

Leprosy!

By Paul K. Williams

The repulsive disease of leprosy has a strange fascination. God's law for Israel described its symptoms in detail and gave minute instructions to the priest for its diagnosis. This law also said, "As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry 'Unclean! Unclean!' " (Lev. 13:45).

So it was with interest that I listened to two members of a Leprosy Mission interviewed on Radio South Africa (Mar. 2, 1976). This ancient disease is still a terrible scourge, especially in the poorest countries. The good news is the sulfa drugs can now cure it, so that it is not the sentence of a slow death it was in Bible times.

But what caught my ear was said at the end of the program. The interviewer asked, "How is leprosy spread?" The experts replied, "It used to be thought that it was spread only by prolonged skin-to-skin contact. But now we think it is spread by coughing and sneezing."

So it has taken medical science 3,500 years to discover that God's way of preventing leprosy is medically cor-

rect. His law said, "he shall cover his mustache." The leper was to wear a cloth, what we would call a face-mask, which would hang down from his upper lip. The spread of the disease was thus prevented because the sneeze or cough was covered. God's people were in this way protected from the spread of the terrible disease by the law of a loving God.

Nothing about leprosy would lead a person to guess it could be spread by droplets in the breath of a sufferer, for leprosy is a skin disease. Certainly Moses, the lawgiver, had no human way of discovering that the disease could thus be spread. But God knew, and He gave the law that protected His people. He gave a law which only now is appreciated for its wisdom. He gave a law which, in its nature, shows that it came from God, not man, for it contained this, and other, provisions which show a knowledge which science did not attain until thousands of years later. Praise be to our wonderful God!

Sunday 5:15 Kid's Class at the Building	Monday 7 PM Men's Class at Walker Davis' Home	Tuesday 8 PM "Truth Seekers" at Student Center - Room 2310	Wednesday 10 AM Ladies "Proverbs" class at Laura Humphrey's
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Sick			
Donna Rutledge (Ashley Tucker's aunt)	Eli Williams (Friend of Sarah Norman)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Jeffery Miller (Friend of Walker Davis)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Pat Webb (Friend of Jared Johnson)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Diane Hudson (Josh Hudson's grandmother)	Arline Harkrider (Nichole Pender's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frances Fultz (Davis Fultz's grandmother)	Judy Nichols (Suzanne's Mother)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Sumner Mauldin's Son)

September Birthdays
2 - Denise Davis
3 - Trenton Anderson
4 - Jillian Petty
4 - Kevin Anderson
10 - BJ Winslett
10 - Josh Carter
10 - Matthew Sullivan
10 - Eleanor Weldon
10 - Keeley Porter
10 - Riley Deason
11 - Sheryl Fowler
12 - Jared Johnson
12 - Heather Bethea
14 - Patsy Ogle
16 - Brittany Till
17 - Laura Weldon
19 - Kayti Persall
21 - Sarah Chandler
24 - Wade Winslett

News and Notes
☑ - We rejoice in the baptism of Reed Starnes last Sunday! He also wishes to identify with the church!
☑ - Those who have expressed a desire to identify with the church should meet briefly with the Elders after any service.
☑ - Those interested in singing at the Arbor Springs Nursing Home today at 2 PM, please see Will Harris or Tyler Cox.
☑ - Let us remember out expectant mothers in our prayers, Karen Padgett, Emily S. Jones and Nicole Pender.
☑ - Let us remember Jennifer Daniels in the loss of her grandfather, Gaylord Huffman.
☑ - Tonight the Elders will present a proposed process for appointing Deacons. Please give them any questions or feedback you may have!

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The Auburn Beacon

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)



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Thoughts to Ponder

Let dogs delight to bark and bite, For God hath made them so; Let bears and lions growl and fight, For 'tis their nature to. But, children, you should never let such angry passions rise; Your little hands were never made To tear each other's eyes..

Elders
Walker Davis
(334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse
(334) 734-2133

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
E-Mail:
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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

No Fear in Love

By Herschel Patton

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:16-18).

Many brethren seem to see in these verses vindication for all earnestly striving Christians who may be guilty of sins of ignorance (of which they are not aware). Such thinking leads to the extremes of the "grace-fellowship" issue that plagues the brotherhood today - "If you are 'in grace' God will overlook or excuse all sins of this nature."

One brother says, truthfully, of the above verses, "The object of the Christian's life is to perfect (finish) this love . . . that on the day of judgment he might stand before God with confidence." He then states, "There is an obstacle that prevents many from accomplishing this - 'fear' . . . The Christian who lives in fear of the judgment, lives in constant torment now." The brother admits that some Christians ought to live in fear of the judgment because their lives of unfaithfulness offer no hope, but he goes on to suggest that there are others "serving God faithfully, yet who live in fear. Their only sense of security comes after they have arisen from a prayer of repentance, only to see it vanish again the next time they err. They have been taught by some of our own number that each sin committed, regardless of intent, separates from God and consigns them

to hell." He then brands such a concept as "Phariseism" and one that "stifles the development of love toward God."

Here is suggested the idea that some sins - errors - do not separate from God and consign to hell . . . A life of unfaithfulness will, but some sins (where there is no "intent") will not separate from God or consign to hell.

Another brother has written (in a booklet): "I was afraid of the Christian life that had to be lived after baptism. Even after I was baptized I am afraid I did not live with much of a feeling of confidence and assurance. The preaching I was raised on had left me living with an anxiety about how I stood before the Lord - an anxiety that only escaped me for a moment after I had prayed for forgiveness. I always felt that I probably was not doing as much as the Lord expected out of me. That fearfulness, however, did not drive me to do any more. It just made me miserable . . . A lot of faithful disciples, I am afraid, are 'running scared.'

They live with doubt and with anxiety and with fearfulness, always wondering how they stand before the Lord." This writer next shows that such fears are unjustified because the Lord (Jesus Christ) who made possible our justification by his loving sacrifice for us is the same one who now saves us by "his life" and enables us to "glory in hope of the glory of God." He says further, "But I insist that faithful children of God ought to quit 'running scared,' always anxious and fearful, always in doubt, always wondering where they stand. We must cease to trust in our own goodness and learn to rest our hope on the love of God in Christ. If we will do that, we will be able to face even

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the judgment without fear; we will be confident that we shall be saved from the wrath that is to come through the intercession which our living Savior is making for us."

The implication of all this is that Christians need not be concerned about some sins and matters of faithfulness, if they are "in grace" and earnestly striving to do right. The Lord's love and intercessions will take care of these without repentance, confession, and prayer on our part. This is a degree of Calvinistic doctrine of "The Security of the Believer." They would cover all sins of a believer, but our brethren limit the covering to "non-intent" or "ignorant" sins.

I would like for those of this persuasion to list some of the sins and errors that Christians need not be afraid of committing - that do not separate from God. The Bible says "all unrighteousness in sin" (**1 John 5:17**) and that no sin (thing that defileth) entereth heaven (**Rev. 21:27**). This being true, God must either not regard sin in the lives of some or the shed blood of Christ automatically takes care of all "non-intent" sins we commit. This is Calvinism, pure and simple.

Such a belief might, indeed, contribute to one's living here without "fear" and go to the judgment with "confidence," but such does not guarantee acceptance at the judgment (**Matt. 7:22-23**).

Perfect Love and Confidence

It is true, as John declares in our text, "love made perfect" in us gives boldness in the day of judgment. What is the "perfect love" of our text? In the fourth chapter of First John, we are told to "love one another" (**vs. 7-8**). **Verses 12-15** show that while man has never seen God, there are many manifestations of Him, especially in the Son who came to earth in the form of man and suffered death in man's place. The apostles, by the Holy spirit, bore witness of this. The love demonstrated by Jesus for man was the same that the Father has for man (**John 3:16**). Christians, moved by this divine love, in turn, love God and one another. God abides in them and they in Him (**vs. 11; John 14:23**). In men and women of faith who love one another, God's love is perfected. God's love was demonstrated by Christ "manifested in the flesh," which made possible our justification, and is manifested by Christians in their love for one another. Thus the love of God is perfected in the Christian.

It is this "perfected love" in the Christian that makes for boldness in the day of judgment. Truly, God's love is the basis for our justification. We couldn't be "in Him" and "have peace with God" without this. And, it is this same love that "keeps us" as Christians since the one sacrifice not only provided for our justification but also "cleanseth us" continually (**1 John 1:7**), providing we use the advocacy provided (**1 John 2:1**). God's love did not provide for our justification unconditionally, nor does it cleanse us from sins we may

commit now unconditionally.

Fear of Judgment

Christians, in whom the love of God is perfected, truly have no reason to fear God in the judgment because Christ's death not only assured their justification (free from guilt) when they obeyed the gospel, but also provided continual cleansing in the future for all who will repent. In other words, the cleansing fountain was, and always is, open - conditionally. This means no one need fear facing God in Judgment.

We must not confuse the "fear" of our text with that of reverential fear and awe. On this point, Pulpit Commentary lists some good thoughts. "The fear which is inconsistent with perfect love is the fear of the slave dreading the lash, or the culprit dreading the verdict. But if the love of God is within us, sweetly subduing us with its tenderness, and if through that love sin in pardoned and destroyed, why, there is no lash to dread - no adverse verdict to fear The judge on the throne is viewed as an infinite vindicator and friend in whose love we ever live If this is not our state of mind, there must be some deficiency in love in exactly the same degree as there is any restless fear" (pp. 114-115).

A Christian who harbors fear of the judgment, evidently is lacking in trust in God, a wrong concept of God, or is condemned in his heart for a lack of love for God and his brethren. The one talent servant of **Matt. 25:24-29** was "afraid" because of a misconception of the nature of his master and a lack of trust. The Christian, in whom the love of God is perfected, doubts not the true nature of his Lord but knows He is a loving, merciful, vindicating friend, and one who can be trusted to keep his promises; he knows in his heart that he has diligently sought the will of God, been watchful and earnest, continually using the advocacy of Christ, so lives without fear of the judgment.

Of course, reverential fear and awe, which the Bible teaches we must have, often causes us to question our fidelity and devotion to God, to search our hearts and lives, to purpose and resolve more diligent service, but this soul-searching which results in spiritual growth and corrections in our lives, is not the fear of judgment that causes us to be miserable. The facts that God judges according to "that which a man hath and not according to what he hath not" and has made forgiveness ever available, should banish constant fear of the judgment from the Christian. There is no reason to "run scared."

We must not be deceived into thinking that our reasons for not "running scared" will EVEN cover various degrees of unfaithfulness and "non-intent" - "ignorant" sins, unrepented of, in our lives. There are numerous examples in the Bible of "ignorant" - "human weakness" sins that were not excused, but had to be repented of. Our confidence is in the loving God who has proven His love in making ever available a cleansing fountain for those in whom His love is perfected.



Don't Beat Yourself Up

By Casey Head

I'd like to begin by directing your attention to the parable of the Pharisee & the tax collector, which can be found in **Luke 18:9-14**. Although this parable is well-known in religious circles, many often walk away from this parable with a false and very dangerous assumption.

"Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men - extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

In this parable, we see a contrast between two men: the Pharisee and the tax collector. While the Pharisee exuded arrogance unbecoming of any child of God, the tax collector freely acknowledged his shortcomings and humbly sought God's mercy. The Pharisee in this parable was condemned by Jesus. The tax collector went home "justified."

Many read this parable and conclude that all

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of us fall into one of two categories. Either we are arrogant and self-righteous like the Pharisee or we are humble like the tax collector. Either we boast about our good works and see ourselves as better than everyone else (the Pharisee), or we beat ourselves up and see ourselves as nothing but perpetual sinners and failures (the tax

collector). Remember, this parable was intended, not to degrade righteous people, but to humble self-righteous people (**vs. 9**). Thus, the tax collector is not being held up as a model for us; he is being used to further enrich and deepen the ugliness of arrogance in religion by way of contrast.

To put it another way, Jesus isn't saying that we must always carry with us a self-defeating attitude, and that if we don't, we must be self-righteous like the Pharisee. He's simply telling us not to be self-righteous like the Pharisee. That's the point of the parable.

Consider with me the following statements and tell me which category these statements fall into; do these statements reflect (a) self-righteousness (like the Pharisee), or (b) the self-defeating attitude many impose upon the tax collector?

"For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord" (**1 Cor. 4:4**).

