



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

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

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SOME EXCOGITATIONS CONCERNING WINE: IT'S USE AND ABUSE

By Wayne Camp
PART II

When I stopped in the last issue we were discussing the good uses of wine. Now I want to note several Scriptures that show that wine was indeed a blessing when used properly.

When God was preparing to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land, he was telling them how he would bless them in that land. Included in those blessings which God promised to give to his people Israel was the blessing of wine.

Deuteronomy 7:13 “And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee.” **Deuteronomy 11:14** “That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.”

That wine was considered a blessing is evident from the fact that God warns Israel if they sin he will cause things to happen that will destroy their wine, as well as other produce. **Deuteronomy 28:39** “Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them.” **Deuteronomy 28:51** “And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of

thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.”

Amos 9:13-14 *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.*” Among the blessings God promised Israel when he brought them back from their captivity was the blessing of planting vineyards and drinking the wine thereof. This promise is set in the same book in which the excessive use of wine is condemned. One may commend the proper use of wine and still condemn the excessive use of it.

Wine was sometimes brought to the priests on special occasions. When Hannah brought Samuel to the house of the Lord as she had promised before his conception she brought various gifts with her. Among them was wine. **1 Samuel 1:24** *And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young.*” The Hebrew word used here is the same as used in **Prov. 20:1**. “Wine is a

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mockers. . ." There is no doubt that real wine, not some imaginary unfermented wine, is what the godly Hannah brought to the house of the Lord in Shiloh.

Other statements of Scripture indicate a good and acceptable use of wine. In a Psalm of praise David glorified the Lord for all his providential arrangements which blessed his people. In that Psalm he says, ***"he causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And wine that maketh glad***

the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart" (Psa. 104:14-15).

Solomon wrote of God's blessings on those who remembered to render to the Lord the firstfruits of their increase. He said, ***"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine"*** (Pro. 3: 9-10).

Most of the readers will be familiar with that glorious invitation found in Isa. 55:1-5. It starts off with these words, ***"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."***

"But," you say, "Bro. Camp that is figurative language. He is describing the blessings of salvation in that passage and uses wine as a type of the joy of salvation." That is true. Remember that the Psalmist said, ***"wine maketh glad the heart of man."*** As God speaks of the joys of salvation he knows that Israel knew how wine would make the heart glad so he used it figuratively to describe the joys of salvation awaiting those who come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, my question is, "If wine is so evil, and its use so wicked that it must **not** be used any time any where in the Lord's services, why would God use it to symbolize the joys of salvation?"

This is the point of the first miracle of Jesus in which he turned water into wine. The nation of Israel had lost the joy of their religion. Their worship of God was steeped in ritualism and formalism. They had run out of the wine of gladness and joy. To show them that, Jesus used the occasion of a wedding feast in Cana where the wine had run out long before the feast was over, and he made wine from water so that the joy of the feast would not be dulled.

In that miracle he was saying to the nation of Israel, "You have lost the joy of your worship of God. It is without gladness that you worship. I can and will restore that joy if you will but look to me." He made wine. He made wine that was the best served at the feast. New wine and grape

juice would not fit the description given by the governor of the feast.

Jesus said in another place, ***“No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better”*** (Luke 5:39). What did Jesus say about old, fully fermented wine? Did he say the old is better? He surely did! Since old, fully fermented wine is better than the new wine that has not reached the peak of its taste yet, and since the wine which Jesus made was better than any served at the feast, it is obvious that the wine he made was comparable to or better than the best wine that man could produce. ***“When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now”*** (Jn. 2:9-10).

If Jesus had made mere grape juice, do you suppose the governor of the feast would have reacted as he did to its rich flavor and goodness? If Jesus had made the imaginary “unfermented wine” of some, do you suppose the governor would have responded as he did? I remind you that Jesus himself said that old wine is better than new wine. And, then I ask, “If wine is inherently evil, as some suppose, and should be totally avoided, how do you explain our Lord’s actions here? He made wine! He made wine that was superior to any that had yet been served at the feast. He made wine that would gladden the heart.

Commenting on this, Dr. A. T. Robertson wrote, “It was a custom that the strongest, best wine was served at the beginning of a feast, and later that which was lesser in strength would be served. The Governor of the feast declared the wine Jesus had made to be the best served.”

John Gill wrote, “It is usual with men, when they make entertainments, first to give the guests the best, the most generous, and strongest-bodied wine; as being most suitable for them . . . then that which is lesser; a weaker-bodied wine, that is lowered, and of less strength,

and not so intoxicating, and which is fittest for the guests.”

It is quite evident from the surprise of the governor that what Jesus made was indeed very good wine. It surpassed the old, full-bodied wine served in the beginning of the feast.

Jesus drank wine. I know that some of you may draw back in horror at this suggestion. But, I believe the words of Jesus himself will corroborate my statement. It was about 30 years ago that I preached a sermon on John 2:1-11. In the sermon I pointed out that Jesus made wine and casually mentions that he apparently drank one as the next passage indicates. ***Luke 7:33-34 “For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!”*** One dear lady was horrified. As she went out the door that morning she said, “The lips of my Lord never touched wine!”

There are at least three things in this declaration that prove that the drinking to which Jesus referred was the drinking of wine. First, he is contrasting himself with John the Baptist as seen by the Jews. John ate locusts and wild honey, a very restricted diet. Jesus did not restrict his diet but ate as did others. John the Baptist drank no wine. The people accused him of having a demon. The drinking that Jesus was doing was in contrast to what John was doing, therefore, it is evident he was drinking wine. Second, The people accused Jesus, because of his eating and drinking, of being a gluttonous man and a ***winebibber***. Third, Jesus makes no denial of either his eating and drinking as they accused. One would have to probe deeply into the sea of speculation to even hypothesize that Jesus ***did not*** drink wine. Yet, he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

Now, I ask you, Dear Reader, “If wine is so inherently evil, why would our sinless Savior make wine, and a good amount of it? If wine is inherently evil, why did Jesus drink wine? If wine is inherently evil, why would Jesus say old wine is better than new wine? I know I have asked that question before, but perhaps asking it again will provoke someone to give us an

answer. Since Jesus made and drank wine, on what **Biblical** grounds do you say it is evil, if indeed you do say it is evil?

Paul commended the proper use of wine. Paul admonished Timothy, **“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities” (1 Tim. 5:23).** Surely none would suggest Paul is recommending grape juice for Timothy's stomach ailments. Wine relaxes a person and aids in the digestive process.

Naturally fermented wine does not have more than seven to fourteen percent alcohol. In moderation, it has some very practical health benefits as Paul knew. Therefore he encouraged Timothy, who was apparently a total abstainer, to use a little wine for his stomach's sake.

Once when I was taking this position with a brother, he said, “But, you cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit if you drink any wine at all.” He cited **Ephesians 5:18 “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”**

I pointed out to him that this does not teach what he claimed at all. There are two key words in this verse which show that it is the abuse of wine, not the use of it that Paul is referencing. The key words are **drunk** and **excess**. It is the excessive use of wine to which Paul is objecting. It is the drinking of enough wine rapidly enough to get drunk that Paul has in mind.

According to Paul, a pastor need not be a total abstainer, but he must be one who is **“not given to wine” (1 Tim. 3:3).** This means he must be one who does not “sit at wine,” or “is continually sipping at it, or drinking it, or is intemperate in the use of it” (John Gill). “This qualification disqualifies a man from the office of Bishop if he is one who sits long at or beside his wine” (A. T. Robertson). The excessive use of wine impairs one's health, stupefies his mind, and leads to all manner of sin. It is, therefore, forbidden that one who is to pastor one of the Lord's churches be one who tarries long at his wine and drinks a great deal.

In his epistle to Titus Paul gives that young preacher some admonitions to pass on to his congregation. Of some, the aged women, he

wrote, **“That they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things” (Titus 2:3).** Note please! Paul did not command that these aged women who were to be teachers of good things, especially to the younger women, were to be total abstainers from wine. No! They were to be **“not given to much wine!”** The expression here means “not enslaved to much wine.” They are expected to set an example for the younger women and must not, therefore, be enslaved by wine.

The good Samaritan, as we often call him, used oil and wine to treat the wounds of the man whom he found who had fallen among thieves. Luke 10:33-34, **“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.”** The oil was to soothe the pain and the wine to cleanse and disinfect. Grape juice, with its inherent yeast, would multiply infection. Wine, on the other hand, cleanses and disinfects.

An objection answered. When discussing this I have had brethren counter with this argument, “If you teach that even a little wine is okay, you are going to cause some to be drunkards.” I wonder how many Paul started down the road of alcoholism and drunkenness with his admonition to Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach. I wonder how many Jesus started down the road to excessive use of wine by making over 100 gallons at that feast in Cana.

Shall I refrain from mentioning food lest I cause someone to become a glutton? Shall I not tell the truth about the sinlessness of marital sex for fear I will cause someone to become promiscuous? Shall I avoid telling someone about the goodness of pure, clean, cool water lest he go over board and drink enough water to drown in it (it has happened)? Shall I desist from mentioning the importance of baptism lest someone depart from the truth and teach the heresy of baptismal regeneration? Shall I cease and desist from mentioning the doctrine of election lest someone go to an extreme on that

position? Shall I refrain from suggesting that a car serves many good purposes, lest someone go head over heels in debt, buys five, and drives all five at the same time at 100 miles per hour? Shall I refrain from telling you that there are Scriptural grounds for divorce lest a lot of readers go out and get a divorce?

Let me illustrate my point. At the Missionary Baptist Seminary in Little Rock, Arkansas, Dr. L. D. Foreman used to give a special lecture to the students at the beginning of each year. Most of it was especially directed toward the first-year students just entering seminary. In that lecture, Bro. Foreman would point out the advantages of a pastor being married and would encourage the young preachers to carefully look for a wife. He would point out that those suggestions that Paul made in his letter to the church at Corinth that most would be better off if unmarried was for a "present distress" through which Christians were going at that specific time. One year, there was this young preacher from way back in the mountains, who heard the lecture. When school was out that day, he disappeared and did not show up at school for several days. When he did return, he had a pretty little girl in tow. He marched right into Bro. Foreman's office and said, "Lookie here what I got Bro. Foreman." Bro. Foreman looked and there was this pretty young country girl. The young preacher said, "You said the other day we'uns ort to be looking for us a wife, every preacher needs a wife. I went home and got me one." Should Bro. Foreman have refrained from ever again mentioning the benefits of marriage lest all the single boys take off home, and on the spur of the moment, marry a wife? Absolutely not!

Shall I refrain from preaching that where sin abounded grace superabounded lest someone think he should sin so that grace could abound? There is no end to this. Now, again, should I cease and desist from telling you that wine is good if used in moderation just because some use it in excess? If so, will you apply that same reasoning to every thing you know of that is good if used properly, but bad if used improperly and/or excessively? Maybe we should ban chain saws lest some idiot cut down all the forests!

My dear friends, every word of God is pure and none of it should be offensive to any of his

children. I will teach that Jesus made wine and apparently also drank wine. If someone seizes that and goes overboard and excessively uses wine, it is their problem, not the Lord's, not mine. If I declare the whole counsel of God on wine, I must tell you that, used moderately, it serves many good and health-enhancing purposes. If I declare to you the whole counsel of God on wine I must also tell you that its abuse is sinful, wrong, and wrought with many pitfalls.

CONCLUSION: In the first message in this series we have seen that God commanded strong wine as the drink offering in several of the drink offerings. This strong wine was a type of the powerful blood that was shed for our sins at Calvary. In the last two messages we have considered the use and the abuse of wine. We have seen that wine is a blessing when used scripturally. I have presented these messages to lay the foundation for the fourth in this series: **"Should Wine or Grape Juice Be Used In the Lord's Supper?"**

A LOVING PURPOSE

(John MacDuff, "The Rainbow in the Clouds")

"Let the Lord be exalted, who delights in the prosperity of his servant." Psalm 35:27

What is "prosperity?" Is it threads of life weaved into a bright outcome? A full cup? Ample riches? Worldly applause? An unbroken circle? No! These are often a snare; received without gratitude; dimming the soul to its nobler destinies. Often spiritually, it rather means God taking us by the hand into the *lowly Valleys of Humiliation*; leading us as He did His servant Job of old; out of his sheep, oxen, camels, health, wealth, children; in order that we may be brought before Him in the dust, and say, "Blessed be His holy name!"

Yes! The very reverse of what is generally known in the world as *Prosperity*—forms the background on which the *Rainbow of Promise* is seen. God smiles on us through these *rainbows* and *teardrops* of sorrows! He loves us too well. He has too great an interest in our spiritual welfare to permit us to live on in what is misnamed "Prosperity." When He sees *duties*

languidly performed, or coldly neglected, the *heart* deadened, and *love* to Himself congealed by the absorbing power of the present world—He puts a *thorn* in our nest to drive us to the wing—and prevent our being grovelers forever!

I may not be able now to understand the *mystery* of these dealings. I may be asking through the tears, "Why this *unkind arrest* on my earthly happiness? Why so *premature a lopping* of my boughs of promise? Why such a *speedy withering* of my most cherished gourd?" The answer is plain. It is your soul's prosperity which He has in view. Believe it—your true *Ebenizers* will yet be raised close by your *Zarephaths* (the place of *furnace*).

His *afflictions* are no *arbitrary appointments*. There is *righteous necessity* in all that He does. As He lays His chastening hand upon you, and leads you by ways you know not, and which you never would have chosen—He whispers the gentle accents in your ear, "***Beloved I wish above all things that you would prosper—even as your soul prospers.***"

Rest in the quiet consciousness that *all is well*. Murmur at nothing which brings you nearer to His own loving Presence. Be thankful for your very *cares*, because you can confidently cast them all upon Him. He has both your temporal and eternal "prosperity" too much at heart—to appoint one superfluous pang, one needless stroke. Commit therefore, all that concerns you to His safe keeping, and leave it there!

AN EVER-PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE

By Thomas Brooks

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Isaiah 43:1-3

This **divine presence** is the greatest good in the world.

The people of the Lord should be very thankful for *His presence* with them in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. O Sirs! this **divine presence** is a great mercy. It is a special mercy, it is a distinguishing mercy, it is a big-bellied mercy—which has many mercies in its womb. It is a mercy-greatening mercy; it greatens all the mercies we enjoy. It is a mercy-sweetening mercy; it sweetens health, strength, riches, honors, trade, relations, etc. It is a soul-mercy, a mercy which reaches the soul, which cheers the soul, which lifts up the soul, which quiets the soul, which satisfies the soul, and which will go to heaven with the soul. Will you not be thankful for such a mercy? Will you be thankful for *temporal* mercies—and will you not be thankful for *spiritual* mercies? To enjoy the presence of God when we most need it, is a mercy which deserves perpetual praises. It is the greatest mercy in this world, to enjoy the gracious presence of God in our great troubles and desperate dangers. Therefore be much in blessing God, and in admiring God—for His presence with you in a dark and trying day.

"**I will be with you;** I will never leave you nor forsake you." Joshua 1:5

"**The Lord Almighty is with us;** the God of Jacob is our fortress!" Psalm 46:7

"God is our refuge and strength, **an ever-present help in trouble.**" Psalm 46:1

THE REASON FOR CHASTISEMENT

(John MacDuff, "The Rainbow in the Clouds")

"For whom the Lord loves—He chastens."
Hebrews 12:6

What! God loves me—when He is discharging His *quiver* upon me—when He is *emptying* me from vessel to vessel— He is causing the sun of my earthly joys to set in clouds? Yes! O afflicted, tempest-tossed one, He chastens you—because He loves you! This trial comes from His own tender, loving hand—from His own tender, unchanging heart!

Are you laid on a *sickbed*—with sorrowful

THAILAND MISSIONS REPORT

By Bill Lee

“The churches of Asia salute you...” I Corinthians 16:19

We greet you in the wonderful name of our Lord Jesus Christ and as always we remain thankful to our God for His wonderful providence. He is the “Grand Weaver” who is able to work all things together for the good of His people. There are so many things we do not understand, but yet we know He controls all things as He works all things after the counsel of His own will.

We had a very profitable trip to Thailand in July and again we are thankful for God’s providence in traveling mercies. It was good to once again see Bro. Anond and to visit many of the churches there. In all we visited ten different churches and visited several more villages. As I mentioned to you in our last report, Ricky Cash, a pharmacist from here in Grenada, accompanied Janice and me on this trip. I think this was Ricky’s fourth trip to Thailand with us.

As we went from village to village preaching in the churches, we also did a good bit of medical work among the people there. Janice is a registered nurse and she and Ricky worked very well together seeing those who needed medical care, as Bro. Anond interpreted and I assisted them as I could. In all Janice and Ricky examined and treated over four hundred people in the villages. For the most part, the medical aid we are able to give the members in the churches in Thailand is the only medical care they receive. We are very thankful that we can not only minister to their spiritual needs, but also to the physical needs of these saints.

Other than being able to preach and to minister in the villages and churches of Thailand, we were also able to meet with a group from Burma. One day we went to the city of Mai Sai, the northern most city in Thailand, where Burma and Thailand are only separated by a small river. There were fifty-two members of sovereign grace Baptist churches located in Burma who came across the border and met with us. While I have never been able to go to any of the churches in Burma, I have met with them in this manner in Mai Sai on several

occasions. It is always good to meet with them and to be able to go over Bible doctrine with them. The pastors from Burma, as well as the church members, are always very eager to learn. There are usually many doctrinal questions that we discuss, which includes not only theology, but also matters concerning church truths. Meeting with them gives us opportunity to not only preach and teach, but also to help them with medical needs also. Many of these who came to meet with us were very sick, including one man who had a blood pressure of 250/175. Please remember to pray for these small rural churches of Burma as they faithfully declare the whole counsel of God. While many places we go in Thailand have their own dangers, these dangers are magnified and multiplied in the repressive communist country of Burma.

We are having difficulties at our children center as contractors who are working on the road in front of the children’s center are trying to take part of our land. They have already torn down a fence we had built along our property line, and have also done other damage. Bro.



Anond has reported this to government officials and after they inspected the situation they determined the contractors were in the wrong in taking part of our property. As there is much corruption in everything political in Thailand, the

contractor and others involved with him stand to lose a lot of money in restitution because Bro. Anond went to government officials and complained that these were taking our land. As a result of all of this, Bro. Anond's life has been threatened on several occasions. Please remember him in your prayers as he not only stands for the faith, but also as he tries to protect our property boundaries where we have thirty five children living.

As I mention the children at our children's center, let me say they are all doing well and seem to be very happy. It was good to see them



once again. As the years go by, we see them growing and growing. We are thankful these have been entrusted unto us by our God. The Lord has graciously saved many of the children and we continue to pray for all of them. Before we left the U. S. on this trip to Thailand, there him him him him were individuals and churches



that had sent money designated for the children. While we were in Thailand we bought the children the uniforms they needed for school



and sports, a computer for the older children to use for their school work, four bicycles, volley balls and soccer balls, and books to start a library at the children's center. Thanks to all who helped in this and all of the other work.



CHILDREN IN SPORTS UNIFORM



BURNING THE BOOKS

By Wayne Camp

Act 19:19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

The airwaves are reverberating with the news of an intended book burning on September 11, 2010. A preacher in Florida has announced that he will burn copies of the Koran on that date. Is he doing it to get his 15 minutes of fame? Probably.

As our text reveals there are times when it is correct to burn books. But the reader is encouraged to notice that the book burning in the text was done by those to whom the books belonged who had been saved. This text should not be used to justify what this preacher in Florida is planning to do.

Have Muslims done similar things? They have burned American flags. They flew planes into the world trade center that resulted in the burning of those skyscrapers and the loss of more than 3000 lives.

Those who committed these and other similar acts against the United States, other countries, and other people are just being true to the teachings of the holy book of the Islamic faith, the Koran (sometimes spelled Quran).

A former Muslim and admitted terrorist who is now a professing Christian, Mosab Hassan Yousef, wrote of the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood, "If they can establish (global rule) in a peaceful manner, that's fine. But they are required by the Quran to establish this global Islamic state on the rubble of every civilization, every constitution, every government." Yousef also contends that the planned building of the



Mosab Hassan Yousef

mosque near Ground Zero is all a part of the Islamic goal of subjugating America in any way possible.

In Thailand we have burned spirit houses and other things pertaining to spirit worship. Brother Anond recently even destroyed a statue of Buddha. But all of these things were done at the request of the owners who had been saved.



If a Muslim trusted Christ and asked for someone to burn his Koran then I would say a hearty, "Amen." But I doubt that the burning of the Koran in a protest such as the preacher in Florida plans can be justified from the word of God.



BURNING SPIRIT HOUSES

Psa 119:128 Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.

WHEN WAS THE FIRST CHRISTMAS?

By Wayne Camp

Isa 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Gal 4:4 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*

I hope it will be safe to write an article about Christmas at this time of the year. We are well past the celebration of 2009 and well ahead of the celebration for 2010. I am not sure, however, that some people ever get over their sensitivity to articles and sermons that speak ill of their favorite day of the year. Every year around Christmas I am showered with "brickbats" because of an article that I have posted on our WebSite called, ***"I Don't Do Christmas: I Do Believe in the Virgin Birth."*** <http://www.gpp-5grace.com/christmas.htm>

I was amused at some of the e-mails I received one year that took a strong position on the matter and said such things as, "It is okay with God for us to observe Christmas." I wrote to one such correspondent and ask, "Where in the Bible did God approve of Christians celebrating Christmas?" You guessed it. No answer was forth coming. Only another letter assuring me that it was okay with God as if this person had personally heard from God on the matter.

I received mail from H. D. Lewis (Don't ask me who he is) that said, "Always remember, He is the reason for the Season."

I also received a copy of an article by a Bill Keller who wrote: "Luke chapter 2 gives us the account of His birth. That was the very first Christmas." He also wrote, "Every year at this time, I get inundated with emails that read like 40 page doctrinal dissertations on why a Christian should NOT celebrate Christmas. They make very good arguments about the pagan celebrations at this time of

year, the evils of the Christmas tree, lying to children about Santa Claus, how Jesus was not born on December 25th, and many other reasons why a Christian should not celebrate Christmas. To those people I have only one thing to say....BAH HUMBUG!"

This man cannot be trusted to tell the truth. If one reads the above paro setagraph carefully you will see that he approves of lying to children about Santa Claus and BAH HUMBUGS those who think it is wrong to lie to children.

Another wrote: "The first Christmas was not exactly a greeting card setting with all its unreality—snow-covered cottages with bright lights within, Frosty the snowman, peaceful country scenes, mesmerized animals surrounding the Christ child in a sanitized atmosphere. A card that depicted the way it really was might be revolting—a bone-tired pregnant girl, a worried husband, streets crowded with people on an unpopular errand (paying taxes), an indifferent innkeeper, a dark, cold cave crowded with smelly animals, a feeding trough for a cradle."

"The ugliness of the first Christmas is what makes Christmas beautiful."

Two of these writers tell outright lies about the first Christmas. They declare it was the night that Jesus was born. The other insinuates the same thing when he calls on folks to remember that Jesus Christ is the reason for the season.

I categorically deny these claims by all three of these writers. This world never heard of a holiday called Christmas until the second quarter of the fourth century after the birth of Christ when the Roman Catholic Church ordered the celebration of the day to coincide with a pagan feast of Saturnalia.

Jer 10:2 *Thus saith LORD, of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.*

(SEE CHASTISEMENT continued page 11)
CHASTISEMENT continued from page 6

months and wearisome nights appointed unto you? Let this be the *pillow* on which your aching head reclines: *It is because He loves me!*

Is it *bereavement* which has swept your heart and desolated your dwelling? He appointed that chamber of death—because He loves you! As it is the suffering child of the family which claims a mother's deepest affections and most tender solicitude—so have you at this moment embarked on your side, the most tender love and solicitude of your heavenly Father. He loved you *into* this sorrow—and will love you *through* it. There is nothing *capricious* in His dealings. LOVE is the reason for all that He does. There is not one *drop of wrath*—in that *bitter cup* you are called to drink!

Says one, "He has *purchased* these afflictions for us, as well as everything else. Blessed be His name, it is part of His *covenant* to visit us with *the rod*." What does our adorable Lord Himself say? The words were spoken, not when He was on earth, a sojourner in a sorrowing world—but when enthroned amid the glories of Heaven. "As many as I *love*—I rebuke and chasten." Believer! rejoice in the thought that the *rod*, the *chastening rod*—is in the hands of the living, loving Savior who died for you!

Tribulation is the *King's Highway*—and yet that highway is *paved with love*. As some flowers require *crushing* before shedding their fragrance—so does your God think it suitable to *bruise* you. As some birds are said to sing their sweetest notes when the *thorn* pierces their bosom—so does He appoint affliction to *lacerate*—that you may be driven to the wing, singing, in your upward soaring, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed!"

Be it ours to say, "Lord, I will love You not only *despite* Your rod—but *because* of Your rod! I will rush into the very arms that are chastening me!"

THE IGNORANCE OF AN UNREGENERATE PREACHER

By Wayne Camp

This morning (September 16, 2010) while going to Memphis I was absolutely flabbergasted when I heard a preacher say something like this, "The

Christian New Testament has a passage that indicates that unless a person trusts Christ he cannot be saved and go to heaven. But a number of theologians disagree with that position."

He clearly indicated there was only one such passage. Of course one must keep in mind that this man is also an attorney who has worked with the ACLU for several years. He is affiliated with the same kind of church with which the infamous Jeremiah Wright is associated.

I'm not sure just what passage he had in mind. I first thought of the following passage. **John 14:6** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* This verse obviously teaches that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father whose throne is in heaven.

But then I thought maybe he's talking about another verse in the book of Acts. **Acts 4:12** *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* This verse surely teaches there is no way to be saved except through Jesus Christ.

But my mind went elsewhere. How about this verse? **John 3:18** *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* Condemned already unless you have believed in Christ!

Or this one? **John 3:36** *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* The person who has not believed in Christ will not see life but the wrath of God already abides over him.

Revelation 20:15 *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.* The book of life contains the names of all those given to Christ in the great covenant of redemption. Their names were written in that book from the foundation of the world. **Revelation 17:8** *... they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.*

I have hardly scratched the surface. True Christians know that there is but one way to heaven, a truth that is abundantly taught in God's Holy Word. The man to whom I referred at the beginning of this article clearly does not know Christ nor his Bible.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"In every form of worship we must constantly come back to the one great and basic theme—it must be done in spirit and in truth. John Gill found his brethren in the coffeehouse usurping the authority of the churches, and though he was but a young man at the time, he challenged them on this error, but he did not leave off the meetings of the preachers in the coffeehouse!"

This is what so many brethren do. They simply cannot accept the fact that every one else does not see things as they do and they develop cliques which are more divisive than associations, more strict in their decrees than the Pharisees, and more worldly in their spirituality than were the Sadducees!"

—Eld. J. C. Settlemaier—

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"If man is not governed by God, he will be ruled by tyrants," warned William Penn, founder and first governor of Pennsylvania

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