

THE OPENED EYES AND THE WELL OF WATER

JOSEPH M. WILSON
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

"And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink"—Gen. 21:19.

This event occurs in the book of Genesis. The last thirty-nine chapters of Genesis tell the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Abraham is certainly one of the greatest of Bible characters, and great spiritual profit can be had from a prayerful study of his life. The story of Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael is an important part of the story of Abraham. Abraham sinned in the affair with Hagar, and Ishmael was the fruit of that sin.

Genesis twenty-one tells about the birth of Isaac. Then, there was a great feast at the weaning of Isaac. Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac at this feast. She demanded that Hagar and Ishmael be expelled from the dwellings of Abraham. Abraham was told by God to hearken to the voice of his wife in this matter, which he did. This retaining of Isaac in the household and the casting out of Ishmael is used by Paul in Galatians to illustrate

that those who seek salvation by the efforts of the flesh will be cast out — and those who are born of the promise of God by grace will be eternally in God's family.

After being expelled from Abraham's company, it seems that Hagar lost her way in the desert. Her water supply was exhausted. She placed Ishmael under a bush and went off a ways to wait for him to die, and lifted up her voice and wept before the Lord. God then spoke to her, making precious promises respecting Ishmael, and opened her eyes so that she saw a well of water. She took of this water and gave Ishmael to drink. I desire to use this touching incident as an illustration of God's work of saving grace.

1. Salvation and water.

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life"—John 4:13.

"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation"—Isa. 12:3.

"And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"—Rev.

22:17.

The comparison of water and salvation is a Biblical one. One thing suggested by this is that, as water is essential to physical life, so salvation is essential to spiritual life.

Oh, salvation is the greatest need of man. Let us never forget this. Let us be faithful in teaching the whole counsel of God. Let us zealously proclaim the great doctrines of God's Word. But let us never forget that man needs salvation more than he needs to know the doctrines as we believe them. Man is an eternal being. When God, at the moment of conception, places the soul in union with the physical life begotten by the parents — so that abortion is truly an act of murder — when God gives this life, it is an eternal life. Not the eternal life of salvation, but an eternal existence.

Each one born into this world must and will exist eternally somewhere. Exist knowingly and consciously, and feelingly. And there is a Heaven and there is a Hell. That's all there is, there isn't any more. A Heaven of unspeakable joy and delight and blessings forevermore. A Hell of indescribable torment, anguish and pain and suffering. And each individual must

exist eternally in Heaven or in Hell. Purgatory is a lie, invented by the Roman Catholics to enable them to steal from the bereaved. Annihilation is a lie of men. It is Heaven, or it is Hell. And the difference is in whether or not one has partaken of the water of life, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Salvation is your greatest need, because it makes the difference between where you spend eternity.

Then water brings great refreshment and joy. Oh, how good a drink of cool, clear water is on a hot, dry day. And, surely, salvation is compared to water because salvation brings the greatest possible joy and blessing one can ever know in this life. Others may seek in a thousand places for that which gives joy and delight. But those of us who are saved seek no more. We have found the greatest of all joys, that which satisfies forever, that which is sweeter as the days go by — we have found — or rather we have been found by the Lord. We know of whom the angels sang when they spoke of "great joy to all people." We know that of which Peter spoke when he spoke of "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Yes, oh yes, there is everlasting life and everlasting joy in the water

of life — in Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. There is a well of water.

Jesus Christ is the virgin-born Son of God. He came unto this world and lived a perfect life. He died on the cross according to the Scriptures. He was buried. He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. In the person and in this work of Jesus Christ, there is the gospel. It is essential to salvation. In saving sinners, the Holy Spirit uses this gospel as the seed that produces spiritual life. Oh, what a well is this! What a blessed well! How many thousands have drunk at this well and bear testimony to its life-giving, joy-producing power. The well is here. It is the only well from which can be drawn the waters of salvation. The existence and identity of this well should be preached to every creature. The well is free. It is free because it has been paid for with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot and without blemish.

This well is sufficient for any and for all who are thirsty. Oh, hear me well. No one need ever turn away from this well. There is no fence around it to keep thirsty (Continued on page 6, column 4)

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LOVE IS AS STRONG AS DEATH

By RAY HIATT
Hazard, Kentucky

(This message was originally preached on the MESSAGE OF GRACE television program, Channel 57, WKYH-TV, NBC, Hazard, Kentucky).

SONG OF SOLOMON 8:6

I undertake this discourse with heavy heart, for fear that what promises to be a most prodigious labor might prove to be fruitless. Men (even saved men) are sometimes rather more fond of their

forth simple truth for simple people; believing that in the simplicity of Christ is to be found the greater beauty.

There is much of Christ that we do not know. Human flesh is too frail a vessel to contain much of the being of God. The perfections of Christ are too much for our beings to apprehend. His attributes are unassailable and His glory shines with a lustre that our sin-scaled eyes cannot pierce. Within the person of Christ is to be found not only "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person," but the very highest expression of God's love to offending and fallen man.

God's love is a worthy theme to occupy any scholar regardless of his attainments. How do you express what it took Calvary for God to express? How do you delineate what the very Word holds forth as a mystery? It is this undertaking that I have felt compelled to approach. Only grace will bring me through to the end; if indeed there (Continued on page 2, column 1)



RAY HIATT

own opinions than they are of seeking what might be unpleasant truth. I tremble at the prospect of setting forth, at length, a glorious truth that has been trodden under foot by so many zealous adherents of Christ. I fear that zeal and love are not always found to be companions. Zeal is commendable, but only when undertaken in love.

It is not my purpose here to postulate on involved complexities of doctrine. I set forth no enigmas and I weave no enticing webs of theological complications. The truth I set forth is the essence of simplicity. Let him who scans this treatise do so with the eyes of a child and with the demeanor of a simple lamb of God. Any other attitude will be of no profit. I set

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I believe that the Baptist Examiner is still the greatest and best paper of its kind in the world and our prayers are with you and the church." Elder Charlie J. Buford, pastor, Mountain View Baptist Church, Scottsboro, Alabama.

By ELD. JULIUS D. WISHON
Meadowview, Virginia

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

Our message today is on repentance; we know this is not a popular subject to preach about, but our Lord in giving the last great commission unto His church, said we must preach repentance. The very first message Peter preached after our Lord ascended up to Heaven was on repentance. After He had given a discourse on how they had with wicked hands crucified our Lord, they were convicted by the Spirit of God and asked, what must we do? Peter said, and the rest of the apostles, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Let us have a look at the meaning of repentance. Webster tells us "repent" means, "to regret deeply anything said or done; to change one's ways because of contrition." We believe that pretty well gives us a definition of what it means to repent, as far as a natural definition is concerned. However, Paul gives us a better picture of what leads people to repent: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (II Cor. 7:10).

What Paul is teaching us is this:

God reveals unto us that we are guilty sinners, and he makes us so sorry for our sinful condition, that we will perhaps ask God to forgive us and we will look unto Jesus, and Jesus only as the one that can help us. We are born with that depraved nature that is enmity unto God and things that are godly. When God makes the sinner see himself in this helpless condition, then it is he has godly sorrow for it, and that leads then to repentance. If any one could be an authority on that, we believe Peter could. Let us have a look at some Scripture where our Lord talks directly to Peter:

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell



JULIUS D. WISHON

thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me" (Luke 22:31-34).

When the Lord told Peter this, Peter thought he was perfect in his faith, and that the Lord was mistaken. Listen unto him as he answers our Lord:

"And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." But our Lord knows more about us than we know about ourselves, and He never is mistaken in any thing.

"And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and (Continued on page 7, column 3)

The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Tom Sollosi

"SCRIPTURAL DEACONS"

We should be aware that if we want to be pleasing to the Lord, we must not be guilty of breaking the Scriptures. Jesus said in John 10:35 the Scripture cannot be broken. Every true church will teach the doctrines of our Lord. Let's notice the government of true churches in the Scripture. Acts 6:1-7: "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because

their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom ye may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the say-

ing pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests (Continued on page 2, column 2)

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Dear Bro. John, Jr.:

We continue to pray for you, the church and the on-going of God's paper, The Baptist Examiner. You are doing a fine job of keeping it going each week and for this we are truly grateful to our great Lord.

We are very happy about Brother Milburn Cockrell coming as new pastor of Calvary Baptist Church and believe he was truly God's choice and am praying for him daily.

With Christian love,

Gaylord and Thelma Haubert
Florida

Dear John:

Just a note to let you know we appreciate your part in carrying on the paper and we pray for all of you daily and ask your prayers for us.

Warmest regards,
Elmo Woodson
Arkansas

Love Is Strong As

(Continued from page one)

could be said to be an end to such an omnifarious theme. Love encompasses so much and pierces to such a depth, that I am afraid of performing a shallow task when I speak of it.

What, then, is this love that so occupies our thoughts at this point? When we refer to love do we mean the Hollywood variety that demonstrates itself in vulgarity and base-ness? Is it the romantic notions that we have been so acclimatized to by all the forces of mass communication? Is this love a physical entity or a spiritual force? As is sometimes the case, to ask the question is to answer it.

We concern ourselves now with spiritual realities. For be it known that the things of the Spirit of God have more of the quality of reality about them than many concrete propositions that men propound. Men will, of course, argue in the objective sense and deny all subjective intangibles. Man, the ever grumbling pragmatist, will argue against the abstract on the one side while he secretly covets the very subjective things he denies.

Love is a force. It is a force of such dimensions that it severed the Eternal Son from the Father's bosom. It is a force that Lucifer and his henchman Death are powerless before. It is a force that enabled the incarnate being of God to "lay down" His life. It is a force that will ever live and reign. As

long as the Godhead is extant, then love will be the crowning feature of it. God is love. God is not doctrine or strife. He is love. Doctrine is of value in its place. Strife we have aplenty because it is forced upon us by the ungodly and by our yet unglorified natures. Nevertheless, God is love. No where is it said that God is "religion," nor is God the author of "religion" as men view religion. He is the architect of eternal salvation and all its attendant properties.

Eternal salvation is the product of love. Election, predestination, foreknowledge, drawing, calling, Christ's suffering and resurrection are all the mere mechanics of our salvation. LOVE IS THE FORCE BEHIND IT. The mechanics a child can understand and these things are rudimentary food for babes. Love that can bring eternal redemption, however, is meat for the hungered soul. We will never grow stalwart and straight until we leave behind the elementary mechanics and immerse ourselves in the study of the person of Christ and His love for sinners. Let it not be thought that I depreciate the election of God. I merely relegate the doctrines of God's sovereignty and Christ's suffering to their rightful place. All things should be done in order and placed in order. Christ loves us. Therefore we were elected, predestinated, called, drawn, saved, sanctified and (marvelous truth) will be glorified in His presence. We deal here with cause and effect. Christ's love for His own being the cause; the operational mechanics that follow, the effect.

Some will perhaps find fault with my terminology. They like their doctrine dressed in more flattering terms. This is a grievous fault. We have need to paint things as they are and position them as it pleases God. God elected me, the Spirit drew me and Christ bought me by the sacrifice of Himself. All of this occurred with precise timing and with infallible accuracy. However, it happened BECAUSE Christ loved me. This was the causative force. All else is effect. At times, we grow so fond of our own priorities that we fail to rightly divide the Word.

Our text describes the force of love in relation to a force of sin. Death is no trifle nor is it to be considered lightly. Death is an overcoming force. Death pursues and vanquishes. Likewise does love. Death is an eternal proposition. So then is love. Death wears a certain face and is always known by his demeanor. Likewise so is love. Death is a constant; so is love. The only difference being that love is a quantitative force and this can overcome even death.

As there are similarities, there are also dissimilarities. Death is a supreme selfishness. It never gives but only takes. Conversely, love never takes but only gives. If a description of love could be compressed into one word, that one word would be "giving." For God so loved the world that He GAVE. (Continued on page 3, column 3)

"Scriptural Deacons"

(Continued from page one)

There are only two ordained offices set down in the Word of God; these are pastors and deacons. In our language deacon has a very interesting meaning. It means an assistant, a helper or a servant. It never means boss. Just as the pastors, elders or bishops (all the same office) are servants of the congregation, the Bible teaches that the deacons are also servants of the church. The very definition of the word proves that this is so. How could a deacon ever entertain the thought that it is his job to run the church. In the history of many churches down through the years, deacons have over-stepped their office by thinking they were supposed to be a boss in the church.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD "DEACON"

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QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACON

Now there are some very strict qualifications in God's Word for

Memorial Pulpit

By JOHN R. GILPIN

Our Beloved Pastor and Editor, Now in Glory



"GUIDE ME . . . AND AFTERWARDS"

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory."—Psa. 73:24.

To me, this is one of the most remarkable chapters in the Word of God. It is one of the most remarkable of all the Psalms. The majority of them are ascribed unto Moses or David, but quite a few in this particular section of the Bible are ascribed unto Asaph. In this 73rd Psalm Asaph looks upon life very much as David looked upon life as recorded in the 37th Psalm, for in the 37th Psalm, David was envious likewise of the wicked. He said he couldn't understand why God blest them, and why they were allowed to prosper in this world while the saints of God suffered and had trials, problems, and vexatious experiences.

Now Asaph takes just about the same attitude toward life in this 73rd Psalm, for Asaph admits that he was envious of the wicked. Here in the 17th verse he says:

"For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

I am sure there is not one of us but what sometime or other in life has had the same experience. Usually, when you pass through a difficulty, or when you are passing through some troublesome time in your experience, you contrast your present circumstances with those who are apparently unsaved and ungodly, and yet prosper seemingly and never have a care.

Asaph said that he couldn't understand this until he went into

the sanctuary of the Lord, for in the 17th verse he says:

"Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

Many times we hesitate to go into a sanctuary because we just don't feel like it from a physical or a mental standpoint, but nothing should ever keep us away from the sanctuary of the Lord. We are more likely to get relief there than any place in all the world. Asaph never understood this problem of life until he went into the sanctuary of the Lord, and there got relief.

I might say that he went into the sanctuary in a storm, but came out in a calm. He went in depressed, and he came out exuberant. He went into the sanctuary of the Lord defeated and cast down; he came out lifted up and encouraged.

Asaph realized when he came out of the sanctuary that he had been wrong in his assumption. He had taken for granted that all men who are unsaved were prospering, but he was wrong in this, for all the wicked do not prosper. If you will look around, you will learn, like Asaph, that while seemingly many times the wicked prosper, at the same time, the wicked have their problems just the same as you and I.

I think Job describes this most carefully when he says:

"Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" — Job 5:7.

It is true that as we look out on this life many people who are

seemingly unsaved have the "Midas Touch," and it looks like everything that these unsaved people do turns to gold. Yet that isn't right. Only when Asaph went into the house of the Lord was his mind cleared and his heart settled, and his soul relieved, so that he saw truly that God was caring for him day by day, whereas the wicked, as he said, in the 18th verse, had their feet set in slippery places.

This reminds me of the story of the rich man and Lazarus as recorded in Luke 16. It looked like Lazarus had nothing. It looked like the rich man had everything. He had a new suit of clothes for every day. His tables groaned beneath the weight of food that was placed upon them. The Word of God says that he was rich, and the Greek word that is used for "rich" is the word which means "exceedingly" or "abundantly rich." Here is Lazarus so poor that he can't even provide a napkin suitable for wiping away the corruption from the sores of his body. God had to provide dogs that were hungry enough to come around poor Lazarus, and with their tongues wipe away the corruption that oozed from the sores in his flesh.

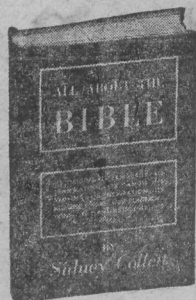
Yet, after a while the rich man died, and the poor man also died. When the rich man died, the Word of God says that he died, and was buried. That is all. There is nothing else to be said. If the reporter for one of the local papers were to write the story of the

(Continued on page 3, column 1)

Greek word which means honest. It is quite obvious that a man who makes his living in a questionable occupation is not qualified to be a deacon. According to the Bible he must be honest with his dealings in business. I remember a man in Springfield, Mo., who did his dead-level best to bring X-rated movies into the city. He was supposed to be a deacon of a supposed-to-be Baptist church. How can a man claim to make an honest living when he is responsible for showing filthy movies?

I Tim. 3:8: "not doubletongued . . ." Doubletongued men are not qualified to be deacons. Be honest now. You know as well as I that women aren't the only ones who carry tales. Only the judgment seat of Christ will reveal how much trouble has been caused in churches because of doubletongued men. I have even known preachers that have done their best to assassinate the character

(Continued on page 5, column 2)



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"Guide Me..."

(Continued from page two)

funeral, he would tell about the number of lodges that were in attendance, he would tell about the number of friends who had arrived from a distance to pay their respects, and the great amount of floral tributes that were there. He might even tell many of the things concerning the life of the individual that were noteworthy, but when God writes the story, he says that he died and was buried. That was all.

Yet, when it speaks about the death of Lazarus, who had dogs to accompany him in life, the Word of God says that the angels acted as pallbearers, and carried his soul into Abraham's bosom. All the troubles that he had had — all the sores that he had had — all the sickness that he had known and all the poverty that had been his to experience, are forgotten. The angelic pallbearers came down and lifted this man out of this world and wafted his soul away to the eternal mansions.

As I think of this in connection with the text I have read in this Psalm which describes the experience of Asaph, I am reminded that in the end the unsaved will take nothing but their sins into eternity, whereas a saved man will carry nothing but the grace of God.

Paul said as he wrote to young Timothy:

"SOME MEN'S SINS are open beforehand, GOING BEFORE TO JUDGMENT; and some men they follow after."—I Tim. 5:24.

A saved man has already sent his sins unto judgment. They have already been judged in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The penalty for them has been paid, and suffered for, in the person of the Son of God. Yet, when every unsaved person comes into eternity, he looks around behind him, and there, following him, is an army, an avalanche, a great horde of sins that are standing there clamoring that they shall be paid for throughout a never-ending eternity.

Whereas it is true that the unsaved man takes nothing but his sins into eternity, the godly man takes nothing but the grace of God. Thus it was in the experience of the rich man and Lazarus, and thus it was that Asaph came face to face with this same teaching. He realized he had been wrong, but he never realized it until he went into the sanctuary of God, and when he went into the sanctuary, and came out, he saw that the wicked were set in slippery places, and he saw that each saved person, who might have suffered for a while, had a wonderful counselor to guide him just now, with a most magnificent prospect afterwards.

As I talk to you about this wonderful lesson that Asaph learned, I trust that you and I might learn afresh, this Thanksgiving morning, some lessons therefrom.

I

WE ARE UNABLE TO GUIDE OURSELVES.

There isn't one of us who is able to direct his own life. The writer of the book of Proverbs says:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and LEAN NOT UNTO THINE OWN UNDERSTANDING. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil."—Prov. 3: 5-7.

Beloved, I say we are unable to guide our paths here in this world. How could Asaph guide himself? He admits in the Psalm that he was grieved, foolish, ignorant, and a beast before he went into the sanctuary. In view of that, how could he guide himself?

Frankly, how could we guide ourselves, anyhow? You and I are but strangers and pilgrims here in this world. We are living in a foreign land. This isn't our home. We are only here as sojourners for a little while. How could a man guide himself through a foreign land?

There are snares and pits; there are pitfalls and traps all about us. How can we guide our paths through the snares and around the pitfalls that are here within this world? No wonder James said:

"If any of you lack wisdom, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."—James 1:5.

We need to do much of that asking. We can't guide ourselves. You and I in this world are just the same as a man who is lost in an impenetrable jungle — in a jungle that is overgrown — so much overgrown with shrubbery, vines, and vegetation that it is impossible to see one's way ten feet ahead. We are journeying in just such a jungle spiritually. I say, beloved, it is impossible for man to guide himself.

When I think of this, I am reminded of Solomon on the day that he offered 10,000 sacrifices unto God. God looked down and said, "Solomon, I am pleased with what you have done. You can feel free to ask of me anything that your heart may desire."

I wonder what you would ask for if God gave you an invitation like that. One woman would say, "That hat I saw down town in the store window that is beyond my price, just give me that." Or you might say, "If I could have gold in one pocket and silver in

IS "THAT" IN THE BIBLE?



WHO ADVISED CHRISTIANS NOT TO MARRY NON-CHRISTIANS?

Answer: Paul, Second Corinthians 6:14-15:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

another, and folding money on my hip, I will just take that." Or it might be that you would say, "Lord, you know that enemy of mine. I would like to get my hands around his neck, and squeeze it until his Adam's apple chokes him with cider."

But Solomon didn't make such a request. He said, "Lord, I am just a child. You have set me over a great nation — the greatest nation in all the world, and I can't go in and out. I don't know how to go in and out before this people. Lord, above all else, above prosperity, above physical health, above protection from the enemies, I will say one thing — that you will guide me as a child that doesn't know how to go in and out before his people. I need your guidance."

Of course, you remember how God granted this, and all the things for which he did not ask, that he might have asked. But I want you to know that Solomon realized his inability. He knew how impossible it was for him to guide himself. Would to God that you, like Asaph — and Solomon, might realize your utter inability in ordering your steps, and in guiding yourself through this world.

II

GOD CAN GUIDE US.

Oh, blessed truth of all truths! While we are so unable to guide ourselves, God undertakes for all His children, and God guides us in this world. Listen:

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will GUIDE THEE with mine eyes."—Psa. 32:8.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: HE WILL BE OUR GUIDE even unto death."—Psa. 48:14.

"And the Lord shall GUIDE THEE CONTINUALLY, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."—Isa. 58:11.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, HE WILL GUIDE YOU into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come."—John 16:13.

Oh, how thankful we ought to be! Do you want to know truth? Do you want to know which way to turn? You are unable to guide yourself, but thanks be unto God, He guides us. Asaph learned this, and as he said, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel."

I go back to the Old Testament and I read the story of the cloud that hovered over the camp of Israel. As that cloud moved forward, they moved forward. When it stood still, they stood still. The Word of God says that if it stood still for a day, or two days, or a

year, they stood still, which would indicate in all probability, that during those forty years of wilderness wandering, they probably camped in one spot for as much as a year's time. If the cloud veered to the right, or if it veered to the left, or whichever way that the cloud went, Israel went. That cloud was their guide for forty years — from the time they left Egypt until they arrived in the land of Canaan.

I thank my God that you and I have the same experience in this world. We have God to guide us to go forward, to stand still, to go to the right, to go to the left. We have a God that guides us.

As I thought about this word "counsel," I turned through the Scriptures, and I said, "Lord, what kind of counsel is this that you offer us?"

I saw that He said that His counsel is wonderful.

Listen:
"This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is WONDERFUL IN COUNSEL, and excellent in working."—Isa. 28:29.

God's counsel is wonderful. Isn't it great to know that God can guide you, and He does guide you, and His counsel is so wonderful that you can't even describe it?

I noticed also that God's counsel is absolutely sovereign.

Listen:
"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth ACCORDING TO HIS WILL in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"—Dan. 4:35.

Thank God that His counsel is absolutely sovereign!

Some people say that they believe in predestination. Some of those individuals who say they believe in predestination, say they believe in a conditional predestination. But when I read Daniel 4:35, about God doing according to his will in the army of Heaven, I want to tell you that I believe in an absolute predestination. I am convinced the God that guided Asaph with His counsel, that this God guides us with a counsel that is absolutely sovereign, and that He Himself guides us with an absolute predestination.

I don't think anything ever takes God by surprise. He would not be God if it were to take Him by surprise. I don't think God is ever disappointed. A disappointed God

would be no God at all. I am thankful this morning that He guides us with a counsel that is absolutely sovereign.

I am thankful, too, that God leads us with a counsel that is enduring.

Listen:

"The counsel of the Lord STANDETH FOR EVER, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."—Psa. 33:11.

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, MY COUNSEL SHALL STAND, and I will do all my pleasure."—Isa. 46:10.

"And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But IF IT BE OF GOD YE CANNOT OVERTHROW IT; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."—Acts 5:38, 39.

I tell you, beloved, Gamaliel, an unsaved Jewish leader, knew more about the counsel of God than any Arminian that lives within this world today. He knew that you couldn't fight against the counsel of God, because God's counsel will stand.

I find that Paul says:

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise THE IMMUTABILITY OF HIS COUNSEL, confirmed it by an oath"—Heb. 6:17.

I come back and stand along side of Asaph and I say, "Asaph, I am so glad that you tell me that God will guide us with His counsel," and as I turn to the Word of God, I find that His counsel is wonderful, absolutely sovereign, enduring, and also determinate. Simon Peter said:

"Him, being delivered by the DETERMINATE COUNSEL and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"—Acts 2:23.

There wasn't one thing done to Jesus Christ that wasn't according to the determinate counsel of Almighty God.

Notice again:

"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel DETERMINED BEFORE to be done"—Acts 4:28.

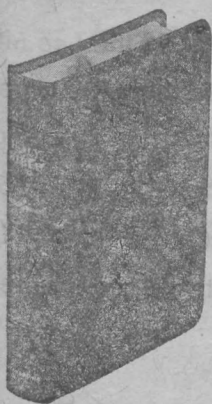
"KNOWN UNTO GOD ARE ALL HIS WORKS from the beginning of the world."—Acts 15: 18.

Beloved, we are serving a God who guides us with a determinate counsel.

Looking back across last year, since the time you and I met here (Continued on page 5, column 3)

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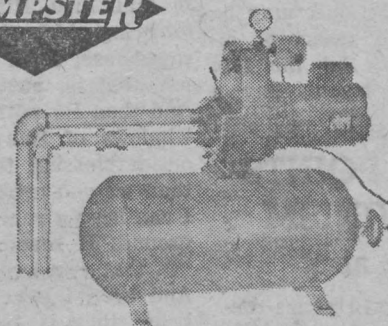
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"What is God's plan of church finances?"

PAUL
TIBER

PASTOR,
NEW TESTAMENT
BAPTIST CHURCH
9272 Euclid-Chardon
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Kirkland, Ohio



God's plan for Church finances has always been that His people tithe their income to their church. The Levitical Priesthood was supported that way. (Num. 18:24). Prior to the establishment of Israel, Melchisedek, the priest of the Most High God, received tithes from Abraham (Gen. 14:18-20). Since Jesus Christ is a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek (Heb. 6:20), tithes should be paid to Him through His storehouse (Mal. 3:10), which we believe is His Church today.

E. G.
COOK

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Birmingham, Ala.
BIBLE TEACHER
Philadelphia
Baptist Church
Birmingham, Ala.



When we consider this subject we are made to think of what Isaiah says in 53:6. He says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." In most cases, it seems to be a matter of how to get the most money. Very little thought is given to doing it God's way. You can see people selling lunches on the church yard in order to raise money for the church. You can see them taking old clothes they do no longer want to the church yard and putting on a sale in order to raise money for the church. And you can even see people going from door to door begging for money for their church, and I mean their church. But none of these ways, nor any of a host of other similar ways, are God's way.

I have preacher brethren who are very dear to me who seem to hate the very thoughts of tithing. And I want to assure them that when they differ with me, it just simply means that at least one of us is wrong. I am ready to admit that, no doubt, much of the tithing in our day is an abomination in the sight of Almighty God. And much of it just may be classed among the works of iniquity in Mt. 7:23. But the fact that some people try to buy a

ticket to Heavenly bliss with their tithe, does not alter God's ordained way of financing His church.

The more I study it the more I am made to wonder why some of the Lord's saints object to tithing. There is absolutely no other way, as I see it, that can be as fair to every one as tithing. The system of tithing makes it possible for the poor church member with a small income to do as much as the rich man. If John makes \$500.00 a month and Tom makes \$1,000.00, then when John pays his tithe of \$50.00, he has done as much in the eyes of the Lord as Tom has done when he pays his tithe of \$100.00. We must remember that God's ways are not our ways, Isa. 55:8. In II Cor. 16:2, Paul told the Corinthian saints to give as the Lord had prospered them. That can only mean that if one member made twice as much as another one, he was to give twice as much. That is just as simple as ABC. In Mk. 12:42-43, when our Lord saw the poor widow cast in her two mites, He said to His disciples that she had cast in more than all the rich men who had cast in their large amounts.

Some years ago, a dearly beloved Brother was telling me of his experience in the matter of tithing. He said that some years before that time, he found himself in a most terrible financial strain. His pay check just would not go round to all his creditors. He was having a hard time keeping his head above the water. He said that every time the situation seemed to be hopeless, his wife would say, "we ought to start tithing." He would say, "How can we tithe when we can't even meet all our bills." But, finally, in desperation, he said, "All right, we'll start tithing. We can't meet all our bills anyway, so that won't make it much worse." He said, "Bro. Cook, before I realized what was happening, or how it happened, we had our bills all under control. The stress and strain was all gone." He then went on to say, "I am afraid not to tithe." In Lev. 27:30, we are told that the tithe is the Lord's. And in Mal. 3:6, we learn that He does not change. So the tithe still belongs to Him. This dear Brother had learned the hard way that you cannot pay your own bills with the Lord's money and get by with it.

God is under obligation to no man until He sees fit to obligate Himself. He oftentimes puts Himself under obligation to His people. In Mal. 3:10, His people are told to bring ALL the tithe into the storehouse. Then He says, "Prove me, that is, put me to the test." And then He promises to open the windows of Heaven and pour us out a blessing that will be more than we can receive. It seems that I can hear a rumbling in the background. It sounds something like, "O, that was written to the Jews." And even I have sense enough to know that is true. I also know that Eph. 2:1 was written to the saints at Ephesus. But I am so thankful that it also applied to me. And how thankful I am that our dear Lord did not say I will pour out all those wonderful blessings on you provided you have a Roman nose. I know of a surety that the promise in Mal 3:10 applies to me, because I have put Him to the test as He told me to do, and He has passed that test with flying colors.

But let us remember, we must bring all the tithe to Him if we are

to put Him under obligation to us. If I say I'll tithe this part of my income, but that part I won't tithe it, then He is under no obligation to bless me. And since He has told me to bring all the tithe, I rebel against Him when I fail to do it, Ezek. 20:7-8. And on top of that, I lose those wonderful blessings. The poorer we are the more we need those blessings. So why not meet the condition and get them? There is just no way you can get God to break one of His promises.

So, as I see it, God's way of financing His church is by means of tithes and offerings from HIS people. And you cannot give Him an offering until you have first paid your tithe. That already belongs to him. I became convinced years ago that if my God and I together could not do more with nine tenths of my income than I could do with all of it by myself, then I needed a bigger God.

JAMES
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God's plan has never changed. He has had one plan for the financing of His work from the very beginning. That plan is through the tithe and offering. The tithe is 10 per cent of our fruit, whether it is money or produce. The offering is what we give over and above the tithe, this is to be willingly given. No person gives an offering until he has given the tithe.

Many Scriptures speak of the tithe and explain it. Leviticus 27:30-33 tells us that it is the tenth and that it is holy unto the Lord.

Numbers 18:26 and Nehemiah 10:37-38 tells us that the Levites took the tithe and offered a tenth of it in a special way during the era of the priesthood. Nehemiah 10:38-39 lets us know that the tithe was taken into the temple while II Chronicles 31:11-12 shows that it was brought into the house of the Lord faithfully.

I can almost hear some of you, as you read this, say, that all of those verses are pointing out that the tithe belongs to those under the law. I agree that those under the law were required to pay the tithe, but so were those before the Levitical law, and so are those after the Levitical law. Abraham paid tithe to Melchisedek (who was not the forerunner of the Levitical Priesthood). "... And he gave him tithes of all." (Genesis 14:20). Read Hebrews 5-7 to understand Melchisedek's role. "To whom (Melchisedek) also Abraham gave a tenth part of all..." (Hebrews 7:2). In this chapter we read that the Levites gave tithes to Melchisedek through Abraham. (See verses 4-10).

Christ rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for not being obedient in some things but told them they ought to pay their tithe (see Matt. 23:23 and Luke 11:42).

The method that God has, is that the tithe and offering are to be brought into the storehouse. The storehouse being whatever the place is, in time, that is called the house of the Lord. It was the tabernacle, then the temple, and now it is the church. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:10). "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the church of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Cor. 16:1-2).

God's servants have always been provided for out of those tithes and offerings. "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy

things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers of the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (I Cor. 9:13-14). Churches should support their pastor and help support missionaries. Paul was sent out by the church at Antioch (see Acts 13:1-4), but he was helped by several churches. "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service" (II Cor. 11:8).

ROY
MASON

RADIO MINISTER
BAPTIST PREACHER
Aripeka, Florida



I believe that God's plan involves the tithe and free-will offerings of His people. I don't think we should go back to the Old Testament and get under the Law, but tithing was taught and practiced by the Jewish people, under divine guidance, and I certainly don't believe that we, under grace, should give less than they did under the Law. Turn to I Cor. 9 and read the chapter. It is there made plain that churches should support their ministers. (Note v. 11-14).

In II Cor. 8, we have a further discussion of giving. In this case, it relates particularly to giving in relation to the poor, but there are some worth while things said about giving in general. First, we are to "first of all give ourselves unto the Lord" (v. 5). Then in chapter 9, verse 7, we are told to give freely and without grudging, "every man as he purposed in his heart." In another verse, we are told, "on the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as the Lord hath prospered him..." This would certainly suggest tithing.

I was pastor of a wonderful church for thirty years, and this was the plan we followed financially:

1. We met on Wednesday nights and laid our financial needs before (Continued on page 5, column 2)

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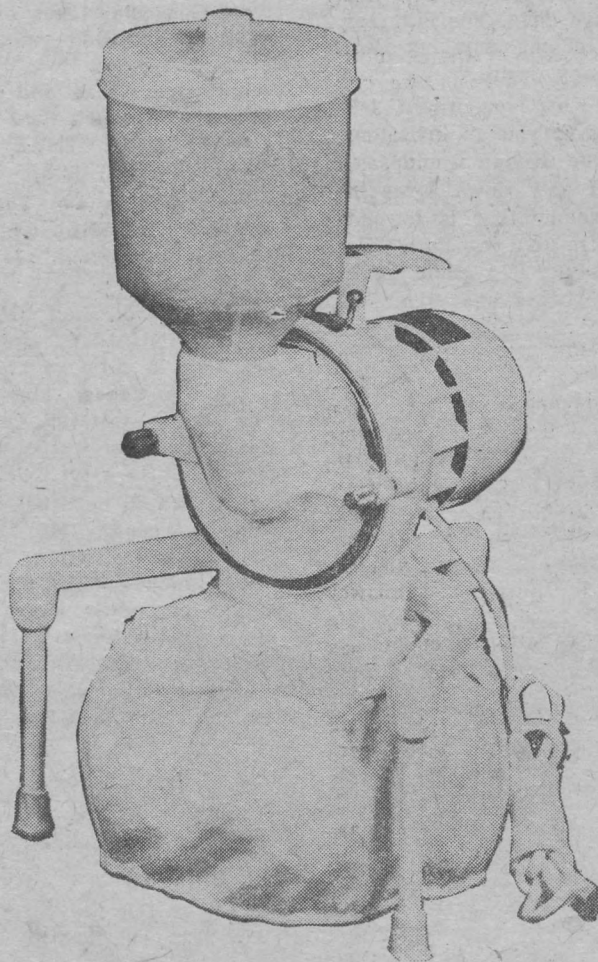
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"THINGS WORKING FOR GOOD"
"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God"—Rom. 8:28.

There are some things a believer is absolutely sure of. The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin — because He lives we also shall live — Jesus Christ is coming again. Our verse says we KNOW something else — "all things work together for good." It matters not how rough the sea is raging all around us. We can by faith see Jesus walking on the water saying, "It is I, be not afraid." We can be confident there are no "accidents," "mistakes" or "it just happened that way," with God. Each thing is working for good.

We have poisonous drugs when mixed in the right proportions become miracle cures. Many a wound has been cleansed and healing promoted by the red-hot poker. Because we believe that God rules all, and governs wisely, we can trust Him to bring good out of evil.

Many times it is hard for us to see wherein the good lies. Perhaps we can't see the forest for the trees. When there is strife in the Lord's church, it is hard to understand. Perhaps this is the way the Lord has of purging His church — cutting away that which is harmful. Every tree must be pruned in order to bear better fruit. Let us not despair, but wait on the Lord.

Our family seems to be against us. Our friends are no longer friendly. Is this good, also? Yea, this too is working together for our good. Perhaps we are depending too much on family and friends and too little on the Lord Jesus. He would separate them from us that we might turn to Him.

Our children are a source of worry and we find disciplining so

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difficult. Can this possibly be good? Perhaps the Father wants to remind us that we are His children, standing in a place of disobedience and in danger of discipline. Often He uses physical situations to teach us spiritual truths.

Whatever our problem, we can be sure it comes from the Father and is for our good. May it please the Lord to grant us grace to look for the good in everything and not despair — looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.

The Forum

(Continued from page four)

the Lord, asking him to provide.
2. We agreed to refrain from going in debt, and to live up to the command, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another."

3. We cut out taking financial pledges.

4. We taught the Bible concerning giving, then passed collection plates twice on Sunday.

5. We had a careful report of church finances each month.

We never had the slightest difficulty in financing our church under this procedure. We had no debts. We financed broadcasts over 15 stations. And at the end of my 30 years, we had a surplus of around 50 thousand dollars.

"Scriptural Deacons"

(Continued from Page Two)

of their fellow brethren. A man who is carefully controlling his tongue would indeed make a fine deacon provided that he meets the other qualifications.

I Tim. 3:8: "not given to much wine . . ." Why should this verse cause any controversy? Some of the Funny-mentalists are teaching that the wine mentioned in the Bible is not fermented wine. Isn't that an astounding discovery! For 1800 years God's churches had been using wine in the Lord's Supper and no one even questioned the fact that the wine in the Bible was fermented wine. Lo and behold, the Methodists in the 18th century started the Temperance Movement and, suddenly, it became wrong to use the unleavened juice of the grape (wine) in the Lord's Supper. So, now, many Baptist churches use leaven in the Lord's Supper (grape juice), and some churches even use crackers. Many would tell us wine means grape juice. If we keep the interpretation of the Scripture-hating Funny-mentalists, we must say that the Scripture teaches that a deacon is not to drink much grape juice. This is a most foolish conclusion.

When a deacon is ordained to office, he does not take a Nazarite vow. He takes a vow that he will be a servant of the church. What does grape juice have to do with a man being a servant of the church? The verse says what it means and means what it says. That means he is not to use wine in excess, Paul says in Eph. 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." Someone might say, "Preacher, you are sanctioning a person to drink." If you accuse me of that, I must answer yes and no. I am saying that the Bible teaches that a person can use wine for medicinal purposes: "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake" (I Tim. 5:23). I am saying that the Bible teaches that churches are to use wine in the Lord's Supper. Luke 22:20: "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

We know that our Lord used the fruit of the vine. Now was it fermented wine or grape juice? All that one needs to do to determine what He used is to determine what was used at the Passover. Lev. 23:13: "And the meat offering thereof shall be two-tenths deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine,

The trouble with little sins is they don't stay little.

the fourth part of an hin." This word "wine" comes from a Hebrew word which means fermented wine. Did Jesus ever violate the Law of Moses? Then, what did He use when He instituted the Lord's Supper? He used fermented wine.

The only symbol that could picture the perfection of Jesus Christ is the fruit of the vine without leaven. Since all grape juice contains leaven, grape juice would be a most wicked picture of our Lord. Sprinkling is a perversion of the commandment of Christ, for He said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, immersing them . . ." Matt. 28:19. Just as sprinkling is a perversion of the Word of God, grape juice is a wicked perversion. We should not be concerned with the way non-Baptists will ridicule (Continued on page 6, column 1)

"Guide Me . . ."

(Continued from page three)

one year ago, what has happened to your life? I ask you just to reflect. What has taken place so far as your life is concerned? It makes no matter what — good or bad, I thank God that it is according to the determinate counsel of Almighty God. No wonder Asaph said, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel."

AFTERWARD, GOD RECEIVES US INTO GLORY.

Asaph said, "And afterward receive me to glory." In other words, he is saying, "When this world is done — when the doubts and fears are over — when the battles are fought, when life comes to a close, blessed afterward, thou wilt receive me to glory."

Isn't that word "afterward" a precious word? Right now, I need guidance, for I can't guide myself.

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self. The Lord has to guide me with His counsel. I am so weak that I cannot direct my steps. He does all that for me here, and now, in this world — and afterward. He is going to receive me to Glory."

Oh, the blessedness of the endless ages of eternity! I have no fear of shipwreck in the river of death. I have no fear of loss in the great judgment day fire. I have no doubt concerning the problems of this world as to how they shall be settled. In view of the fact that afterward He is going to receive us unto Glory. I think then, cheerfully we ought to put up with the present when we foresee the future. Why should the present bother us? Worry us? Control us? or cause us agony? I want to look to the afterward, the blessed afterward. We have a matchless terminus out yonder, for we are going to be received into Glory.

I wouldn't be a bit surprised but that when Stephen said, "I see the Son of God standing up," that the Lord Jesus Christ stood up for one purpose—to take hold of Stephen and receive this martyr into Glory.

I am not going to knock on Heaven's doors, and beg to get in, but rather, the text tells us that the doors are going to swing wide open, and that we will be received by Him into Glory. What a glorious future then awaits the child of God — to be received into Glory!

Forty years ago, a friend was in England. He left Birmingham about 9 o'clock one morning and traveled through Northern England. One of those fogs for which

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England is famed, settled down over the land, and he couldn't see anything of the beauty of Northern England. Occasionally, they could see 40 to 80 feet, but none of the beauty of Northern England was observable to them because of the fog. That afternoon, a guide came through the car, and said they were going to pass through a tunnel, and when they came out of that tunnel, they would be in Scotland. My friend said that they were in that tunnel six minutes — that when they entered the tunnel everything was dark, dreary, dismal, and gloomy. They were six minutes in the dark, but when they came out on the other side, the sky was clear, the sun was shining, and the raindrops glistened like jewels on the heather.

To me, that is the picture of what is in the future for the child of God. As he comes down to the end of the road with the fog about him — the clouds settle about him — old age, the cruelest experience of life has come upon him. As he comes to the end of the way, it seems that there is so little for which to thank the Lord, yet He knows He has guided him with His eye, and afterward, He is going to receive him into Glory.

Isn't it going to be wonderful then? A new body — a body that can't ache, a body that can't feel pain, a body that can't know what the trials of life are. Isn't it going to be wonderful to have a body like that? Paul said:

"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."—Rom. 8:29.

Thank God, we are going to be made like Jesus Christ. We are going to have a body just like Jesus Christ. We are going to be transformed to the image of His Son.

Notice again:
"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall CHANGE OUR VILE BODY, that it may be FASHIONED LIKE unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."—Phil. 3:20,21.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, he said:
"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also BEAR THE IMAGE of the heavenly."—I Cor. 15:49.

John said:
"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet ap-

pear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; for we shall see him as he is." — I John 3:2.

I tell you, beloved, you and I as God's children, have a glorious future. The endless ages of eternity will come someday, and all the trials of this life will seem nothing when we come to the end of the way.

I think how wonderful it will be in that day to be forever at home, and at rest with the Lord. As David said:

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever?" — Psa. 23:6.

Right now, goodness and mercy follow us. After while, I am going to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

CONCLUSION

I wonder about you. Did you ever come to that place, like Asaph and David, that you were envious of the seeming prosperity of the wicked? Just remember this: Their feet are set in slippery places. Just remember this: God is guiding us now, and He is going to continue to guide us with His counsel, and then He is going to take us into everlasting Glory. It is no wonder that the Psalmist Asaph closed this psalm by saying:

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." —Psa. 73:25.

Sometimes we get discouraged, cast down, blue, morose, and we need to remember, like Asaph, that God guides us and afterward receives us into Glory.

I often think how over in Scotland one night the light went out just as the preacher closed his sermon, and announced the hymn, and one of the brethren spoke out and said, "Pastor, I don't think we can manage that hymn in the dark, but I think we can sing 'The Lord is My Shepherd.'" —

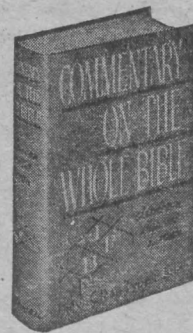
Can we do as well? In the dark, when we are compassed about with fear, and when everything seems dreary, I wonder if we can do as well. Can we say that "The Lord is my Shepherd," in the dark?

May it please God this Thanksgiving, in 1968, that you and I may take this text of Scripture, marvelous as it is in its implications and applications — may we take it, and make it a part of our lives, to the extent that, like Asaph, we can say, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

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MAY 24, 1975
PAGE FIVE

"Scriptural Deacons"

(Continued from page five)
us for carrying out the commands of our Lord.

If a deacon uses wine for the above reasons, then he would be fulfilling I Tim. 3:8: "not given to much wine." I am in no way advocating social drinking. I believe it is a shame and disgrace for any church member to be guilty of social drinking. A deacon who socially drinks casts a stumbling stone in front of a weaker brother. Paul says, "if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh . . ." I Cor. 8:13. If social drinking offends a weaker brother, as it certainly does, then a deacon should be the first one in the church to say, "I'll have nothing to do with social drinking."

In the above comments we were studying the Bible to see some things about deacons. We noticed that since the church is a democratic organization, the church selects the deacons. We commented on part of I Tim. 3:8. The deacons are to be grave (honest), not double-tongued, and not given to much wine. I Tim. 3:8: "not greedy of filthy lucre . . ." The man who is selfish in supporting the church cannot be a deacon. In every age since Adam, God has always commanded that His people give a tithe back to Him.

Tithe comes from a Hebrew word which means tenth. Abraham gave a tithe to God before the Law. Gen. 14:20: "And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all." Levi gave a tithe during the Law. Heb. 7:9: "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham." God reminded His people of His commandment to tithe in Mal. 3:10: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Tithing has always been God's way of financing His work in the earth. You will not read where God told His people to have bake sales or to make pledges into the storehouse. I can think of three reasons why a deacon does not tithe:

1. He is ignorant that the Bible teaches tithing. If he does not know this simple Bible truth, then he would certainly make a very poor and unscriptural deacon.
2. He does not believe the Bible

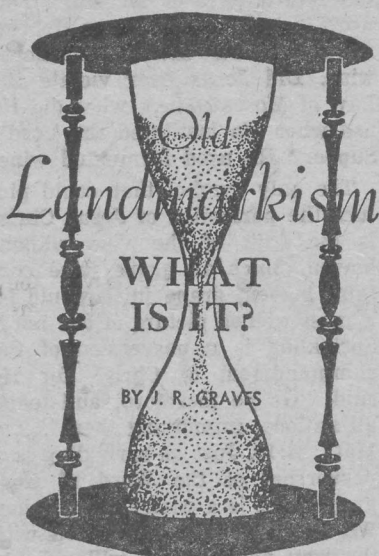
when he reads God's commandment to tithe. If he does not believe the Word of God, he certainly has no business being a deacon.

3. The third reason why a deacon will not tithe is that he is greedy of filthy lucre. If he is greedy of filthy lucre, he is not qualified to be a Scriptural deacon according to I Tim. 3:8.

I Tim. 3:9: "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." In my personal library, I have 20 translations of the New Testament. I like the way that the New English Bible puts verse 9. "These must be men who combine a clear conscience with a firm hold on deep truths of our faith." In other words, we should have deacons who believe Baptist truth. I Tim. 3:10 is a verse that teaches the church to examine the deacon to see if he is sound in the truth. Examine them, question them, and make sure they believe the doctrines of the Word of God. Can we really expect God to bless our churches when we willfully disregard His Word? God does not put a premium on ignorance, so men who know and believe Baptist truth are the only men who should be considered for this important office.

I Tim. 3:11: "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." To the disappointment of many, verse 11 is just as much a qualification as verse 8, 9 and 10. If the wife of a deacon is not living right, she disqualifies him from the office of deacon. A man whose wife is not a member of the church should not be considered for this office. She would no doubt hinder him from being the kind of deacon he should be. If the church elects a man whose wife is not a member, this cheapens the office of deacon and could hurt the church. This same verse would certainly apply to a deacon's wife who is a member of the church. If she is not faithful to God, then her husband cannot be a Scriptural deacon.

There are some women who hinder their husbands from doing what he should concerning serving Christ in a New Testament Baptist Church. They complain if their husbands insist on women being silent when the church is assembled. A man may be a good member of the church, but if he has a wife that hinders him in the above manner, it would be quite wrong for the church to elect that man to the office of deacon. Verse 12: "Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." We do not object to women being



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deacons just as long as these women are the husbands of one wife. If a woman is not the husband of one wife, she could not qualify for the office of deacon according to verse 12.

Let me say that a man who is not faithful to his wife is not a Scriptural deacon. The Bible says the deacon is to be the husband of one wife. Here is a question that has caused controversy in times past, and I guess it always will. Can a man who is divorced be a Scriptural deacon? We must determine what one wife means. Jesus said in Matt. 5:32: "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

According to the teachings of our Lord, there are Scriptural grounds for divorce. To deny this is to deny the Word of God. What happens when a man has a Scriptural divorce. It should be very simple to ascertain — the marriage bonds are broken. Jesus said in Matt. 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." According to this verse, Jesus said it was permissible to remarry. If a Scriptural divorce did not break the marriage bonds, then you accuse Jesus of saying that a man can have two wives. You'll notice that Matt. 5:32 and Matt. 19:9 definitely gave a person the right to remarry if the other partner was unfaithful. So, what happens when a man has had a Scriptural divorce? If you believe the Bible, then you must say the marriage bonds are broken. When the marriage bonds are broken and he remarries, how many wives does he have? To put it in simple arithmetic — 1 - 1 equal 0; 0 plus 1 equals 1. So then, a man who has a Scriptural divorce, according to Matt. 5:32 and Matt. 19:9, can be a deacon, for he is the husband of one wife.

I have a good friend who has an unfaithful husband. She went to her church leaders for some spiritual help concerning her unfaithful husband. Her pastor told her that if she got a divorce, she would have to resign her Sunday school class and she could no longer serve the Lord at that church. I know of a so-called Baptist church that will not receive a person into their fellowship who has been divorced and the pastor brags about it. These Baptist Pharisees remind me of the group Jesus said "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel" Matt. 23:24.

No one places a curse on a man who has formerly been a drunk or a dope addict. He can get in the pulpit and preach and even use

his past life as sermon illustrations. I'm not saying it is wrong for him to do this, however, many people seem to be impressed that he has had such a wicked life and is now serving Christ. If this is true for many brethren, then I am thankful that God has set them straight. But you let a preacher or deacon say that his wife left him for another man, right away the Pharisees pick up stones and they are ready to pounce upon him. I've seen it in times past and I have been guilty of this myself. I have asked God to forgive me for being so ignorant concerning the clear teachings of the Word of God.

Verse 13 is the result of a Scriptural deacon. "For they that have used the office of a deacon will purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." A Scriptural deacon will be a very satisfied deacon. He will not be a wishy-washy compromiser and we believe that a man who comes up to those qualifications laid down in the Scripture is well-pleasing to the Lord. A man who comes up to these qualifications is a Scriptural deacon. What a blessing he is to the Lord's church! What a tremendous blessing he is to his pastor! If you are a deacon of a Baptist church and you realize your shortcomings as a deacon, may God give you the grace to correct your life and may He give you the grace to bring your life in accord with the teachings of His Word. Are you a Scriptural deacon? May God bless you all.

The Opened Eyes

(Continued from page one)

ones out. There are no signs before it warning of trespassing. There is no danger whatsoever of any thirsty soul ever coming to this well and being turned away — or finding that the well has gone dry. Let us beware of drawing any conclusion from any Bible doctrine that would imply anything but that this well is sufficient for all thirsty souls.

Let me further say that all who are thirsty are invited to come to this well and to drink. Yes, oh yes, invite the thirsty to the well. Come and welcome. None are ever turned away. There is not a verse in the whole of God's Word that can be properly used to turn the thirsty soul from the water of life in Jesus Christ. Let him that is athirst come. Whosoever will, let him come. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. This is Bible teaching on inviting the thirsty to Christ. Let me make the invitation as wide as possible. Surely, the Arminian cannot, in honesty, give an invitation any wider than this. I do most dogmatically affirm that any man, woman, boy, or girl anywhere in this world who is

thirsty for salvation — who is willing to be saved is freely invited and encouraged and exhorted to come to Jesus Christ for eternal salvation. Let no man falsely accuse us on this matter. What I have said here is the true and proper position and teaching of sovereign gracers. There may be some who pretend to be of us who will not say these things. But they are Hardshell heretics. All true sovereign gracers teach that the well is sufficient for all and any who are thirsty, and that all the thirsty are invited.

Brothers and sisters in sovereign grace churches: Let us be faithful in this part of our commission. Yes, let us be faithful in teaching baptized disciples all things whatsoever Christ has taught us. But let us likewise be faithful in presenting the gospel of the well of salvation in Christ Jesus to all men and letting it be known far and wide that the thirsty are invited to the well. Oh, that we might be as faithful in presenting this glorious gospel to the lost as we are in presenting the further doctrines to the saved.

3. Men by nature do not and cannot see this well.

Please notice that the well was there all the time, but Hagar did not see it until God opened her eyes. Now my message contracts somewhat and becomes somewhat sad. But duty to the truth and to the whole of God's Word demands faithfulness here, as well as in the brighter side of our message. The well is there. It is sufficient for all who are thirsty. All who are thirsty are invited to the well. But man, by nature, does not see or feel his need of the well. Oh, here is the trouble. The trouble is not that the thirsty are not invited or that the well is not sufficient — that is falsehood. The trouble is that man is not thirsty. Oh, God help us. Man is not thirsty. Oh, man is thirsty alright — but for what? He is thirsty for adultery, for drunkenness, for lying, for sin, sin, and more sin. Man drinketh iniquity like water and can never get enough of it. From morning to night man is seeking to satisfy his thirst for sin. Thirsty for the things of this world, its pleasures, its fame, its possessions. But not once — not even in the most minute way — not even for a moment does the natural man have a thirst for Jesus Christ and the water of life in Him. Here is the heart of the controversy between free-willers and sovereign gracers. And here is where free-willism fails to meet the awful need of fallen man. Both teach a sufficient supply for the thirsty. Both teach that the thirsty are invited. But the Arminian has no way of salvation for those who are not thirsty. And let us never forget that man by nature is not thirsty. But the gospel of sovereign grace — oh, that glorious and saving gospel — teaches that God (Continued on page 7, column 1)

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PAGE SIX

The Opened Eyes

(Continued from page 6)

not only provides the well of water — but that by an effectual and irresistible working of the Holy Spirit, God provides the thirst. Man by nature is blinded and cannot see the well. The natural man looks at Christ as we preach Him — and sees no beauty that he should desire Christ. He has no thirst for or desire for Christ. The unsaved man is blind to his need for Christ and he is blind to the desirability of Christ as the only One who can meet his need. Go to the unsaved and preach Christ to him. His reply is "thanks, but no thanks." Man is blinded by Satan lest the light of the glory of God should shine unto him. Man is blinded by himself and his love for sin. Man is blinded by sin as he drinks it like water. Man is blinded by the things of this world and cannot see the desirability of the things of the world to come. Now the result of all this is that — though the well is there, and man needs the water from that well — man will never see his need and will never see the well, and will never drink of the water from the well apart from a wonderful, effectual, and irresistible work of the Holy Spirit of God.

4. God does open eyes.

Now, the story begins to brighten again and to glow with the glory of God's grace. Man is born blind to spiritual things. But God does open eyes. He does not open the eyes of all. Now this may be sad, it may be shocking to some, but it is the truth. Our own observation, as well as the Bible, make us know that God does not open the eyes of all. The well is there. It is sufficient for the thirsty. But multiplied thousands walk by the well — never seeing it in their blindness — never desiring it, because they are not thirsty for what it contains. They would rather drink at the wells of Hell than from this well. They go on in their natural born blindness into the flames of an eternal Hell and there beg for eternity for just one drop of water. Why does God not open their eyes? They are no more blind by nature than those whose eyes God does open. God could as easily open their eyes as the eyes of others. The power of God is omnipotent. He could as easily save those He does not save as to save those He does save. Why does He not open the eyes of all? I do not know the answer to this. I do not know why He opens any eyes at all. I do not know why He opens the eyes of the ones He does. This is the high and holy exercise of the awful sovereignty of our God. Who are we to reply against or question God. He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.

There are a people whose eyes He will and does open. Satan cannot hold them in blindness. They cannot and will not continue in their natural born blindness. God will open their eyes. When the predestinated time comes, God will, with Almighty power, open their

eyes. Who are those whose eyes He opens? They are the elect. They are the ordained. They are the chosen. They are the predestinated. Before all worlds began, God, in the unconditional exercise of His sovereignty chose them from among fallen mankind and predestinated them to be the objects of His saving grace. Oh, this is a wonderful, precious and glorious truth!

What if God did not open eyes. If He did not open the eyes of some, they would all perish in their blindness. All are born blind. None can or will give himself eyesight. Their eyes must be opened or they will perish forever. Thank God, that He opens the eyes of some. A question, Mr. free-will Arminian: If, in the realm of the physical, God keeps some from being blind, and heals some who are blind, and lets others live out their days in blindness, is not this as much an exercise of sovereignty in the realm of the physical as election and reprobation is in the realm of the spiritual? There were many blind men on earth in the days of Jesus Christ. Some, He passed by and left in their blindness. Some, He cured, and they showed their gratitude in following Him. So it is in the realm of spiritual salvation.

5. When God opens the eyes to see the well, one will run quickly and drink thereof.

Hagar did not need any pressing invitation. When her eyes were opened and she saw the well, she went and filled the bottle and gave the lad drink. Now, the Arminian would argue that we must have a special invitation service for Hagar. We must sing many verses of a special song. We must plead with Hagar to drink of the well. We must send personal workers back and they must exhort, and urge, and maybe even lay hands on Hagar and drag her to the well and make her drink. You say, that is silly. You are right. But it is no more silly than the hundreds of thousands of invitation services given in Arminian churches every week. I say unto you, you can't dispute it, that when God opens the eyes and when God makes one thirsty, they will need no special urging to get them to drink of the well. I will tell you what we will not, and what we will do with long-drawn out Arminian invitations.

We will not get one person saved whom God has not elected to be saved. We will not get one of God's elect saved a moment ahead of the predestinated time. But we will get a lot of false professions. We will make them two-fold more the children of Hell. We will ruin the churches. When we get folk in our churches in membership — and the Holy Spirit has not yet brought them to Christ — we have not helped anything at all — but we have done injury to the souls of men and the work of Jesus Christ.

We cannot, and we should not ever invite anyone to come forward and be saved. The well is not at the front of the church. The well is, and must be in the gospel

we preach. The invitation to salvation must be in the message we preach. Then, and there, in our preaching, we invite men to the well. We, then and there, in the message invite them to believe on Jesus Christ and be saved. We must make it clear that coming to the front has nothing to do with salvation.

I never invite anyone to come up and get saved. I do invite any who have been saved, who have been made to drink at the well to come forward and let that be known. I consider this a valid invitation. I do not consider it a necessary thing. I do not do this at every service. But I consider it a valid thing to do and in harmony with Scripture teaching. But if I should put the well at the front of the church and invite people to come up and drink and be saved, I should consider that to be an unscriptural thing. Frankly, I am not overly concerned about the invitation. If I am wrong, I stand ready and willing to be corrected. I have friends who do, and friends who do not give an invitation at the close of the service. I am convinced that the doctrine I have preached in this article is very clear — in that not giving an invitation will not keep the one whose eyes are opened from drinking of the well — that giving an invitation will not cause one whose eyes are not opened to drink of the well.

I am for the invitation in its proper place and properly used. I am all for — 100 per cent for — the invitation in the message. In the preaching to any who are thirsty. I am for the public invitation at the close of the service — when and if the preacher desires to use it — as long as it is not made a part of salvation or essential to salvation — as long as it is simply an opportunity for the one saved by grace to make it known. Surely, I am mighty close to being Scriptural in this.

I must add that when the one whose eyes have been opened does — and they will — drink of the well, there will be a new and wonderful life filled with great joy. God bless you all!

"Repentance"

(Continued from page one)

were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow was with him: for he is a Galilean.

And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:55-62).

That is the kind of repentance godly sorrow leads the sinner unto, and brings salvation.

The message John the Baptist preached in the wilderness was to repent:

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1,2).

In giving this message on repentance, let us remember that God called and elected the Jewish nation to give us a shadow of the good things to come (Hebrews 10:1-3). That is why it is useful that we read the writings of the Old Testament prophets. They give us a picture of human depravity at

its greatest, and why people must repent, even after we have received Christ Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we still, at times, must need to repent. Peter had been a follower of Jesus quite a while, perhaps for more than three years, when he denied our Lord and had to repent. The writer of the Psalms gives us the true picture of the children of God:

"Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes" (Psalm 89:27-32).

We have the writer here of this Psalm mentioning our Lord, the firstborn of God, and writing specifically about the people of God. We know this means the elect people, those who have faith in Christ Jesus. If they disobey God, and His commands, then God will punish them as mentioned in this 89th Psalm, and they, like Peter, will repent perhaps with bitter tears.

Then, too, this Psalm is speaking about the Jewish people (Israel). They had forsaken the teachings of God, and at the time of John the Baptist, and the days of our Lord on earth, they were under the domination of the Roman government. That was one way God was chastising them for their disobedience. Then when John the Baptist came preaching for them to repent, many of them did, knowing that God would abundantly pardon them through Jesus Christ our Lord. The world today still needs the message of John the Baptist. Had they not needed it, then our Lord would not here commissioned the first church to preach it to all the world beginning at Jerusalem.

When God called Abraham way back in olden time, from Ur of Chaldea, He told Abraham about his descendants, how through him that He (God) would bless all families of the earth (Gen. 15:3).

Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3), and many of the descendants also believed God. Nations and families of the earth are blessed through Abraham. It is those who believe in Christ Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, and they cannot prove that they believe God, unless they forsake their ways. Remember! God called Abraham telling him to leave his country, and even his father's house, and go unto a place that He (God) would show him. It took repentance on the part of this man Abraham to obey the Lord God. He left all that he had ever known.

The capital of the land of Chaldea, was Babylon, and when we think of Babylon, we think of the multiplicity of people, and their imagining to build the great tower, at which time their tongues were confused, causing them not to un-

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Understand one another. Traditional history tells us that before God called Abraham, he was a pagan priest of Babylonish worship, but he repented. There is not any peace and satisfaction unto those who are out of Christ Jesus our Lord. If there was, they would not all the time be seeking new things to satisfy.

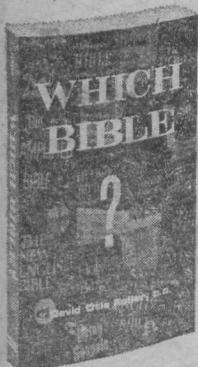
All down through time, there have been prophets telling people to turn from their ways and turn unto the ways of the Lord, which is the same as repentance. Isaiah was one such a prophet: "let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; saith the Lord."

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:7-9).

Here we have the prophet Isaiah giving us a lesson in what repentance really is. He is showing us that we are depraved, and without us looking unto God, we are completely helpless and can never expect eternal life. God is sovereign in every thing. Isaiah said in another Scripture these words: "Look (Continued on page 8, column 3)

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GIVE US READERS
We Will Give Them The Truth

"Repentance"

(Continued from page seven)
unto me, and be ye saved, all the
ends of the earth: for I am God,
and there is none else" (Isa. 45:
22).

Before lost sinners will look un-
to God to be saved, they must look
away from themselves. Jesus said,
"If any man come after me, let
him deny himself." Just as long
as the Arminian freewill has a
way in the sinner's life, that is just
how long he will not forsake him-
self. That is one of Satan's greatest
tools, making the sinner think that
they have a part in their salvation.
You may be thinking, How then
can I repent? God will make the
sinner so sorry for his sinful ways,
that he will want to look unto the
Lord God to be saved, and he will
trust only in the power of God to
be saved.

John the Baptist's message was
repent. Then when Herod put him
in prison, our Lord began his min-
istry by saying:

"The time is fulfilled, and the
kingdom of God is at hand: repent
ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark
1:15).

It is impossible to believe the gos-
pel without repentance. Read the
story of the prodigal son in Luke
15:11-24. Just think about God, our
Heavenly Father, that has plenty
and also plenty to spare. Leave
this old world of self in the hog
pen, and be willing to just be a
servant of our Heavenly Father.
If there is someone who can see
himself as lost as the prodigal
was, and you are starving for
righteousness, we hope it will
please God to draw you unto Christ
Jesus just now. God bless you!

Love Is Strong As

(Continued from page two)
Love asks nothing but proffers ev-
erything. God does not love for
reward; He loves in order to give.
How can a mortal be likened un-
to the immortal and infinite God?
What attribute can we claim in
common with the great Jehovah?
To be God-like it is evident that we
must show forth some of the being
(or essence) of God within us. This
must be done or else our claim to
godliness is a tenuous one at best.
We claim to be a "godly" people.
What does this entail? Since the
term "God" denotes supremacy,
are we laying claim to deity's pre-
rogatives? No, this is unthinkable.
Our mortal flesh is ill-suited for
any such pretensions. How, then,
can the appellation "godliness" be
applied to us? We are certainly not
deities as most will certainly ad-
mit. For the sake of clarity, let us
pose the question this way: "How
can those who occupy mortal flesh
be like God?" Here we are on pre-
cise ground and should be able to
arrive at an answer.

"God is love." It is not said here
that God does love but that He IS
love. Here would seem to be our
answer. God is love. Then, if we
possess and evidence love, are we
not like God? Yes, and as we study
we find that this is the only one of
God's attributes that we can truly
emulate. This is how we (convert-
ed sinners) can be God-like. We
are not immutable and our wis-
dom, power and knowledge are
certainly limited. However, in love
we can show forth the presence
of God within us. Herein God has
enabled us to do one perfected
thing while in this mortal flesh.

It is a false premise to state
that we love those whom we do not
MANIFEST a love toward. How
can we say we love even God if we
do not EXPRESS this love, in ob-
edience and concern for the things
of God? How can we say we love
our brother unless our love takes
the form of longsuffering, kindness,
seeking not our own, thinking no
evil, etc.? I CONTEND THAT IF
LOVE IS NOT SHOWN IT DOES

NOT EXIST. As we have stated,
love is a force. A force is an ac-
tive entity. The strength and power
of love are not dormant. If it ex-
ists at all, it exists as an EXPRES-
SION. The property of light is that
it illuminates. That which does not
illuminate is not light. There may
be varying quantities, but regard-
less of quantity, light illuminates.
Love is a manifestation. It DOES
certain things. If these things are
not evidently performed, we have
good right to suspect that love does
not exist.

Would it have been sufficient for
God to say He loved sinners, and
yet have done nothing to demon-
strate that love? What sort of love
would that have been. This is why
our Arminian neighbors are so
confused. They say that Christ died
for all; even those already in Hell.
This is strange utterance. Do you
mean that God loves people and
yet sends them to an eternal Hell,
when it is within His power to pre-
vent it? A strange love, this love
of the Arminian. Does God simply
SAY or does He PERFORM? When
I speak of "LOVE" I make no dis-
tinction between God's love and
the Christian love we express.
There is no distinction. Love is
love regardless of source and re-
gardless of recipient. "A rose, is
a rose," except of course, when it
is something else. Love, however,
is the same wherever we find it. It
has the same properties and the
same manifestations. Love is re-
cognizable only as it is evidenced.
Non-visible love is non-existent
love. SHOW IT OR DENY IT.
There is no middle ground.

I have heard of those who pro-
fess a great love toward others but
would scarcely offer the hand of
fellowship to them. Yet, they speak
of love. I know of those who speak
of a syrupy kind of love for cer-
tain saints; but are they kind, are
they longsuffering, do they seek
their own, are they easily provok-
ed? If so, then, how dwells the love
in them? What is this love they
profess to have? Let them show it
so we can see the reality of it, then
we can declare it to be love in-
deed. When men's words are
smooth and their demeanor truc-
ulent, we have some small reason
to call their "love" into question.
We do not judge these circum-
stances, but we have eyes. We are
not blind. Actions, in the finality,
do indeed speak so very much
louder than words.

Love is so mis-understood that it
is easily counterfeited. What pass-
es for current in most churches and
individual Christians is not love at
all but a clever substitute. The sub-
stitute costs less to the flesh and
is certainly a great deal more
comfortable. It is more comfort-
able to mouth love than to live it
and perform it. When millions who
identify themselves as Christians

give lip service to love, why should
not the child of God? This is the
message of the subtil Lucifer.

Do you profess Christian love
for the saints of God? If so, then
show it. Show it in your words,
show it in your conduct, show it
in your desires, show it in your
demeanor, show it in your face
and in your smile, show it at all
times and in all places, show it in
the loved one's presence and in
their absence, show it when you
agree and when you must disagree,
show it regardless of the cost to
yourself, show it even if it is mis-
understood, show it when it is mis-
trusted and disbelieved, show it
when it gains you smiles, show it
when it engenders bellicose scowls,
show it in all places, climes and
circumstances, show it when you
are wont to lose all by it — al-
ways show love and you will never
be the loser by it. For you see, my
dear friend, LOVE is a force as
strong as death.

As I have said, our salvation is
founded on love. Other things fol-
low, but love is the precipitating
force that assures us of an eter-
nity with Christ. The apostle tells
us that "Charity never faileth."
Which love does he speak of? He
just refers to love in whatever
place, clime or context you hap-
pen to find it. LOVE NEVER
FAILS. If love could fail we would
all be lost. Civilizations fail, gov-
ernments fail, political systems
fail, churches fail, preachers fail,
husbands and wives fail, parents
fail, our own minds and hearts fail
us — this earth is wreathed in fail-
ure; however, we are assured that
LOVE NEVER FAILS.

Dear Christian, do you desire to
do a perfected deed before your
God? Then do it in love and it is
guaranteed NEVER TO FAIL, for
love NEVER fails. Love God and
love your neighbor and you will
walk pleasing before your God.
Faith can fail and frequently does.
Hope can fail if it is in the wrong
object, but LOVE NEVER FAILS.
We are not saved by faith or by
hope, but by LOVE. The salvation
that you possess is not your salva-
tion but God's salvation. It exists
because LOVE NEVER FAILS.
True, we have faith in Christ and
in "the glorious hope" of His ap-
pearing, but faith and hope are
gifts of God. They are given to the
elect, in LOVE and because of
LOVE, and, dear Christian, LOVE
NEVER FAILS. It is a force strong
as death.

The apostle, in writing to the
babes at Corinth, speaks of three
things in particular, in the 13th
chapter of his first letter: Faith,
hope and Charity. He says "Char-
ity never faileth," and so assures
us that the greatest of these is
CHARITY — LOVE.

Whatever you have, my Chris-
tian friend, have love.

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