



M Grace Messenger

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

122 Walnut Street
Madison, AL 35758
256-837-8821

GBC HOMEPAGES

<http://www.gracemadison-al.com>
<http://sermonaudio.com/gbcmadisonal>

"Preaching the free grace of God which brings a change of lifestyles, masters and destinies."

DEAN OLIVE, Pastor

— March 2012 Issue —

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" 1 Peter 4:10



NURSERY SCHEDULE

March

04 Jon and Tanya Amis
11 Jenny and Peter Lovassy
18 Troy and Jessica Moseley
25 Vicki Johnson and Amber Solan

April

01 Pat and Kristy Hines
08 Kevin and Sara Smith
15 Kristin Scarbrough and Lori Hewlett
22 Melanie Myatt and Hannah McFadden
29 Linda Olive and Sonja Williams

CHURCH CLEANING

March - Palazzolos
April - Marshalls
May - Myatts
June - Volunteer Needed

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF MARCH 1, 2012

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$ 26,929.24
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 24,827.34
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 0.00
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 25,171.60
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 1,150.00
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 610.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$ 26,931.16
February Love offerings	\$ 550.00
February General Fund offerings	\$ 11,953.02
February Designated Missions	\$ 350.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 96,297.75
Missions Fund balance	\$ 11,605.82
General Fund balance	\$ 97,495.05



JOINT BIBLE CONFERENCE

WITH

PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

7745 Highway 72 West, Madison, AL

March 16-18

Preacher – **MAURICE ROBERTS**, former editor of the Banner of Truth Magazine

Theme – The Pillars of Our Faith

Schedule (all services at PPC except 9:30 AM Sunday)

Friday Evening, 7:00 PM – “Church Order and Worship”

Saturday Afternoon, 3:00 PM – “Church Order and Worship”

Sunday Morning, 9:30 AM – “The New Birth” (at GBC)

Sunday Morning, 11:00 AM – “The New Birth”

Sunday Evening, 5:00 PM – “Justification”

There will be a book table at the conference presented by Solid Ground Christian Books. Mr. Roberts is author of seven books that will be available for purchase.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

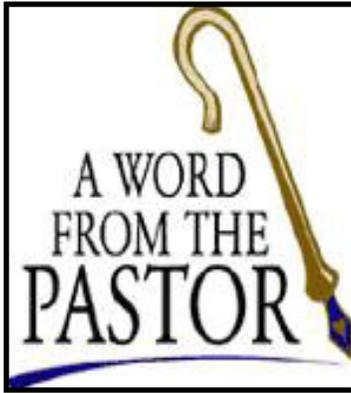
Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting
7:00 PM

FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Dinner at the Church 12:00 Noon
Afternoon Service 1:30 PM
(No Evening Service)



Asking Others for Forgiveness

The Bible talks much about our forgiving those who sin against us. We are not to hold grudges against those who do us wrong. We are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who forgave men of the wrong that they did to him. When Jesus was crucified, he cried out, "Father, forgive them, for

they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34).

So Jesus taught us to forgive others. He said, "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mk 11:25). If anyone sins against us, we must forgive him. If we have been wronged we must be forgiving. Even if they do not acknowledge that they have sinned against us, we are to have a forgiving spirit. Note the words "anything" and "anyone" in Mark 11:25. It doesn't matter who it is and it doesn't matter what they have done

Our hearts should be set to forgive others of wrongs they have committed against us as God himself has shown forgiveness toward us. We can forgive immense wrongs because we have been forgiven immense wrongs. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32). We must look to the cross and see God's gracious forgiveness of our sins. How can we not be forgiving when we look at Calvary? May our hearts go out with forgiveness to those who have wronged and injured us.

But there is another aspect of forgiveness that we need to consider. It isn't only that we should be forgiving to those who have sinned against us, but we also must seek forgiveness from those whom we have offended. Jesus told his disciples that they needed to be reconciled to a brother that they have sinned against before worshipping the Lord. He said, "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Mt 5:23-24).

These verses are found in the context of quelling anger. Jesus mentions the 6th commandment in v. 21, which forbids murder. But Jesus goes far deeper. He traces murder to its root – hatred. Michael Green says, "The God who sees in secret is affronted not only by the fruit, murder, but by the root, hatred. Hatred may not be accountable in a court of law, but it is to have no place among members of the kingdom. Anger will have to face the judgment of God" (Green).

What follows is our Lord's words about being reconciled to someone we have sinned against before drawing near to God in worship. The closer we walk to the Lord, the more sensitive our consciences will be. Having a sensitive conscience will help us to keep short accounts.

However, there are time when we become so hard-hearted that we don't recognize that we have sinned against another. Sometimes we need help from a friend to point this out or trust that the Holy Spirit will expose our sin. We are amazingly skillful at inventing excuses for our sinful behavior and are in great need of the convicting work of the Spirit of God.

Let me make clear that Jesus was talking about actual sin. When Jesus said, "remember that your brother has something against you," he is indicating that there is a just, legitimate claim. This isn't something imaginary or illusive. Whatever was said or whatever was done is clearly sin and thus needs correcting.

So we must go to them and seek their forgiveness. Going to someone that we have sinned against doesn't guarantee that they will receive us and be reconciled to us, but we should make every effort to right the wrong. "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (Rom. 12:18).

If we fail to seek reconciliation, communion with God will be hindered. For one thing, our prayers won't get very high. The heavens will become like brass. Our prayers will be hollow and empty because we have offended a brother or sister and are not willing to do anything about it. The Psalmist said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps 66:18). Simon Peter said, "Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7).

Not only will our prayers be ineffective, our praise will be insincere. To come before God in worship with sin not dealt with is to play the hypocrite. It means we will be honoring the Lord with our lips but not with our hearts (Mt. 15:18). Kent Hughes says, "If we are at odds with others because of our actions and are unwilling to do anything about it, attendance at a worship service is an exercise in hypocritical futility."

Do you see then how important it is to deal with sins in interpersonal relationships? "We are called to sensitivity in our relationships with others. This does not mean morbid sensitivity to imagined offenses, but rather dealing with real offenses that the Holy Spirit brings to mind" (Hughes).

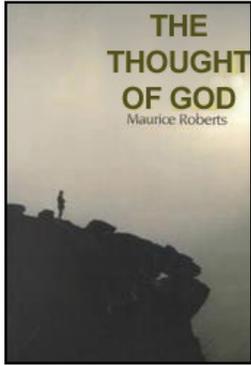
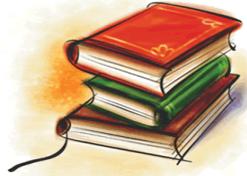
What is our duty? Charles Simeon says that we should be willing to see our fault, ready to ask pardon for it, and be desirous to make amends. Remember, even if an offended party doesn't confront us with our sin, we should still seek their pardon if we sinned against them.

Let us pray that God will prick our hearts when we sin against others and that we will find forgiveness from both God and man. Let's remember the words of our Lord: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Mt 5:23-24).

BOOK REVIEW

The Thought of God

by Maurice Roberts
Banner of Truth Trust,
Paperback, 256 pages



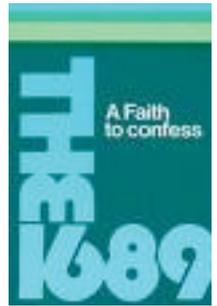
This is a collection of articles which have already been widely read and appreciated as editorials in The Banner of Truth magazine, of which Maurice Roberts was the editor. Pointedly biblical, they are thoughtful and searching, humbling and exalting, challenging and encouraging. Like editorials in other journals Maurice Robert's articles have spoken to the needs

of the times. But while many editorials appear to have only historical or sociological interest at a later day, in contrast these are of lasting value. They have God and His Word as their starting place, and their horizon stretches beyond time to eternity. Those who have already read them will rejoice to have these pieces conveniently and permanently in book form, while those who come to them for the first time will appreciate their freshness, relevance and power, and will find in them a seriousness which has a sanctifying effect on the heart and a clarifying influence on the spiritual vision.

We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith CHAPTER 16

GOOD WORKS (PARAGRAPHS ONE, TWO,
THREE AND FOUR)



1. Only the works that God has commanded in His holy Word are to be accounted good works. Such works, as men have invented out of blind zeal or upon the mere pretense of good intentions, are not good, for they lack the sanction of Holy Scripture.
Isa. 29:13; Mic. 6:8; Matt. 15:9; Heb. 13:21
2. Works that are truly good, and which are done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith. By means of them believers make known their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance of salvation, edify their brethren, adorn their Christian witness, and deprive their opponents of arguments against the gospel. In sum, they glorify God who has made them what they are, namely, new creatures in Christ; and as such they yield fruit that evidences holiness, eternal life being the outcome of all.
Ps. 116:12, 13; Matt. 5:16; Rom. 6:22; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:1; Jas. 2:18, 22; 1 Pet. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 1 John 2:3, 5
3. The ability of believers to do good works does not spring in any way from themselves, but is derived from the Spirit of Christ alone. But besides the graces which they receive from Him in the first instance, they need His further actual influence to give them the will and ability to perform the works that please Him. Yet this does not mean that, without that special influence, they are at liberty to grow careless of duty, for they must be diligent in stirring into activity the grace of God that is in them.
Isa. 64:7; John 15:4, 5; 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:12, 13; Heb. 6:11, 12
4. In rendering obedience to God, those believers who attain to the greatest height possible in this life are so far from performing works of supererogation (that is, beyond what God actually requires) that they fall short of much which, as their duty, they are bound to do.
Job. 9:2,3; Gal. 5:17.

SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTIST PASTORS' FELLOWSHIP

Thursday, March 15

Preachers and Schedule of Service

- 10:00 AM – **Jim Gables**, Grace Abounding Ministries, Birmingham, AL
- 11:00 AM – **Maurice Roberts**, former editor of the Banner of Truth Magazine
- 12:00 Noon – Lunch provided by the Church
- 1:15 PM – **Gary Scott**, pastor of Middle Valley Baptist Church, Hixon, TN



Although this is a pastors' fellowship, everyone is invited to attend. If you want to hear faithful preaching of God's Word, please join us for a day of worship. Coffee will be served from 9:30 – 10:00 AM.

Thanks, But I'll Keep My Printed Hymnal

David de Bruyn

Visitors that attend my church are often introduced to the seemingly obscure practice of fumbling for a hymnal, finding a page, and according to some, mumbling the words into the book they are peering into.

In an era of affordable projectors, Powerpoint and similar software, surely insisting upon hymnals is like insisting on horse-drawn buggies for transport or quills for pens? What conceivable reason could there be for putting expensive, bulky, hardcover books into the hands of individuals, who will sing into them and not out, instead of a clear, colorful presentation that results in everyone looking up and forward, and probably singing louder? I suggest five reasons.

1) When you hold a hymnal in your hands, you hold something of your Christian heritage. A good hymnal has hymns spanning the ages, from the first centuries into the present. In a balanced hymnal, there will be hymns from Christians of all stripes – Church Fathers, medieval mystics and monks, Reformers, Puritans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Moravians, and so forth. Importantly, these contributions *are found in one place*. The physical nature of a hymnal has the effect of communicating a collection of the work of the church triumphant. Since a projection is not a collection (except on the laptop), it cannot convey this sense, or communicate that collective heritage. When you pick up a hymnal, you identify with the church triumphant, and you sing her experience into yours.

2) When you hold a good hymnal in your hands, you are holding the distilled affective responses of hundreds, if not thousands, of believers. A hymnal is more than a songbook; it is a *record*, a *testimony* of how Christians collectively have responded to the various truths of the Christian life. Thumb through a hymnal, and it will usually be organized according to themes: God, Christ, the Spirit, the Church, Salvation, Heaven, Submission and Trust, and so forth. A hymnal is not systematic theology, it is *doxological* theology – the testimony of the church's affections. With a hymnal in hand, one can peruse how the church has responded to these various truths, and compare it with contemporary responses. Certainly, you could do that by clicking through your collection on your PC, but most of the parishioners don't have access to that. The sense of cohesive, collective Christian sentiment is profoundly weakened when Christians only access a few slides a week, one slide at a time.

3) A good hymnal remains the best devotional literature we have. Hymnals grow, stretch and shape one's affections beyond what they would be if the choice is simply that of remembering a likable song and Googling it. Devotional literature is formative. Certainly devotional "literature" does not have to be printed, and can make use of the many gadgets available to us, but once again, at least the defined collection contained within a hymnal helps the church, family or individual to not be blown to and fro by every wind of competing Christian songs. Every Christian should have a hymnal (or several) to have at home for

personal and family worship. The Reformers fought and died for the privilege of singing to God in your own language in a hymnal you could read. Hymns ought to be contemplated, understood, and sung to the Lord outside of church gatherings. At the very least, when hymnals are entirely replaced by projections, this becomes more unlikely.

4) Since hymnals require more time and money to produce, there is at least the possibility that the editors of those hymnals will sift through the chaff to include the very best of Christian hymnody. While every hymnal represents some theological bias, it at least represents a kind of canon, a settled standard of Christian hymnody in the eyes of its editors, from which a congregation can select appropriate hymns. On the other hand, a collection on a PC or laptop can be edited as quickly (and whimsically) as the laptop-owner desires. Copy and paste, or select-delete. Forget about the consensus of the ages; a mouse-click and a song is in or out...

I am not saying that churches that use only projections *aim* to produce musical illiteracy, ignorance of historical Christian sentiment, radical devotional eclecticism, chronological snobbery, or devotional impoverishment. I am saying that given the needs of the hour, I'm keeping my printed hymnal.

David de Bruyn is pastor of New Covenant Baptist Church in Johannesburg, South Africa.