrote, "God bless and give you and your dear wife health and strength to 'keep on keeping on' in setting a good example of N.T. Mission work."

It is not always easy to keep on keeping on. But Scriptures such as the one that I've used for a text encouraged me to do just that. Let's look at it again. **Romans 8:18** *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

I am also reminded of the words of Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. As he reminded them of the second coming of Jesus Christ he concluded that discussion found in the 15th chapter of first Corinthians with these words, **1 Corinthians 15:58** *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

CONSIDER FIRST OF ALL THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY OF CHRIST'S COMING

Hebrews 10:37 *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

There was no doubt in Paul's mind about the certainty of the coming of Jesus Christ. He will

come and will not tarry. It bothers me to read a statement such as I did this week in which a brother said, "If the Lord tarries his coming such and such is going to happen." I wanted to cry out loudly, "He will not tarry his coming." He will come and he will come on time, not a day before God's appointed time and not a day after God's appointed time. Speaking of his return Jesus used these words, **Matthew 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.** The time of the return of Jesus Christ has been set by the Father and nothing can change that time.

Jesus told us in a parable saying, "Occupy till I come." **1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.** Therefore in view of the second coming of Jesus Christ we must continue faithfully in his work as long as is possible.

THE CERTAINTY THAT OUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN

One thing that encourages us to keep on keeping on as long as is possible is the fact that our labor is not in vain. God has promised to bless his word and that it will not return unto him void. **Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.** What a blessing it is to know that if we faithfully teach and preach the word of God it will not return void but it will accomplish what **HE** purposes that it accomplish. It may not accomplish what we desire but it will always accomplish what he has purposed. Therefore, we can be assured that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US MAKES IT ALL WORTHWHILE

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be

revealed in us. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; (18) While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Paul suffered much in his service for the Lord. He suffered from a thorn in the flesh given him by God. He suffered at the hands of men often beaten and yet he kept on keeping on. **2 Corinthians 11:24-25 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. (25) Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.** Paul did not let the sufferings stop him but he labored on because he knew that it was worth it all. He had his eye forward to the glory that would be revealed and all those who love and serve Christ.

I ask you pray that God may give us the grace that he gave to Paul.

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