

Always there is something to be thankful for.

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The Baptist Examiner

Earnest Questions, Sound Answers Concerning Easter

By J. T. PARISH
Madisonville, Kentucky

Since childhood days several questions have plagued me in regard to Easter. For the past few years the questions have not been bothering me because I have discovered their answers. But many others have asked me these same questions. With the aid of the Bible and an encyclopedia I shall try to answer some of these questions.

in our calendar). Jesus was not crucified on the Day of the Passover but rather on the Eve of the Passover. That is why the thieves' legs were broken. Their death was hastened that they might not be still hanging on the Cross during the Passover. The Jewish day began at six in the evening. Jesus died at three o'clock. The thieves must have died shortly afterwards, because their legs were

CONCERNING TIME

The question most often asked is, "Why does Easter not come the same time each year?"

It stands to reason that it should come at the same time each year if it is a commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ.

Any good encyclopedia contains the answer to that question. The Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. decided that Easter should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox (March 21). Thus Easter can come as early as March 22 or as late as April 25. What this has to do with the Resurrection of Christ has never been explained to my satisfaction.

As any Sunday School child knows, Jesus was crucified at the time of the Passover. The Passover was an annual feast which was observed on the fourteenth day of the first month (which corresponds to the month of April

THE CLASP OF CONFIDENCE



November 24, 1966

broken and death would have resulted from suffocation shortly. Their legs were necessary in order to get enough leverage to breathe at all.

This plays havoc with the Good Friday tradition that is so popular. It seems very likely that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, lay in the grave three days and three nights as He has said, and arose late Saturday afternoon. When the women came to (Continued on page 5, column 2)

Paid Circulation In All States And In Many Foreign Countries
"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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Sinners In The Hands Of An Angry God

By JONATHAN EDWARDS
(Abridged)

There is nothing that keeps wicked people at any one moment out of hell but the mere pleasure of God. The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations:

There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men's hands cannot be strong when God rises up: the strongest have no power to resist Him, nor can any deliver out of His hands.

He is not only able to cast wicked people into hell but He can most easily do it.

They deserve to be cast into hell, so that divine justice never stands in the way; it makes no objection against God using His power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite

punishment of their sins.

They are already under sentence of condemnation to hell. They do not only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the Law of God stands against them, so that they are bound over already to hell.

They are now objects of that same anger and wrath of God which is expressed in the torments of hell, and the reason they do not go down to hell at each moment is not that God, in whose power they are, is not angry with them, as angry as He is with many of those miserable creatures now tormented in hell, who already feel and bear the fierceness of His wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers who are now on earth than He is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell.

So it is not because God is

not unmindful of their wickedness and does not resent it that He does not let loose His hands and cut them off. The wrath of God burns against them; their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared; the fire is made ready; the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet and held over them; and the pit has opened her mouth under them.

The devil stands ready to fall upon them and seize them as his own, at that moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. The devils watch them; they are ever by them, at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy, hungry lions that see their prey, and expect to have (Continued on page 7, column 3)

THE UGLY MESSIAH

ELDER JAMES WILLINGHAM, JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

IS NO PERSONAL BEAUTY THAT WE SHOULD DESIRE HIM.

One of the most startling and striking statements ever made by a written word concerning Jesus is the statement in Isaiah 53:2b "... he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." It is rather astounding and astonishing, startling and surprising, offensive and repulsive. "There is no beauty that we should desire him." Men today often portray Jesus

newly hatched ducks of a certain mother duck was a rather odd looking duck. Matter-of-fact he didn't even look like a duck. He was odd and peculiar, and soon the other ducks began to notice him. Because he was different, they made life miserable for him. It became so miserable that he finally swam away from them forever. After a period of time he came upon some beautiful birds floating gracefully upon a pond. He soon discovered that he was just like them. He was really a beautiful swan.

Now Christ, as far as this world is concerned, is an ugly Messiah. That is to say, the real Christ of the Bible is an ugly, repulsive Saviour, humanly speaking. Our text is indicative of this fact. Why is He ugly? How is He ugly? These are some of the questions this message will seek to answer.

I. AND FIRST OF ALL, THERE

was bruised for our iniquities." (Isa. 53:5).

1. There is no personal beauty physically about Christ. "He hath no form nor comeliness; ... there is no beauty that we should desire him." Christ was not beautiful after the flesh. He was, if anything, quite ugly. Why? I believe that it constituted part of his sufferings for our sins. His ugliness in the flesh is a picture of and a part of the price paid for our ugliness of soul. But even if He were good-looking at first, He is not good-looking now. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." (Isa. 52:14). If the nail prints were still in His hands, when Thomas saw them, surely the scars from the thorns must still be on His brow. Beautiful? No. Attractive? No. Handsome? No. Why? Because "He

was bruised for our iniquities." (Isa. 53:5).

2. There is no personal beauty mentally about Christ. In Philosophy some of the great thinkers were quite attractive in present-

THANK THE LORD

Our first offering for Rally Day — the first clasp of confidence — is a check for \$300.00 which comes to us from an Ohio Baptist Church.

The note attached said, "To share in the ministry of printing TBE."

May it please God to stir many more to do likewise.

ing their reasons, and in their reasoning they were compelling. Not so Christ. What was beautiful about his reasoning in Luke 4:18-29? When he had uttered

the words of Isaiah about the Spirit of the Lord being upon Him and said that this Scripture was fulfilled, they "Wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Gracious? Yes. But when he said that Elias was not sent but unto one widow and that Eliseus was instrumental in causing the healing of one leper and no other, the Bible says, "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." What was beautiful in the mental processes of Christ which reasoned like that? What was attractive about that? So many good pastors today are smooth and very sincere in their preaching and pastoral work. Their Arminian reasoning is hailed by the world. But their approach is not truly Christ-like.

Many today draw good crowds to the church, but would they dare do something like this: "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." (John 6:65, 66). What was mentally attractive about that?

Take the many times He trapped the Pharisees. What was attractive or beautiful about that? What pastor or Christian dares to be like Him?

3. He has no personal beauty socially. How utterly indifferent He seems to the institution of slavery. What did He do about the great multitudes of the poverty-stricken? What did He do about prohibition? Why didn't He heal every soul He found? If He were God, and I certainly (Continued on page 2, column 2)



Eld. James Willingham

handsome and attractive. In fact He is pictured as good looking. But the Word of God, the written Word of God, gives us a different conception: "He hath no form nor comeliness; ... there is no beauty that we should desire him." This reminds one of the story of the Ugly Duckling by Hans Christian Anderson. Among the

The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor John R. Gilpin

"PROVIDENCE"

PREACHED AT CALVARY'S 1966 CONFERENCE IN ASHLAND

(Read I Sam. 24:1-7)

"I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me." —Psa. 57:2.

This Psalm from which I have read my text was composed at a time of extreme danger. Saul had hunted David as a wild animal, through plains and mountains. He pursued him into the wilderness of En-ge-di. It was an obscure and desolate hole among the rocks, with only one outlet, and the wild goats lived there. David went into a cave, and lay down to rest. Presently Saul came in to rest too, with David there

within the cave. It was then that David rose up and cut off the skirt of Saul, as he lay asleep. Later, David wrote the words of my text, which says, "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me."

I am thankful that the God we serve, and the God we preach, is a God who performs all things for us. There isn't anything that you are doing today but that God is performing all of it in your behalf. I insist that you and I are no greater in the sight of God than the checkers upon a

checkerboard, or the men of chess upon a chess table. I insist that as an individual moves those pawns backwards and forwards upon a chess table, so God is standing behind us and is controlling, or as my text says, "performeth all things for me."

HE WATCHES OVER OUR BIRTH.

I was born on the exact day, in the exact place, and under the exact circumstances that God's providence predetermined in my behalf. Listen: (Continued on page 2, column 3)

RALLY DAY NOV. 24 . . . PLEASE PRAY, ATTEND, GIVE, WRITE!

The Baptist Examiner

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JOHN R. GILPIN Editor

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Bro. Jackson Says He Is Gratified Over Election Discussion

Brother D. N. Jackson, in the October issue of his paper, says that he is gratified with the discussion that we have been having on the doctrine of election.

We are certainly happy to know of his gratification, and if he only knew of the correspondence that we have had with preachers and laymen who are his friends, then I am sure that he would know that we, too, are more than gratified. To be perfectly truthful, we have had literally over 200 letters about the discussion from friends of Brother Jackson, and all of them are more than pleased with the position we have taken and the truth they have learned, with but one exception. Only one—a lady in Amarillo—has written defending him; and her letter showed that she had no more knowledge of the Word of God, and the doctrines of grace, than Brother Jackson himself.

I don't know how many people have written Brother Jackson expressing their appreciation. Evidently, some have, or else, he would not be gratified. I trust that he has had enough encouragement to keep him in the discussion for quite some time to come, and I am determined to teach the dear brother what he ought to have learned a long time ago about the Word of God.

Brother D. N. (Dangerous Neophyte) Jackson shows us that his nerves are getting on the ragged edge though for in his October issue, he says:

"Twice this editor was accused in Editor Gilpin's paper of being a 'rank Calvinist.'"

Of course, I never said this, and Brother Jackson knows that

I did not, it is just a slip of the tongue, or as Andrew H. Brown used to say, "That was a typewritergraphical error." What we said was that he was a rank Arminian. We have said it twice, and we will say it again in this paper: He is a rank Arminian. The fact that Brother Jackson gets mixed up enough to declare that I said he was a 'rank Calvinist' shows how badly this discussion is affecting him, and it will affect him much more before it is over.

He is going to find that Hobbs has not disappeared from the ring, and that Mason is not just barely hanging on to the ropes, and that Gilpin is not just throwing up smoke screens. These are Brother Jackson's accusations. He reminds me of a Negro going through a graveyard at midnight whistling to keep up his courage, but he is going to need more than this before this discussion comes to an end.

I don't want anybody to get a bad idea of Brother Jackson. He is one of the best men that ever lived. Somebody just got him mixed up doctrinally, and he got started wrong as a boy. Nobody has ever taken time to straighten him out. By the time we get through, this Neophyte will have learned more Bible and more about the doctrines of grace than he has ever known before. He is a fancy twister and turner, but some of these days he may twist right into the truth of God's Book, as to the great doctrines of grace, and he will know then that he has been a 'rank Arminian' all the time, and he will be apologizing for it.

I hope all of our readers will continue to pray for Brother Jackson. He has been one of the greatest defenders of the faith Baptists have ever known, and his preaching on the church has been marvelously sound. I don't want him to go to Heaven as a 'rank Arminian.' I want him to be a genuine five-point Calvinist when he gets there.



Ugly Messiah

(Continued from page one) believe that He was and is, He could have healed every one of them with or without faith. And He healed some without faith contrary to Arminian conceptions.

4. Christ had no personal beauty politically that we should desire Him. He paid His taxes just like every one else. He raised no furore over the ungodly ruler called Caesar. Instead His dictum was "Render unto Caesar, the things that are Caesar's." What would he have done about Communism? About Catholicism? And I mean in particular the hierarchy's actions in the political realm with regards to state aid. Of course He will one day judge all these things, but when He was here on this earth as a God-man to suffer for our sins, He had no political beauty that we should desire Him.

5. He has no personal beauty religiously. Who, like Christ, among our Baptist preachers and

(Continued on page 4, column 3)

Please, Help Send A Good Missionary To New Guinea

Brother Fred Roberts will be leaving for New Guinea very shortly now. It is just a matter of waiting for his visas and passports, and he will be flying from the West Coast to New Guinea. He is still visiting a few churches that he has not been able to reach previously, but very shortly he will have finished all the visiting that he intended, and he will then be waiting until all the papers are in order to leave.

Brother Roberts is going out under the auspices of the Macedonia Baptist Church of Chicago—the same church that sent out Brother Halliman. He and Brother Halliman will be working together.

I have a feeling that a lot of our churches and individuals should have a part in regard to the travel expenses of Bro. Roberts and wife. Macedonia Baptist Church and her noble pastor, Bro. Lloyd Wyrick, are most sacrificial in their giving. However, it is not right that they should bear all the expenses of Bro. Roberts.



Eld. Fred Roberts

Brother O. C. Harris (Bro. Roberts' former pastor) has expressed himself in the same manner. The following note speaks for itself:

"Dear Bro. Gilpin: Our church realizes the tremendous burden that Macedonia Baptist Church is carrying with the New Guinea mission fund. We are participating in the passage fund for Bro. Roberts. I know there would be others so inclined to help. Bro. Roberts will be leaving for the field as soon as the details are worked out in all areas. May our churches, as soon as possible, raise his passage fund. May the Lord so bless. Sincerely in Him, Missionary Baptist Church, O. C. Harris, Pastor.

I would, therefore, like to suggest that each church and Christian who is interested in missions immediately send an offering to the Macedonia Baptist Church, 2501 N. Maplewood, Chicago, Illinois, designated for this purpose.

This will be money well spent. We know Bro. Roberts, and we thank God for him. He will make an excellent worker with Bro. Halliman.



Providence

(Continued from page one) "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret."—Psa. 139:15.

God, I say, is watching over our birth.

We find that the birth of the Son of God came to pass as it did, because God predetermined, or God's providence ruled that it would be thus. We read in the

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PAGE TWO

WHEN GOOD FELLOWS GET TOGETHER



Elders John Dexter Greenleaf of Rutherford, New Jersey, E. G. Cook of Birmingham, Alabama, and Gene Hensley of Stockdale, Texas.

In between the sessions of our recent conference, these three brethren got together for a little fellowship, and frankly, this picture doesn't do them justice.

Brother Gene Hensley (right) is 5'16" tall — and big with it. Brother John Dexter Greenleaf (left) is almost as tall and a whole lot bigger. I am sure that he weighs something under 500 pounds, but don't ask me how

much under. The little fellow that they are squeezing in the middle is Brother E. G. Cook of Birmingham, Alabama. He is a little over 5 feet tall and weighs about 100 pounds.

Well, it was a good Bible Conference with lots of good preaching, plenty of food for the body, and good Christian fellowship, and three finer fellows than these never got together.

second chapter of Luke how that Caesar Augustus sent out a decree that all the world should be taxed. Caesar Augustus didn't know anything about the Bible. He did not care anything about God. He wasn't interested in seeing that the Word of God be fulfilled. However, long before, in the providence of God, God had seen to it that a great Scripture had been penned by a man of God saying that Jesus Christ was to be born in a certain city — the city of Bethlehem.

Listen: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." — Micah 5:2.

Beloved, it looked like that Scripture was going to be broken. It looked like that Scripture was not going to be fulfilled. It looked like here was one Scripture that was going to fail of coming to fulfillment, for at that time Joseph and Mary were living some fifty miles north of the city of Bethlehem. Yet at that time, the king sent out an edict saying that the world was going to be taxed, and that every man had to go to his home city to be taxed. This meant that Joseph had to saddle his donkey immediately and start with Mary, though she was big with child, and was soon to be delivered. He had to make that laborious journey some fifty miles south to the city of Bethlehem in order that they might be taxed.

I tell you, beloved, Caesar Augustus wasn't concerned one particle about the Bible, but if Caesar Augustus had not issued this edict, the Lord Jesus Christ would have been born fifty miles away from the city of Bethlehem, the Word of God would have been broken, and the Son of God would have been born into this world a sinner — a violator of the Word of God, from the day of His birth by coming into this world in a town where it was not prede-

termined that He should be born. However, God controls, and He performs all things in our behalf, and the birth of the Son of God came to pass in exact fulfillment of the prophecy of Micah, in the exact place where God had predetermined that He should be born.

That you might see how God watches over our birth, notice carefully when the Son of God was born into this world. If it had not been for the power of God, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself would have found His mother's womb to have become His burial place. Listen:

"But thou art he that took me out of the womb." — Psa. 22:9.

Had it not been for the power, the purposes, and the providence of God, Mary's womb would have become a casket for the Lord

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Jesus Christ. However, God, in His providence, took Him out of the womb, that He should be born in the city of Bethlehem.

I tell you, beloved friends, in the light of my text which says that He "performeth all things for me," I say first of all that He watches over our birth.

HE WATCHES OVER THE PLACE OF OUR BIRTH.

He even watches over the very place of our birth, for we read: "The lines are fallen unto me in PLEASANT PLACES; yea, I have a goodly heritage." — Psa. 16:6.

From our standpoint it looks like our lines have fallen to us. (Continued on page 3, column 1)



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Providence

(Continued from page two)
 in an accidental manner, but in actuality it is God who has thus planned the place of our birth. Notice again:

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath DETERMINED the times before appointed, and the BOUNDS of their habitation." — Acts 17:26.

Beloved, the very place that you live was determined by Almighty God, and even the fence around your house was determined by Almighty God before the foundation of the world. This text says that He "hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."

I ask you, what would your life be, if God had not watched over the place of your birth? Suppose you had been born of savage ancestry rather than here, what we speak of as a Christian America. Suppose you had been born of a pagan mother, an idolatrous mother, and as you sucked her milk into your body, you sucked her idolatry into your soul. I ask you, what is it that kept you from being born of a pagan, idolatrous mother? Just the thing — the eternal providence of Almighty God.

What was it that kept you from being born in Godless, atheistic Russia? What was it that kept you from having been born an Indian — a little papoose to be carried around on your mother's back? What was it that caused you not to be born a Catholic? The Catholics say if you give them a child until he is a few years of age you can never remove or eradicate or erase the teachings of Catholicism from him. What was it that caused you not to be born an Indian, or a Russian, or a Catholic? I'll tell you. It was the eternal God, who watched over not only our birth, but even the place of our birth.

III

HE WATCHES OVER US AS TO OUR PARENTS.

We read:
 "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" — Gen. 15:2.

Abraham didn't have a child. He didn't have one single individual that he could point to and say, "I am the sire of that child." He didn't have one single child that he could say, "This is my offspring." So he cried out to God and said, "Lord, what will you give me? The only one I have to leave my property to is this Eliezer of Damascus — this servant I picked up on my way into the land of Canaan, when I came through the city of Damascus." You know, beloved, God heard him, and God gave him a

In the case of childless Hannah (Sam. 1:10, 11), God gave her Samuel to be her son. Thus in

the case of Abraham and Hannah, God chose the child for the parent, and the parent for the child. As in the case of these two families, so in yours and mine, we have both the parents and the children that He wishes us to have. Perhaps neither your parents nor your children please you, yet you should be content, knowing that God performeth all things for us.

I say to you, God performs all things so far as our parents are concerned. Even Abraham's seed was given him because God performed all things in his behalf.

IV

HE WATCHES OVER US AS TO OUR CONVERSION.

I think of that little girl who had been taken captive in the land of Canaan. I see her as she became a servant in the house of Naaman, in Damascus. When they carried that child all the way from Palestine to Syria, why was it, of all the houses of Syria, that she became a servant in the home of Naaman? Weren't there a thousand houses where she might have gone? Weren't there a thousand places where she might have lived? Yes, there was, but there was only one that God had predetermined that she should be in, and the providence of God put her in the house of Naaman the Syrian.

Wasn't it providential that one day she said to her mistress, "Would God that your husband, my master, were back in Canaan because there is a man of God there that can heal him?"

Why did that little girl say that? Why did she think about the man of God? Why did she mention that? I'll tell you. An eternal God of providence, who picked her up and took her from her home, even though it robbed her of the joy of growing up with her own mother and father, placed her there in order that Naaman the Syrian be saved and be a child of God throughout a never-ending eternity.

I tell you, beloved, God watches over us so far as our conversion is concerned.

Notice again:

"And he must needs go through Samaria." — John 4:4.

I ask you, why must Jesus go through that certain section of the country? There is just one answer. There were some of His elect there. Ordinarily, if a Jew were going from the southern part of Palestine to the north, he would cross over the Jordan River, go up on the east side of the Jordan, and then re-cross the Jordan River back into Palestine. Why? In order to keep from going through Samaria, the section of Palestine that was inhabited by the half-breed Samaritans.

But, beloved, the Word of God says that one day Jesus must needs go through Samaria. I ask you, why was it when Jesus got to Jacob's well that there came a Samaritan woman out to that well to draw water at the same

time that the Son of God got there? He went through Samaria in order that He might bring out one of those Samaritan half-breeds to become a child of God.

I ask you, why was it that God sent this lady from Indiana who made a profession last night to this Bible Conference? Why was it that God picked her up almost by chance and brought her here when she was a member of an Arminian church, with an Arminian pastor? I'll tell you why. If God doesn't get a message to an individual through the pastor of one church, God will move that one miles away in order to get the message to that individual.

I say unto you, beloved, the providence of God controls our lives and performs all things in our behalf.

I look at the eunuch the Word of God tells us about in the 8th chapter of Acts. I see him as he had been to Jerusalem, not to collect taxes as I heard a preacher say a few days ago, but to worship, as the Word of God tells us. However, he hadn't found what he wanted.

Imagine a man going to the seat of religion, to the very place where Christianity was born, yet when he gets there, he doesn't find anything to satisfy him spiritually. Nobody there can answer his question as to the meaning of Isaiah 53. There isn't a person there that can tell him who it is that the prophet is talking about in Isaiah 53. As he is on his way back home he has the Word of God and he is read-

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ing that 53rd chapter of Isaiah. Notice how God was working at the same time. A Baptist preacher was holding a revival meeting miles away in Samaria. God said to that preacher who was having great success, with souls being saved and great crowds attending — God said to him, "Close the meeting tonight and go south."

I ask you, what would you think if God were to say to you right in the midst of a great revival meeting, "It is time to close?" Well, God told this Baptist preacher to close the meeting, and he went south as God directed him. When he got out there in the wilderness, here came a chariot with this Ethiopian eunuch riding in it. Beloved, I'll tell you why that eunuch was there. He didn't find the Lord Jesus Christ in the city of Jerusalem, but the eternal God who in His providence predetermined that the eunuch should be saved, and who performs all things for us, caused the preacher and sinner to meet out there in the wilderness, and the Word of God tells us that He was gloriously saved.

I like to think about Paul going to jail. I like to think about how he was put in prison. I like to see him with his back beaten. I like to see him when they put him in the jailhouse. I can hear Paul at the midnight hour when he said, "Silas, can you 'lift' an old hymn?" I don't know what they sang, but I have always thought it must have been the 46th Psalm, because that is the one that I would want to sing under similar circumstances. Anyhow, they started to sing, and the Word of God tells us what happened, by way of an earthquake that shook the jailhouse apart.

You know, I am such a firm believer in the providence of God that I believe when God laid down this world, rock on top of rock, dirt on top of dirt — I

believe that God made a fissure there in the rock, underneath the city of Philippi, and He fixed it so that it was slanting on an edge, and He timed it so that it would go off. At what time, beloved? At the midnight hour when the Apostle Paul was in jail, and when he and Silas were singing. The whole thing slipped, everybody's cell door was thrown open. The Word of God tells us that the jailer rushed in, thinking that his life would be in jeopardy the next day because his prisoners had escaped.

He started to kill himself, but Paul spoke and the man's life was saved. Why was it that this took place? I'll tell you. Paul was made a prisoner in order that his keeper might be made a spiritual free man. In the providence of God, He performeth all things in our behalf.

I like to think about Onesimus. What a marvelous story we have in the book of Philemon how that Onesimus had run away. Suppose previously his master had said, "I'd like for you to go over to Rome and hear Paul preach." Do you know what he would have said? "Well, if it is all the same to you, just give me a little more work and I'll stay here. I don't want to go hear that preacher." But, you know, one day he decided that he was going to leave — and where did he go? If you will study your geography, it will make this story much more interesting to you. He shouldn't have gone to Rome. He probably didn't go in a straight line, but he wandered about, until finally, humanly speaking, he happened to arrive at the city of Rome.

One day he walked down the street and when he saw a crowd gathering, he slipped up to see what was going on. He saw a man standing there speaking, with a chain on his arm. That interested him. He did not know that he was a preacher, but as Paul preached, and Onesimus listened, somehow the Word of God gripped his soul, and he was saved. The God that performs all things for us, that God caused Onesimus to run away from home, and that God sent him to Rome. It didn't just happen, but it all took place because of the eternal providence of Almighty God in directing his salvation.

V

HE WATCHES OVER US AS TO MATERIAL THINGS.

We read:
 "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." — Job 1:10.

Beloved, the Devil has a lot more sense than the average Arminian preacher, for the Devil said, "God has done all this. God has blessed Job. He has given him all of this, and He has put a hedge about him, about his house, about his property, about his chil-

dren, and about everything he has."

I tell you, beloved, I thank God for this Scripture. The same God that put a hedge around Job, can likewise put a hedge around us. He is performing even the material things in our behalf.

I wonder this morning how much money you have in your pocket. Beloved friends, whatever you have in your pocket, whatever you own, whatever you have, you have it because the God who works all things, the God that performs all things in our behalf, that God has predetermined it, and it is in the providence of God that you have what you have this morning.

Oh, doesn't that make you feel better when you reach down into your pocket and you haven't even got a penny there? I tell you, it is a mighty sweet pillow to lie down on at night when you have enemies howling at you on every side — it is a mighty sweet pillow to know that when the money has run out — when you haven't money to defend yourself any longer, that you have a God who performs all things in your behalf.

I speak from personal experience. I go back a few years to the time when I spent \$6300.00 in court, when I was tried nine times on a case that amounted to nothing. Even the worst murder case in the world would have been tried only two or three times and then thrown out of court. My enemies were so determined to get a conviction they tried me nine times. When I walked out of the courthouse, at the close of the last trial, a man stepped up to my side and said, "I am hungry, Brother Gilpin. Give me something to eat." I reached in my pocket and gave him fifty cents. Mrs. Gilpin said, "How much money have you left?" I had \$2.12 after having spent more than \$1000.00 that week and over \$6300.00 in all. But you know, beloved, I have a God who controlled that, and I am looking this morning into the face of God who performs all things in my behalf. Do you know what happened? The next day an unsaved business man called me to come see him. When I walked into his store, he handed me a fifty dollar bill. And, beloved, it wasn't one month until God gave me \$4200 for THE BAPTIST EXAMINER from people I didn't even know anything about.

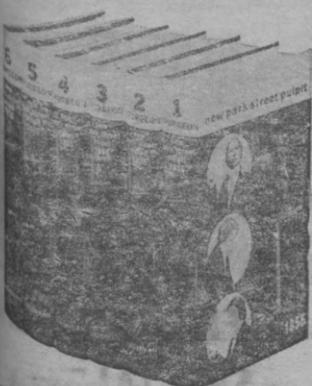
I want to tell you, there is a God dwelling in the skies who is controlling the providences of this world, and He performs all things for us even in regard to the material things of this life.

If you want further proof, look at those individuals in the Old Testament who needed food, and God gave them manna. Isn't it wonderful how God takes care of the material things? All they had to do was to walk out each morning and there was their breakfast waiting on the ground. If they wanted quail, all they had to do (Continued on page 5, column 3)

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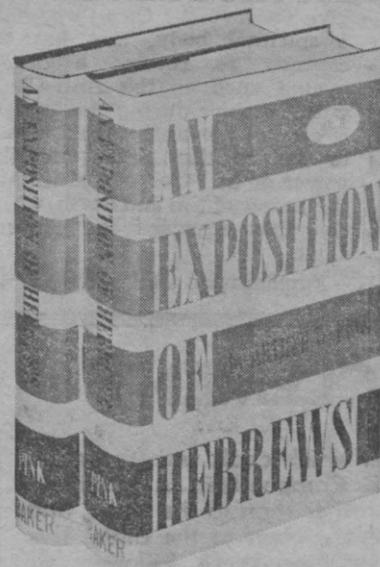
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PAGE THREE



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"Could the Anti-Christ be Judas Iscariot risen again?"

**JAMES
HOBBS**

Rt. 2 Box 182
McDermott, Ohio

RADIO SPEAKER
and MISSIONARY

Kings Addition
Baptist Church
South Shore, Ky.



I assume that the questioner means the man of sin when he says "the Anti-Christ." There are many Anti-Christ's as shown in I John 2:18-20; 4:3.

No. Judas Iscariot will not be the man of sin. There is no indication in the Scripture that God will raise him up again for this purpose. Sometimes we try to let our imagination run away from us and that is wrong.

The man of sin will be the Beast of Revelation. If you compare II Thess. 2:4-10 and Rev. 13:6-8 and Rev. 19:11-20 you will find similarities between the two. I do not know who he will be, but I do not believe that he will be some individual of the past raised again.

**E. G.
COOK**

701 Cambridge
Birmingham, Ala.

BIBLE TEACHER

Philadelphia
Baptist Church
Birmingham, Ala.



There seems to be some indications that Judas Iscariot may be the Anti-Christ. In Acts 1:25 we are told that he went to his own place. This might indicate that he has spent these nearly two thousand years in a specially-prepared place apart from the rest of the wicked dead. Then in Jno. 17:12 our Lord calls him the son of perdition, and in 2 Thes. 2:3 most translations make it clear that the man of sin (Anti-Christ) is the son of perdition. This could indicate that the Anti-Christ is the son of perdition that our Lord was talking about in Jno. 17:12.

Then there are those who go to Rev. 17:8 for the clincher on this subject. And they just might be right since this beast was, and is not, but is to be, and since he is to come up out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition. But, as of now I have difficulty in seeing this beast as the Anti-Christ. In Rev. 13 we see two beasts. The first one comes up out of the sea (the chaotic conditions in the world). The other one comes up out of the earth, or land (Palestine). As I see it the first beast is the last Gentile ruler over the Bible lands (the old Roman Empire). This seems to be the beast upon which the old whore (Catholic Church) sits. When this old whore has her harlot daughters (and apostate Baptists) securely under her wings, she will tell this political

ruler what he can do and what he cannot do, and he will do it, until Rev. 17:16-18. The second beast is the false prophet, or Anti-Christ as I see it.

So, I refuse to say that Judas Iscariot is to be the Anti-Christ because I could not prove it. And neither do I say that he is not to be the Anti-Christ for I could not prove that either. Both of them being called the son of perdition seems to point in that direction, but when we study the word perdition (APOLEIA) we find it used in so many other ways that we refrain from putting too much weight upon the use of it in Jno. 17:12 and in 2 Thes. 2:3. He may be the Anti-Christ, and again he may not. And there I leave it.

**AUSTIN
FIELDS**

610 High Street
Cool Grove, Ohio

PASTOR,

Arabia Baptist
Church
Arabia, Ohio



No. I find no Scriptural justification for such a view. The Scriptures tell us that the beast (Anti-Christ) will rise up out of the sea, not the grave. Read Rev. 13:1. Had this verse stated that this man was to come up out of Hell and the grave, I would then advocate that Judas Iscariot to be the Anti-Christ, but the Spirit said the sea, and we know that the sea represents the moving mass of humanity. Read Rev. 17:15.

The Scriptures reveal that the Anti-Christ is to be a pawn in the hand of Satan to carry out his evil designs, and in order for Judas to be the one that Satan works through, he must resurrect him from among the dead. I do not believe that Satan has the power of life and death, but rather Jesus Christ has this power. "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. 1:18.

In this verse the Lord declares that He has the authority over the departed souls as well as those in the grave. Therefore I cannot believe that Judas will be resurrected by Satan and pose as the Anti-Christ during tribulation period.

If Judas is to be resurrected and to become the Anti-Christ, where will he get the life of the flesh which is blood? Can Satan give this to him? Or will he have a spiritual body, that has the capacity to receive a deadly wound such as the Anti-Christ will receive during his reign? Brethren I cannot bring myself to believe that Satan has this power or that God will grant him the power of life and death, which God has reserved for Himself alone.

Furthermore Judas does not

answer the characteristics of the Anti-Christ for he is to be a political genius, and we know that Judas was not prominent in the realm of government, but rather in the realm of religion. I would rather think that Judas would be the false prophet than the Anti-Christ, but I do not believe that Judas will be either one of them.

The souls that are in hell will remain there until the judgment of the great white throne, for there is no escape from this place, because God made a gulf in it so deep and wide that no one who enters there will be able to leave, therefore Judas could not be resurrected and be the Anti-Christ. Now I realize that some will say, "but the Scriptures declare that he went to his own place." Acts 1:25. His own place was the place that God had prepared for him and all other unbelievers which the Scriptures call hell. This is the prison house for the soul until the time of judgment; it then will be emptied and all its prisoners stand before the judgment bar of God.

Others base their theory of Judas being the Anti-Christ, because he is called the son of perdition. Read John 1:12. Webster defines perdition as the place or condition of damnation — hell. When Christ called Judas the son of perdition, He then called him the son of damnation or hell. Judas was not the only one that Christ referred to as the son of hell. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." — Matt. 23:15.

Could not we say that those who had committed the unpardonable sin, were also the sons of perdition or hell, predestinated to ruin and damnation? To base our argument that Judas will be the Anti-Christ simply on the statement that he is called the son of perdition, is without Scriptural foundation for all who go to hell are sons of perdition.

I do not know who the Anti-Christ will be, for the Holy Spirit will not make this revelation until after the saints are raptured from the world.

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He who now letteth will let, until He be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed." — 2 Thess. 2:7, 8, but if Judas will be the Anti-Christ we already know who he is.

**ROY
MASON**

Radio Minister

Baptist
Preacher

Aripeka, Florida



Here is a question that can only give rise to conjecture, since there is no Scripture that definitely says that Judas will reappear on this earth in the form of Anti-Christ.

I remember to have read somewhere — I think it was in the writings of Arthur W. Pink — where it was argued elaborately that Anti-Christ will be Judas returned to this earth. The arguments made were far more plausible than one would suppose possible unless they have given the subject considerable thought. It was brought out that Jesus called

(Continued on page 8, column 3)

Ugly Messiah

(Continued from page two) church members, rises up a great while before dawn and departs to some solitary place to pray? Who prays to God all night before selecting officers and lead-

ers for the church? Who, like Christ, walks 60 miles to be immersed. Who has no place to lay his head? Who is willing to give up fat salaries and be laughed at and mocked and scorned and spit upon and crucified? What's beautiful about a religion like that?

II. THERE IS NO DOCTRINAL BEAUTY THAT WE SHOULD DESIRE CHRIST.

1. There is no beauty in His doctrine of man's depravity, of man's sinfulness.

For Christ there isn't any such person as a good man in God's sight. Listen: "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." (Mk. 10:18). Not only is there none good, but all are utterly helpless. Jesus astonished his disciples with his teaching on man's helplessness. "And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, who then can be saved. And Jesus looking upon them saith, with men it is impossible." (Mark 10:26, 27). Man, as Jesus pictures him, is not only helpless to save himself, but he is also helpless to resist the Devil. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return to my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." (Matt. 12:43-45). And Paul said that men were "taken captive by him (the Devil) at his (the Devil's) will." (II Tim. 2:26). Worse than that Jesus pictures unsaved men, not as children of God, but as children OF THE DEVIL. "Ye are of your FATHER THE DEVIL, AND THE LUSTS OF YOUR FATHER YE WILL DO." (John 8:44).

But the most repulsive picture that Jesus used to illustrate his doctrine of depravity is that of the grave. "Ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them." (Luke 11:44). He also called the Pharisees Serpents and Vipers. (Matt. 23:33). But listen: "Ye are LIKE UNTO WHITED SEPULCHRES, WHICH INDEED APPEAR BEAUTIFUL OUTWARD, BUT ARE WITHIN FULL OF DEAD MEN'S BONES, AND OF ALL UNCLEANNES." (Matt. 23:27). In the graves men's bodies decompose, their flesh rots, germs invade their remains as well as worms. Any diseases they have remain and are potentially dangerous to any living thing that disturbs their remains. A gruesome, ghoulish, ghastly picture, BUT THAT IS THE PICTURE WHICH JESUS USES TO DESCRIBE THE HEART OF UNREGENERATE, UNSAVED MAN AT HIS BEST. Is there any beauty in that doctrine? NO. THEREFORE FEW REALLY PREACH IT.

2. There is no beauty, no doctrinal beauty, in Christ's teaching on the New Birth. First, this teaching utterly negates any free will man could have, if he had any. What's more helpless? Who is the least consulted in the birth process? The baby. Now that is obviously and plainly and undeniably the greatest point of the comparison. Man's free will or ability has nothing to do with his spiritual birth. All it can do is respond like a piece of dead iron drawn by a magnet. All of the power is in the magnet. "The wind bloweth where it listeth (pleaseth) . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8). Now if that isn't plain enough, maybe this will be: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD." (Jno. 1:13). What is beautiful or attractive from the human standpoint, about Christ's doctrine of the New Birth?

3. There is no beauty in his doctrine of a CALLED OUT LOCAL ASSEMBLY WHICH HE PROMISED TO PERPETUATE UNTIL HIS RETURN AND INTO WHOSE HANDS HE COM-

MITTED THE ORDINANCES OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER. Why? Because it means that absolutely no one is a member of a true church unless he is a Baptist, and that of the right sort. What would the appointment and the calling and the control of missionaries by the local churches themselves, do to these foreign and home mission boards and societies? Christ said "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the Gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Where is there any mention of a convention or other ecclesiastical structure in that? It is a called out local legislative assembly. That is the word Jesus used, and in its very meaning it denies the idea of a universal, visible or invisible church. It certainly is visible, but it is never universal. Why, because the primary meaning of the word and its primary use in the New Testament is that of a called out local assembly. All other uses are secondary and FIGURATIVE. Matter-of-fact, Christ is using the word here in its figurative sense. He is actually using a figure of speech. No Baptist would argue that he did not use a figure of speech, when he said of the bread. "This is my body." Yet

THE CLASP OF CONFIDENCE



November 24, 1966

many say this verse on the church is literal and means a structure or body that is universal in nature. No wonder the latest issue of the Word and Way, state paper of the Missouri Baptist Convention, mentions the desires of five leaders of Baptist groups in the U. S. for closer cooperation . . . when those groups are supposed to vary greatly.

4. There is no beauty in His doctrine of His return. What's beautiful about the thought that the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man will hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face

(Continued on page 5, column 1)

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PAGE FOUR

Will You Give Us A Genuine Clasp Of Confidence November 24?

Ugly Messiah

Continued from page 4)
...that sitteth on the throne,
...from the wrath of the Lamb:
...the great day of his wrath is
...and who shall be able to
... (Rev. 6:17).

There is no beauty in Christ's
...of Hell. What's beautiful
...a place of punishment
...the worm dies not and the
...not quenched? Yet Jesus
...those very words to describe
...And if they are figurative,
...what is the reality that they
...trying to convey and how hor-
...must it be? Jesus described
...tain rich man in hell as
...in torments." (Luke 16:
...He quotes the man as say-
...I am tormented in this
... (Luke 16:24). He quotes
...him as saying, "Thou art
...ent." (Luke 16:25) Now
...well that Jesus pictured is a
...of literal fire, and of tor-
...and of pain, and of agony,
...of helplessness, and of hor-
...and of endlessness, and of
...and of utter hopelessness.
...it, it is the deepest, darkest
...ion of depression, despond-
...and despair that was ever
...ved.

...case is made out; there is
...beauty about Christ that his
...beings should desire him.
...the ugly messiah. But the
...duckling turned out to be a
...ful swan, and the Bible tells
...Christ will also turn out to
...beautiful Messiah: "When he
...come to be glorified in his
...and to be admired in all
...that believe in that day."
...ness. 1:10). But please ob-
...that the ugly duckling was
...the ducks, because he was
...duck. Now the Swans recog-
...the Ugly Duck for what he
...was — a SWAN. When a
...nature is changed in regen-
...— in the new birth —
...Christ becomes beautiful.

...Because the man is seeing
...with new eyes. He is wor-
...ing him in a new way — in
...beauty of holiness. Dear
...if you have never truly
...Christ, if you have never
...known by him, if you have
...ed in a Christ that you nor-
...hear preached today, then
...have been given in this mes-
...the Bible's own picture of
...Christ — A SAVIOUR
...AND REPULSIVE TO
...HUMAN NATURE, BUT
...IOUR WHO IS ABLE TO
...ANGE SUCH A NATURE
...MIGHTY AND IRRESIS-
...POWER FOR A NEW
...RE. A Saviour who can
...UR. Your will is chained,
...at willingly, to your old
...Something even now rises
...hin and says, "I do not
...his Saviour." Ah, Friend,
...oes it matter? This Saviour
...eak the chain, lose and
...the power of your old
...He can FREE YOU. If
...el any inkling, and desire
...be like a slave who feels
...here is hope of freedom
...he is in chains. Feeling
...pe, he moves a little to
...the light. His chains rattle.
...cannot free himself. So,
...you feel the chains of

your nature and the obstinacy of
your own will, yet in obedience
to that impulse, in obedience, in
response to that ineffably, effec-
tual, effective, efficient, efficac-
ious, and irresistible magnetic
drawing and attraction and com-
pulsion and impulsion, strain to-
ward the Saviour, toward Christ,
and you will find that HE IS
WILLING AND READY, YEA,
THAT HE DOTHS NOW MOVE
TOWARD YOU WITH ARMS
OUTSTRETCHED. True yes, for
he says, "All THAT THE
FATHER GIVETH ME SHALL
COME TO ME; AND HIM THAT
COMETH TO ME I WILL IN
NO WISE CAST OUT." (Jno.
6:37).

Easter

(Continued from page one)
the tomb as it began to dawn to-
ward the first day of the week,
He had already risen.

CONCERNING TRADITIONAL OBSERVANCE

"What do rabbits, chickens, and
eggs have to do with the resur-
rection?" According to Compton's
Encyclopedia, "Colored eggs and
rabbits have come from Pagan
antiquity as symbols of new
life." Rabbits, chickens, and eggs
have nothing to do with the resur-
rection. They are adopted from

THE CLASP OF CONFIDENCE



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the worship of pagans who used
them to symbolize new life and
the reproduction of life.

CONCERNING THE NAME

"Where did the name Easter
come from?"

It is not a Scriptural name. One
time the King James translators
mistranslate and use the name.
The proper word would be "Pass-
over" on that one occasion. Again
we will resort to the encyclopedia.
Quoting from Compton's "The
name Easter comes from the an-
cient Anglo-Saxon goddess of
spring, Eostre or Ostara, in whose
honor an annual Spring festival
was held. Some of our Easter cus-
toms have come from this and
other pre-Christian spring festi-
vals."

CONCERNING SPECIAL DAYS

"What is the meaning of the
various days connected with the
Easter observances in both Catho-
lic and Protestant churches?"

These days and seasons are
numerous. There is "Ash Wednes-
day," "Holy Thursday," "Good
Friday," "Passion Sunday," "Palm
Sunday," "Passion Week," and
others almost too numerous to
mention. There is the forty days
of "Lent" which is preceded by
the Carnival period. During this

period the Mardi Gras is held in
New Orleans and other southern
cities.

The Bible says something about
observing special days and sea-
sons. "But now, after that ye
have known God, or rather are
known of God, how turn ye again
to the weak and beggarly ele-
ments, whereunto ye desire again
to be in bondage? Ye observe
days, and months, and times, and
years. I am afraid of you, lest I
have bestowed upon you labour
in vain." (Gal. 4:9-11).

CONCLUSION

Isn't this making a mountain
out of a molehill? If we look at
the inherent dangers of such tra-
ditions, the molehill might be
larger than we at first suspect.

(1) Since rabbits and eggs have
nothing to do with Christ and
the Resurrection, they ought not
be connected with the Church in
any way. They are pagan in origin
and were used to honor the pagan
goddess, Eostre, the goddess of
Spring. It is a clear violation of
the first two of the Ten Com-
mandments.

(2) When we observe a special
day for the Resurrection Day of
Christ we minimize the import-
ance of the Resurrection rather
than emphasize it. Really every
Sunday should be observed as
Resurrection Day. The majority
of preaching we hear today leaves
out sermons on the Resurrection
until Easter. This ought not to be.
A casual glance at the preaching
of Peter and Paul in the Book
of Acts reveals that the Resurrec-
tion was the very heart of the
Gospel they preached. That ought
to be the heart of our preaching
also.

(3) Multitudes of people put
their faith in an outward observ-
ance of forms and days instead
of in Jesus Christ, the only Saviour.
This results in souls being
lost throughout eternity. This is a
good-size molehill!

These special days are man-
made. The first day of the week
is the "Lord's Day." On that day
we ought to go to the Lord's
House and commemorate His
Resurrection. That comes not
once but 52 times each year.

Providence

(Continued from page three)
was take a stick and knock one
down as it flew by. I tell you,
beloved, God controls the mate-
rial things of this world. He is
truly a God who performeth all
things in our behalf.

VI

HE WATCHES OVER US AS TO THE DANGERS OF OUR LIVES.

Beloved, there have been some
pretty bad days in your life and
mine, yet it is remarkable to
know that God watches over us,
and that He performs all things
in our behalf even so far as the
dangers of this life are concerned.
Listen:

"A man's heart deviseth his
way; but the LORD DIRECTETH
his steps."—Prov. 16:9.

"Jesus answered and said unto
him, What I do thou knowest not
now; but thou shalt know here-
after."—John 13:7.

There are lots of things that
God does that we don't know
now, but we'll know hereafter.
He performeth all things in my
behalf. He directeth my steps. He
watcheth over me, and there isn't
anything that comes to pass in
my life by way of the dangers
that beset my life, but that God
is watching over, and His provid-
ence controls.

Let me tell of an experience in
the Bible that means more to me
as the days pass by. That is the
story of Haman, as found in the
book of Esther. The book of Es-

ther doesn't have the name "God"
mentioned in any part of the
book. You'll never find God the
Father, God the Son, nor God the
Holy Spirit mentioned in any part
of the book, yet, though you don't
find the name of God in the book
of Esther, you find the hand of
God on every page.

I can see the queen disobey her
husband. Why should she? Only
because God was ruling and per-
forming all things. I see them
put on a beauty contest. We think
about these sex beauty contests
as being something new. Beloved,
they had one back there that
would put to shame all that we
have today. You read closely this
story in the book of Esther and
there isn't anything in this world

was a book kept of every one of
those provinces. I ask, with all
those books, why was it that
this man picked up this particu-
lar book — the book of the chron-
icles of Shushan? When the book
was brought, and was opened,
why did it happen, that it opened
to the very page that told how
Mordecai had saved the king's
life? Not one thing had been done
to reward Mordecai. Why did all
this happen? Beloved, it didn't
happen, for a God of providence
worked in every respect. Next day
I see Haman fall and Mordecai
elevated, and I see God overrule
even the sin on the part of the
king and Esther. I see everything
about it, all of which God per-
forms, so that it all glorifies God.

I think about those Philistines
when they had the ark. They
wanted to get rid of it. They said,
"We are not fully convinced that
this is of the Lord. We are going
to put it to a test." They got
some young heifers with their
first calves. Any farmer knows
there is nothing more foolish than
a cow with her first calf. They
said, "If these cows leave their
calves and take this ark back to
Palestine, we'll know it is of the
Lord." When they hooked those
cattle up, they left their calves.
They not only left their calves,
but the Word of God says that
they went lowing down the road,
and took the ark over to the land
of Canaan. You talk about God
or chance. You talk about Lord or
luck. I am talking about a God
of providence, who can direct
even a cow to leave her calf and
go as He directs.

I think about the Apostle Paul
when he was first arrested, as re-
corded in Acts 21. The Word of
God says that they were about to
beat Paul to death. It was a mir-
acle that Paul's life wasn't taken
by being beaten. They would have
beaten him to death except for
one thing — the Word of God
tells us that a soldier heard there
was an uproar and he ran in and
saved Paul's life. Why? A God of
providence performs all things in
our behalf.

I look again and I see Senna-
cherib, king of Assyria, and Rab-
shakeh, his general. I see them
drawn up against a city in Pales-
tine, ready to take it. They say,
"Don't you trust your prophet?
Don't you trust your king? We
have conquered every city we
(Continued on page 7, column 1)

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from the human point of view
that is more morally disgusting
than the manner in which Esther
became the wife of the king. Why
did God allow such a disgusting,
immoral performance to take
place, that she should become the
queen of the country? Beloved,
we know not why, but He per-
forms all things.

One night while Haman was at
home working, building a gallows
90 feet high on which to hang
Mordecai, the king couldn't sleep.
Finally, he called a servant and
asked him to go into the library
and bring a book that he might
read to him. Now there were 127
provinces in that land, and there

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THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

NOVEMBER 5, 1966

PAGE FIVE

A person falls into temptation because he is unwilling to stand up against it.

BRO. JACKSON, AND THE OTHER BRETHREN, WHO TRY TO DENY THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION, WILL SURELY HAVE A HARD, DIFFICULT TIME, DOING THEIR FANCY TWISTINGS AND TURNINGS THROUGH THIS MESSAGE ON . . .

Divine Foreknowledge

By ARTHUR W. PINK
(1886-1952)

Edited STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES; Author of THE GOSPEL OF JOHN; THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD; Commentaries on Genesis, Exodus, Hebrews; THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION; THE SATISFACTION OF CHRIST; THE LIFE OF DAVID; and many other books and booklets.

What controversies have been engendered by this subject in the past! But what truth of Holy Scripture is there which has not been made the occasion of theological and ecclesiastical battles? The deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His atoning death, His second advent; the believer's justification, sanctification, security; the church, its organization, officers, discipline; baptism, the Lord's Supper, and a score of other precious truths might be mentioned. Yet, the controversies which have been waged over them did not close the mouths of God's faithful servants; why, then, should we avoid the vexed question of God's Foreknowledge, because, forsooth, there are some who will charge us with fomenting strife? Let others contend if they will, our duty is to bear witness according to the light vouchsafed us.

Foreknowledge Misunderstood

There are two things concerning the Foreknowledge of God about which many are in ignorance: the meaning of the term, its Scriptural scope. Because this ignorance is so widespread, it is an easy matter for preachers and teachers to palm off perversions of this subject, even upon the people of God. There is only one safeguard against error, and that is to be established in the faith; and for that, there has to be prayerful and diligent study, and a receiving with meekness the engrafted Word of God. Only then are we fortified against the attacks of those who assail us.

There are those today who are misusing this very truth in order to discredit and deny the absolute sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners. Just as higher critics are repudiating the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures; evolutionists, the works of God in creation; so some pseudo Bible teachers are perverting His foreknowledge in order to set aside His unconditional election unto eternal life.

When the solemn and blessed subject of Divine foreordination is expounded when God's eternal choice of certain ones to be conformed to the image of His Son is set forth, the Enemy sends along some man to argue that election is based upon the foreknowledge of God, and this "fore-

knowledge" is interpreted to mean that God foresaw certain ones would be more pliable than others, that they would respond more readily to the strivings of the Spirit, and that



Arthur W. Pink

because God knew they would believe, He, accordingly predestinated them unto salvation. But such a statement is radically wrong. It repudiates the truth of total depravity, for it makes His decrees rest upon what He discovers in the creature. It completely turns things upside down, for in saying God foresaw certain sinners would believe in Christ, and that because of this, He predestinated them unto salvation, is the very reverse of the truth. Scripture affirms that God, in His high sovereignty, singled out certain ones to be recipients of His distinguishing favours (Acts 13:43), and therefore He determined to bestow upon them the gift of faith. False theology makes God's foreknowledge of our believing the cause of His election to salvation; whereas, God's election is the cause, and our believing in Christ is the effect.

Foreknowledge Defined

Ere proceeding further with our discussion of this much misunderstood theme, let us pause and define our terms. What is meant by "foreknowledge?" "To know beforehand" is the ready reply of many. But we must not jump at conclusions, nor must we turn to Webster's dictionary as the final court of appeal, for it is not a matter of the etymology of the term employed. What is needed is to find out how the word is used in Scripture. The Holy Spirit's usage of an expression always defines its meaning and scope. It is failure to apply this simple rule which is responsible for so much confusion and error. So many people assume they already know the signification of a certain word used in Scripture, and then they are too dilatory to test their assumptions by means of a concordance. Let us amplify

this point.

Take the word "flesh." Its meaning appears to be so obvious that many would regard it as a waste of time to look up its various connections in Scripture. It is synonymous with the physical body, and so no inquiry is made. But, in fact, "flesh" in Scripture frequently includes far more than what is corporeal; all that is embraced by the term can only be ascertained by a diligent comparison of every occurrence of it and by a study of each separate context.

Take the word "world." The average reader of the Bible imagines this word is the equivalent for the human race, and consequently, many passages where the term is found are wrongly interpreted.

Take also the word "immortality." Surely it requires no study! Obviously it has reference to the indestructibility of the soul. Ah, my reader, it is foolish and wrong to assume anything where the Word of God is concerned. If the reader will take the trouble to carefully examine each passage where "mortal" and "immortal" are found, it will be seen these words are never applied to the soul, but always to the body.

Now what has just been said on "flesh," the "world," "immortality," applies with equal force to the terms "know" and "foreknow." Instead of imagining that these words signify no more than a simple cognition, the different passages in which they occur require to be carefully weighed. The word "foreknowledge" is not found in the Old Testament. But "know" occurs there frequently. When that term is used in connection with God, it often signifies to regard with favor, denoting not mere cognition, but an affection for the object in view.

"I know thee by name" (Ex. 33:17).

"Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew thee" (Jer. 1:5).

"They have made princes and I knew it not" (Hos. 8:4).

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2).

In these passages "knew" signifies either loved or appointed.

In like manner, the word "know" is frequently used in the New Testament, in the same sense as in the Old Testament.

"Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23).

"I am the good shepherd and know My sheep and am known of Mine" (John 10:14).

"If any man love God the same is known of Him" (1 Cor. 8:3).

"The Lord knoweth them that are His" (II Tim. 2:19).

Foreknowledge of PERSONS

Now the word "foreknowledge" as it is used in the N. T. is less ambiguous than in this simple form "to know." If every passage in which it occurs is carefully studied, it will be discovered that it is a moot point whether it ever has reference to the

mere preception of events which are yet to take place. The fact is that "foreknowledge" is never used in Scripture in connection with events or actions; instead, it always has reference to persons. It is persons God is said to "foreknow," not the actions of those persons. In proof of this we shall now quote each passage where this expression is found.

The first occurrence is in Acts 2:23. There we read, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." If careful attention is paid to the wording of this verse it will be seen that the apostle was not there speaking of God's foreknowledge of the act, but of the crucified: "Him (Christ being delivered by," etc.

The second occurrence is in Rom. 8:29,30. "For whom He did foreknow. He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called," etc. Weigh well the pronoun that is used here. It is not what He did foreknow, but whom He did. It is not the surrendering of their wills nor the believing of their hearts, but the persons themselves, which is here in view.

"God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew" (Rom. 11:2). Once more the plain reference is to persons, and to persons only.

The last mention is in I Peter 1:2: "Elect according to the foreknow-

ledge and predestination. God purposed in Himself to elect a certain people, not because of anything good in them or from them, either actual or foreseen, but solely out of His own mere pleasure. As to why He chose the ones He did, we do not know, and can only say, "Even so, Father, for it seemed good in Thy sight." The plain truth of Rom. 8:29 is that God, before the foundation of the world, singled out certain sinners and appointed them unto salvation (II Thss. 2:13). This is clear from the concluding words of the verse: "Predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son," etc. God did not predestinate those whom He "foreknew were conformed," etc. On the contrary, those whom He "foreknew" (i.e., loved and elected) were predestinated "to be conformed." Their conformity to Christ is not the cause, but the effect of God's foreknowledge and predestination.

Foreseen Faith Not The Cause of Election

God did not elect any sinner because He foresaw that he would believe, for the simple but sufficient reason that no sinner ever does believe until God gives him faith; just as no man sees until God gives him sight. Sight is God's gift, and the consequence of my using His gift. So faith is God's gift. If it were true that God had elected certain ones to be saved because in due time they would believe, then that would make believing a meritorious act, and that event the saved sinner would have ground for "boasting," which Scripture emphatically denies: Eph. 2:9.

Surely God's Word is plain enough in teaching that believing is not a meritorious act. It affirms that Christians are a people "who have believed through grace" (Acts 18:27). Then, they have believed "through grace," there is absolutely nothing meritorious about "believing," and nothing meritorious, it could not be the ground or cause which moves God to choose them. No; God's choice proceeds not from anything in us, anything from us but solely from His own sovereign pleasure. Once more Rom. 11:5, we read of "a remnant according to the election of grace." There it is, plain enough; election is self is of grace, and grace is unmerited favor, something for which we have no claim upon God whatsoever.

It thus appears that it is highly important for us to have clear Scriptural views of the "foreknowledge" of God: Erroneous conceptions about it lead inevitably to thoughts most dishonouring to Him. The popular idea of Divine foreknowledge altogether inadequate. God not only knew the end from the beginning, but He planned, fixed, predestinated everything from the beginning, as cause stands to effect, so God's purpose is the ground of His science. If then the reader be a Christian, he is so because God chose him in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), and chose him because He foresaw you would believe, but chose simply because you pleased Him to choose; chose you notwithstanding your natural unbelief. This being so, all the glory of praise belongs alone to Him. You have no ground for taking any credit to yourself. You have believed "through grace" (Acts 18:27), that, because your very election was "of grace" (Rom. 11:5).

THE CLASP OF CONFIDENCE



November 24, 1966

edge of God the Father?" The previous verse tells us: the reference is to the "strangers scattered" i.e. the Diaspora, the Dispersion, the believing Jews. Thus, here too the reference is to the "strangers scattered" i.e. the diaspora, the Dispersion, the believing Jews. Thus, here too the reference is to persons, and not to their foreseen acts.

Now in view of these passages (and there are not more) what Scriptural ground is there for anyone saying that God "foreknew" the acts of certain ones, viz., their "repenting and believing," and that because of those acts He elected them unto salvation? The answer is, None whatever. Scripture never speaks of repentance and faith as being foreseen or foreknown by God. Truly, He did know from all eternity that certain ones would repent and believe, yet this is not what Scripture refers to as the object of God's "foreknowledge." The word uniformly refers to God's foreknowing persons: then let us "hold fast the form of sound words" (II Tim. 1:13).

Decree Precedes Foreknowledge

Another thing to which we desire to call particular attention is that the first two passages quoted above show plainly and teach implicitly that God's "foreknowledge" is not causative, that instead, something is His own sovereign decree. Christ was "delivered by the (1) determinate counsel and (2) "foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). His "counsel" or decree was the ground of His foreknowledge. So again in Rom. 8:29. That verse opens with the word "for," which tells us to look back to what immediately precedes. What, then, does the previous verse say? This, "all things work together for good to them . . . who are the called according to His purpose." Thus God's "foreknowledge" is based upon His "purpose" or decree (see Psalm 2:7).

God foreknows what will be because He has decreed what shall be. It is therefore a reversing of the order of Scripture, a putting of the cart before the horse, to affirm that God elects because He foreknows people. Truth is, He "foreknows" because He has elected. This removes the ground or cause of election from outside the creatures and places it in God's own

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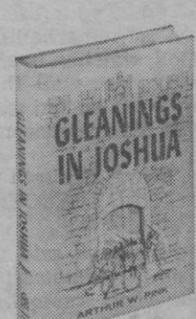
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Providence

(Continued from page five)
 ever gone up against, and are able to conquer you with a bit of difficulty, for your is no greater than the gods of all the nations. We are going to conquer you."
 beloved, I suspect it began to cut pretty much like they had, the Bible indicates that in the night's time an angel of the Lord smote 185,000 of them. Sennacherib's whole army was destroyed here. He hurriedly returned home to his country. When he gets there he says, "I'd better go to church. I can't go out to church without going to church," he went to the house of his God. When he got in there to worship two of his boys — his own came in, and smote him. The God that Sennacherib engaged, and the God that shakeh shook his finger in the face of, that God slew his king and slew him in the house of his god where he should have protection.

Beloved, we are serving a God that is big enough to take care of us. We are serving a God that is on His throne, and is big enough to look us in spite of everything that comes to pass.
 the days of Elisha, the king for Gehazi his servant, and "I want you to tell me all that your master Elisha. Tell me all the great things that he has done." Gehazi starts to enumerate those great things that his master Elisha had done. He tells of a woman who had a son who had died, that Elisha had brought back to health. In the meantime, that woman had left her country, and her property had been forfeited to the government. It is now government property. While Gehazi is relating these things to the king, this man comes in to beg the king to restore her property, and he says, "There she is." Don't tell me, beloved, that could happen except a God of omnipotent providence has it to pass!

CONCLUSION

Beloved, I don't know what problems you may have this morning, but I look back over my life I am amazed at the number of problems which I have had, and which I have solved.

Beloved, I think about the problems of my life. I think about the problems we have had as pastor. I think about the problems we have relative to THE BAPTIST EXAMINER. Friday is payday, and some paydays I just don't know how we can go any farther. Maybe some of you have thought about us, but you haven't thought deep enough to reach into your pocketbook to help us. My text says, "I will cry out to God most high; unto God performeth all things for me." There isn't a thing in my life that God isn't performing, just as God looked after that I have been talking about that same God is performing things for me. He is going to work your life exactly like He wants it,

for we read:

"Seeing his days are DETERMINED, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." —Job 14:5.

Beloved, when the time comes for you to die, you are going to die, and all the doctors, and all the nurses, and all the hospitals in this country aren't going to keep you alive.

Notice again: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." —Heb. 9:27.

God appointed my birth, He appointed the place where I live, He appointed my parents, He appointed my salvation, and He performs all things in my life in my behalf, and when I come down to die, that will be taken

care of too.

We read:

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." —Acts 15:18.

Now I thank God that, this is true, that God knows all things from the foundation of the world, and there isn't anything in this world that will ever take place in your life or mine that isn't according to the predetermined, foreordained plan of the God of eternal providence.

Angry God

(Continued from page one)
 it, but are, for the present kept back. If God should withdraw His hand by which they are restrained, they would, in one moment, fly upon their poor souls. The old serpent is gaping for them; hell opens its mouth wide to receive them. If God should permit, they would hastily be swallowed up and lost.

It is no security to wicked men for one moment that there are no visible hands of death at hand. It is no security to natural man that he is now in health and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by way of accident. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages shows that this is no evidence that a man is not on the brink of eternity, and that the next step will not be into hell.

another world. The unseen, unthought-of ways and means of persons going suddenly out of this world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and the places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noonday; the sharpest sight cannot discern them. God has so many different, unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell that there is nothing to make it appear that God Almighty had need to perform a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of His providence, to destroy any wicked man at any moment.

God has laid Himself under no obligations, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. So that thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God over the pit of hell. They have deserved the fiery pit and are already sentenced to it, and God is dreadfully provoked; His anger is as great toward them as to those who are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of His wrath in hell. They have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger; neither is God in the least, bound by any promise to hold them up for one moment.

The devil is waiting for them; hell is gaping for them; the flames gather and flash about (Continued on page 8, column 4)

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PICTURES

By J. MARCELLUS KIK

Exodus 20:4-6, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

In this second commandment we are forbidden to make any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. We are forbidden to bow down to them or to serve them. Now the question has been asked whether or not this commandment forbids the use of pictures of Christ. Naturally the command forbids the bowing down before such pictures and worshipping them. There can be no question of that.

But in many Protestant churches and in many evangelical churches pictures of Christ are used in teaching and in the homes of Christians pictures of Christ are hung up to remind them, I suppose, of Christ. Is that Scriptural? Does it meet with the approval of God? Is it sinful? Is it another way of breaking the second commandment?

No doubt, if I state that the use of pictures of Christ is unscriptural; that it does not meet with the approval of God; that is sinful; and that it is a breaking of a second commandment — I will be considered as a fanatic, a reactionary, and perhaps not quite normal. But before you have such unkind thoughts, please hear me out. If we are Christians, our service and worship will be regulated by the Word of God. The Bible is our infallible guide in faith and worship.

Now here is the surprising thing. Nowhere in the Bible, either in the Old Testament or New Testament, is there a physical description of Christ. Isn't that strange if God wanted to use the picture of Christ in spreading the Gospel or in worship, that we are not told whether Christ was tall or short, fair or dark, light hair, blue eyes or brown eyes?

With all their love for the Lord you would think that Peter or John would have given a description of Him unless, of course, they were forbidden. They wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Surely it is significant that neither they nor any other of the Scriptures gave a physical description of the Lord. Surely if God desired the use of pictures of Christ to further the cause of Christ He would have had a physical description of His Son in His Word. Why should we consider ourselves wiser than God and provide what He has deliberately left out?

The second amazing fact is that in the first four centuries of the history of the Church, no picture of Christ was used. These were the years when the Church made her most astonishing growth. These were the years in which the Christians conquered Pagan Rome. It is so frequently stated that we need pictures of Christ in order to teach the Gospel. The apostle Peter did not need pictures of Christ to instruct the young or bring the Gospel to adults. The apostle John did not need pictures of Christ to convert pagans and instruct the Church. The apostle Paul did not need pictures of Christ to convert Barbarians and Greeks. The early

church did not need pictures of Christ to conquer paganism. They accomplished it by preaching the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

When pictures of Christ were first introduced, they were opposed. The Church historian Eusebius who lived in the fourth century declared himself in the strongest manner against images of Christ in a letter to the Empress Constantia who asked him for such an image. Amongst other things Eusebius wrote: "Who can therefore counterfeit by dead and insensible colors, by vain shadowing painter's art, the bright and shining glistening of such His glory? whereas His holy disciples were not able to behold the same in the fountains; who, therefore, falling on their faces, acknowledged they were not able to behold such a sight."

Here Eusebius touches on one of the reasons why it is impossible to have a true picture of Christ. If you want a picture of Christ do you want it as He was upon earth or as He is now in heaven? If you want a picture of Him as He was upon earth, you have quite a problem. There was no picture of Him painted. The so-called pictures of Christ which are present today are from the imaginations of the artists. Not one of them is a true picture. So every time you say this or that is a picture of Christ, you are uttering a lie. You cannot teach truth by a lie. Christ is the Truth and surely He would not want the use of a false means to point to Him. Christ abhors lies and falsehoods.

How would you like it if someone who never saw you painted a picture and told everyone that it was a picture of you? Certainly you would resent it. And certainly Christ must resent all those counterfeit pictures of Him.

But supposing you wanted a picture of Christ as He is now. The disciples had such a vision of Him on the mount of transfiguration. We read in Matthew 17:2, "And his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." This was the glorified Christ. No artist could give us a picture of Christ which would show the glowing of Christ's face as the sun and His raiment as white as the light. They would only rob Christ of His glory by miserably falling short of a true painting of Christ in His present glory.

But someone will state that at least we can depict the humanity of Christ as He appeared upon earth. But who are we to separate His humanity from His divinity! The apostle John states in his Gospel, chapter 1:14, "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." Notice that the apostle states that even while Christ was in the flesh they beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. In other words, they beheld His divinity as well as His humanity. This one cannot paint. So one must behold His humanity as separate from His divinity. Then one falls into the ancient error of Nestorius. He stated that Christ consisted of two persons: one human and the other divine. There was, according to Nestorius, a separation between the human and the divine persons.

That was the ground on which the Council called by Constantine V condemned paintings of Christ. You see, this question of pictures of Christ was the subject of controversy throughout the eighth century. So Constantine called a council in 153 of three hundred and thirty bishops. Their conclusion was this: "If any person shall divide the human nature, united to the Person of God the Word; and, having it only in the imagination of his mind, shall therefore, attempt to paint the same in an Image; let him be holden as accursed. If any person shall divide Christ, being but one, into

two persons; placing on the one side the Son of God, and on the other side the son of Mary; neither doth confess the continual union that is made; and by that reason doth paint it an Image the son of Mary, as subsisting by himself; let him be accursed. If any person shall paint in an Image the human nature, being deified by the uniting thereof to God the Word; separating the same as it were from the Godhead assumed and deified; let him be holden as accursed."

This council points out the difficulty and indeed the impossibility of painting a portrait of Christ. Christ is more than man. He is God-man. It is impossible to depict by a painter's brush the almighty power of Christ; the infinite majesty of Christ; the infinite knowledge of Christ. You cannot localize by a painter's brush the everywhere presence of Christ. One can only succeed in degrading Christ. When one considers the deity of Christ it is no wonder that the apostles did not attempt a physical description of their Lord and Saviour.

There is always, also, the danger of worshipping the picture of Christ and attaching power to it. Even a Protestant publishing firm stated that there is power in a picture of Christ. It stated: "When one plants deeply and firmly in his mind the picture of Christ, it has a strong and powerful influence in his life." Thus instead of attributing this influence to Christ and the Holy Spirit they attribute it to the picture they are trying to sell. That is a breaking of the second commandment.

But can it not be help in the saving of souls, it is asked. But how? Looking at a picture of Christ hanging upon the cross tells me nothing. It does not tell me that He hung there for sin. It does not tell me that He hung there for my sin. It does not tell me that He is the Son of God. Only the Word of God does that. And it is the Word of God that has been given us to tell the story of salvation through the blood of Christ. It is not through the foolishness of pictures that sinners are converted but through the foolishness of preaching.

It is amazing how slowly unscriptural practices enter the Christian Church. We must at all times go back to the Scriptures. The Bible is our infallible guide. And if our practices and doctrines do not conform with the teachings of the Scriptures then we must eliminate them. The Bible instructs the Church not to make any likeness of Christ. The present day pictures of Christ are false and no one would make a serious claim that they resemble Christ upon earth. They separate His humanity from His deity. They do not at all give us a glimpse of His present glory. They are not condoned by the inspired apostles.

God has ordained the foolishness of preaching to evangelize the world. He has promised to attend the preaching of the Word with the power of the Holy Spirit. The so-called pictures of Christ are a hindrance and a temptation to idolatry. Let us cleanse the Temple of God from them.



The Forum

(Continued from page 4)

Judas a "devil" in John 6:70, which would fit in with the idea that Anti-Christ will be the very incarnation of Satan. Also Anti-Christ is spoken of as one "who was and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" (Rev. 17:8). This was made to coincide with the idea of Judas as having lived, and as ascending out of the bottomless pit to live again as Satan's masterpiece. Yet still other arguments were used which I have not the space to detail. However the sum total of arguments fell short of actual PROOF in my judgment. Speaking for myself, I do not believe that Judas will reappear in the form of Anti-Christ. Others will possibly disagree with me, but we shall never know one hundred per cent who

is right until God chooses to reveal more to us than we know now.



Angry God

(Continued from page seven)

them and would fain lay hold on them and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out, and they have no interest in any mediator; there are no means within reach which can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open, and you have nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God which holds you up.

The wrath of God is like great waters which are damned for the present; they increase more and more and rise higher and higher till an outlet is given. The longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty its course when once it is let loose. It is true that judgment against your evil work has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt, in the meantime, is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are continually rising and waxing more and more mighty.

There is nothing but the mere pleasure of God which holds the waters back, which are unwilling to be stopped and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw His hand from the floodgate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury and would come upon you with the omnipotent power. If your strength were a thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent and the arrow made ready on the string and justice points the arrow at your heart and strains the bow and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all which keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

The God who holds you over the pit of hell much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked; His wrath toward you burns like fire. He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire; He is of purer eyes than to bear you in His sight. You

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are ten thousand times as abominable in His eyes as a most hateful and venomous serpent in ours. You have offended Him infinitely more than a stubborn rebel did his prince. Yet it is nothing but His hand which holds you from falling into the fire every moment; it is ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell the last night after which you were suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep.

There is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning but that God's hand has held you up.

O sinner, consider the fearful danger you are in! It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath which you are held over in the hands of God whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against any of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder; and have no interest in any mediator, and nothing lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing that you can do to induce God to spare you one moment.

Note: Seek the Lord now. Read 3rd chapter of Romans, John and Ephesians. There is mercy now if you will turn to Christ. Read Acts 3:19, 4:12 and Acts 16.



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