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## THE REVIEW

### The Homeless

Vic Perry, Moderator IBFNA

More and more it seems like there are increasing numbers of homeless people, at least in the urban areas of so much of our country. Homelessness is not new. Probably many of us have seen homeless folks along the roadways, like I have for 20 years or more.

Some people are homeless by choice. Others do not choose to be homeless, at least if you ask them. One is amazed how things add up when two and two are put together in the homeless scenario, especially regarding those who are homeless by choice. Let me list a few things I have observed during the last 20 years about homeless people. Many of us could add other things as well.

I have seen homeless people begging beside the roadway, who at the end of the day, when they leave that day-by-day spot they were begging at, simply walk over and get into a fairly new vehicle to drive away.

I remember years ago watching a lady who probably was truly homeless. On several days I observed her go to the cans where New York City hospital workers had put out the garbage to be collected by trucks. This lady would come day after day with some kind of container, and she would rummage through the garbage cans to pick out the milk containers the hospital patients and staff had emptied. This lady would then meticulously empty every last drop of milk out of those containers into the container she had brought with her for the collection of those few last drops of milk left behind. I had no doubt that this lady was indeed homeless, probably not by choice, but she was doing what she could just to survive one day at a time.

I have seen some homeless people, as the weather changes from cold to warm, shed heavy clothing they wore in the colder weather. They left it along the roadway for the county to retrieve and dispose of. I have also seen some homeless people get up just before or shortly after daybreak, so they could move on to whatever they would do that day. Some of those folks slept, unknown to the homeowner, right outside of someone's home in a sheltered area. Sometimes they will carry around a bed roll or sleeping bag, but when the weather was too warm at night, they would leave that behind alongside the roadway for someone else to take care of.



#### INSIDE PAGES

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I have seen people wanting a handout along the roadway within 100 yards of “help wanted” signs that were prominently posted at area businesses. I have no doubt that these people just do not want this work that is so readily available.

Most who read this article personally know the One who Himself chose to be homeless. Paul wrote in Phil. 2:5–8 that Christ humbled Himself, suggesting that He was functionally homeless, for heaven had been His home. Jesus said He had no place to lay His head (Matt. 8:19, 20, Luke 9:57, 58). He had no place on earth He called home when He left His heavenly home to make possible as a man His death, burial, and

resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-4). He did this so that the believer can go to his heavenly home with Him one day. Think of it—one day we will be moving on home! No U-Haul trucks, no worries, no fussing, unlike our experience when we move down here on earth from place to place.

The hymn writer penned as part of the old song, “There’s a new home in heaven, and it’s mine.” In a real way, every believer now on earth is homeless, because this old world is not our home. The One who became homeless on earth, came to make it possible for us to have that new heavenly home (John 14:1-3).

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## President Calvin Coolidge on Francis Asbury

Pastor Paul Gustine

*Editor’s note: The following article is from a book written by President Calvin Coolidge titled, Foundations of the Republic: Speeches and Addresses, based on remarks he gave at the unveiling of the Equestrian Statue of Francis Asbury in Washington D. C. on October 15, 1924 (Scripture references provided by Paul Gustine, who served as pastor for many years in Northampton, MA, where Coolidge once served as mayor).*

“This occasion cannot but recall to our minds in a most impressive way the sacrifice and devotion that has gone into the making of our country. It is impossible to interpret it as the working out of a plan devised by man. The wisest and most far-sighted of them had little conception of the greatness of the structure which was to arise on the foundation which they were making. As we review their accomplishments, they constantly admonish us not only that ‘all things work together for good to them that love God’ [Rom. 8:28], but that in the direction of the affairs of our country there has been an influence that had a broader vision, a greater wisdom and a wider purpose, than that of mortal man, which we can only ascribe to a Divine Providence [Dan. 2:20-

22]. A wide variety of motives has gone into the building of our republic. We can never understand what self-government is or what is necessary to maintain it unless we keep these fundamentals in mind. To one of them, Francis Asbury, the first American Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and his associates, made a tremendous contribution.

“Our government rests upon religion. It is from that source that we derive our reverence for truth and justice, for equality and liberty, and for the rights of mankind [Ps. 85:7-13; 96:10, 13; 97:2]. Unless the people believe in these principles, they cannot believe in our government. There are only two main theories of government in the world. One rests on righteousness, the other rests on force. One appeals to reason, the other appeals to the sword. One is exemplified in a republic, the other is represented by despotism. The history of government on this earth has been almost entirely a history of the rule of force held in the hands of a few. Under our Constitution America committed itself to the practical application of the rule of reason, with the power held in the hands of the people.

“This result was by no means accomplished at once. It came about only by reason of long and difficult preparation, oftentimes accompanied with discouraging failure. The ability for self-government is arrived at only through an extensive training and education. In our own case it required many generations, and we cannot yet say that it is wholly perfected. It is of a great deal of significance that the generation which fought the American Revolution had seen a very extensive religious revival. They had heard the preaching of Jonathan Edwards. They had seen the great revival meetings that were inspired also by the preaching of Whitefield. The religious experiences of those days made a profound impression upon the great body of the people. They made new thoughts and created new interests. They freed the public mind, brought a deeper knowledge and more serious contemplation of the truth. By calling the people to righteousness, they were a direct preparation for self-government [Prov. 14:34]. It was for a continuation of this work that Francis Asbury was raised up.

“The religious movement which he represented was distinctly a movement to reach the great body of the people. Just as our Declaration of Independence asserts that all men are created free, so it seems to me the founders of this movement were inspired by the thought that all men were worthy to hear the Word, worthy to be sought out and brought to salvation [Rom. 1:16; 1 Tim. 2:3-4]. It was this motive that took their preachers among the poor and neglected, even to criminals in the jails. As our ideal has been to bring all men to freedom, so their ideal was to bring all men to salvation [Luke 24:46-48]. It was preeminently a movement in behalf of all the people. It was not a new theory. The American Constitution was not a new theory. But, like it, it was the practical application of an old theory which was very new.

“Just as the time was approaching when our country was about to begin the work of establishing a government which was to represent the rule of the people, where not a few but the

many were to control public affairs, where the vote of the humblest was to count for as much as the vote of the most exalted, Francis Asbury came to America to preach religion. He had no idea that he was preparing men the better to take part in a great liberal movement, the better to take advantage of free institutions, and the better to perform the functions of self-government. He did not come for political motives. Undoubtedly, they were farthest from his mind. Others could look after public affairs. He was a loyal and peaceful subject of the Realm. He came to bring the gospel to the people, to bear witness to the truth and to follow it wheresoever it might lead. Wherever men dwelt, whatever their condition, no matter how remote, no matter how destitute they might be, to him they were souls to be saved.

“For this work, the bearing of the testimony of the truth [John 17:17] to those who were about to be, and to those who in his later years were sovereign American citizens, he had a peculiar training and aptitude. He was the son of a father who earned his livelihood by manual labor, of a mother who bore a reputation for piety. By constant effort they provided the ordinary comforts of life and an opportunity for intellectual and religious instruction. It was thus that he came out of a home of the people. Very early, at the age of seventeen, he began his preaching. In 1771, when he was twenty-six years old, responding to a call for volunteers, he was sent by Wesley to America. Landing in Philadelphia, he began that ministry which in the next forty-five years was to take him virtually all through the colonies and their western confines and into Canada, from Maine on the north, almost to the Gulf of Mexico on the south.

“He came to America five years after the formation of the first Methodist Society in the city of New York, which had been contemporaneous with his own joining of the British Conference as an itinerant preacher and a gospel missionary. At that time, it is reported that there were 316 members of his denomination in this country. The prodigious character of his labors is

revealed when we remember that he traveled some 6,000 miles each year, or in all about 270,000 miles, preaching about 15,500 sermons and ordaining more than 4,000 clergymen, besides presiding at no less than 224 Annual Conferences. The highest salary that he received was \$80 each year for this kind of service, which meant exposure to summer heat and winter cold, traveling alone through the frontier forests, sharing the rough fare of the pioneer's cabin, until his worn-out frame was laid at last to rest. But he left behind him as one evidence of his labors 695 preachers and 214,235 members of his denomination. The vitality of the cause which he served is further revealed by recalling that the 316 with which he began has now grown to more than 8,000,000.

“His problem during the Revolutionary War was that of continuing to perform his duties without undertaking to interfere in civil or military affairs. He had taken for the text of his first sermon in America these very significant words: ‘For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified’ [1 Cor. 2:2]. When several of his associates left for England in 1775, he decided to stay. ‘I can by no means agree to leave such a field for gathering souls to Christ as we have in America,’ he writes, ‘therefore I am determined by the grace of God not to leave them, let the consequence be what it may.’ But he had no lack of loyalty to the early form of American government. When the inauguration of Washington took place April 30, 1789, the Conference being in session, Bishop Asbury moved the presentation of a congratulatory address to the new President. His suggestion was adopted, and the Bishop being one of those designated for the purpose, presenting the address in person, read it to Washington. How well he fitted into the scheme of things, this circuit rider who spent his life making stronger the foundation on which our government rests and seeking to implant in the hearts of all men, however poor and unworthy they may have seemed, an increased ability to discharge the high duties of their citizenship [Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17]. His outposts marched with the pioneers, his mis-

sionaries visited the hovels of the poor so that all men might be brought to a knowledge of the truth.

“A great lesson has been taught us by this holy life. It was because of what Bishop Asbury and his associates preached and what other religious organizations, through their ministry, preached, that our country has developed so much freedom [John 8:32, 36] and contributed so much to the civilization of the world. It is well to remember this when we are seeking for social reforms. If we can keep in mind their sources, we shall better understand their limitations.

“The government of a country never gets ahead of the religion of a country. There is no way by which we can substitute the authority of law for the virtue of man. Of course, we can help to restrain the vicious and furnish a fair degree of security and protection by legislation and police control, but the real reforms which society in these days is seeking will come as a result of our religious convictions, or they will not come at all. Peace, justice, humanity, charity—these cannot be legislated into being. They are the result of a Divine Grace. I have never seen the necessity for reliance upon religion rather than upon law better expressed than in a great truth uttered by Mr. Tiffany Blake, of Chicago, when he said: ‘Christ spent no time in the antechamber of Cæsar.’ An act of Congress may indicate that a reform is beginning or has been accomplished, but it does not of itself bring about a reform.

“Perhaps, too, there is a lesson in contentment in the life of this devout man. He never had any of the luxuries of this life. Even its conveniences did not reach him, and of its absolute necessities he had a scanty share. Without ever having the enjoyment of a real home, constantly on the move, poorly clad, often wretchedly sheltered, much of the time insufficiently nourished, yet his great spirit pressed on to the end, always toward the mark of his high calling [Phil. 3:14]. His recompense was not in the things of the earth [Matt. 6:19-21]. Yet who can doubt that as he beheld his handiwork, as he saw these accom-

plishments grow, there came to him a glorious satisfaction and a divine peace? No doubt he valued the material things of this life, and certainly they ought to be valued and valued greatly, but he regarded it as his work to put a greater emphasis on the things of the spirit. He sought to prepare men for the sure maintenance and the proper enjoyment of liberty, and for the more certain production and the better use of wealth, by inspiring them with reverence for the moral values of life.

“What a wonderful experience he must have had, this prophet of the wilderness! Who shall say where his influence, written upon the immortal souls of men, shall end? How many homes he must have hallowed! What a multitude of frontier mothers must have brought their children to him to receive his blessing! It is more than probable that Nancy Hanks, the mother of Lincoln, had heard him in her youth. Adams and Jefferson must have known him, and Jackson must have seen in him a flaming spirit as unconquerable as his own. How many temples of worship dot our landscape; how many institutions of learning, some of them rejoicing in the name of *Wesleyan*, all trace the inspiration of their existence to the sacrifice and service of this lone circuit rider! He is entitled to rank as one of the builders of our nation.

“On the foundation of a religious civilization which he sought to build, our country has enjoyed greater blessing of liberty and prosperity than was ever before the lot of man. These cannot continue if we neglect the work which he did. We cannot depend on the government to do

the work of religion. We cannot escape a personal responsibility for our own conduct. We cannot regard those as wise or safe counselors in public affairs who deny these principles and seek to support the theory that society can succeed when the individual fails.

“I do not see how any one could recount the story of this early Bishop without feeling a renewed faith in our own country. He met a multitude of storms. Many of them caused him sore trials. But he never wavered. He saw wars and heard rumors of war, but whatever may have been the surface appearance, underneath it all our country manifested then and has continued to manifest a high courage, a remarkable strength of spirit and an unusual ability, in a crisis, to choose the right course. Something has continued to guide the people. No tumult has been loud enough to prevent their hearing the still small voice [I Kings 19:9-12]. No storm has been violent enough to divert inspired men from constantly carrying the word of truth [2 Tim. 4:1-2]. The contests of the day have but been preparations for victories on the morrow. Through it all our country has acquired an underlying power of judgment and stability of action which has never failed it. It furnishes its own answer to those who would defame it. It can afford to be oblivious to those who would detract from it. America continues its own way unchallenged and unafraid. Above all attacks and all vicissitudes it has arisen calm and triumphant; not perfect, but marching on guided in its great decisions by the same spirit which guided Francis Asbury.”

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## Biblical Authority

Pastor Kevin Hobi

As fundamental Baptists we believe in Biblical authority. Among the original founders of the IBFNA, L. Duane Brown and his son, Daniel Brown, authored a book titled, *Biblical Basis for Baptists Revised & Expanded: A Bible Study of*

*Baptist Distinctives* (North Fort Myers, FL: Faithful Life Publishers, 2009). Chapters 2 through 9 of that work take the reader through a helpful study of Baptist doctrines using the acrostic B-A-P-T-I-S-T-S. They begin in Chapter 2 by desig-

nating the B as "Biblical Authority."

The theme verse for the chapter is 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." The Browns affirm, "Inspiration of the original manuscripts is the guarantee that all Scripture is exactly what God wanted" (7). The Bible's authority is self-authorizing because it is ultimate authority. The Browns list what the Bible tells us about itself: (1) "it claims to be supernaturally inspired"; (2) "it claims to be free from error"; (3) "it claims to be the source of salvation in pointing men to Jesus"; (4) "it claims to be sufficient for all faith and practice"; and (5) "it claims to be the standard for local church conduct" (7-8).

All these claims are true. God used the Apostle Paul to write that theme verse in 2 Timothy, which was itself God-breathed Scripture. Peter recognized this authoritative quality of Paul's epistles as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:15-16). The Apostle John also wrote authoritative New Testament Scripture (John 19:35). His witness enables men to believe, because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17).

John also identifies the source of rebellion against the authority of the Bible as spirits. He warns, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Paul noted the correlation between seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1). It is to these spirits that he refers as he warned the Corinthian church against "another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted" (2 Cor. 11:4). Deniers of Biblical authority are "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (v. 13). From these we must separate.

As we seek to heed the warnings of the apostles in our churches today as faithful separatists,

we face four categories of the denial of Biblical authority, with which we must refuse ecclesial cooperation: (1) denials of antagonism; (2) denials of addition; (3) denials of accommodation; and (4) denials of association.

The antagonistic denial of Biblical authority originated with the serpent in Eden. He expressed his denial to Eve (and Adam with her) forthrightly: "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). This assertion says one of two things about the revelation our original parents received from the Lord about the consequence of death for eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Either the revelation was not from the Lord, or it was from a lord who is less than the true God He claims to be. Satan seems to suggest the second of these doctrines of demons: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (v. 5).

In our day, antagonistic denials of Biblical authority may be found especially in modernistic churches, where higher critical approaches to the Bible rely on the theory of evolution to deny the veracity and authoritative authorship of the Scriptures. Judaism's rejection of the New Testament revelation belongs here too, as does Islam's rejection of all but the Torah, the Psalms, and the Gospels.

The Lord spoke of additions to Biblical authority when He revealed to Jeremiah: "The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart" (Jer. 14:14). It is likely true that none of these false prophets would have rejected the Scriptures of Moses and David as less than biblically authoritative, but they claimed equal authority for their false form of special revelation. This denial of Biblical authority happens through addition.

The denials of addition have been an effective tool since the days of the false prophets of the Old Testament. Islam adds the Koran; Mor-

mons add the Book of Mormon; Roman Catholics add the Apocrypha and the teachings of the Magisterium. Jesus condemned the elevation of the traditions of the Jewish elders to the authority of Scripture (Mark 7:8-9). Significantly, the modern Charismatic movement has plagued the church with its many additions of special revelation, which claim that the authority of God's Word continues to be heard through revelatory gifts that passed away with the completion of the New Testament canon (1 Cor. 13:11).

Also influential in our day are the denials of Biblical authority that favor accommodation toward conformity to this world. Jesus sacrificed Himself to deliver us from this present evil age (Gal. 1:4), but some Christians have concluded that some of the evil of our age must be accommodated in order for them to reach our present evil age, putting aside the command to "be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2). This accommodating form of Bible-denial ignores or undermines clear teachings of Scripture in order to achieve a conformity to and a desired acceptance from modern culture.

Examples of the denial of accommodation include theistic evolution. The text itself is clear. The Bible teaches that God created the universe in six earth-days and rested on the seventh day, at which point the process of creation ceased. Acceptance with modern culture, however, requires acceptance of evolution, so Christians exchange the plain teaching of the Bible's creation account for theistic evolution, an idea unknown prior to Darwin's popularity because of its incompatibility with the Biblical text.

Egalitarianism in Christian leadership is a similar denial of Biblical authority. In this case, the complementary but distinguishable roles of man and woman in the home and in the church are obvious to the honest Bible-reader. The acceptance of feminism in modern culture, however, calls for the acceptance of egalitarianism in the church; so Christians exchange the plain teaching of the Bible about male leadership for female pastors, a practice unknown to believers

prior to the sexual revolution of the 1960s.

We may add to this category the use of rock-roll music for worship, the inclusion of homosexuality and transgenderism as categories of anthropology, and the refusal of parents to practice corporal punishment for raising children. In each case, the Bible is not unclear, and in each case, neither is the denial's accommodation of our modern culture. Each case involves setting aside Biblical authority to conform to modern culture. The only antidote for this temptation is the commitment to follow the exhortation of Hebrews: "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (13:13).

Our understanding of the denials of Biblical authority today is incomplete without recognizing the denial of association. Here we turn again to the Apostle John. He warned regarding false teachers: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10-11). Any of the denials of Biblical authority we have cited qualifies as this kind of evil deed. To bid ecclesial Godspeed to them is to partake in them. For this reason, we must separate from them, lest we commit the denial of Biblical authority through association, against which John warns true churches.

Unfortunately, every one of these denials of Biblical authority mentioned above has been committed by true believers. Martin Luther rejected the Epistle of James, an error committed for different reasons by modernists today. Credible professions of faith can be found among Roman Catholics and Charismatics. Accommodation for the present evil age in gospel ministry is a temptation that is attractive to the flesh of every gospel minister seeking success. For these reasons, ecclesial separation from these denials of Biblical authority must be practiced, whether it requires separation from believer or unbeliever, even while we seek to obey Jesus's commission to make disciples of one another, so that His true churches may be both sanctified and unified.

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