

The Baptist Examiner

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"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."—Isaiah 8:20

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The Danger Of Following The Crowd

By ROY MASON
Tampa, Florida

The opinion of many people, is determined by the majority vote. There is no absolute standard of right and wrong—it is all a matter of custom and what "everybody is doing." Back before the last war, nudism was becoming current. All over the country nudist clubs were springing up. One of these was located just a few miles from Tampa. There are still such, although the widespread use of "shorts" and other mere substitutes for clothing, has fur-

nished keen competition to the nudist organizations. Nudism became a fad because "people were doing it."

Is There Any Moral Standard To Go By?

Yes,—that standard is set up by the One who creates us and created the world. He, the Moral Governor of the universe, is the only One who has the right to say what is right and what is wrong. In His Word, the Bible, He has laid down His moral code. Our conduct should be determined—not by what is "being done" but by what God

says. And just why is this true?

1. Because the Moral Governor of the universe has the right to set standards.

2. Because His standards are eternally right, because based on eternal truth and justice, rather than on shifting customs.

3. Because before this Moral Governor we shall have to stand for judgment.

Human Courses In Human Ethics Lacking

In colleges they teach courses in "Ethics" in which standards of conducts are set up. God is (Continued on page four)

Harbor A Grudge

Lev. 19:11-18, "Thou (God's children) shalt not bear any grudge."

How searching is that demand upon the soul of God's followers! My forgiveness of my brother is to be complete (unconditional). No sullenness is to remain, no sulky temper which so easily gives birth to thunder and lightning, and many times leads to bloodshed. There is to be no painful aloofness, no assumption of superiority which rains contempt upon the offender. When I forgive, I am not to carry any powder horn, bullets, not even the gun. Judas even threw down the thirty pieces of silver, and that is more than many are willing to do today. They would have kept the money and claimed to be perfect or laid it on some other brother. But as I go on my religious journey toward heaven to meet my Lord, I want to be free from grudges. I am to empty out all my explosives, all my ammunition of anger and revenge. I am not to "bear any grudge," so said my God. I cannot meet this demand of God.

It is altogether beyond me. I might utter words of forgiveness, but I cannot reveal a clear, bright, blue sky without a touch of storm brewing anywhere. But the good Lord of grace can do it for me. He can change my attitude toward my beloved brethren. He can create a new feeling in my mind. He can "renew a right spirit within me" (David's prayer) and in that holy atmosphere nothing shall live which seeks to poison and destroy me or my fellowman. Grudges shall die, "like cloud-spots in the early dawn." Revenge, that awful creation of the unclean, feverish soul, shall give place to love and goodwill, the strong genial presence which makes its home in my new heart. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34. "If ye love me, keep my commandment." John 14:15. Doesn't Jesus make it simple and plain about loving one another? It should be said, "Behold, how (Continued on page four)

Here Is How A Choice Of Doors Proved Fatal

A man trying to flee a smoke-filled hotel room apparently selected the wrong door and died of suffocation, according to the surmise of fire inspectors in Omaha, Nebraska.

As Chief Investigator Dan Mulcahey of the fire department rescue squad reconstructed the circumstances, the man fell asleep while smoking in bed. An upholstered chair adjoining the bed caught fire.

The man awakened, tried to flee, but instead of opening the door into the hallway, opened the door to the clothes closet.

In spiritual matters, the choice of a door is even more important, for one's eternal destiny depends on the proper choice.

The Lord Jesus said: "I am the Door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." (John 10:9). No one need be confused when there is such a definite statement as that to guide one.

Yet when the average person is asked, "What is the door to salvation?" the answer is likely to be: "The Church," "the Preacher," "The Sacraments," "Good works," or "Character."

There is a place for everything and everything should be kept in its place; That honor belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. Once on the inside there will be much to engage one's attention; but until one has entered the open Door; nothing else, so to speak, should receive attention.

The Lord Jesus is the only One who has offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins, and He alone should be acknowledged as Saviour and Lord. Following that, one should be careful to maintain good works. (Titus 3: 8). To imagine that one's own works save is to substitute the clothes closet door for Christ, the Door to salvation, and glory.

ARE YOU BRUISING THE DEVIL OR ARE YOU BOOSTING HIM?

A pastor preached last Sunday morning on "Bruising The Serpent's Head."

Every redeemed child of God is of the "Seed of the Woman." It is our business to "Bruise The Serpent's Head."

When we are in our places we are bruising him, when we are out of our places we are boosting him.

When we give as we ought we are bruising him, when we do not we are boosting him.

When we forgive we bruise him, when we do not we boost him.

When we set a guard at our lips we bruise him, when we turn our tongues loose we boost him.

When we visit and do personal work we bruise him; when we do not, we boost him.

When we take our places in the choir, we bruise him; when we do not we boost him.

When we walk in the Spirit we bruise the serpent; when we walk in the flesh we boost him.

When we read our Bibles and pray, we bruise him; when we fail we boost him.

When we live in our community as Christians, we bruise (Continued on page four)

Five Great Questions As To The Virgin Birth

By R. S. BEAL
Tucson, Arizona

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee?"—Heb. 1:5.

Every believer has stood with bowed head under the shadow of the cross of Calvary to behold with the eye of faith the Lord Jesus hanging there a bleeding victim for the sins of the world. We have been privileged also to stand beside the empty tomb of our Lord, and as we have done so our hearts have leaped with joy because we had the assurance that He arose a victor over the dark domain and recalled how He said to His disciples, "... because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). By faith we have stood on the mount of Ascension to behold Him as He went on high to be received at the Father's right hand, where He was to represent us in the court of heaven. Many times have we tried to visualize the sight of His coming when He shall descend with ten thousand of His holy ones.

Today, I want to lead you to

Bethlehem, the place where the holy child Jesus was born. While this infant came into the world through the portals of a woman's life, no babe was comparable to Him in birth; He was born of a virgin. In his wonderful Gospel, John tells us that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1,14).

I trust as we gaze upon this (Continued on page three)

TEN FACTS AS TO ASIA

"To understand Asia better," says The Saturday Review of Literature, "and the complex challenge confronting the United States in this area of the world where more than half of the human race lives, Americans would do well to bear these 10 points in mind when studying news from the Far East:

1. Most people in Asia will go to bed hungry tonight.
 2. Most people in Asia cannot read or write.
 3. Most people in Asia live in grinding poverty.
 4. Most people in Asia have never seen a doctor.
 5. Most people in Asia have never heard of democracy.
 6. Most people in Asia have never known civil liberties.
 7. Most people in Asia believe anything different would be better than what they have, and they are determined to get it.
 8. Most people in Asia believe that freedom or free enterprise means the freedom of western colonial powers to exploit Asians.
 9. Most people in Asia distrust people with white skins.
 10. Most people in Asia are determined never again to be ruled by foreigners.
- The religions of Asia have miserably failed her. Can it not (Continued on page four)

STATE OF FEAR EXISTS IN CAPITOL

Everyone seems to fear that the Pentagon, the seat of America's military power, will be wiped off the map. Consequently, deep caves, caverns, tunnels and underground installations are being made in a mountain, 100 miles distant.

It is rumored that the military brain center will soon be transferred there. Thousands of men are diligently working on the project, hoping to get it completed before Russia in desperation attempts something disastrous.

This hideout is reported to be so deep and reinforced in steel and concrete, that no existing or conceivable bomb will be able to penetrate it.

There will be a vast radio station in the heart of the mountain, from which military planners expect to direct far flung operations of the next war.

Whether Washington's fears are well grounded or not, the word for believers is: "Enter-tain no worry, but under all circumstances let your petitions be made known before God by prayer and pleading along with thanksgiving. So shall the peace of God, that surpasses all understanding, keep guard over your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:6-7, Berkeley Version.

The First Baptist Pulpit

"Saul And The Witch Of Endor"

(Read I Samuel 28:3-25).

I'd like to preface my remarks by saying that there is a lot of fortune telling and soothsaying, and a lot of spiritualism that is nothing short of pure fraud. I think in all probability the most of it is purely fraud. I cite two examples in that respect.

Sometime ago, a man whom I knew casually, an English professor in college, died. One of his friends was a firm believer in spiritualism. He sought out a medium and this medium was supposed to call up this dead

English professor that there might be a conversation engaged in between him and the man who was living. Accordingly, the medium said presently that she had this English professor ready for the conversation, and in the first sentence the English professor spoke, there were three glaring grammatical errors. This man knew immediately that it was a pure case of fraud, for if it had been his friend, he would at least have spoken correct English.

Another instance that I would

cite which would indicate the fraudulent side of spiritualism, took place here in Russell about twenty years ago. There was a woman who lived here then who claimed to be a spiritualist. I have been told that she was able to make tables walk across the floor, and that she could cause rappings to be heard in various parts of the room, as people gathered within her home to converse with the dead. One morning she called a woman here in town, who was (Continued on page two)

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"Saul And The Witch Of Endor"

(Continued from page one)
pregnant and who soon expect-
ed to be delivered of a child,
and told this expectant mother
that she had been in communi-
cation the night before with the
mother's father who was dead,
and that the mother's father had
told her that she was going to
have a fine, robust son born to
her within a few days. The
strange part of it is this—the
baby that was born was mar-
ried a few days ago, and SHE
married a man.

I cite that as a second exam-
ple of the fraudulent part of
spiritualism.

I am satisfied that I could tell
you of at least twenty-five in-
stances of like nature that have
come under my own personal
observation in the days that
have passed. However, let me
say, beloved, that there is a
genuine communication with
the spirit world as we would
gather from this portion of
God's Word that we have just
read.

Suppose we get the story
carefully in our minds before
we analyze it. Saul was the first
king of Israel—not God's choice,
but the people's choice. They
said, "Lord, give us a king. We
are tired of this theocracy —
the rule of God. We want a
monarchy — the rule of man.
Give us a king." Sometimes, be-
loved, God gives us what we
want, even though it isn't best
for us, and God gave them a
king. They had seen kings on
dress parade. That was about
all they knew about kings, but
they wanted a king and God
gave them Saul to be their first
king. They looked at him as
they made their choice, and
they were highly pleased with
their king. The Word of God
says that he was head and
shoulders taller than everybody
else. He was a virtual giant in
himself.

After that Saul became king,
while he did some few things
that would indicate that God
was at least dwelling with him
and working through him, the
most of King Saul's life was
contrary to the revealed will of
God. The fact of the matter is,
beloved, practically everything
that is recorded in God's Word
concerning King Saul, was con-
trary to God Almighty's reveal-
ed will. Finally, he came down
to his last night on earth. He
knew that tomorrow he was go-
ing out to battle. His soldiers
now are pitched on Mount Gil-
boa, and the Philistines are
pitched a little farther away at
Shunem. He knew that tomor-
row there is going to be a bat-
tle, and he wondered as to the
outcome. I am sure that he
wanted to know who was going
to win. He wanted to know if
he and his children would come
through the battle unscathed

and unharmed. He wanted to
know who was going to get the
victory. He was definitely con-
cerned about the outcome of to-
morrow.

Saul went to God. That was
the proper place for him to have
gone. If you want to know
something, beloved, go to God.
Don't look to man. Look to God
for the answer. If you want to
know anything, beloved, take
the Word of God first; get your
answer from it. At least look to
God first of all to find out what
you are to do.

I would think that we should
commend Saul that he at least
looked to God, but when he
turned to God, he couldn't find
the Lord. The Word of God tells
us that God wouldn't give him
an answer.

There were three ordinary
ways whereby people communed
with God, particularly in the
Old Testament. One was by
dreams, another was by the
Urim, and the third was by the
prophets. Saul couldn't get an
answer from God by way of a
dream; God just simply refused
to give him a dream. If you re-
call, one of his men, Abiathar,
took the Urim,—the breastplate
which flashed its answer by way
of different colored lights—and
fled to David. Furthermore,
King Saul had killed all the
prophets, and there was not a
man of God by way of a prop-
het that was left. When Saul
wanted to talk with the Lord
and desired an answer from
God, God refused to give him
an answer. He couldn't inquire
of the Lord either by dreams, or
by the Urim, or by the prophets.
Poor man—couldn't talk to God!

Saul, unable to commune with
God, is desperate. Being thus
destitute of God, he immedi-
ately resolves to go to a witch,
a fortune teller, a possessor of a
familiar spirit, that he might in-
quire of her as to the outcome
of tomorrow's battle. One time
previously, apparently these
possessors of familiar spirits had
irked King Saul and he had had
them all put to death—at least
all that he could find, but now
after a careful search, it is re-
vealed to him that there is one
that is left in the town of En-
dor. Tradition tells us (and this
is not history, and it is not Bi-
ble, but merely tradition) that
this was the mother of Abner,
the general of his army. Whe-
ther that be true or not, I don't
know, but it would seem that
there might be some credence to
be put in that statement in view
of the fact that the two men
who accompanied King Saul to
the witch of Endor were Abner
and Amasa. It might be because
that she was Abner's mother
and he was the general of Saul's
army—it might be that that was
the reason that she was spared
when all the balance were put
to death. At any rate, King Saul
goes to see her, and after cer-
tain preliminaries were past he
said to her, "Call me up the in-
dividual that I name to you." He
asked for Samuel the prop-
het—the man who had anoint-
ed him to be king—the man under
God, who had been the guiding
star of Saul's earlier life for
whatever good there had been
in his life. He asked that Sam-
uel might be called up from the
dead that he might talk to him.

As this woman stood before
King Saul, when she realized
that Samuel had been called
from the dead, she cried with
a loud voice. I don't know whe-
ther she was fooled. I don't
know why it startled her. I
couldn't say why it was that
this witch thus cried out, but
immediately on seeing that it
was Samuel, she perceived that
she was then calling Samuel up
in behalf of King Saul and
thereby recognized King Saul.
Saul gave her assurance that

she need not fear for her life,
and he thus communed with
Samuel who told him that the
battle would go contrary to him,
and that he and his sons would
be slain, and that the people of
Israel would be taken captive
by the Philistines in tomorrow's
battle. The Word of God tells
us that immediately Saul fell on
his face before Samuel and the
woman with no strength left in
him. He hadn't eaten all that
day. He hadn't eaten all that
night. He had been mentally
perturbed because he couldn't
get an answer from God, and
now he is more perturbed be-
cause of the answer that Samuel
gives to him in view of his
question. He falls on his face,
mentally and physically ex-
hausted. The woman hastily
prepared a meal, and Saul ate
of her food and went out into
the midnight darkness, highly
typical of the spiritual darkness
that enshrouded his own soul.

I have four lessons that I
want you to get from this story.

I

KING SAUL WAS NEVER A SAVED MAN.

There is only one passage of
Scripture that might in any wise
indicate that Saul was saved,
and I can explain it.

"And it was so, that, when he
had turned his back to go from
Samuel, God gave him AN-
OTHER HEART: and all those
signs came to pass that day. And
when they came thither to the
hill, behold, a company of pro-
phets met him; and the SPIRIT
OF GOD CAME UPON him; and
he PROPHESIED among
them."—I Sam. 10:9,10.

These two verses are the only
verses in all the Bible where
King Saul is mentioned that
would even indicate in the least
that Saul might have been a
saved man, and I will show you
that they don't say that he was.
It says that God gave him an-
other heart, but it doesn't say
that God gave him a new heart.
It is one thing for a man to have
another heart so that he can act
as a king; it is still a different
matter for him to have a new
heart that he might live like a
Christian. It is true that it says
that the Spirit of God came up-
on him, but it doesn't say that
the Spirit of God came within
him. Beloved, the Spirit of God
rested upon many unsaved peo-
ple in the Old Testament so that
they did what God wanted them
to do. My brother, men are not
saved by the Spirit of God rest-
ing upon them; men are saved
when the Spirit of God operates
within them.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said to
Nicodemus:

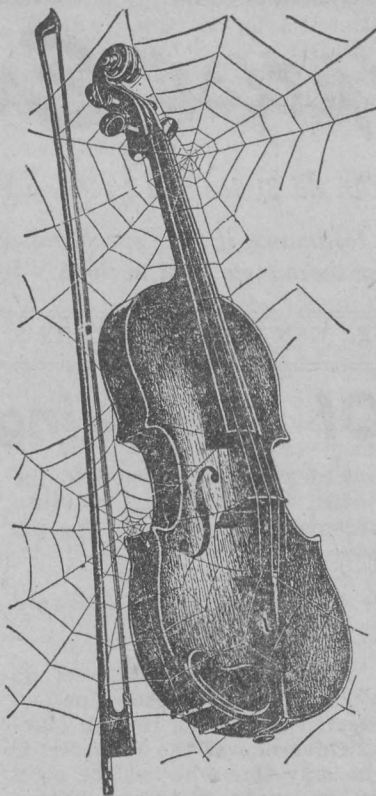
"Except a man be born of wa-
ter and of the Spirit, he cannot
enter into the kingdom of God."

—John 3:5.

I tell you, beloved, a man has
to have a spiritual birth — he
has to have the Spirit of God in-
side him in order to be saved.

I'll tell you why that Saul was
definitely an unsaved man and
was never a child of God. He
never was in submission to the
will of God one time in his life.
Right after he was anointed as
king, in the very next chapter
following the one telling of him
being anointed as king, we read
how that he was weighed and
found wanting. The Word of
God tells us how that he was
going out to battle against the

WE HAVEN'T BEEN FIDDLIN' AROUND



This paper was launched Feb.
4, 1939. There was modernism,
unionism, lodgism, Arminianism
and feminism then. There were
plenty then who believed in
open communion and alien im-
mersion. Plenty of folk then be-
lieved in falling from grace. There
were multitudes who then thought
that one church was just as good
as another.

Conditions have only changed
to grow worse. We've done our
best to contend against error
and for the truth. We don't ex-
pect to fiddle around in 1952.
Pray for us that we may hit
hard and true!

Philistines and that he waited
six days for the prophet of God
to show up that a sacrifice could
be offered. When the prophet of
God failed to put in his appear-
ance by the end of the sixth
day, Saul pushed the others
aside and said, "I am the king;
I will offer the sacrifices," which
was contrary to God Almighty's
revealed will. He had hardly of-
fered the sacrifice when the prop-
het of God put in his appear-
ance and said, "You have acted
foolishly because you have pro-
truded into the office of the
priest, which office did not be-
long to you. Because you have
done that God is going to take
the kingdom from you." He was
thus weighed and found want-
ing in the next chapter follow-
ing the story of him being
anointed as king.

Then, my brother, look how
that God told him to kill all the
Amalekites who had carried on
a guerilla warfare against the
children of Israel as they came
forth out of the land of Egypt,
but instead of killing all the
Amalekites, he spared old King
Agag and the best of the sheep
and the best of the cattle. When
Samuel, the prophet of God,
confronted him with the facts,
he said, "Well, the people—they
brought back the best of the
sheep and the best of the cattle
for sacrificial purposes."

Beloved, I tell you, you can
go right through every chapter
of God's Word and you will see

that each shows Saul in opposi-
tion to God's revealed will. Just
like he intruded into the priest's
office when he had no business
to do so, just like he failed in
the slaughtering of the Amale-
kites when he was commanded
to do so, so in every instance
Saul was weighed and found
wanting.

I tell you, beloved, if a man is
saved, he ought to occasionally,
at least, be found doing God's
will. If a man is saved, regard-
less of how far backslidden he
may be, that individual once in
a while is going to be found in
the will of God, but not so with
Saul. Not once do we find him
doing God's will. That is why
I say, first of all, Saul was a
lost man and never was saved.

II

INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE FAMILIAR SPIRITS, OR WHO ARE ABLE TO TALK WITH THE DEAD, ARE DEFINITELY CONDEMNED BY THE WORD OF GOD.

"When thou art come into the
land which the Lord thy God
giveth thee, thou shalt not learn
to do after the abominations of
those nations. There shall not
be found among you any one
that maketh his son or his
daughter to pass through the
fire, or that useth divination, or
an observer of times, or an en-
chanter, or a witch, Or a charm-
er, or a consulter with familiar
spirits, or a wizard, or a necr-
mancer. For all that do th-
ings are an abomination unto
the Lord: and because of these
abominations the Lord thy God
doth drive them out from before
thee. Thou shalt be perfect with
the Lord thy God. For these na-
tions, which thou shalt possess,
hearkened unto observers of
times, and unto diviners: but as
for thee, the Lord thy God hath
not suffered thee so to do."

—Deut. 18:9-14.

These were the words that
God spoke through Moses to the
children of Israel as they were
encamped on the plains of Moab
just before they entered into the
land of Canaan, following their
forty years of wandering in the
wilderness. Listen, beloved,
Moses was giving to this peo-
ple advice which had been re-
vealed to him from God, and he
said, "You are going to enter
into a good land—the land of
Canaan — and remember that
God is going to give you that
land because the people that live
in that land have been harken-
ing unto observers of times and
diviners, and as for you, you
are not to look to them; you are
to look to God."

Frankly, I am glad that I don't
know what tomorrow is going to
bring forth. If I knew what to-
morrow had in store for me, I
am afraid that I would be bow-
ed down so much I wouldn't be
able to reach it. I am satisfied
that some of you have sometime
or other in life faced some big
problem and you wondered as to
what the outcome was going to
be. I wouldn't be a bit surprised
but what at sometime or other
you have been tempted to go
to a fortune teller, or a sooth-
sayer, or someone with a fami-
liar spirit. Probably you have
been tempted to go to such an
individual for advice. Listen, my
brother, that is a temptation out
of the pit itself. That is a tem-
ptation from the Devil of Hell.
As surely as God looks down
upon us tonight, beloved, God
doesn't want you to go to any
individual who is possessed of
the Devil, for your information.
God wants you to trust Him, be-
loved, with your hand in His,
and as you come to the problem
God will make the way clear.

Oh, believe me tonight, when
problems arise, as they must
arise in your life and mine, God
(Continued on page three)

Good old Bro. Ruben got up in the church and
said, 'Brethren, when I am in fellowship with the
good Lord, I see my own faults; but when I am
out of fellowship with the good Lord, I see your
(church's) faults.'

"Saul And The Witch Of Endor"

(Continued from page two)

wants us just to trust Him, to walk hand in hand with Him and depend upon Him, and to look to Him to see us through instead of looking to an instrument of Satan.

III

THE THIRD LESSON THAT I WANT YOU TO GATHER FROM THIS IS SAUL'S DESPAIR AS HE FACED THE FUTURE.

Samuel told Saul that the battle was going contrary to him, he was going to die, his sons were going to die, and Israel was going to be carried captive by the Philistines. I see King Saul as he fell on his face, faint and weak as a result of having no food that day and that night, mentally perturbed and upset as a result of the message that he had received from Samuel. He fell on his face, distressed as to what the future held for him.

Listen, sinner man, sinner woman, if you would face the future as it is before you tonight, unsaved, there would be just as much despair concerning your life as there was in the life of Saul.

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God."—Psa. 9:17.

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

—II Thess. 1:7-9.

Beloved, that ought to put fear and despair in the heart of every person who is outside of Jesus Christ.

Listen again:

"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

—Rev. 14:10,11.

Sinner friend, these Scriptures ought to put despair within your heart as you face the future and as you think what your future might be without the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

No wonder Saul was overcome. It wasn't all because he hadn't had any food that day and that night. It wasn't all because of the mental anguish that he had been going through. The future for Saul was a dark future, and it brought despair as he faced that future unsaved.

Man, woman, without Jesus Christ it ought to bring despair to your soul as you face tomorrow, and tomorrow's tomorrow, and all the tomorrows to come without the Son of God as your Saviour.

IV

THE NEXT LESSON PERTAINED TO THE FATTED CALF.

This woman who possessed the familiar spirit had, close by, a fatted calf. It is said that she killed it immediately, kneaded bread, cooked a meal and set it before Saul and insisted upon him eating of it. I don't imagine that it was a very joyful meal,

and I don't imagine that it was a meal that Saul enjoyed in the least. His mind tells him that tomorrow there is going to be a dreadful battle, with a terrible disaster to him, his family, and his neighbors. I rather imagine that there was about as much joy for Saul in this meal as there is for a man who is eating his last meal before he goes into the death chamber for his execution. Saul eats in silence, and the Word of God says that the feast came to an end and he went out into the night.

There is another place in the Bible where we read about a fatted calf, where the story is entirely different. We read of a father who was overjoyed because of the return of a son that had gone in sin, and the father killed a fatted calf.

"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

—Luke 15:23,24.

That is the story of the prodigal son. When he came back there was a feast for him. Of course that prodigal son represents every sinner outside of Jesus Christ. The father represents God the Father.

Sinner friend, the day you come to the Lord Jesus Christ there begins a feast — a feast whereby there is merriment, and it says in this instance that they began to be merry. It doesn't tell us that the feast came to an end. It just says that it began. There is a reason it doesn't tell us that it came to an end, for, beloved, it just doesn't end. In the case of Saul, eating of the fatted calf came to an end and he went out into the dark. In the case of a sinner who comes to Jesus Christ and is saved, he is just beginning to be merry. There is no end to that feast. When a man comes to Jesus Christ, God makes him happy then, and keeps him happy everyday of his life, and God is going to keep him happy throughout a never-ending eternity.

CONCLUSION

This passage of Scripture presents to us a tragedy—the tragedy of a life that is lived without God. Oh, the tragedy of a man or woman who lives his life without God having a place in his life! When he realized his need of Him, God was not to be found.

I wonder if I speak to someone tonight who has been crowding God into the background who has been crowding God out of his life. Let me tell you, if there is no place for God and for God's Son, Jesus Christ, in your life, you are paving the way to the fearful end to which King Saul came.

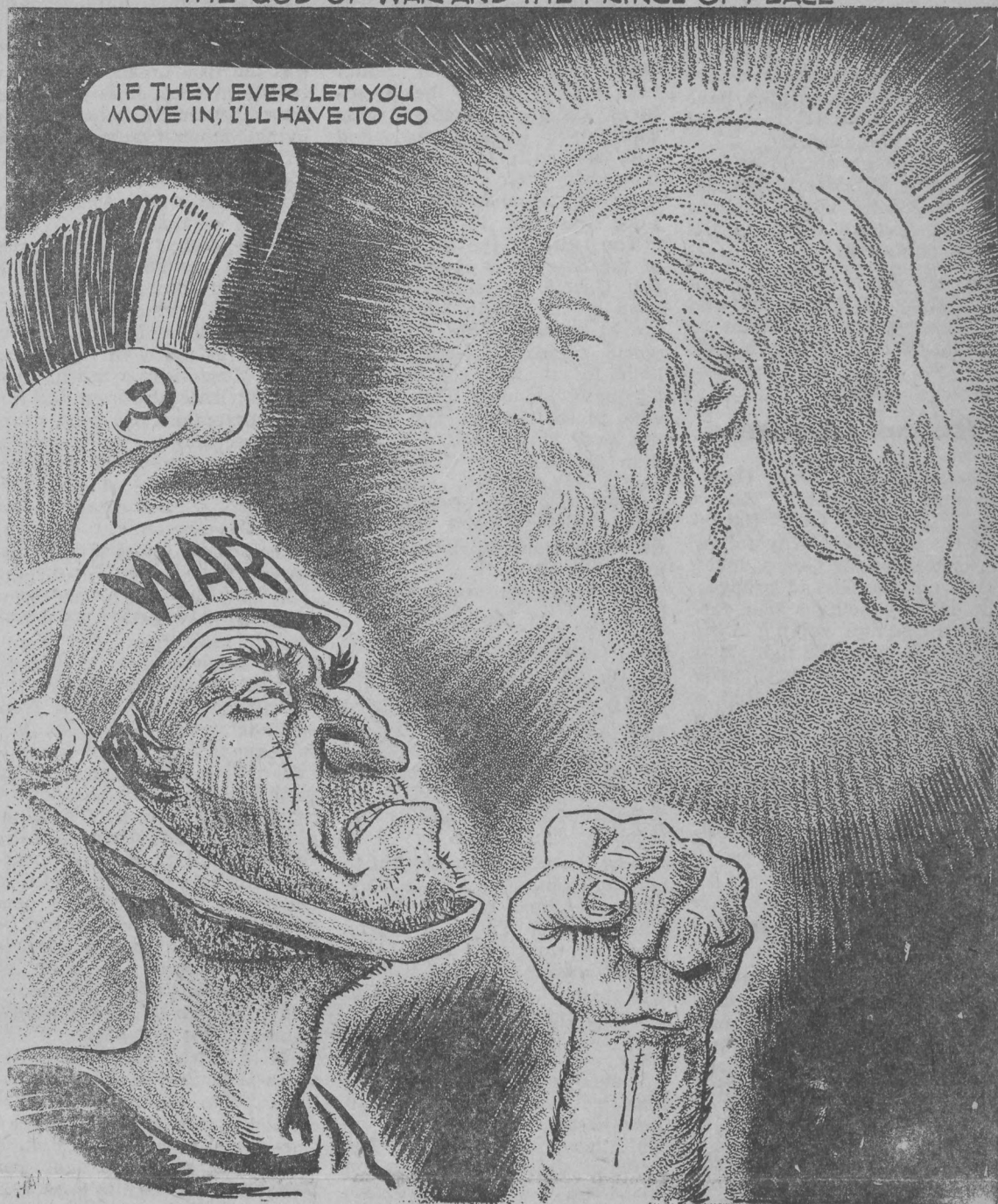
In contrast, I like to think of one man in whose life God had first place. Saul, another Saul—not King Saul of the Old Testament, but Saul of the New Testament who became the Apostle Paul when he was saved. God had first place in that Saul's life. When he came down to die, he looked backward over his life and said:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

—II Tim. 4:7,8.

Oh, may it please the Lord tonight for the Holy Spirit of God to work within your life that God might have not only a place, but first place and the right-of-way in your life thru the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

THE GOD OF WAR AND THE PRINCE OF PEACE



The Virgin Birth

(Continued from Page One)

wondrous child, His birth will take on a deeper and more precious meaning for us. The world has ruined the Christmas season by a coating of commercialism, and merchants have capitalized upon it as a time for money-making. But Christians memorialize the day in remembrance of Him who came for the express purpose of redeeming mankind.

It is impossible to rush into the stable where was the manger-cradle and catch the significance of the occasion as it is revealed to us. We must move quietly and with reverence if we are to gain the blessing the Holy Spirit has in store for us. The secrets of this holy place will never be revealed to those who would scoff and criticize. History records how Alexander the Great rushed into the Jewish holy place and into the Holy of Holies upon the Conquest of Palestine, hoping to gratify his curiosity in the sight of rare and beautiful treasures. But he found only a bare, plain room. Yet that room was the place where God revealed Himself to the High Priest who entered it wearing the garments of reverence. If we race into the mysteries of this astounding thing, the incarnation of our Lord, there is bound to be naught but disappointment. But if we will follow the Star of Hope until we come to the side of that sacred manger, then offer in reverence our gifts, we will find our hearts filled to overflowing with joy and the intellect fully satisfied.

The first question which I wish to ask relative to this

striking birth, is,

Is It Taught?

We mean by this, is it taught in the Word of God? There are many stories told about the advent of the Saviour, but does the Bible have anything to say about it? Irrespective of what any one may think about the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus, I want each of you to see that the event is revealed and emphasized upon the pages of the Book It is not a subject relegated to some back portion of Scripture or crowded into a remote corner of revelation. It is conspicuous upon the sacred page and worthy of careful consideration.

Moses could not get beyond the 3rd chapter of the first book which he wrote without alluding to the coming of our Lord. Quoting the Lord God, he said, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). Satan must have trembled as these words were uttered for they prophesied his doom through the appearance of "the seed of the woman" which is a very definite reference to the virgin birth of the Saviour.

The sun of divine revelation shines even brighter in Isaiah for he wrote, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7:14). There are those who have called this statement in question declaring it refers to some local circumstance in the history of the nation and has no

bearing on Messianic truth. However we believe all objections to the real meaning of this prophecy must vanish in the light of the Spirit's usage of this passage in the New Testament. The first quotation in the New Testament is this blessed statement. Let us see how clearly it is used by the Holy Spirit, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:21-23).

Beginning with the passage I have just mentioned, the first five quotations in the book of Matthew taken from the Old Testament refer to the birth of Christ and the facts which are connected with it. Surely this shows the importance which God gives to the advent of His Son into the world. His appearance marked the fulness of time, and it is to be noted that all history was to be changed and the law and the prophets fulfilled. The birth of the Lord Jesus is an occasion of vast and sweeping importance.

With marked definiteness Matthew and Luke teach the historical fact of the virgin birth of Jesus. These two are the ones which deal with His childhood and quite naturally should be

(Continued on page four)

Ten Facts As To Asia

(Continued from Page One)
be said that the only real bright spots in Asia are those where Christian missionaries have brought the light of the gospel to the glory of Christ?

The ten points should be kept in mind by Missionary "boards" and "societies," while portions of Asia are still open to the gospel (Acts 1:8).

The ten points should be kept in mind by all Christians who are heeding the injunction to pray for all men (I Tim. 2:1-4).



Harboring Grudges

(Continued from Page One)
they love each other." "God is love." "Love is of God." Hatred is of the old Devil. Why follow him instead of the God of love? God is not the God of grudges. It is only by being a true follower of God and walking in the light, as He is in the light, that the life is cleansed and made beautiful with a purity that is divine. No grudge can live in a divine atmosphere. "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." I John 1:7.



The Virgin Birth

(Continued from page three)
expected to touch upon His birth. It would be a strange thing indeed if these two evangelists failed to mention the peculiar nature of our Lord's birth and a very singular thing if other New Testament writers dealt with it as Matthew and Luke have done.

Of the thirty-nine books comprising the Old Testament, thirty-five of them make direct reference to the nativity narratives of the New Testament. This cannot be said of any other single historic event recorded in the New Testament save the redemptive work of Christ Jesus. New in a preponderating way controlling the thoughts of the speakers and guiding the feet of the seekers to the very side of the manger in Bethlehem. Our answer then to the first query is a positive affirmation. The virgin birth is definitely taught in the Bible.

The second question concerning the unique birth of our Lord is equally interesting.

Is It Essential?

We often hear people say, "Why make so much ado over this theme? Does it make any difference whether one believes it or not? Why should it be considered a test question as to one's orthodoxy? Is it not possible for a man to be a Christian and at the same time respect the virgin birth?"

The question might be approached for the moment from the negative side. Suppose Jesus were not born of a virgin? In this case He would be the illegitimate son of an unchaste mother and of a sinful father. Matthew declares how Mary "was found with child of the Holy Ghost" before she and Joseph came together (Matt. 1:18). If our Lord were not born of a virgin and had a natural father, then He was not divine and did not have a pre-existence. He was not a member of the Trinity. If Jesus had a hu-

man father, and He had a sinful nature comparable to that father, and being sinful, He would not be able to be the world's redeemer. Man cannot save man even as the Scriptures declare. "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God" (Ez. 14:14).

The truth of the virgin birth of the Saviour is essential to a full Gospel. Unless Jesus was born of the virgin Mary as is taught in the Bible, then the world stands hopeless at this hour for it does not have an adequate Saviour. The Christ who reached down and saved this poor sinner was none less than God of very God and it took such an One to satisfy the righteous demands of God in my behalf. Let us never minimize what the Holy Spirit has been pleased to magnify.

Another important question is,

Is It Mystical?

Without hesitation we answer that the virgin birth of our Lord was mystical. Nowhere are we told to understand the mysteries involved in this miracle, but we are to believe it and to rejoice in the fact of it and its far-reaching significance.

Why should any one object to our Lord's birth because he cannot understand all that is involved in it? There are hundreds of things in nature we cannot understand, yet we accept them as historic facts. Who can understand or explain the tides of the ocean? This and many other features in nature will ever remain locked in mystery, yet we do not turn from them because of this.

Matthew wrote, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise . . ." (Matt. 1:18), which statement, in itself, indicates a super-natural element is involved. Let us keep in mind that Christianity not only begins with a miracle, but it continues in one and ends in the mystical. We read further in this first Gospel how the angel said of Mary, ". . . for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 1:20). Anything with which the Spirit of God has to do is mystical and super-natural in character. In the case of our Lord's birth, the Holy Spirit imparted life and used the virgin to form the body "wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5). Jesus Christ was both Son of Man and Son of God, human and divine, both natures being perfectly blended within the confines of one body.

The fourth question for consideration is,

Is It Believable?

A man said to me one day, "I am a thinking man, therefore I cannot accept the story of the virgin birth of Christ." Since Jesus was a thinking man, I ask, "Did He believe it?" I do not recall any passage in the four Gospels where His words are recorded that He spoke directly of His virgin birth, and it is perfectly fitting that He should have remained silent concerning it. The revelation of it was left to His heavenly Father. Nevertheless, He constantly referred to His pre-incarnate existence and His heavenly origin. The teaching of His eternality was definitely predicated upon such an event as the virgin birth.

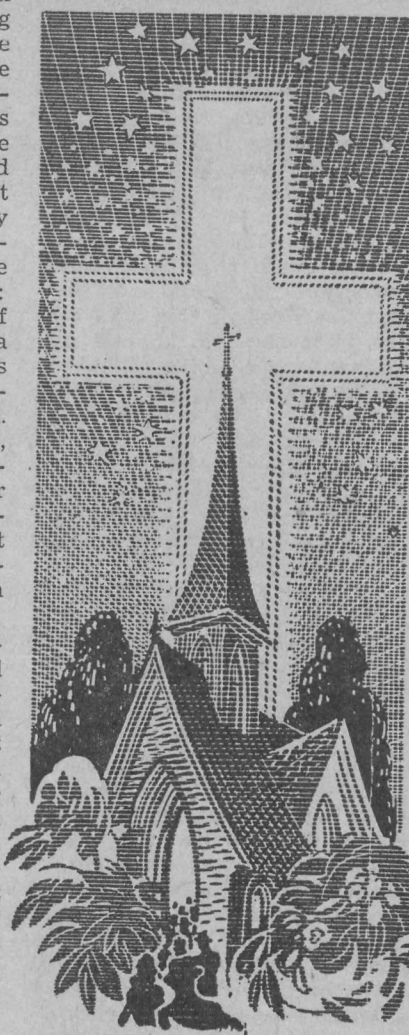
On one occasion the Saviour said, "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me . . ." (John 5:

37). No one can read the sixth chapter of John without being profoundly impressed with the oft-repeated statement that He was the true bread which cometh down from heaven. In this same chapter He stated, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John 6:57). A little further on we read again, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23). Such a statement as this is ridiculous without a knowledge of the supernatural birth of our Lord. While Jesus was a dutiful Son, He laid little stress on His human parentage. He was never disrespectful but ever was deeply conscious that He was sent from the presence of His heavenly Father and was on an heavenly mission.

Some have asked if Paul believed in the virgin birth, and if he did, why did he not mention it in his epistles? We would like to ask those who doubt Paul's knowledge of the virgin birth of the Lord to explain the meaning of Gal. 4:4 aside from an understanding of it. The passage reads, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." The great apostle to the Gentiles was fully conversant with the pre-incarnate existence of the Son of God and every great doctrine pertaining to salvation which he propounded in his epistles is predicated upon the truth of the virgin birth.

Writing to the Philippian Church, Paul spoke of the descent of Christ and among His seven steps downward he mentions, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:6-7). To reject the truth of the virgin birth of Jesus is to render this passage utterly unintelligible. Everywhere Paul made allowance for this grand truth though he did not mention it by name.

The early church fathers believed it and regarded it as an essential part of the faith of the church. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch early in the second century, in his epistles speaks emphatically of it. To the Ephesians he wrote, "Hidden from the prince of this world are the vir-



MAY EACH CHURCH LIFT HIGH THE CROSS DURING 1952!

ginity of Mary and her child bearing, and likewise also the death of our Lord—three mysteries of open proclamation, the which were wrought in the silence of God." In his letters to the Smyrneans, he wrote, "I am firmly persuaded as touching our Lord, that He is truly of the race of David according to the flesh, but Son of God by the divine will and power, truly born of a virgin and baptized by John." These are but a few of many which might be quoted. The truth of the virgin birth is believable because it fits in with the divine scheme of things pertaining to the person of our Lord.

Our final question is,

Is It Practical?

In these days people are thinking of the practical rather than the abstract. They desire to know what bearing a truth such as the virgin birth has upon daily living, and it is right that they should ask such a question. I know of no more practical truth revealed upon the sacred page than this. We can readily appreciate the practical nature of the truth of Christ's atonement and of His resurrection from the grave. And it is not difficult to understand the practical character of His second advent. Wherein is the practical everyday value of the virgin birth?

This is brought out as the story was told to Joseph, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23). Most of the false religions of this world have the underlying philosophy of making gods out of men, but in the truth of the incarnation we see how God

was made man to the end that we might come to know Him. Nothing could be more assuring to the heart of man than to know that "God is with us." He is not so far away that He cannot be found. In the person of His Son, He came to be with us.

As this story was unfolded to Mary it revealed that earth is to have a king some day. ". . . and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32). The world stands in desperate need of such a Ruler, and when He does come, its problems will be solved.



Following The Crowd

(Continued from Page One)
not taken into consideration. Future judgment is not considered. Hence "Ethnics" amount to nothing. Manifestly one group of human beings have no right to arbitrarily set the standard for other groups. As in etiquette—what right has Emily Post to tell me how to handle my knife and fork? None. I was born with as much right to eat peas with my knife as Emily was to tell me not to. But in the case of God it is different. He being my Maker and Sustainer, and the One before whom I must be judged, has the right to tell me what to do.

What God Says About Going With The Crowd

Read Exodus 23:2. "Thou shalt not run with a multitude to do that which is evil."

Remember, the whole race went off into evil before the flood. (Gen. 6:5-6). The conduct of the multitude was not right because numbers were involved, for God wiped the human race off the face of the earth.

Jesus warned against going through the wide gate, and down the broad road. (See Matt. 7:13).

We are warned that in the closing days of this age, people will go the same way that people went in the days of Noah. "So also shall it be in the day of the Son of Man." We are told that in the "last days, perilous times shall come." We cannot go the way of the multitude without going to ruin.

Examples Of People Following The Crowd Rather Than God

1. Drunkenness. Men and women in droves are frequenting the drinking places. Women drink because drinking has been popularized. Same is true of cigarette smoking.

2. Near Nudity. This characterizes many church people—and even some preachers and their wives.

3. Divorce. Formerly frowned upon—now popular until there are almost as many divorces as marriages. But God's law hasn't changed one bit.

4. Materialism. The masses give themselves over to the things of this world, with practically no thought of God and eternity. People readily fall into materialistic ways of thinking and doing. They join with the "men of this world who have their portion in this life."

But Almighty God must still be faced. Then, we shall be judged according to His commands and not according to the trend of our times.



Bruising The Devil

(Continued from page one)
him; when we do not we boost him.

Are you bruising or boosting the devil?