

The Ryburn Christian Clarion

BIBLICAL STUDIES RESOURCE

Upholding the Accuracy of the God-Breathed Word

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Unless otherwise noted, all passages are quoted from the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. All explanatory remarks by a writer within a scripture verse are enclosed in brackets [].

“ABLE MINISTERS”

Of The New Covenant

SEVERAL TIMES OVER THE PAST YEAR OR SO, we’ve referred to verses in II Corinthians 3 that are largely overlooked by most Christians and, yet, if believed, would lead to profound confidence and growth in their lives. We see in the opening verses of the chapter that believers are to be *living* epistles (letters of instruction) that others may observe and imitate. In verse 5, The Word declares that our ability to be such examples is derived directly from the Heavenly Father, for “...our sufficiency [or “ability”] is of God;...” The salient point, however, comes in verse 6, where the Scriptures reveal that God has “...made us able ministers of the new testament [“covenant”];...” What an electrifying statement!

We live in an era when the dominant concern of many Christians seems to be their eternal destination. All too often, saints expend countless hours garnering assurances of everlasting bliss. The Bible, though, is quite straightforward about the permanence of salvation once it has been received. If the Scriptures are right when they state we are born again “...not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God,...” (I Pet. 1:23), then the matter is settled. If the spiritual seed within a child of God is “incorruptible”, then it will last **forever**. Once a believer is at peace regarding this truth, he can turn his attention to God’s work and learn to walk as an “able minister”.

Our abilities to minister, however, are God-given, and are received and internalized at the time of salvation. They are not natural talents *we* have, but He “hath made us able”.

continued on next page...

INSIDE AT A GLANCE

IT’S 2006, AND THE WORD OF GOD is still the will of God. We, therefore, continue our outreach to those seeking the Truth, as well as brothers and sisters in Christ who use the Clarion to augment their study of The Word. We’re blessed to do our part.

“ABLE MINISTERS” is a phrase the Bible uses to describe those who have made Jesus Christ their Lord. As His brethren, the believers have been equipped with spiritual enablements based upon the standard of His finished work. These abilities allow us to minister the things of God.

by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....1

“GOD’S MATCHLESS WORD”, in this issue, features the writing debut of a Christian teenager who has recognized the abundant grace with which God has showered His people. “Grace Versus Law” presents basic truths that seasoned believers should know.

by Joshua Thomas.....3

“FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT”: You’ve heard about Noah’s Ark all your life, but do you know the details of the Biblical account? In “Rocking The Boat A Bit”, the Clarion’s chief researcher highlights aspects of the text that make the record more plausible than ever.

by Keith Jamison.....4

“FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT”, our “grab-bag” of edification, returns with a collection of original Christian poetry penned over the last thirty years. We believe this assortment of sentiments, from awe to humor, entitled “‘Again, I Say, Rejoice’”, will hearten and strengthen you.

by various saints.....5

“GOD AND COUNTRY” continues the social commentary on our national heritage that began in our Summer, 2005 edition. In “AMERICA: Coincidence Or Providence?”, we see God actively working in the affairs of men as vast, new regions are opened for His people, and His Word.

by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....6

Note that God's activity is expressed in the past tense, He "hath made", for what He wrought in Christ *for us* occurred two thousand years ago. It becomes a reality *in us* when we are born again of *incorruptible* seed. The Christian must then study God's Word to discover what he has received. When he sees, from The Word, the abundant spiritual blessings latent within the saint, he can begin to draw upon these enablements the Father has so amply supplied. He will thus be trusting in the Lord's ability, and not his own strength.

Our goal at the *Clarion* is to help believers recognize that Christianity is far more than church attendance. Actually, coming together with the saints to worship and fellowship is similar to a "pit stop" in an automobile race. A pit stop is made to examine the battery, to have the tires checked, to fill the fuel tank, to look under the hood, and whatever else is necessary to get the driver back in the race, for the race itself is the real deal. Our Christian experience should be like that. Assembling with like-minded believers should refresh us for the greater challenge, namely, our daily walk with God.

At the *Clarion*, we strive to be an uplifting influence in that regard. When not with other saints, we trust this Biblical studies resource will serve as a reminder of *who* and *what* you are in Christ. We, in turn, have been strengthened by the energy and support of friends like you from across America, who add much to the *Clarion's* outreach ministry.

While we're offering accolades, we want to mention those who've added so much to our "**God's Matchless Word**" (GMW) column, as we did at this time last year. Our last four contributors have enhanced the *Clarion's* approach to its readers. For example, our brother-in-Christ from La Quinta, California, Henry S. Altheide, set forth a pivotal truth in his article "**'He Is Risen!'**" (Spring, 2005; Vol. II, No. 3). This was followed in the Summer, 2005 issue (Vol. II, No. 4) by Michele Kelch Nation's offering, "**'There Is No God'**", which cautioned us against taking scriptures out of context. Last issue, (Fall, 2005; Vol. III, No. 1), Rev. Howard P. Yeremian, Jr. related his search for God's love in his article, "**The Quest**". Finally, in this installment (Winter, 2006; Vol. III, No. 2), we are reminded of the simplicity in Christ with young Joshua Thomas's submission entitled "**Grace Versus Law**". To all, we extend our heartfelt gratitude.

We are blessed to see that the GMW column is doing so well. We are pleased to have received an

array of submissions on a host of topics. Our first attempts at regular columns were "**Chaplain's Corner**" and "**Youth Outreach**", both of which began in the Winter, 2004 issue (Vol. I, No. 2). Needless to say, they did not survive. GMW (added in the Spring, 2004 issue (Vol. I, No. 3) of the *Clarion*) was our first ongoing feature to last, due largely to interest generated among believers who appreciate a forum for sharing The Word. We then introduced "**From The Research Department**" (by Keith Jamison) and "**Antiquity Speaks**" (by Theodore C. Mahr) in the Summer, 2004 installment (Vol. I, No. 4). In the Fall, 2004 issue (Vol. II, No. 1), we presented for the first time "**For Your Spiritual Enrichment**", which appears occasionally, featuring essays, testimonies, book reviews, poetry, and so on. The Spring, 2005 issue (Vol. II, No. 3) saw the arrival of "**Investigating Creation Science**" (appearing in every spring and fall issue), examining a comparison of Biblical accounts and recent scientific data. Finally, our "**GOD And Country**" column (appearing in every summer and winter issue) began in the Summer, 2005 edition (Vol. II, No. 4).

As you can see, we've been busy during the two and a half years the *Clarion* has been in print. I've recounted all this, however, because I want you to see how God has furthered this work by the doors He's opened for us. He has blessed us with faithful ones who place this periodical in over 35 locations in southwest Ohio and northern Kentucky; He has allowed us to make inroads into other states like Virginia and California; He has inspired saints to share The Word by sending in articles; He has moved some to underwrite our work with financial offerings; and He has helped us assemble a mailing list of interested and spiritually hungry souls. The Lord has been our strength since we started this venture.

We look forward to seeing the great things God will do in this brand new year. Before we take our leave of you, we want to announce that we've just added a fax line, so you now have a new way to reach us. Our fax number is (937) 276-5534. Use it to send articles, testimonies, poetry, letters to the editor, etc. Of course, you may still use our phone number, (937) 275-3316, or you may e-mail the *Clarion* at ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net. In closing, we thank you for your interest and support of this endeavor. May our Heavenly Father watch over and sustain you in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

-----by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament;..." II Corinthians 3: 5 and 6a

GOD'S MATCHLESS WORD:

A Forum For Presenting The Light Of Life

(This column features a wide range of subjects from God's Word as they are set forth by a host of preachers and teachers from differing avenues of Christian thought and various areas of Biblical study and concern.)

“Grace Versus Law”

by Joshua Thomas

ONE DAY IN SCHOOL, when I was at lunch, I took a French fry from my friend's plate. He told me that it was stealing and that not to steal is in the Ten Commandments. I said that we are not under the law any longer, but we are under grace. A big discussion broke out, and he claimed I was only giving my opinion. That's when I stopped him and showed him John 1:17.

John 1:17

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

My friend commented that the verse does not say that the law is no more, so I took him to Romans 10:4. There it plainly says, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Let's take a look at the first part of the verse, I told him. It says, “For Christ is the END of the LAW...[author's emphasis]”. I asked him if that was clear enough. He simply said that it didn't mean that, and was soon joined by about six other kids. They only gave their opinions, while I gave scriptures. They all concluded that we are saved by grace, but my friend said we should still follow the law. I asked him to show me in God's Word.

He showed me in the Book of Matthew where Jesus said that he came not to *destroy* the law, but to *fulfill* it. I listened to what he had to say, and then told him that he was misunderstanding it. If I fill in the blank pages in a book, I told him, then that book is fulfilled. We then took a look at Hebrews 8. The whole chapter is good, but I wanted to focus on just a couple of verses.

Hebrews 8:7 and 13

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Look at that! Let's say I have a candle, I told him, and I light it. What will happen? It will get smaller and smaller, and then the wax will vanish away. The law (or Old Testament) is like a lighted candle whose wax has vanished away. Some people, like my friend, try to hold on to the law and grace at the same time, but how can you hold something that has gone? Finally, I showed him some verses in Galatians 3.

Galatians 3:24 and 25

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Do you see that, I pointed out? The law *was* a schoolmaster until Christ came. Now that He's come, we are no longer under the law. We have no more need of a schoolmaster. After reading and hearing this, he got mad and walked away. The bottom line is, I studied The Word and he didn't. I was like a loaded shotgun, with plenty of ammo, just waiting to go off. As God states in the first part of II Timothy 3:16, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God,....” It pays to be ready, doesn't it?

You see, we are saved by grace, and if you're saved and have the love of God in your heart, then you want to do good based upon the Scriptures. I probably shouldn't have snatched my friend's French fry without asking, but, even so, we are still under grace, not law. Am I right, or wrong?*

(Joshua Thomas is a sixteen-year-old high school student from Brookville, Ohio. He is the former youth leader of the Ryburn Chapel and is currently the editor of a Christian newsletter aimed at teenagers entitled Kid's Word. E-mail Josh at kidsword001@yahoo.com.)

The Clarion's new fax number is.....(937) 276-5534.

THE RYBURN CHRISTIAN CLARION: Biblical Studies Resource

Upholding the Accuracy of the God-Breathed Word

E-mail the Clarion at ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net.

FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

(This column, featuring the work of Keith Jamison, examines God's Word and how its application in our Twenty-First Century lives has been influenced by mythology, philosophy, and tradition.)

“Rocking The Boat A Bit”

PEOPLE HAVE MANY QUESTIONS regarding Noah's Ark. For example, what were its size, shape, and general layout? Also, how was it made? Was there truly enough room for its large cargo? Basically, we are asking if it would have really worked. We shall take a look at what the Bible tells us in order to answer these questions.

Just how big was the ark? Genesis 6:15b relates the dimensions of the ark, saying, "...The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits." The question to ask is, "How long is a cubit?" A cubit is the length of a man's forearm from the outside of the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. As such, it was not a standardized unit of measure since people are of differing sizes. In order to know the exact dimensions of the ark in modern measurements, we need to know the length of Noah's forearm. Since we cannot know this, we must use an approximate value.

A value of 18 inches is commonly used, and is generally considered to be an average length, however, spans as long as 21 inches or more have been suggested. This three-inch variation would make a vast difference in the size of the ark. If a cubit is 18 inches, then, in current measurements, the ark had a length of 450 feet, a width (or "breadth") of 75 feet, and a height of 45 feet (as tall as a four-story building). It enclosed a space of 1,400,000 cubic feet. If we use a 21-inch cubit, we get a length of 525 feet, a width of 87.5 feet, and a height of 52.5 feet (as tall as a five-story building). The volume would then be 2,411,718.75 cubic feet. Those additional three inches nearly double the storage capacity of the ark. Either way, it was huge.

Even if we use the smaller dimensions, the ark would have had a gross tonnage of 13,960 and the carrying capacity of 522 railroad boxcars, the volume of a freight train stretching nearly thirteen and one half miles. The larger dimensions increase this capacity by over half again. Indeed, the ark was larger than most ocean-going freighters, and was as large as Germany's World War II Pocket Battleships. Although we often compare the ark to ships, in reality, it was not a ship; it was a barge. A barge is a waterborne vessel without its own means of propulsion. In fact, the word "ark" simply means box or chest. A box-like barge certainly would have maximized available cargo space. This shape would also have simplified construction of the vessel.

How did Noah build the ark? Perhaps, we should first ask, "How long did he work on it?" The Bible tells us that Noah was six hundred years old when The Flood came (Gen. 7:6 and 11). As such, he certainly had enough time

to construct it. God told him that he was to build the ark, having rooms in it. He was to use gopher wood, and was to seal the ark's inside and outside surfaces with pitch, which is tar (Gen. 6:14). This would have made it watertight. It has not been determined what "gopher wood" is, but cypress or cedar are likely candidates.

In Genesis 6:15a, the Lord said to Noah, "And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of:..." God gave Noah detailed instructions concerning how to build the ark. The Aramaic text of this phrase can be rendered, "This is how you do it:..." The Old Testament Greek translation includes the word *schema*, from which English derives the word "schematic". As readers of the Biblical record, we are only told the basics: the vessels size, that it was to have three decks (or "stories"), that God wanted a window near its top, and that a door was to be placed in the ark's side (Gen. 6:16). Noah, on the other hand, would have needed a more detailed plan. He would also have needed the methodology for proceeding with the construction. God would have shown him all this.

Many ark devotees have searched for the legendary craft. One such person was Joseph K. Silver, whose involvement led him to do a feasibility study on the ark. He investigated every field from architecture to zoology. After his death, his family sent his research to Ed Shearer of Shearer And Associates, a naval architecture firm. Mr. Shearer found that the ark, as Silver's research had envisioned it, met all the requirements for an ocean-going barge that were recognized by the U. S. Coast Guard, the U. S. Bureau of Shipping, and the International Maritime Organization. Silver's work showed that the ark would have been very stable in differing wave conditions, and that it would have remained nearly level in all but the roughest seas. Also, Silver's studies indicated that there would have been little stress on the hull, making for a very seaworthy craft.

These questions of size, shape, and layout are necessary in order to determine if the ark was big enough to do its job. Was it big enough to hold two of every species as tradition teaches? The answer is, it didn't need to be. In Genesis 6:17, we see that God told Noah that The Flood was going to "...destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life,..." or air-breathing animals, "...in whose nostrils was the breath of life,...(Gen. 7:22)." Specifically, we're talking about birds and land animals, because aquatic animals would not drown. Next, The Word tells us that two of every sort, "after their kind", were to be taken into the ark (Gen. 6:20 and 7:14). How specific, then, is the word "kind"? Is it genus, species, or breed? In the Aramaic, the word is *miyn*, meaning, "sort." In the

Septuagint, the Greek word is *genos*, which means “kin.” *Genos* is transliterated into today’s English word “genus.” This shows that the Bible is referring to two of every genus, not species. A genus (or “kind”) is a larger classification than a species. In fact, many species may be included within a single genus. This means, for example, that Noah took only two *felines* (period), rather than two lions, *and* two tigers, *and* two leopards, *and* two panthers, *and* two jaguars, *and* two cheetahs, *and* two pumas, *and* two lynxes, *and* so on and so forth. All these *species* of “cats” eventually arose through evolution within the *feline* genus. This indicates a great reduction in the number of animals people have assumed were aboard the ark. This also would have allowed for plenty of room for storing the ark’s provisions.

We know that God told Noah to build an ark. He showed him how to build it. The result was a large and stable barge. There was enough room aboard for Noah, his family, provisions, and every kind (genus) of air-breathing animal. Its purpose was to preserve life on the earth from the ravages of a worldwide flood. Our present existence is proof that it did its job very well. Although there are other scriptural details we could have examined, we trust you have enjoyed what we’ve shared in this particular study of Noah’s Ark. Until next issue, God bless you from the *Clarion’s* Research Department.*

(Mr. Keith Jamison has been a student of the Scriptures for over fourteen years. Currently, he is the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion’s Research Department, developing material for the “From The Research Department” and “Investigating Creation Science” columns.)

FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT

Poetry

(This column offers our readers a variety of inspirational and edifying submissions. In this “grab-bag”, appearing from time to time, you will find essays, book reviews, testimonies, poetry, letters, and other things designed to exhort and comfort God’s people.)

“ ‘Again, I Say, Rejoice’ ”

WE ARE PLEASED TO PRESENT a collection of original Christian poetry that has been assembled for your spiritual enrichment and enjoyment. Ranging in sentiment from reverent to humorous, these contemporary poems and lyrics, gathered over the past thirty years, reflect the depth of heart and dedication exemplified by many of today’s Christians. May these words speak to your soul.

LORD, I BELIEVE

*Lord, I believe...
Not in my ability to believe,
But in Your goodness, Your love, Your grace.
I will not make flesh my arm,
But I will seek Your face.
For You are, always have been, always will be
The greatest Giver, Lover, Friend,
And believing You is quite simple,
Knowing Your love will never end.*

----by Henry S. Altheide

GOD IS WITH YOU

*Take comfort and refuse to fear.
The Lord Almighty’s always near,
And though you might feel slight and frail,
My son, you shall not ever fail.*

*For God has pledged His mighty power,
To strengthen you this very hour.
So, just get up! Arise and prove
That God is with you as you move.*

----by Wayne Clapp

YOU’RE FIRED!

*Mr. Evil, Mr. Sickness, Mr. Sin,
This meeting is to inform you
I’m making some major changes around here,
And you won’t do.
Though you’ve been with me for a long, long
time,
I’m driving you right out of my mind.
In plain English, boys, you’re fired!
You guys have been stealing from me way too
long;*

*I’m tired of listening to your devilish song.
You’re a disgrace to my place,
So, get out of my face.
In the name of Jesus Christ, hit the door.
I don’t want you ‘round here anymore.
In plain English, boys, you’re fired!
You are not the only ones I’m kicking out:
Included are Mr. Fear, Mr. Worry, and Mr.
Doubt.*

*You guys are always trying to pull me down.
It’s over now; don’t want you hanging around.
In plain English, boys, you’re fired!
I’ve replaced you with ones that are just,
Like Mr. Confidence, Believing, and Trust.
My new staff is starting here today,
So, get your junk and get out of the way.
In the name of Jesus Christ, hit the door.
I don’t want you ‘round here anymore.
In plain English, boys, you’re fired!*

----by Ted Ferrell

THANKSLIVING

*What shall I render to the Lord for all His
grace?
What can I say to offer praise worthy of
His glory?
How can I call with all my being upon
His name,
And raise a new song from the depths of
my heart?*

*I must do more than mouth a platitude.
To express the soul in words is an art.
My words cannot express my gratitude;
My words are empty and without intent.
“Thank you” too soon becomes a hollow
phrase,
So, I shall worship God with my spirit,
And shall give thanks well for all my
days.*

*To live is to give thanks with tongue and
limb;
With each breath, each move, I live in
thanks to Him.*

----by Lonell E. Johnson

continued on next page...

FIRST CAME THE WORD

*First came The Word with precision,
Then man came with his own opinion,
Inserted some doubt,
So turned it about,
And today we call it religion.*
----by Michele Kelch Nations

MY TIMES ARE IN THY HANDS

*My times are in Thy hands,
Thou Who enfolds me in the safety of Thy
matchless Word,
Thy fortress strong, and mighty tower.
Thou Who hast set the perfect meter of the
washing of Thy tide
Upon the beaches of life's sin-stained
shore,
Into Thy hands, I place the secrets of my
heart,
For only Thou canst make me rest within
the Hope,
Whose quiet solace stills my trembling
fears forevermore.
My heart from out Thy hands can ne'er be
torn away,
Nor pried from out Thy grasp by wicked
craft
Devised by earthly powers;
And evermore within the safety of Thy
gentle, warm embrace,
I shall eternally be found to stand,
For all I am, I owe to Thee,
My Master and my Lord;
And truly now, my Father and my God,
My times are in Thy hands.*
----by Lynn Keyes

FAR BETTER THAN A PICTURE

*If God could paint a picture
Of how much He thinks of you,
He'd use every single color
Of the rainbow, every hue.*

*And if God wrote a poem to tell
How great He knows you are,
It would stretch from sky to sky,
And it would reach the highest star.*

*If God wrote you a love song
Entitled "What You Mean To Me",
It would be an everlasting song
In Godly harmony.*

*But our Father did far better
Than a verse or song for you.
He out-painted every picture,
Using every single hue.*

*When He chose you to be His child,
And placed you in His hands,
As an integral part of the Body of Christ,
A vital part of His masterful plan!*
----by Cathy Peterson Latimer

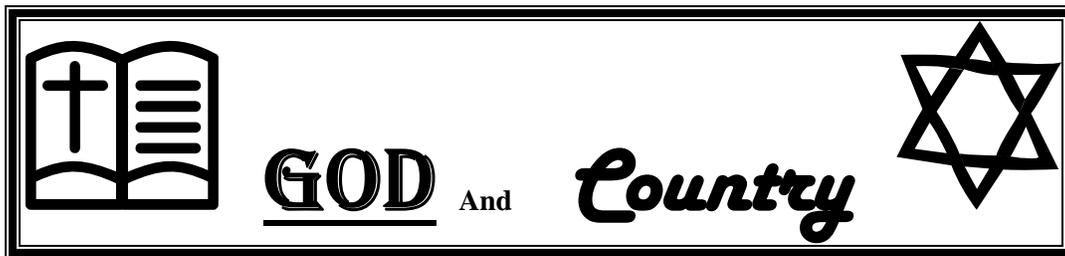
Do you have something in your soul or on your heart that you'd like to share with other saints? Has God healed your life in a special way? If so, feel free to send poems and testimonies to us at ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net, or fax us at (937) 276-5534.

THE RIGHTEOUS RAP

*I'm a child of God, and this is my rap.
If you love the Father, then stand up and
clap.
Deep in The Word is a good place to be,
So, if you want to know Jesus, then listen
to me.
He died on the cross for all our sins;
He arose and went to Heaven, and He's
coming back again.
He sent the holy spirit on the Day of
Pentecost
To empower the saints and bring in the
lost.
Now, the Lord is in us to help us every
day,
So, open up your ears, and listen 'what I
say!
If you want to go to Heaven; if you want
to be saved;
If you want to be delivered from the pit
and the grave,
Then open your Bible to Romans 10,
verse 9,
And believe what it says, and things'll be
fine.*

----by Amy Sue Redepenning
and Rick Heeter

IT IS OUR JOY to have shared with you some of the thoughts and inspirations of brothers and sisters in Christ from various parts of the country, and differing walks of life. We'll do it again sometime. God bless!



(Continuing in this installment of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, and appearing in every summer and winter issue, "GOD And Country", featuring our editor-in-chief, Rick Heeter, will explore the Judeo-Christian heritage of America and her social and political institutions. Through this running commentary, we will discover where we came from as a people, and how we can preserve our unique cultural identity and the liberties it fosters.)

"AMERICA: Coincidence Or Providence?"

by Rick Heeter

IN THE FIRST ARTICLE in this column, we took a sweeping look at America's ancient roots. We saw how the seeds of this nation's founding stretch back into the recesses of antiquity, into the very foreknowledge of the Almighty, Himself. Although men of old, in the East, did not know of the existence of the Western Hemisphere, and the role its peoples would play in succeeding centuries, God certainly did. As such, in

His infinite wisdom, and by means of His abundant grace, the Lord worked in the lives of believing men and women to bring about certain ends.

Certainly, God does not interfere with the freedom of will He has given to man, but being all-knowing, He can foresee a man's decisions. This foresight allows God to work within situations, providing seeking men with possibilities and choices

they would not otherwise have. Man, thus, makes his own decisions, having some alternatives provided by the Lord, and with the Almighty already knowing the decisions the individual will make. In this manner, God, Who is just and holy, may influence mankind for good, often in imperceptible ways.

As He “that searcheth the hearts” (Rom. 8:27), God is privy to the unspoken deliberations and motivations that impel men to certain deeds. Those who believe in Divine assistance are receptive to His influences; those who deny Him are not. Those who accept the Lord’s guidance, however, may exert a powerful influence over those who are closed off to the alternatives and benefits that come only from God. To this extent, the Heavenly Father has aided civilizations throughout the ages, blessing those individuals, families, clans, societies, and cultures that demonstrated *heartfelt* adherence to His Word. In addition, the proportion of God’s benevolence was usually linked to the degree of faithfulness exhibited by His people, for their trust in Him (their free-will belief) gave Him intimate access to their lives.

By this means, God patiently and inexorably drew the floundering civilizations of Middle Ages Europe out of spiritual slumber and into the invigorating light of the Renaissance, and the accompanying Reformation. It’s interesting to note that Christianity was stirring from its lethargy just as the existence of the Americas was being proclaimed across Europe. Was this a coincidence, or did God actively move in the affairs of men in order to bring newly-enlightened saints into a fresh realm where His truths could live, free from the errors of the Old World?

One who believes that there is no real purpose to life, or who deems it necessary to replace the current social order with another, a nihilist, will never grasp or appreciate the workings of God in human events. Likewise, the psychiatrist or psychologist, who acknowledges human progress, may attribute such social advances to a firm *belief in God*, but he will rarely recognize the Almighty as an *actual, living being*. Instead, God will be perceived as a mere “concept” of goodness which impels mankind forward. On the other hand, the child of God, who loves the Lord and His revealed Word, will see the gracious and merciful workings of the God of Heaven throughout the rolling span of history. The believer will know that even when “ungodly” societies emerge, their rise to power is due fundamentally to their adherence to underlying, immutable principals that God established in the

beginning to bless man and ensure his survival upon the earth.

In light of all this, we have noted previously how unfaithful men led to the diluting of God’s Word near the end of the First Century A. D. (I Tim. 1:5-7). We’ve seen that, as Christianity spread across Europe, the basic tenets of The Faith were compromised by idolatrous practices until only a shadow of the original doctrine remained. This resulted, for the most part, in a sterile, standardized religion, steeped in ceremonial window dressing, compelling obedience through endless works of the flesh, and promising salvation based upon the ongoing efforts of the believer himself. This is a far cry from the “free gift” of God founded upon the finished work of Jesus Christ, our Lord (Rom. 5:15-19).

In the midst of this Dark Ages quagmire, though, the greatness of God’s Word still burned in the hearts of a few individuals and enclaves of believing saints who had not been seduced by “vain jangling” (I Tim. 1:6). As God had seen to it, according to numerous Biblical accounts, that His Word would continue to live and His will for man would be fulfilled, even so He nurtured the Dark Ages “remnant” (Isa. 1:9).

Indeed, God has always preserved the faithful for their good, and the furtherance of His purposes. As He called Abraham out of the pagan city of Ur to go into a land where His promises could be fulfilled; as He exalted Joseph in Egypt to the saving of the people of God; as He raised up Moses as a deliverer to lead His people out of slavery; and as He worked with Gideon to rescue Israel from the Midianites; even so, in post-Biblical times, the Lord protected His children, eventually stirring the hearts of a few who, in turn, awakened the larger society to the end that a great move of God ensued.

This is what we discover when looking at 14th and 15th Century Europe. The ignorance and superstition of the Middle Ages was slowly giving way to a social and cultural revolution that would one day become the basis upon which Western Civilization rests. At the very core of this foundation would be the great themes of the Bible, enhanced by long-forgotten but newly-recovered truths and principles that would lead to what we think of, in our day and time, as *individual liberty* and *human rights*.

With the mention of these things, we trust that a definite connection has been established between Biblical characters and people living in America today, and between the beliefs and personal exertions of those who have gone before us and the citizens of this nation

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

who have inherited a substantial spiritual legacy worth preserving. In so doing, we will augment our prosperity and ensure the continuance of a free and open society for those who come after us. In such a society, The Word will live, even to the benefit of those who reject God.

With all this discussion about the unfolding of events as the Heavenly Father moves in the situations in which men find themselves, we are now poised to produce historical evidence of the Judeo-Christian underpinnings in the discovery of the Americas, and the subsequent founding of the United States. We shall see from the actual writings of Christopher Columbus that he was not the conquistador that revisionist historians make him out to be. He was, rather, a man with mercantile ambitions who also had an awareness of his responsibility to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, his Lord. Although a flawed human being, his bold venture beyond the bounds of the known world of his day speaks loudly regarding his trust in the God of the Bible.

Almost concurrently, imperfect but devout Christians like Martin Luther, John Wesley, and John Calvin, within a generation, turned the religious world on its ear, teaching that the individual is capable of having a genuine relationship with God without the aid of an intermediary like a priest or an established religious institution. In its day, this was a volatile notion, resulting in social upheaval and countless religious wars that left European societies forever changed. One thing is certain; for many, the average congregant was no longer seen as a mere cog servicing the whims of an all-intrusive church. Instead, believers were free to walk with their God, with only the Lord Jesus as mediator between God and men (I Tim. 2:5).

Additionally, we'll examine the part played by earthly rulers like Henry VIII, who, through vanity, unwittingly laid the foundations for Protestant England.

We'll look at cultural contributions to our national legacy made by Elizabeth I, including the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and James I, who authorized the English version of the Word of God which now bears his name. These three events are spiritually profound in that they impelled Great Britain to the forefront of what would become modern civilization. The British Empire would not only spawn the American nation, but would be instrumental in carrying the preaching of Jesus Christ to the four corners of the earth.

Finally, as America's "mother country", Great Britain exerted an indelible influence over her colonies in the New World, inculcating Biblical ideals into every stratum of society and culture. There is an abundance of historical evidence to consider and, unless the Lord returns from Heaven to gather together his saints, we intend to set before our readers the details. Please join us as we debunk the teachings of the revisionists, dismantle the arguments of the Marxists, and disprove the claims of the humanists. Unlike the nihilist, who views life as a series of random, haphazard occurrences having no meaning, we know better. Our joy is to share the love of our God with those seeking meaning in life, and, with that, the integrity and accuracy of The Word. We trust you'll find it fascinating.*

(Be sure to join us in every summer and winter issue of The Ryburn Christian Clarion as Rick Heeter, the Clarion's editor-in-chief, examines the historical evidence supporting the Judeo-Christian beginnings of The United States Of America.)

(Mr. Rick Heeter has been a student of the Word of God since 1972. For over thirty-three years he has participated in numerous Biblical studies courses, and has taught God's Word on many occasions. Most recently, he was the teacher at the Ryburn Chapel in Dayton, Ohio. Presently, he is a columnist, book reviewer, and the editor-in-chief of The Ryburn Christian Clarion.)

**Articles and columns submitted to The Ryburn Christian Clarion are edited to ensure correct spelling and punctuation, proper grammar, and clarity of expression.*

If you are interested in submitting an article for our "God's Matchless Word" column or, perhaps, an essay, some original Christian poetry, or a testimony for our "For Your Spiritual Enrichment" column, please note that it is best to send them on a 3½" floppy disk, using a standard Microsoft™ Word® format. You may also e-mail your submissions, in a "plain text" format, sending them to ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net. Additionally, if you desire, you may send us a fax at (937) 276-5534. For more information, feel free to call us at (937) 275-3316. If you would like to send a letter to the editor, you may use our e-mail address or fax number, or simply write The Ryburn Christian Clarion, 420 Ryburn Avenue, Suite C-2, Dayton, Ohio 45405-2552. If you would like to support our outreach work financially, please make your offerings payable to "The Ryburn Christian Clarion", and mail them to the same address.

Until next issue, God bless you from the staff of The Ryburn Christian Clarion!