

COUNT THE COST

by Velmer B. Paler
Philippines

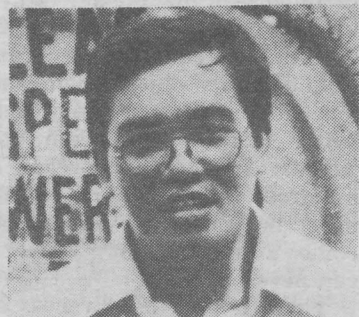
"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Lk. 14:28).

Today we find in the popular world with the popular churches; teaching the popular doctrines of popular free-will. This is of great disregard of God's sovereignty and robs out His glory. I believe very definitely that we believers have a responsibility to God. God is sovereign over human life. It is He who gives life and brings it to pass and it is He that controls the number of days of man. We are responsible to God. But, because of our sinful nature we cannot fulfil that responsibility, and so God's sovereignty works in us to enable us to do so.

"Count the Cost," is not another gospel loaded with ideas how to achieve a satisfying relationship with Jesus. We find so many books today which promises to give "keys," "secrets," and "steps" to the higher spiritual life which will make you an upper-class Baptist. Books which offer the reality of experience with the Spirit that can be seen, heard, and felt, thereby largely bypassing the Bible. The New Testament knows nothing about the sen-

timental, spiritual romance, and excitement. These are flimsy and unsubstantial.

"Count the Cost." I'm speaking here to the very elect of God; particularly those chosen called out ones who are members of the local church. The Bible is plainly teaching the type of life which Christians are called to live, stated in the most straight forward manner. There are no "secrets" or "mysteries" here. Counting the cost is for the way-



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faring Christian though a fool, need not err therein. There are four points in this text for us to know and I felt lead to share this with you.

First of all, a Christian life is costly. Notice that the gift of God's grace cost us nothing. Salvation cannot be purchased with money, nor merit, nor vows, penances, baptism or sacraments. Salvation is without

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HEARING THE WORD OF GOD PART IV

by Nick Wools
Windsor, Ill.

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by



Nick Wools

reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:11-14). The writer of the Hebrew Epistle told these brethren they were unskilful in the Word of righteousness. Babies have a natural desire for the sincere milk of God's Word that they may grow thereby. These brethren seemed to have partaken of the milk, but didn't grow from its spiritual nourishment. There were two reasons they did not mature spiritually: they were dull of hearing, and they were unskilful in the Word of righteousness. To be unskilful means to be inexperienced. They were not experienced in the practical application of doctrine to every day life. In verse

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THE POLICY AND PROGRAM OF THIS PAPER

by T.P. Simmons
(Now in Glory)

(copied from the first Baptist Examiner. Published April 1, 1931).

It is fitting in this first issue of The Baptist Examiner that we give an outline of the policy and program that we shall follow. All that read this issue are urged to give close attention to what we have to say; and if it is found that the policy and program of the paper are worthwhile, or such as to make it profitable to them in any way, they are urged to subscribe immediately. This paper solicits support either on the ground of its merit as a potentially effective medium for the propagation of the truth, or on the ground of its value to the individual. We solicit support on these grounds and these alone. Here are the ten planks in

our platform:

1. This paper is a real Baptist paper. There are many different kinds of colors of "Baptists." Consequently, the name is not always as distinguishing as it should be. Therefore, for the sake of clearness, the editor wishes to say that he belongs to the largest group of "Baptists," which group was formerly known (in England) as Particular Baptists; later (in America) as Regular Baptists; still later as Missionary Baptists; and now generally as simply Baptists. But there are some that affiliate with this group who are Baptists only in name. For that reason we specify that this paper is a real Baptist paper. It will stand four square for those distinctive principles that have ever made Baptists a separate people, — viz, the ver-

bal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures; the complete separation of "church" and state, and religious liberty; baptism as immersion in water of a saved person by a duly authorized administrator; closed communion; the democratic policy of New Testament churches under the headship of Christ; total depravity; the absolute sovereignty of God and unconditional election; and the eternal preservation and perseverance of every believer in Jesus Christ. We will stand also for the perpetuity of New Testament churches from New Testament days to the coming of our Lord for His saints.

T.T. Eaton is quoted as saying: "Some say they are Baptists, but not a Baptist and a half. The only reason I am not a

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A SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE AND A BODY OF DIVINITY

by C.H. Spurgeon
(Now in Glory)

"For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (I Thessalonians I, 9, 10).

In Thessalonica the conversions to the faith were remarkable. Paul came there without prestige, without friends, when he was in the very lowest condition; for he had just been beaten and imprisoned at Philippi, and had fled from that city. Yet it mattered not in what condition the ambassador might be; God, who worketh mighty

things by weak instruments, blessed the word of His servant Paul. No doubt when the apostle went into the synagogue to address his own countrymen he had great hopes, by reasoning



C.H. Spurgeon

with them out of their own Scriptures, he might convince them that Jesus was the Christ. He soon found that only a few would search the Scriptures and form a judgment on the point; but the bulk of them refused, for we read of the Jews of Berea, to whom Paul fled from Thessalonica, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Paul must have felt disappointed with his own countrymen; indeed, he had often cause to do so. His heart was affectionately warm toward them, but their hearts were very bitter toward him, reckoning him to

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

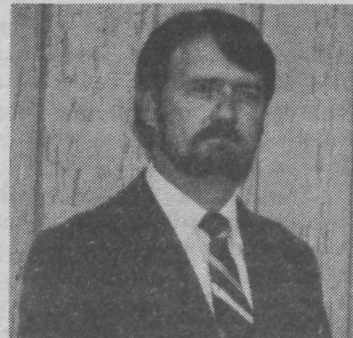
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THIS GREAT SIGHT

by Bob Belanger
704 Liberty Hall Rd., No. 22
Goose Creek, S.C. 29445
Scripture reading: Exodus 3:1-5.

Primary Text: Exodus 3:2. "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."

The Lord Jesus declared to



Bob Belanger

the Pharisees in Luke 16:15 that "...that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." We find this to be a fact well borne out throughout the Bible, particularly when we read of the powerful men that ruled not just one nation, but many nations. Surely our Lord's declaration emphasizes that His thoughts are not as the thoughts

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

WHERE LOVE IS

"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Prov. 15:17). I take the words of my subject from the middle of this Scripture verse.

True love, real love, Bible love is the greatest need we have in the world today. We need this in the individual, in the home, in society, in the whole world; and yes, we need this in our churches today.

"Love" is a much abused and mis-used word in modern society. Love is a pure word. It is beautiful. It is clean. It is holy. But this word has been dragged down into the mire by the filthy mind and heart of depraved men. It has been so perverted, so dirtied by men, that one can hardly recognize it as the

beautiful gem of days gone by. Men and women, in their depraved sexual lust, have dishonored the word "love." They have applied this pure, lovely, and holy word to the filth of their depraved and sinful sex. A man once told me that he had made love to over a hundred women. I promptly told him that he did not even know the meaning of the word. The T.V. program "lust boat" has mis-used the word "love" in its misnomer of a title. This reflects the depraved thinking of society. My friend, sex without true love is barnyard sex. Animals have sex without love. Human beings have love that culminates in the proper sex act. When humans act lower than animals, they have no right to try to

dignify their vile affections by the beautiful word "love." We are living in such a wicked age that people even refer to a homosexual partner as one's love. How awful! How vile! How wicked!

The word "love" is mis-used by those who speak of free love. By this they mean having sex without any obligations. They don't really mean free love; they mean free sex. Love is never — yea, can never be free. Love imposes obligations upon the one who has it toward the one who is the object thereof. One who does not have the great desire to do that which costs for the object of his love does not know what love really is. I cannot love one without desiring to do

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LOVE

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something for that one. I must feel pain when my loved one feels pain. I must weep when the loved one weeps. I can not have — I do not want a love that is free of obligations.

Well, what kind of love am I talking about? Let us look at that marvelous chapter in the Bible that deals with love. I refer, of course, to I Corinthians 13. I know that the word "charity" is used there, but I know also that the Greek word used is not what we refer to today as charity. Rather, it is that word which is the strongest word for love in the Bible.

"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet I shew unto you a more excellent way" (I Cor. 12:31). I Corinthians 12 has been talking about those supernatural gifts that were given to the early church. These gifts were given at least in part, to authenticate the message of the New Testament when that message was not yet written down. Of course, when the Bible was completed, these gifts ceased. I do say most emphatically that no one has any of these gifts today. Note that even in the days of those gifts, there was something more excellent. The words "a more excellent way" may well be used as the title of chapter 13. Love is the more excellent way. Love is better than all the gifts of I Corinthians 12. Let us look at this chapter and see some things about this more excellent way.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so

that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (I Cor. 13:1-3). See here the great importance of love. One may have all the gifts, but if he has not love, he is nothing. One who speaks in tongues (then, not now; there is no gift of tongues today) is only a noise maker if he does not have love. One who gives all, even his very life, has done nothing unless he has love. One may know it all, but he knows nothing worthwhile unless he has love. I do not know how love could be set forth as to its importance any stronger than it is in these verses. One has love or he has nothing. One shows love or he does nothing. The necessity of love could not be more strongly put.

Let us note some of the characteristics of this love. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is



Joe Wilson

not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Cor. 13:4-7). What more is needed? What more can be said? Note that true love is described here, not by a dictionary definition, but by the attitudes it has and the acts it performs. This is always the way with true love. True love does not simply talk; it also acts. True love shows its reality, not by what it says, but by what it does. Note the attitudes and actions of true love as described in this portion of Scripture. How wonderful. Oh, if this love existed in all men in the world today! If all men did that which is described in this Scripture — why we would not need to die and go to heaven — we would have heaven on earth. Wars would cease. Arguments would be ended forever. Strife would be a thing of the past. Policemen, judges, courts, and jails would be needed no longer. Sorrow would cease and joy would fill the earth as the waters cover the sea — if all men only had this kind of love.

What more will we have in heaven than this kind of love? Why, it will be this kind of love that makes heaven to be heaven indeed. The words of my subject can certainly describe heaven, for truly, heaven is a place where love is.

Think of the verses quoted above as a marvelous picture of Jesus Christ. Do they not describe Him perfectly? Are they not all true of Him? Do they not make out a well rounded word picture of our Lord? Think of these verses as a marvelous picture of what the believer should be. Is this not what we should be? Is there

anything in I Corinthians 13:4-7 that should not be true of every child of God? These words describe perfectly what the attitude and actions of the child of God should be. Oh, how these words condemn us! Oh, how these words set before us a standard that we should daily strive to attain! These words give us much matter for prayer if we would only read them over and ask God to forgive us wherein we fail, and strengthen us to measure up as much as possible to this standard. I make a suggestion. Let the reader determine to read I Corinthians 13 every day for a month, to examine his life by this chapter, and to pray earnestly that God will help him to measure up more completely to this. I doubt not but that this would prove a great blessing to everyone who would do it.

Think of these words as a description of married life and love. Oh, what would a marriage be like if husband and wife would earnestly seek to manifest this kind of love the one toward the other. Married life would be one long honeymoon. Quarrels would cease. Unfaithfulness would be a thing of the past. Divorce courts would go out of business. And why not? Why should not the man and the woman earnestly strive to have this attitude and to act in this way toward one another?

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (I Cor. 13:8-10). True love never fails; it never ceases. These verses teach us that the miraculous gifts of I Corinthians 12 have been done away. The perfect Word of God has come — the Bible has been completed. Therefore, the gifts have ceased. Three of the gifts are mentioned here as representative of the nine. These three have ceased; so have the nine. With the completion of the inspired Word of God, the need and purpose of the gifts ceased — and the gifts ceased.

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (I Cor. 13:13). The gifts have ceased; but faith, hope, and love abide. Faith is great. Hope is great. Love is the greatest. Faith will give way to sight. Hope will give way to fruition. Love will abide forever. Now, this love set forth in this great chapter is the kind of love I am preaching about in this article. It is the greatest thing in the world. It is the greatest need in the world. Let me preach to you about "where love is."

Where love is, there will be nothing to hurt. Love never hurts its object. Love never has that passion of temper or anger that causes hurt to another. Love can hardly bear to see the hurt of another, much less hurt that one itself. Where love is there are no words that sting, burn, cut, and hurt. Oh, the power of words! Don't ever believe that old saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Don't believe that. Words can and have caused far more hurt than have sticks and stones. All of us have felt the deep hurt of hard and unkind words. Love never does this.

Where love is there are no acts or deeds that cause hurt to the object of that love. There is not pride, jealousy, or envy; which things cause so much trouble. Love is always humble in the presence of its object. Love thinks less of self and more of its object. If this is not true, love is not there. Love can never (it is impossible to its nature?) put itself above or ahead of its object. Love gives to its object. Love would die for its object. Love never envies and is never jealous of the possessions and attainments of its object. Why, love wants the very best for its object. How could love ever be jealous of its object. Someone tells me that my sons can preach better than I can. I am not jealous. I hope they preach a hundred times better. I can never be jealous of that which comes to the object of my love. I can never envy such.

There is no vindictiveness in

true love. Love suffereth long. Love beareth all things. Love does not try to take vengeance. Love believes the best possible about its object. Love hopeth the best for its object.

Where love is there will be that which blesses and helps. There will be thoughtfulness and consideration. Love will be always thinking about its object; always seeking that which its object would desire. Oh selfishness is the sin of sins. It is the blight of all that makes life really worthwhile. We need that love in this sin-sick world that will consider the feelings of others. Oh, some people, some people! Some people seem to not care at all about others. They will run rough shod over the feeling of others. They will run over anyone who gets in their way — just to fulfill their own selfish desires. This is not love. Love is very tender and

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FROM THE EDITOR

ON BEING A PREACHER. I thought I would just take this opportunity to muse a little about being a preacher. Salvation, of course, is first and foremost among the blessings of God. Then, it is a great blessing to be led of the Lord into a true Baptist Church. But just now I am thinking of the great blessing of being called of God to be a preacher. All true preachers are called of God, and they know they have been called by God. No man should ever take this honor unto himself, except he be called of God. Anyone, now in the office of preacher, who realizes he has not been called of God, should leave such immediately.

It is a wonderful blessing to be a preacher. I have been preaching for nearly 43 years; and I have never gotten over the wonder, the awe, the glory, the thrill, and the blessing of being a preacher. I would not trade being a preacher for anything in the world. I suppose that before God saved me, I would have rather been a great major league baseball player — second baseman for the New York Yankees — than anything in the world. But such a thing pales into insignificant nothingness compared to being a preacher. There is absolutely no position or honor in this world that can even begin to compare with that of being a preacher.

Being a preacher is a matter of God's sovereign choice and enablement. No man qualifies for this office by reason of any amount of natural abilities. I do verily believe that when God calls a man to preach, God will give that man some measure of ability to do the work. God may well have already given the man some of the natural abilities needed in the work of preaching. If a man is called of God to preach, he will be able to get something out of the Bible and to give that to others in an interesting and effective way. Of course, God's gifts to His preachers vary. Some preachers are more interesting and effective than others, but all God-called preachers have some preachig ability. And they realize that these abilities come from God. Pity the preacher who would ever become proud of God-given abilities.

I feel sure that God deals differently with His preachers, and that no one preacher is a pattern for another. I have heard many preachers say two things that have not been true with me in my ministry. Of course, I do not mean at all to disparage their calling or work. I just illustrate that God deals differently with His preachers, and thought I would muse awhile about my experience as to these two things.

Many preachers tell of how they did not want to be a preacher, and how they ran from and fought against such. I am sure that many God called men have had such an experience. It is God's business how He calls His men. But I can truthfully say that such was not my experience. It has been a long time now, and memory becomes fuzzy; but as near as I can remember, I was preaching twice a week within three months of the time God saved me. I believe that I was ready to start preaching the night God saved me, at least very shortly after. I never fought or argued with God when I felt His call to preach burning in my soul. I was young. I did not know much. But I was ready to start telling others what little I did know. Oh, I felt that burning in my heart, burning with desire to preach God's Word to others. Feeling that, I was immediately ready to start preaching.

Then I have heard many preachers tell of how many times they had wanted to quit preaching. I have heard them tell of "quitting" the ministry nearly every week, but starting back before next Sunday. I am sure this was a hyperbole, but many preachers have spoken of often considering quitting the ministry. I have never felt any desire at all to quit the ministry. I, of course, do not say that I love the ministry more than these men do. I have loved preaching from the first time I did so, and love it even more now than I did then. I cannot imagine what life would be like without being a preacher. I would much rather die than to quit preaching. Honestly, I have never thought once, to the best of my memory, of quitting the ministry. Oh, it is hard and discouraging at times. But there is still too much of the thrill and glory and blessing of the ministry in my soul for me to even consider quitting.

I am no better than any other preacher. Many preachers have had to retire from the ministry due to poor health or other reasons. This may come to me. But, oh, I hope, and I pray that I may preach until this life is over for me. I hope that, if God does see fit for me to retire for some good reason, that He will give me grace to bear it graciously. But I hope He will let me stay in harness until time to go home to heaven. When I get to heaven; surely, I will have very much to praise God for. But I am sure that praising Him for calling me to be a preacher will furnish a part of the theme of my eternal praise to Him in glory.

There is nothing more pitiable than a soulless, sapless, shriveled church, roofed in barren professions and bearing no fruit for Christ.

LOVE

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considerate of its object.

Where there is love there will be kindness. Love is kind. We surely need some kindness in this old world, and it only comes from love. Where there is love there will be prayer. How can I not pray for those I truly love? I know their need. I can not meet that need. I know One who can. I will go to Him in prayer. Yes, I will pray for myself. Yes, I will simply commune with God in prayer. But I will also — I must if I love — I will pray sincerely and earnestly for those whom I love. Where there is love there will be words that soothe, bless, and encourage. Oh, a word in season!

How good it is! I look back down the road of my life. I think of those who came to me with a kind word just when I needed it so badly. My heart even now is so thankful for the good, kind, and gracious words that many of the brothers and sisters have given me through the years. Love will do this. Oh, my friend, it does not cost much to say a few words of kindness, encouragement, and love. It does not take much time. And it is so important, so needful, so helpful. Show your love by words and deeds of kindness, and it will ease someone's burden along the rough road of life.

Where love is there will be desires for spiritual good and efforts for spiritual help. After all, the spiritual things are the important things. If I truly love, I will desire the salvation of those I love above all else. After that, I will desire spiritual blessings for them. I will desire above all else to be a spiritual help to them.

Now, some cautions. Love does not mean that we never rebuke sin in those we love. It is a very mistaken notion of love to believe that it never rebukes and never chastens. Jesus said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19). It is a part of true love that it stands against that which hurts the loved one, and sin is the greatest hurt of all. We must rebuke the sins of our loved ones, else we do not manifest true love toward them. We must stand against their sins. We must not just give in and let them go on in sin and stand idly by, saying nothing, doing nothing. The loving parent will speak against the sins of the beloved child, and will punish for that sin. True love never involves a compromise with sin in the life of the loved one.

A second caution. That our love is not perfect does not mean that it does not exist at all. I have set before you the ideal. I have told you what love, in and of itself, is and does. But we are still in the flesh. Our attitudes and actions are sometimes those of the sinful flesh. We have love, true love; but we sometimes fail to show it and act it as we should because we are still in the flesh. Do not think that I mean to discourage you. Do not think that I am saying that a failure to do what love does, means that you have no love at all. I am just setting the standard before you that you might bemoan and repent of your failures, and might try more and pray more toward exercising more love.

The individual needs to love others. Love of self never promotes true happiness. Love for others is a boomerang. It is thrown out towards others — it reaches and blesses others —

and it returns loaded with blessings to the one who sent it forth. The greatest happiness we can have is to love someone, do something out of love for that one, and see the gladness and joy we have produced by our act of love. Oh, be continually thinking of others. Be continually loving others. Be considering what you can do for others that will be a blessing to them. Then do that thing, and you will greatly rejoice at the joy that you bring into the lives of others. The grandmother thinks of the grandchild. "What would she like? What could I get that she would enjoy?" The grandmother sacrifices and buys the object decided upon, gives it to the grandchild; the grandchild laughs with joy. But who has the most joy? Why the grandmother does. She has brought happiness to one she loves, and in doing so has found a greater happiness herself. This is always the way and result of true love. If you want to be happy, love as many people as you can and do as much for them as you can. You will make them happy, but you will receive the greatest happiness.

We need love like this in the home. Oh, what a happy home it will be where love is. Parents and children, husband and wife, all loving and giving and receiving — why it is a little "heaven on earth" — where love is. We need this in society and in the world. Wars will cease, strife will end, oh what the world will be like — where love is. We need this — at least we need much more of this in our churches. Oh, there is often trouble in the church. There are sometimes hard feelings in the church. There are church quarrels, fights, and splits. But, where love is, these things will cease; and the church will be the blessing it should be and can be.

Let me tell you some things love has done. Love has settled more problems than all the wisdom and politics of men. Love has warmed more hearts, fed more hungry, clothed more naked, dried more tears, promoted more happiness, restored more broken homes, eased more pain, likely healed more sicknesses, ended more quarrels, and met more needs than all else beside. Where love is! Where love is!

This love does not come from the natural man. It is not the product of the flesh. Where does it come from? "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5). "But the fruit of the Spirit is love..." (Gal. 5:22). This is where love comes from. It comes from the Holy Spirit of God. It does not exist in the heart where the Holy Spirit is not at home. All we need to have and show more of this love is to be filled with the Spirit. We don't have this love. We can't produce this love. But, if we are saved, we do have the Holy Spirit; and He can give us more and more of this love. Let us be submissive and yielded to the Holy Spirit. Let us be empty vessels, asking that the Holy Spirit will fill us with love. Let us seek more and more to have and show more of this love from day to day to all about us.

Heaven is filled with love. The more love we have, the more heaven on earth we will have. May God bless you all!

COUNT

(Continued from Page 1)

money and without price. We are justified freely by the

sovereign grace of God. Yet, if a man be a Christian it will cost him something.

Cancel of Self-Will. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14:26). Christianity is worth the cost. Mark this one, the blessings of true Christians are worth the cost. The Bible says, "...Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). Let me remind you, that whatever Christ asks you to give up will be for your good and His glory. When Jesus asks you to forsake your loved ones it is only in the sense that you will not put them first in your life. If you are His follower your Lord must be first, then mother, father, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, business and possessions are next to God. If you follow Him then you must be hated and must bear His cross.

Character Building. The Christian life is a fight, a race, and a battle. There is a real work to do, there are rivers to swim, mountains to climb, lions to face, and wars to fight. The Lord Jesus said two thousand years ago that men must take up the cross daily, and that they must be ready to cut-off hands or feet, if they would be His disciples. There are no gains without pains. Let me say this, a Baptist who is good for nothing is worth nothing; and a worth nothing Baptist is merely a nominal member; and a nominal member is a real hinderance to the pastor and the church. True Christianity is the building up of character which will endure in the day of judgment. It is carried on by putting patiently and carefully and painfully stone upon stone. Be sure to use the right materials.

Chastity in Life. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body..." (I Cor. 6:19-20). God has the right to the believers whole being. You may say, "It is impossible to live a separated life and to do our duty in this world at the same time: the thing cannot be done." I answer you that it can be done. With Christ on your side nothing is impossible. Again you may say, "At this rate very few will be saved." That's right! Jesus said, "...strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:14). Few will be saved, because few will take the trouble to seek salvation. Men will not deny themselves the pleasure of sin and their own way for a little season. They turn their backs on an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 1:4). "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (Jn. 5:40). Count the Cost!

Then secondly, the elect is COMMITTED TO COUNT THE COST. True Christianity is a lasting one. It is throughout eternity. Anything that will last is very expensive. Think of a blood-bought Christian that the whole world cannot buy. But, a Christian life cost him something. He is committed to count the cost.

Our Object: Building a Tower. You must be sure that the cost will be great since it is like a tower. So is a Christian. It is an all important business that

you and I are committed to. As touching unselfishness, God's elect are to bear one another's burdens; In humility, they are not to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think; In love, forgiving one another; In purity, let no corrupt words or foolish talk proceed from their mouths; and in good works, they are to be jealous in their practice, especially to those of the household of faith.

Our Obligation: To Finish It. By His grace, we are to endure hardness. Our obligation is to finish in the cheerful, faithful, and grateful performance of daily duties. We are not to fret or complain in our humble lot, but to trust the wise disposition of His sovereignty. Therefore, take up your work as God's work and do it as unto the Lord up to the finishing line. Do not spend your time dreaming of how you could do a greater work for God if only you were not bound by present circumstances and responsibilities. Joseph worked faithfully as a despised slave, and when rewarded with a prison sentence, he was faithful to his work in the prison. Though he knew it not, God was training him for a place beside the throne of Egypt.

Out of Service: Expose You To Ridicule. To fail in this great work will involve a terrible defeat. "Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish it" (Lk. 14:29-30). It is a sad thing to say that so many who bear the name Baptist becomes a "bad-taste" and instead of a blessing becomes a burden. Unless God gives you preserving and persevering grace to stand fast and to endure to the end, you are not able to finish and you are turning back to what? to perdition to hell! He that will live for Christ must suffer to endure to the finishing line. This is the way to heaven, do you turn from it? Count the Cost.

Thirdly, we believers are CONSECRATED TO COUNT THE COST. Take note of this, that only the elect can endure and do good works consecrated for God's business. There are healthy, happy people who have not been born again who have well-ordered personalities too. Culture, refinement and morality are good and beneficial but they are not Spirit sanctified ones. Supernatural gifts or talents are no sign that a person's heart is indwelt and filled by the Spirit. Judas cast out devils and healed the sick but had not been born into God's family. But, Paul declared that faith, charity and endurance of the Thessalonians in all their persecution and tribulation "which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer" (II Thess. 1:5).

Sacrifice if necessary. The one who bows to the pleasure of the Almighty will acknowledge His absolute right to us as seemeth good to Him. If He chooses to send poverty, sickness, domestic bereavements, even while the heart is bleeding at every pore, it will say, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good" (I Sam. 3:18). Like Job of old, in a single day he lost not only his flocks and herds, but his sons and daughters as well. Harken to his sublime word, "...The Lord gave, and the

Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). The man who walks with God is the man who agrees with God. Count the cost!

Serve Him Faithfully. To pay the price is the heart's desire and prayer of all true believers. None claims to have reached it perfectly, but all press toward it. Billy Sunday said, "God's service is not unreasonable. It's the only sensible thing to do." If we consider it for a moment, there can be no other conclusion.

Surrender to Christ. By counting the cost is also to resign ourselves entirely recognizing His sovereignty and that we bow to His perfect right to do with us as He wills. To give our life to Him we consecrate our whole being. Consecration is daily, and moment by moment yielding in the daily crisis. Count the cost!

And now lastly, CONSIDER THE COST. "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Lk. 14:34, 35). It is a great mistake to think that Christians have no responsibility to the world. We cannot deny that the world hates the believers. But as a member of the local church whom God has given the responsibility to propagate His word, you and I have the sacred duty with our life as a light shining before the world. Are you Christians worth a cost? Consider the cost.

Testimony Before The World. Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Christian remember that there are so many eyes looking and watching you. As God's ambassadors we bear the name of Christ in us as we win souls for Him. I'm not saying here that by your sheer magnetism or life style like "holier than thou attitude" could be a way for a soul winner. No sir! Why? In most of the churches today, the gospel which changes lives, has been superceded by another gospel. This is a treachery to Jesus Christ and robs Him of His glory. This ought not to happen. Believers, we are obligated to walk "in the light" not as a hypocrite but "walk as children of light."

Throughout Life's Work. Faith and repentance were not just for a day or a year, but a life work. The Bible demands a life of separation from the world. "Pure religion and undefiled before God... to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Taste for Seasoning. "...but if the salt have lost his savor..." it's good for nothing before the world. Christian living is a very sacred matter. God delights in it and through it He wants to bestow His blessings on you. Whatever we may think fit to say, we must live a separated life. Where is our Christianity if we are not Christians? We must not have merely a Christian name and knowledge, we must have a Christian character also. Brethren, Count the Cost! God bless you all. Amen.

SIGHT

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of men. It is not these mighty conquerors, these men of great power and renown, that the Lord would call to do His bidding, for the Lord would seek

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THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

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PAGE THREE

When a man is wrapped up in himself he makes a pretty small package.

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER — P.O. Box 60 - ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

Should a church give money to help those who are not members of the church? Explain.

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One cannot set definite rules for something like this. One thing we must understand, however, is that the Lord's church was not established nor intended to be a benevolent organization. The Salvation Armies and Union Missions can take care of that.

The church has only one responsibility and that is to fulfill the commission given to her by the Lord Jesus Christ. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19, 20).

There are times when a situation arises that the church might consider it as something necessary for her to provide assistance. We have given people money to help them through a particularly hard time, but it is the exception and not the rule. Each case should be considered separately.

Of course, this is not the same as when a church helps another church or a missionary out of another church. The church at Corinth sent assistance to the church at Jerusalem (see I Cor. 16). The churches of Macedonia sent help to Paul — (II Corinthians 8:1-5).

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"For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land" (Deut. 15:11). In Proverbs 14:31 it is said that one who honoreth his Maker, "—hath mercy on the poor". Also in Proverbs 19:17, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."

Jesus told the rich young ruler to, "—sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). The apostle Paul, in telling of the conference he had with the church at Jerusalem said that, "they, (the church) would that we should

remember the poor, the same which I also was forward to do" (Gal. 2:10). From these passages we see that God has always commanded His people to care for the poor and needy. Under the law of Moses much was said as to the taking care of the poor. When the disciples complained about the woman using precious ointment, to anoint the head of Jesus, saying the ointment could have been sold and the money given to the poor, Jesus did not deny that the poor were to be cared for, but said, "ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always" (Matt. 26:7-11).

It is clearly stated in many passages in the New Testament that the church is to care for those who are in need of their own number, but what Paul wrote to the church at Galatia shows that, if possible, the churches are to care for others as well. He said, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). While this means more than just giving money, it certainly includes that.

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This is another question that does not have a Bible answer. It is a question that must be left up to each individual church to act upon as she sees fit. I do not have the right to try and tell another church how she should spend her money, and I do not intend to try. I will simply give my opinion, and you do what you wish.

Let me first say that as a church we have a very definite obligation to our membership. This includes, in some cases, a financial obligation. I do not mean by this that the church is to be another welfare program. We are not to help those who will not work. Certainly, Paul speaks to the church when he makes mention of taking care of widows past a certain age. If we have a member who gets laid off, or by an accident becomes greatly in debt; there is nothing wrong with the church helping out this person. It would seem a shame for a person to tithe to a church for years and then be denied any financial help in a bind. There are other ways in which we, as a church, can and should help our membership. We can help in finding jobs, and homes. Our churches would be far better off if we were to begin to realize the responsibilities we have toward one another. There is so much jealousy and bitterness in the churches that we have forgotten to "consider others better than ourselves." May God impress upon us the love and concern we should have for each other.

Now, for the question about helping others outside of the

church. The answer to this would depend on who they are. I do not feel that a church is under any obligation to help strangers who pass through town and ask for help. They may need gas money or something to get them where they are going. I do not feel we have any obligation to them whatsoever. There may be those who are not members of the church, but are attenders. Whether or not the church should help these people would be left up to the discretion of the local church.

These people might be prospective members. These people could be loved ones of members. I am not saying the church should or should not give them money. That will be a decision that the church must make based on the circumstances. I do not say this to sound cruel to non-members who are in a bind. I say this because the church's first obligation is to take care of her own. God forbid that we take care of outsiders and forget our obligations to each other. May God bless you all.

SIGHT

(Continued from Page 3)

the humble that would exalt Him, and not the world's mighty who would exalt but self. Such is one of the many lessons we learn as we study the lives of men such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, and above all, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul, likewise among these, in writing to the brethren at Corinth told them to make this observation: (I Cor. 1:26). "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."

The question is, what of Moses, was he not a man of wisdom, mighty, and nobility? Consider that he was born the son of Hebrew slaves but raised in the palace of Pharaoh the King of Egypt. With the best of education he was provided in that which was then the mightiest nation on earth, even Egypt. Surely we would almost be led to say that such a one as he should be a leader among men. Acts 7:22 tells us concerning Moses that "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." Would we then, most readily agree that this man Moses was well equipped to lead this people of Israel out of bondage? Moses so believed he was. Though Scripture does not totally reveal just how, Moses knew early in life that he would be the deliver of Israel, for in Acts 7:23-30 we read of his daring and might and v. 25 tells us, "For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not." This is in reference to his murder of the Egyptian and sadly enough, this also declares the terrible spiritual condition of Israel, for they "understood not." Bold and daring was

Moses indeed, but the end result of his murdering the Egyptian was not deliverance for Israel for we read in Acts 7:29-30;

"Then Moses fled at this saying (v. 28), and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons. And when forty years were expired, there appeared unto him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush."

Moses, a man of nobility, wisdom, and might had done this murder as an act of faith through misguided zeal. (Heb. 11:23-27). Yet in our reading we observe that forty long years had passed since Moses had fled from Egypt. Moses was now eighty years old and had not yet delivered Israel. The question is, why? He had slain an Egyptian forty years earlier in his great zeal and youthful strength. Surely he had proved himself wise, mighty, and noble, but Acts 7:25 tells us that Moses had "supposed." A lesson here, beloved, that it is often folly to seek to go forth in one's own strength, without the blessings of the Lord. For often enough when we do, all things will usually work together for evil rather than for good. A point is that we may have the Universities doctorate in theology, we may have much worldly wisdom, but will it please the Lord to use us as we are? Can the wisdom, the might, the nobility of Egypt, America, or the world be used for the service of our Lord apart from Him? Would the Lord use Moses the adopted grandson of Pharaoh, possible heir to the throne of Egypt; or would the Lord use Moses the lowly humbled shepherd? This was the same Moses forty years older, but forty years wiser, having learned forty years of humility. We consider that the Egyptians had a very low esteem for shepherds, thus Moses would not again enter Egypt as an honored man. Nevertheless he would depart Egypt having honored and exalted his God. He would not have the honor and praise of this world, but he would be honored and exalted of his Lord. Humility as we see here, is not a lesson easily learned, but once learned and used, is used of God. Moses, by human standards, has departed Egypt in disgrace, perhaps having no set destination in mind, but behind all these things that had befallen him was the ever present leading and directing of the Lord working all things after the counsel of His own will for the good of Moses.

Moses at his birth, as with all the Hebrew males, had been condemned to death by Pharaoh who had declared (Ex. 1:22),

"Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river"; and at that designated place of death was Moses cast, but safely within the ark! Beloved, such a beautiful picture of the child of God preserved in Christ. Such a mighty display of God's ability to turn the evil of men for the good of His own. For from the river of death was Moses delivered to be raised in the house of him who had condemned him. Oh, and again consider:

thank God for faithful parents for Heb. 11:23 tells us that the parents of Moses "were not afraid of the king's commandment." Acts 7:21 adds, "And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for

her own son." By faith the parents of Moses prepared an ark of bulrushes and cast him upon the Nile as his sister Miriam observed the workings of the Lord in the preservation of her baby brother. Such grand lessons are these! Lessons we, like Miriam, need so often to do; that is, to pause and watch the faithfulness of God in our lives. And so, such is the manner and position we find Moses eighty years later: Exodus 3:1 tells us that he "led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God." In observing this in a spiritual sense, Moses, by grace, had found a place of tranquility in a troubled world. He had found the kind of peace the world could not offer, for he was alone with his God. This likewise is another lesson emphasized by Scripture. Matthew 5:1 tells us of our Lord, that "seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain" seeking solitude and sweet fellowship with the Father. Again in Matt. 14:23 we read that our Lord "had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone." It was on the mount of transfiguration that some of the disciples beheld Him in great glory, being alone with Jesus. Paul the Apostle spent three years in the deserts of Arabia, alone with his God. These beloved, are lessons of divine friendship. Lessons that help us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The way of many of the young people, in their actions today, would almost lead one to believe that God is in Hollywood for television and music seem to be their daily bread. It deeply saddens me to say that I have never seen a teenager sitting alone with his or her Bible, but then, how many of our youth observe their parents on the "backside of the desert"? This beloved, is the place of green pastures and still waters. The place where the ailing soul is restored as David tells us in Psalm 23. We are told by the scholars that this place where Moses led the flock was three days journey from Egypt, in other words, a good safe distance from the world, for Egypt typifies this "present evil world" and is indeed a place that the child of God needs a refuge from. You know, relative to this, some of the best marriages remain strong because of communication and deep intimacy. The lesson you see is always there! We cannot feel the joy of the Lord's presence without deep intimacy and communication by prayer. Alone, but with each other. For in this, the "backside of the desert" is where we learn to grow in considering the ways of our majestic Lord, for in doing such, we consider less of ourselves. The beloved Arthur Pink stated that "to be much alone with God is the first requisite for every servant of His." Yea, this is first necessary that we may know Him, for how may we serve a Master whom we know not? The sure results of being in the "backside of the desert" are seen in Exodus 3:2. "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him." We observe that surely we will be abundantly blessed, uplifted, comforted, and restored by the very presence of the God of all comfort.

Now, in observing Exodus 3:2 we find that this "angel of the

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If you do not crown Jesus Lord of all, you do not really crown Him at all.

The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER — P.O. Box 60 — ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

Explain II Peter 1:9. Is this a saved man or not?

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This second letter that Peter wrote was a warning concerning the misconception that a Christian need not maintain good works. His antidote for this false doctrine was growing in grace. Chapter one reveals this. Christians are to be diligent, always growing in spiritual things. Such as, faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity. Thus verse nine states... "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." Not that he is lost, but that he is near-sighted, and that, by his actions, he is denying the work of grace in his heart. He has not added to his faith virtue, etc. He is not looking ahead to the second coming of his Saviour when he shall stand before Him in judgment. When his works shall be tried to see what sort they are and he shall receive reward for those things done for the cause of Christ and His kingdom. This is a saved man that has either never grown in grace, or else has fallen from the Christian graces that Peter spoke of. This man is in great danger, having trodden under foot the blood of Christ wherewith he was sanctified, and despised the Spirit of grace. His physical life is in danger. (There is a sin unto death). And worse than death is the possibility that he may meet His Saviour at the Bema seat with only wood, hay, and stubble. Escaping only with his soul, yet so as by fire.

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"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." The word "lacketh" means things not present. The things that were not present refer back to the exceeding great and precious promises mentioned in the preceeding verses. The reference to "he" does not refer to a particular man but is really translated to whom these things are not present.

When we are born again, God gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness. The first of these is faith and to faith is to be added the other promises of God so that we might be partakers of the divine nature. These are to be looked upon as possessions because he states in verse eight: "For if these be in you and

abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The word "you", is to convey a sense of possession. If we possess faith, then we are to give all diligence to add to that faith, virtue; "and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience and to patience godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

If these things are not present, the person is blind. Blind is used here as a metaphor and not meaning without sight, but one that cannot see afar off. In this instance it means to be short sighted. Seeing only that which is close by, not heavenly things. Man's affections today are on the world even though they should not be. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

If these things are not practiced, the person becomes forgetful. He forgets about the cleansing he received from the blood of Christ. He does not remember that he was deep in sin, and that those sins were purged (purified) for him. He literally takes on forgetfulness. We need to remember that our sins have been purged and we need to give all diligence to the precious promises of His word. Peter says in verse thirteen: "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."

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If a man does not have faith then he cannot add the other graces that are mentioned in verses 5, 6, and 7. It is a Scriptural fact that all men have not faith, (2 Thes. 3:2). How then can one see afar off if he does not have that which enables him to see? A person must have the graces that are mentioned in these verses to have a spiritual understanding. Such a person does not have true knowledge of God and of Christ. He does not know what it means to have communion with Christ. He has no depth of understanding; he has no true sight of the beauty of holiness.

A person can have much knowledge about many things and yet not have a spiritual knowledge of the things of God. Such a person does not see the sinful nature of his own heart, does not and cannot see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, does not see the terrible consequences of his lost state and his standing before God. He has forgotten that he is lost and that he sinned in Adam. He does not remember that he fell in Adam.

I am inclined to believe that this verse, that the question is about, refers to a man or person

that is not saved. If a person is saved, then he would make use of the goodness of God's grace. He does not know that God through Christ is rich in mercy and grace. He does not know that the love of God passes knowledge. Such a person has not received Christ by faith. He cannot see; he cannot know spiritually. He does not have spirit and discernment, for he has not had a work of grace upon or in his heart. He has not experienced the work of the Spirit of God upon his heart.

If a person does not have faith, then he can not add these other graces. To have faith he must have it given to him of God, for salvation is, "For by grace are ye saved through faith..." And then the Apostle Paul wrote by inspiration that faith was not our own, but a gift from God.

Also I think this verse may refer to a person who may have some temporal knowledge of the Word of God. He may even have the knowledge that there is one God, but he does not realize the seriousness of his standing before God. It is my opinion that this verse refers to an unsaved person.

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Yes, this man is saved. If one is purged from his sins, he is cleansed from all sin. The word "purged" means cleansed, to be made pure. The Bible speaks of babes in Christ. Babies are not mature enough to know anything much. I Corinthians 3:1-3, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

Now, these were Christians, but babes in Christ; that is, Paul tells those whom he admits to be Christians, and whom he calls brethren in the first verse that they are not spiritual. He uses the word in a modified sense. When we predicate spirituality of a Christian as compared to other Christians, we mean that he is eminently spiritual. However, when the distinction is between Christians and the world, then every Christian is said to be spiritual.

There are some Christians that are worldly, I must admit. However, they are weak in faith and will be saved with loss of reward. I Corinthians 3:15, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

Lord" is called "the angel." In verse 4, He is called "the Lord."

SIGHT

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In verse 6, He is called "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." In verse 7, He refers to Himself as the Omniscient One for He sees, hears, and knows all things. In verse 8, He is seen as the Sure and Great Deliverer. In verse 9 He is seen as the great God of compassion saying, "the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them." In verse 14 He refers to Himself as the great "I AM", i.e., the eternal, independent, self-existing One. This then is the Lord Jesus Christ and none other. In John 18:6 our Lord identifies Himself as the great "I Am" for of the heavenly Father He declared (John 5:37). "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape."

John 1:18 adds: "No man hath seen God at anytime; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Again in John 14:9 Jesus declared to Philip, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Thus here on the backside of the desert, Moses met face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ. In somewhat sidetracking, it is also interesting to note that those who doubt the eternalness of Christ and the eternal security of the believer, need to remember that even long after Moses had died, he is again seen in the presence of Christ on the mount of transfiguration. This is indeed the eternal ever-present Christ!

In Exodus 3:2 we find that the Lord Jesus Christ presented Himself in a most strange manner to Moses for we read that "the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he (Moses) looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." We have seen beyond all doubt that this angel of the Lord is indeed the Lord Jesus Christ who had in times past appeared to Abraham, Hagar, and Jacob. Yet here was a most strange manifestation and miracle which Moses declares to be a "great sight." This was in some respects not an unusual sight for it was not uncommon to see a bush afire in the desert, but it was uncommon that this bush "was not consumed", i.e., not devoured nor burned up by the fire, for this kind of bush was known to be quickly devoured once set afire, for it was a bramble or "thorny bush" as in the Hebrew. Yet we must ask, for what reason did our Lord so choose to appear to Moses in this manner?

In studying behind the best and great scholars we learn many reasons for this particular appearance, yet we find that one of these reasons has been generally ignored though leading to the same main conclusions. As a strong advocate in the doctrine of Biblical Numerology, a subject often abused or neglected in present day teaching, but nevertheless a subject most worthy of note as we consider the infinite perfections of the Word of God, we meet with these astounding facts which follow.

The word so translated "bush" in KJV is more properly rendered "thorny bush," and this same Hebrew Word is found but six times in the Old Testament; five here in Exodus, and once in

Deuteronomy 33:16 in the final closing words of Moses to the descendants of Joseph where he speaks in reference to Christ as "him that dwelt in the bush." This verse gives us a key to the meaning of the miraculous manifestation, before the eyes of Moses in two manners: First, this is the sixth and last reference to the bush in the Old Testament, and second, the meaning of the word "dwelt." As we have often seen and heard, the number six in the Word of God represents man, for he was created on the sixth day. Every word and the number of times the Lord has so chosen to use that word, is of great significance, for the Word of God is indeed spoken by the breath of God, thus making it the Word of Life. In considering these six utterances here, and the meaning, we then conclude that this bush is representative of man, but the number of uses alone is not what we use to fully conclude with. We add to this the fact that this bush is a bramble or "thorny bush." Thorns in the Word of God represent the sinful nature of man, having thorns in his tabernacle (Hos. 9:6) or body. Paul, in speaking of the unregenerate lost declared in Hebrews 6:8, "But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." Thorns in the Word of God also signify the curse upon the earth and man. (Gen. 3:17-18). Thus we find that this bush in which Christ appeared to Moses represents the nature of man. It speaks to us in prophecy then, of the coming Messiah and the nature He would possess, even the God-Man, which John's Gospel so clearly sets forth.

Exodus 3:2 tells us that the Lord appeared to Moses "out of the midst of the bush," but Deut. 33:16 adds further that He "dwelt in the bush," or as the Hebrew shows, He "tabernacled in the bush." Likewise does John 1:14 declare of our Lord: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled) among us..." This then gives us the second key to understanding the meaning of the Angel in the bush. This brings to mind the tabernacle in the wilderness which Moses would later be directed to build. Yea, the tabernacle that would be so typical of the Lord Jesus. Christ entered and dwelt in the bush making it His temporary abode. He likewise took on the form of sinful flesh and dwelt among men. We observe with Moses, this lowly unattractive bush in which few could find beauty, and we consider the Christ who dwelt in this sin cursed wilderness called earth and was not esteemed among men, nor was He desired. This lowly bush is the place where God would meet with man and speak face to face, as was the tabernacle, and thus He has in these last days spoken to us by His Son (Heb. 1:2), making no other way whereby we must be saved. Beloved, God has never met with man apart from Jesus Christ, and without Christ can no man meet with God. Such is the lesson here beloved! Here at the bush was the victorious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. He who knew no sin, becoming sin for us, suffering the just wrath of God and coming forth victorious. How do we

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QUESTION: — Who believed there are "fiery flying serpents"?

ANSWER: — Isaiah, Isaiah 30:6. "The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from which come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent..." See also Isaiah 14:29.

SIGHT

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see this?

Let us observe carefully beloved, the glorious redemptive work of Christ. Exodus 3:2 tells us, "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." Beloved, this is the only way Christ will appear to His own dear elect! If we see Him not as Moses did, beloved, we have not seen Him. You say, "what do you mean?" Was this flame of fire for naught? Nay! But it speaks to us of pure, holy, divine justice and wrath put upon the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. Yea, that which caused Him to call forth, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Behold beloved; man could not again enter the garden of Paradise while the flaming sword of justice barred the way, but observe this flame of fire upon Christ as He suffered and declared, "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise," for here was the fire of wrath satisfied. For "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). "For our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:29). Is it no wonder then, that our Christ should thus so appear unto man, unto Moses? Behold! This great sight! The bush then was also a place, as was the tabernacle, as was Christ, the place of sacrifice. Yet observe also a place of victory! It can be no wonder then that Moses declared this to be a "great sight." Beloved, he came to the place of victory for the bush you see, "was not consumed... is not burnt." It withstood the all consuming fire of God. Why? Because of the very presence of the Victorious One. Psalm 16:10 gloriously declares, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

We observe this lowly bush held fast by the earth, full of thorns. (Perhaps it was from this same type of bush that the Romans plaited a crown of thorns for our Christ) But in the midst of the bush dwells the living Christ who is unharmed by the thorns, for He knew no sin, and unharmed by the fire, for He should "not see corruption." Yea, showing us Christ the victor over death and hell. Indeed a great sight!

On this day Moses had departed Midian, the place called "contention" and met with the "Prince of peace" on the backside of the desert. Moses,

who was "drawn out" was this day drawn to this great sight. He was called to "turn aside" and caused to thirst by what men call curiosity, but by what the elect call being drawn of the Spirit of the Living God. God had known of the presence of Moses, for He had brought Him there that day. Yea, David declared "Thou hast searched me and known me... thou understandest my thoughts afar off... and art acquainted with all my ways... whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Ps. 139). Thus in Exodus 3:4 the Lord calls Moses by his very name, as with all His own. Be comforted herein beloved, and let us also consider the readiness of Moses at the call of His name, "Here am I." Submissive and humbled; few are so blessed and learned in these evil times.

We conclude beloved on Exodus 3:5 with this note. Many in our day and time blasphemously deny the deity of Christ but we observe here that the bush and all it contained spoke only of Christ, thus this also was a place of worship. The Lord told Moses: "Draw not nigh hither." Moses was to see this great sight, but must not yet approach until all was done as pleasing unto the Lord. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet" was and is the requirements of all the Lord's children. None may dare enter into the place of purity and holiness, in the presence of God to worship without putting aside those things that have walked upon the accursed. It is the symbol of worshipping in "Spirit and in truth." Each Lord's day many will seek to come before Him speaking lies in His name, adhering to false doctrine for they consider little "Him that dwells in the bush."

HEARING

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14. Paul tells them that strong meat, advanced doctrine, belongs to them that are of full age, and then explains how one gets to that point in his spiritual life.

To be of full age means finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness; brought to its end. In the Scriptures the word perfect means mature, when it is talking about our Christian character. As far as God's people are concerned, no one will ever be perfect in this life. Christ is the only perfect human being. Regardless of this fact, God ordained that we would grow by grace into the image of Christ's character. Any growth in spiritual maturity we experience is the result of God's grace working in us; yet at the same time God works through means; primarily the written Word of God applied by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual maturity then, is a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22, 23). The apostle Peter spoke about escaping corruption and partaking of the divine nature. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to

knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (II Pet. 1:3-10). In verse 10 Peter said, "For if ye do these things." It is our responsibility to add these virtues to our life. There is a connection between knowledge and practice in verse nine where it says that if these things be in you, you will not be barren in the knowledge of the Lord. Grace and peace are multiplied unto us through the means of knowledge, and it is through knowledge that all things pertaining to godliness are given to us by divine power, according to verse two and three. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Pet. 1:2, 3). There is an interaction by the Holy Spirit between Scriptural knowledge and its application to every day living. Surely it was this that Paul had in mind when he said, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but not much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12, 13).

Now, we want to observe several verses that connect the end result of maturity with the means used to gain it. "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Ja. 1:4). Patience is one of the fruits of the Spirit. The object of verse four is that we become perfect. The word, "perfect", is modified and explained by the last three words of the verse, "entire, wanting nothing." Notice how verse three makes temptation the cause of patience. "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (Ja. 1:3). A child of God who is of full age will be patient, because he has been exercised in temptation. Verse 2 teaches that because temptation works in us the fruit of patience, we ought to look upon temptation with joy; as a means to an end: an end of completeness and maturity. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (Ja. 1:2). Now here is where the Word of God enters into the matter. There can be no joy in temptation unless we are able to resist it obediently. The Word of God educates us as to how we should act, react, and enteract. The Word admonishes, exhorts, reproves, rebukes, encourages, and comforts. "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are

able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:14-17). Whoever looks into the Word of God, and abides therein, shall receive the strengthening growth which keeps him headed toward the end of the course, called maturity. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Ja. 1:25). The gifts of the Spirit come from God through His ordained means of striving in the arena of faith. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Ja. 1:17).

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (I Tim. 6:11, 12).

Another characteristic of one who is fully aged is the fruit of the Spirit, love. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I Jn. 4:17, 18). A person who is of full age will be one that loves his brethren and manifests patience toward them. But we can't love anyone until we first love the Lord. A true love of the Lord casts out that nagging fear that hinders our obedience. And if we are mature enough to properly love the Lord, we will be obedient; even to the discomfort of our flesh. So it is the fruit itself that becomes not only the result and evidence of maturity, but the God given means to obtain it. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. 4:15). If we know the truth and speak the truth, then we will grow in grace. But the difficulty is that babes have a limited view of the truth. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, an cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14). To remedy this problem, God ordained the church with the necessary means of teaching and preserving the truth. "And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13). Through the ministry of the church, we grow in grace and knowledge as we continue to sit under the preaching of the Word, and as the Spirit applies

it to our heart. Faithfulness to God and His Word will cause us to mature into fully grown Christians.

POLICY

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Baptist and a half is that there is only one of me. If I had another half, it would be Baptist too." The editor can truly say that these are his sentiments. Some say that they are Baptists, but not fool Baptists. The editor is what many call a fool Baptist. Some say they are Baptists, but not narrow Baptists. The editor is a narrow Baptist because the truth is always narrow. The truth is just one definite thing; not two or three things. Some say they are Baptists, but not fighting Baptists. The editor is a fighting Baptist because the Scriptures command him to put on the whole armor of God and to fight the good fight of faith. They also command him to contend earnestly for the once delivered faith, and the Greek word for "contend earnestly" means to fight against every assailant of the faith. Besides these, there are many other Scriptures also that enjoin warfare for truth and righteousness. We will remember, however, that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (II Cor. 10:4). We will do all our fighting with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Also we will remember that victory for the truth is wrought "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

This paper will strive to make more Baptists and better Baptists. If it is right (in the full sense of the term) for one person to be a Baptist, it is the duty of all saved persons to be Baptists. And if it is right for a person to be a Baptist, it is his duty to be the best possible Baptist.

2. This paper is an independent Baptist paper. This means that the paper is under no control, except that of the Holy Spirit. It means that it is bound by no obligation, except an obligation to be true to the Word of God. It means that it owes no allegiance and loyalty to anything, or anybody, except the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God. It means that the paper will be free to print the whole truth without fear or favor. This paper is as independent as the first Baptist was when he came crying in the wilderness and calling the people to prepare the way of the Lord. Our mission is essentially the same as his.

3. This paper will be unifying tie between real Baptists all over the English-speaking part of this continent. We have adopted nothing less than the entire English-speaking part of this continent as our field. We will expect and solicit support from real Baptists all over this field. And in this day of looseness and compromise real Baptists (those who love the whole truth in sincerity) should be drawn closer together, and should realize their unity more fully. Therefore, one of the distinctive missions of this paper will be to work untiringly and systematically toward these ends. This paper is undertaking to provide a medium of expression for real Baptists all over our adopted field. In this issue we are carrying an article from a pastor in Michigan, one from a

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

(Read Revelation 3:1-6).

All will agree that there is something wrong with the churches of today. Even though we may differ widely as to that which we think may be wrong, yet all will agree that our churches lack spiritual power, and that there is something dreadfully wrong today. Human judgment would give a varied answer — just as varied as there might be individuals to discuss the question. Only Divine judgment is to be trusted.

Ephesus, the first of the seven churches which we studied, had left its first love. Jesus said: "thou has left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4).

Smyrna was being opposed by the devil on the outside. We read, "...behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days..." (Rev. 2:10).

Pergamos was composed of a mixed membership — the world and the church were sadly mixed up together.

Thyatira was run by a woman. By her public teaching, she was violating the Scriptures.

Thus, in each of these four churches which we have studied, there was a definite wrong. Today, we have each of these wrongs in practically all of our churches. We have those who have left their first love. We have those churches which have taken a doctrinal stand, and are being fought by the devil. Still again we have churches like Pergamos, where the world and the church are mixed together. And then, to be sure, we have thousands of churches like Thyatira which are run by the women.

And now today, we are studying the church at Sardis.

I. It is rather interesting to notice the location of the city of Sardis. The city was the capital of Lydia. It was the residence of King Croesus, whose name was a synonym of enormous wealth. When Cyrus captured the city Sardis in 548 B.C., he found riches amounting to over \$600,000,000. This city of Sardis through the years of its history, was always noted for its wealth.

Wherever you find wealth, you naturally find worldliness. That is true of any wealthy church. It is ordinarily true of any wealthy Christian, though thank God, there are exceptions.

The city of Sardis was no exception, and the church of Sardis was no exception. In this wealthy city of Sardis, where wealth, heathenism, and idolatry flourished, it was natural that a church thus located, would be absorbed in the acquisition of wealth, and swallowed up with worldly mindedness. With such environment, it is no wonder that we find the church of the city of Sardis as we have read it in God's Word.

II. The revelation which Jesus gave of Himself to this church at Sardis, is interesting. In fact, to me, perhaps the most interesting thought of this series of sermons is the way in which Jesus revealed Himself to these churches. Listen to His revelation of Himself to this church at Sardis: "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a

name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3:1).

You will notice that He reveals Himself as the one "that hath the seven spirits of God." The number seven in the Scriptures is usually taken as the number of completion. This would seemingly indicate then that Jesus revealed Himself to this church as the one who was the possessor of spiritual perfection.

What a mighty revelation then of Jesus concerning Himself. This church at Sardis



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was very imperfect. Therefore, He revealed Himself as the possessor of spiritual perfection to show them how that they might become perfect, and to reveal to them how utterly imperfect they were.

Furthermore, He revealed Himself as the one who had the seven stars in His hand. Of course, the seven stars represent the pastors. Therefore Jesus revealed Himself to this church as the one who was the pastor's protector through whom He might give the Holy Spirit unto the church.

In preaching this series of sermons, no thought has blessed my soul quite as much as the thought concerning the way in which Jesus has revealed Himself to each of these churches; and in this particular revelation, I am indeed impressed thereby. To this imperfect church, He revealed Himself as the one who was perfect, and as the one who stood ready to protect the pastor through whom He would give the Holy Spirit unto the church.

III. In each of these churches, before we look for the condemnation, we always look for the commendation. We like to see that for which Jesus commended each of the churches. Of all four churches which we have studied thus far, Jesus has commended them, among other things, first of all for their works; for of each of these we have read in the very beginning of His commendation, "I know thy works." However, when we come to the church at Sardis, there is a departure from the usual form — there is no commendation for Sardis relative to her works. In fact, there is not commendation at all. There was simply nothing for which Jesus could commend them.

What a pitiable plight! Here was a church for which Jesus did not have a single word of commendation. Yet, beloved, I am sure that there are many today similar to it. I am positive that if the Lord Jesus were to take a cross-section of our state, or of the United States, and were to carefully consider our churches, concerning hundreds and thousands of them, there would be no commendation for them. Many of our churches are

just like Sardis. Many of our preachers are like Sardis. Many of our church members are like the church members at Sardis, and therefore, would not deserve any commendation from the Lord Jesus.

IV. If it be shocking to you to learn that Jesus had no commendation for the church at Sardis, it will doubtless be just as shocking to learn that He had no condemnation for the church at Sardis. There was nothing for which to commend them, and there was nothing for which to condemn them.

Jesus said that this was a dead church, and therefore He did not censure it. There is no need in this world to censure a corpse. A few years ago, I visited a railroad man one afternoon, and censured him sharply for his misconduct. He went out on the road to work that night, and was killed instantly. The next morning as I stood beside his body, I did not censure him then, for there was no need in doing so. He was past the realm of censure. The day before, while he was yet alive, he was a fit subject for censure; but when dead it was useless — there is no need to censure a corpse. Thus Jesus dealt with the church at Sardis. There was no commendation, and no condemnation. It was purely a dead church.

How like many of our churches, and preachers, and church members today. Sardis ought to stand as a warning for every unscriptural preacher, worldly church member, and heterodoxical church organization, in view of the fact that it received no commendation and no condemnation.

V. By carefully observing this church in the light of the balance of these seven churches, we have an interesting description given us concerning this one.

It is described first of all, as a church of no heresies. Ephesus and Pergamos had the heresy of church bosses — the Nicolaitanes, with which to contend. Thyatira, being run by a woman, had the heresy of a feminist to confront it; but at Sardis, there were no heresies. There was not even life enough to produce heresies. The season of winter is usually looked upon as symbolic of death. May I remind you that neither weeds nor flowers grow in winter. Likewise, while the truth does not flourish in a dead church, at the same time, neither do heresies.

Searching for a description of this church, we find furthermore that there were no immoralities mentioned. At Pergamos there was much immorality. The world was mixed up with the church. Yet, Sardis' evil was deeper. It wasn't flagrantly corrupt as Pergamos — it was merely dead.

We also have a negative description of the church in that there were no persecutions. Philadelphia, the church which we will study next Sunday morning, was being strongly persecuted. Smyrna, the second of these churches, was also suffering much persecution. But not so at Sardis, for it was so dead that there was not even enough life in it to be obnoxious to this worldly, heathen, idolatrous town of ungodly riches.

Finally, this dead church is described as a deceived church, for they had a name that they

were alive, and yet were dead. They were not only dead, but were actually deceived as to their condition.

Did you ever read Coleridge's "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner"? If so, then you recall that the ship was manned by a crew of corpses. Each of the sailors was a corpse. The captain himself was a corpse. In fact, the entire ship was thus manned. I never did visit the church at Sardis, but I have seen the same in many of our modern churches.

I have seen a church come together for its worship services when a choir of spiritually dead church members stood up in mockery to sing, "I love thy kingdom, Lord."

I have seen a church pastored by a spiritually dead preacher. I have seen spiritually dead deacons, and spiritually dead church members — yes, I have seen first century Sardis often in these twentieth century times.

Thus, this church is described — no heresies, no immoralities, no persecutions, deceived, and dead. Does it describe your church? Does it describe you as a preacher? Does it describe you as a Christian? I feel that the description of Sardis is a description of many of our modern churches today.

VI. The question logically arises: "What's wrong with this church?" We have already said that it was dead. And what is it that makes a dead church today?

One thing that makes them dead was that their works were imperfect. Listen; "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God" (Rev. 3:2).

When I say that this was a dead church, I do not want you to think that they closed their doors, nailed up the windows, and left the building for bats, and owls and birds. It was not thus, for services still went on at Sardis; but the services were not satisfactory to God. Works were done, but their works were not pleasing to God. They had a reputation that they were alive, and they lived on this reputation. God said that their works were imperfect, which would indicate that their praying did not please Him. Their giving was not as He commanded. Their preaching was not satisfactory. Their singing was not for the glory of God, and their works were not those which God wanted.

This church was dead then first of all, because of its imperfect works. Another thing that made them dead was that they were forgetful hearers. "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard" (Vs. 3).

It isn't enough for a person to just hear the truth — he must act upon it. Listen: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

Here is a Greek phrase which means that a Christian is not just to be a doer — he is to be a word-doer. James declares that many hear but are not doers. Listen again: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

This wasn't true of the church

at Sardis. They listened to the preacher's words, and then forgot them. They knew far more than they were willing to do. This, beloved, is characteristic of the great percentage of modern Christians; for the biggest part of them know far more than they are willing to do.

This church at Sardis was not only dead because of its imperfect works, and because the members were forgetful hearers; but it was also dead because of their defiled lives. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments". (Vs. 4).

This statement which declares that there were some in Sardis that were not defiled, would also indicate that there were many that were defiled. Many of these folk had failed to live above the world. They engaged in the worldly pleasures of sin, and practiced the world's tricks of trade; and in this town that was given over to wealth and heathenism, they were defiled in their living.

Many a church member, sad to say, is an exact duplicate today. Yet, God's ideal is far different. Listen: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14).

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

This church was also dead because there was a lack of the Word of God. "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent..." (Vs. 3).

The fact that they were forgetful hearers indicates a definite lack of the Word of God. I am personally convinced that in most of our churches, our greatest need today is more of the Scripture. I often remember that Mr. Spurgeon said that he once saw a Bible that had been eaten through from cover to cover by a worm. I, too, beloved, want to devour the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation. But these folk at Sardis were dead simply because of their lack of God's Word.

I say then, beloved, concerning this church that it had too big a name — a name for life, and yet it was dead, and that it was dead due to the fact that their works were imperfect, they were forgetful hearers, they were defiled as to their living, and there was a lack of the Word of God. These things make dead churches today. Many a church, and many a Christian, and many a preacher is dead today for the same reasons.

VII. While this chapter does not reveal it, the Bible elsewhere makes the revelation that there is a terrible curse for the dead church, or church member. Jesus made such a revelation when He was dealing with the religious professors of His day.

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REVELATION

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Here it is: "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23:13).

What a terrible pronouncement upon a dead preacher, or a dead church member, or a dead church. Jesus said that such a one does not go to heaven himself, and worse than that, he is standing in the way of others to keep them from entering.

This then is the curse on Sardis. It is the curse on any dead church, or church member, or preacher today.

VIII. Our blessed Master offered this church some counsel — in fact, some rich advice. This advice centers around four words. In verse three, He said, "remember." That is don't forget the better days for you in your Christian experience.

The second word of His counsel was "repent." This was the same word He used relative to the church at Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira. God not only demands that sinners repent in order that they might go to heaven, but He also demands that Christians repent of their sins that they might live in fellowship with Him.

The third word of His counsel is "retain," for He counselled them to "hold fast," or retain what little good there was about them.

The fourth word was "watch." He said "be watchful" (Vs. 2). That is, watch against the devil, your past failures, and your future temptations.

With these four words of counsel, Jesus advised this church at Sardis. They were to remember the better days of their early Christian experience. They were to repent of their sins. They were to retain what little there was that was worthwhile, and they were to be watchful relative to the future.

What splendid advice for each church today. Wonderful would it be if all of our churches and preachers would but heed these words of Jesus, and would make His counsel to become words of wisdom and advice which they might heed in their own experience.

IX. To this church, the same as to all the balance, Jesus gave His promise to those who were overcomers. His first promise was that they were to be clothed in white. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy" (Rev. 3:4).

Sardis is, as I have said, a dead church, and as you know, black is symbolic of death. To those who might overcome, Jesus gave them a promise that they would be clothed in white.

His second promise was that their names were secure in the Lamb's book, for He reminded them that they would never be blotted out... "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life..." (Rev. 3:5).

A final promise to those who overcome at Sardis was that they were to have their names confessed before God and the angels. "...I will confess his name before my Father, and

before his angels" (Rev. 3:5).

What an honor this is just to have one's name confessed before God and the angels. It reminds us as we look backward to the time when Ruth came from the land of Moab, and was married to Boaz. You remember that Boaz, the richest man in all the land, took this beggar girl, and said, "I have purchased her to be my wife." What an honor this was to Ruth to be thus confessed before the entire city. This promise to the overcomers at Sardis looks forward, just like the promise of Boaz to Ruth looks forward in type to that day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall confess each of us as being His child in the presence of God the Father, and the holy angels. Listen to Jesus' own words: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God" (Luke 12:8).

I tell you, beloved, this is an honor worth working for. What difference does it make if men do speak reproachfully of us now? Why should we worry, though the truth we preach is often trampled beneath the feet of swine? Why should we worry though men do not honor us for the things for which we stand? Some day we shall be honored by Christ in the presence of both God the Father and the angels. And in conclusion: May God grant that the church of which I am pastor shall never become a successor to the church at Sardis; and may the church of which you are pastor, or member — may it never become a successor to the church at Sardis.

Yet, may I speak a word in closing to the unsaved. You, beloved, are spiritually dead too. But I thank God that you can be made alive through Christ. Listen to this Scripture: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14).

You remember Lazarus who was dead, and had been buried four days, came forth from the tomb when Jesus commanded him to do so. It was Jesus who brought dead Lazarus back to life, and today, lost friend, I thank God that Jesus can bring you to life, and can make you a child of God this very hour.

May God bless you, and may you receive Him as your Saviour!

POLICY

(Continued from Page 6)

pastor in Kentucky, and one from a pastor in Florida. We will endeavor to continue a similar distribution of writers. To this end we solicit the help of our brethren. If you have a Scriptural, edifying message for the people, let us have it.

4. The one main objective of this paper is to bring about a clearer understanding of, and more exact obedience to the whole Word of God.

In this, as in other things, we will differ from denominationally owned papers. The chief objective of denominationally owned papers is the advocacy and defense of denominational programs, policies, institutions, agencies, and organizations. But our appeal will be ever to "the law and to the testimony."

The greatest prosperity of Baptists depends not upon the efficiency of their methods nor upon their loyalty to a man-made program; but upon their loyalty to the whole truth both

in doctrine and in practice. This is our greatest need. There is no sound basis for co-operation other than the Word of God. We will seek to promote co-operation and unity, but only on the above mentioned basis. We are certain this is the kind of paper our people need, and we have the conviction that it is the kind a goodly number of them want.

5. This paper is to be an open forum for discussion in light of Scripture. This is one of our special characteristics. We will not demand that a man agree with us before we will allow him to use the columns of this paper. But permit us to add that the truth, as God gives us to see it, will be safeguarded. When we feel sure that there has been any considerable or important departure from the truth by any writer, we will always point it out and meet it with the Scripture. And, while we will use it in extreme cases only, yet we must reserve the right to reject any article when we feel led of the Lord to do so. To those who are jealous for the truth (as all of us ought to be), we wish to say that we will feel a more acute responsibility for the teachings of this paper than we would feel for that which might be preached in the pulpit of a church over which the Lord had set us; for that which is written down in black and white, so that it may lie constantly before the reader, is capable of doing more evil than the spoken word. But we believe the best way to oppose prevalent heresy through a paper is to let the heresy come to the light and then meet it with Scripture. Thus intelligent beliefs are wrought in the hearts of believers. God has allowed heresy to come into the world because its presence has a strongly confirming influence upon believers in the truth, because it furnishes the needed stimulus for study of the truth, and because it makes the truth stand out more prominently by providing a background for it. We believe this item of our policy and program is sound, and think it will prove beneficial. It will increase interest in the paper and extend its usefulness. We have adopted it after much prayerful deliberation. And, here and now, we want to extend an urgent invitation to those who dissent from any position taken by this paper to set forth their views in these columns. You will receive fair and brotherly treatment. (See present editor's note at conclusion).

6. This paper will magnify the dignity, authority, and importance of the local church as the body of Christ and the custodian of His commission.

Paul reproached the Corinthians for despising the church (I Cor. 11:22). The opposite of despising the church is magnifying it. This we shall ever endeavor to do. Baptists seem to be slowly realizing that they have minimized the church in missionary activities. It is an indisputable fact that Baptists in practice have taken the commission of Christ out of the hands of the churches. But, thanks be unto God, there is the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees. There is a movement back toward the Book among Baptists. This paper will cultivate and encourage this movement. It will advocate that churches are directly responsible for that which they support, and that, consequently, they should make up their own budget; also that they should support only that

which is Scriptural and right.

7. This paper will be thoroughly missionary and evangelistic to the core. It will be glad to give place to the report of sound missionary work. Space will be given frequently to the discussion of topics and Scriptures that relate to missions. We have no patience with anti-missions in any form or kind. We will ever seek to cultivate and encourage Scriptural missionary zeal and activities. Also from time to time we will carry appropriate messages to the lost.

8. This paper will stand strongly against the six most deadly, damaging, injurious isms that war against the once delivered faith, viz. modernism, unionism, Armianism, feminism, secretism and postmillennialism.

These isms are all rank enemies of truth and righteousness. They all make for loose doctrine and living. We will wage an incessant warfare against them.

9. This paper will stand against all worldliness and will seek ever to hold up the Scriptural ideal of holy living for believers.

Our position and policy in this connection are well defined by the following Scriptures: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable (or spiritual) service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2). For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).

10. This paper will stand for the whole counsel of God and against every unscriptural doctrine and practice.

This item has really been covered in a general way in the foregoing paragraphs, but we wish here to give it special emphasis to remove all grounds for suspicion that we will stand only for a few pet ideas. We will ride no hobbies. We have no grievances to satisfy. We will seek to declare the whole counsel of God as God leads and enables us to do it. And this item covers everything we have no thought to mention particularly. Our contention for these things will include, nor merely the letter, but also the Spiritual reality that underlies them.

If this policy and program appeals to you, we urge you to send in your subscription immediately. We need your subscription now more than we will need it later. Subscribe now!

Editor's note: The policy and program of this paper is still the same except for number 5 above. This paper will not be used as an "open forum" for discussion relative to that which is contrary to God's Word. We will demand that a man, in the main, agree with us before he will be allowed to use the columns of this paper. We plan to meet heresy with the Word of God, but we do not plan to let heresy come to light through or in this paper. I do not believe

that printing of views contrary to what we believe would be beneficial to this paper. It might create interest, but I do not believe it would extend this paper's usefulness. I do not extend any invitation to those who dissent from the positions taken in this paper to send forth their views for this paper. We will try to give others fair and brotherly treatment, but we will not print their views in The Baptist Examiner. I have not read greatly in the early issues of The Baptist Examiner. However, in what I have read for several years in this paper, I do not believe that it has been the policy of the paper to do much, if any printing of dissenting views. I suspect that, if this policy was every carried out in this paper, it has been long since discarded. Anyway, please note that this is not the policy of The Baptist Examiner at present. Comments welcomed.

SUMMARY

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be a pervert and an apostate. But if he seemed to fail with the Jews, it is evident that he was abundantly successful with the Gentiles. These turned from their idols to serve the living God, and their turning was so remarkable that the Jews charged Paul and Silas with turning the world upside down.

In those days there was a good deal of practical atheism abroad, and therefore the wonder was not so much that men left their idols, as that they turned unto the living God. It became a matter of talk all over the city, and the Jews in their violence helped to make the matter more notorious; for the mobs in the street and the attack upon the house of Jason, all stirred the thousand tongues of rumor. Everybody spoke of the sudden appearance of three poor Jews, of their remarkable teaching in the synagogue, and of the conversion of a great multitude of devout Greeks, and of the chief women not a few. It was no small thing that so many had come straight away from the worship of Jupiter and Mercury to worship the unknown God, who could not be seen, nor imaged; and to enter the kingdom of one Jesus who had been crucified. It set all Macedonia and Achaia wondering; and as with a trumpet-blast it aroused all the dwellers in those regions. Every ship that sailed from Thessalonica carried the news of the strange ferment which was moving the city; men were caring for religion, and were quitting old beliefs for a new and better faith. Thessalonica, situated on one of the great Roman roads, the centre of a large trade, thus became a center for the gospel. Wherever there are true conversions there will be more or less of this kind of sounding forth of the gospel. It was especially so at Thessalonica; but it is truly so in every church where the Spirit of God is uplifting men from the dregs of evil, delivering them from drunkenness, and dishonesty, and uncleanness, and worldliness, and making them to become holy and earnest in the cause of the great Lord. There is sure to be a talk when grace triumphs. This talk is a great aid to the gospel: it is no small thing that men should have their attention attracted to it by its effects; for it is both natural and just that thoughtful men should judge of doctrines by their results; and if the most

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SUMMARY

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beneficial results follow from the preaching of the Word, prejudice is disarmed, and the most violent objectors are silenced.

You will notice that in this general talk the converts and the preachers were greatly mixed up: — "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you." I do not know that it is possible for the preacher to keep himself distinct from those who profess to be converted by him. He is gladly one with them in love to their souls, but he would have it remembered that he cannot be responsible for all their actions. Those who profess to have been converted under any ministry have it in their power to damage that ministry far more than any adversaries can do. "There!" says the world, when it detects a false professor, "this is what comes of such preaching." They judge unfairly, I know; but most men are in a great hurry, and will not examine the logic of their opponents; while many others are so eager to judge unfavourably, that a very little truth, or only a bare report, suffices to condemn both the minister and his doctrine. Every man that lives unto God with purity of life brings honour to the gospel which converted him, to the community to which he belongs, and to the preaching by which he was brought to the knowledge of the truth; but the reverse is equally true in the case

of unworthy adherents. Members of churches, will you kindly think of this? Your ministers share the blame of your ill conduct if ever you disgrace yourselves. I feel sure that none of you wish to bring shame and trouble upon your pastors, however careless you may be about your own reputations. Oh, that we could be freed from those of whom Paul says, "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, which god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." When these are in a church they are its curse. The Thessalonians were not such: they were such a people that Paul did not blush to have himself implicated in what they did. He was glad to say that the outsiders "show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven."

Quitting this line of thought, I would observe that these two verses struck me as being singularly full. Oceans of teaching are to be found in them. A father of the church in the first ages was wont to cry, "I adore the infinity of Holy Scripture." That remark constantly rises from my lips when I am studying the sacred Word. This Book is more than a book, — it

is the Mother of books, a Mine of truth, a Mountain of meaning. It was an ill-advised opinion which is imputed to the Mahom-medans at the destruction of the Alexandrian Library, when they argued that everything that was good in it was already in the Koran, and therefore it might well be destroyed. Yet it is true with regard to the inspired Word of God, that it contains everything which appertains to eternal life. It is a revelation of which no man can take the measure, it compasses heaven and earth, time and eternity. The best evidence of its being written by an Infinite mind is its own infinity. Within a few of its words there lie hidden immeasurable meanings, even as perfume enough to sweeten leagues of space may be condensed into a few drops of otto of roses.

The first part of my text contains a summary of Christian experience; and the second part contains a body of divinity. Here is ample room and verge enough. It is not possible to exhaust such a theme.

I. The first part of the text contains A SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE; "What manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven." Here we have in miniature the biography of a Christian man.

It begins, first, with the entering in of the word, — "What manner of entering in we had unto you." When we preach the word you listen, and, so far, the word is received. This is a very hopeful circumstance. Still, the hearing with the outward ear is comparatively a small matter; or, at least, only great because of what may follow from it. The preacher feels even with some who listen with attention that he is outside the door; he is knocking, and he hopes that he is heard within; but the truth is not yet received, the door remains shut, an entrance is not granted, and in no case can he be content to speak with the person outside the door; he desires an entrance for the Word. All is fruitless until Christ entereth into the heart. I have seen the following: the door has been a little opened, and the man inside has come to look at the messenger, and more distinctly to hear what he may have to say; but he has taken care to put the door on the chain or hold it with his hand, for he is not yet ready to admit the guest who is so desirous of entertainment. The King's messenger has sometimes tried to put his foot within when the door has stood a little open, but he had not always been successful, and has not even escaped from a painful hurt when the door has been forced back with angry violence. We have called again and again with our message, but we have been as men who besieged a walled city, and were driven from the gates; yet we had our reward, for when the Holy Spirit sweetly moved the hard heart, the city gates have opened of their own accord, and we have been received joyfully. We have heard the hearty cry, "Let the truth come in! Let the gospel come in! Let Christ come in! Whatever there is in Him we are willing to receive; whatever He demands we are willing to give; whatever He offers us we are glad to accept. Come and welcome! The guest-chamber is prepared. Come and abide in our house for ever!"

The truth has its own way of entrance; but in general it first affects the understanding. The man says, "I see it: I see how God is just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. I see sin laid on Christ that it may not be laid on me, and I perceive that if I believe in Jesus Christ my sins are put away by His atonement." To many all that is wanted is that they should understand this fundamental truth; for their minds are prepared of God to receive it. Only make it plain and they catch at it as a hungry man at a piece of bread. They discover in the gospel of our Lord Jesus the very thing for which they have been looking for years, and so the truth enters by the door of the understanding.

Then it usually commences to work upon the conscience, conscience being the understanding exercised upon moral truth. The man sees himself a sinner, discovering guilt that he was not aware of; and he is thus made ready to receive Christ's pardoning grace. He sees that to have lived without thinking of God, without loving God, without serving God was a great and grievous crime: he feels the offensiveness of this neglect. He trembles; he consents unto the law that it is good, and he allows that, if the law condemns him, he is worthy to be condemned.

When it has thus entered into the understanding and affected the conscience, the Word of God usually arouses the emotions. Fear is awakened, and hope is excited. The man begins to feel as he never felt before. His whole manhood is brought under the heavenly spell; his very flesh doth creep in harmony with the amazement of his soul. He wonders and dreads, weeps and quivers, hopes and doubts; but no emotion is asleep; life is in all. When a tear rises to his eye he brushes it away, but it is soon succeeded by another. Repentance calls forth one after another of these essentials. The proud man is broken down; the hard man is softened. The love of God in providing a Saviour, the unsearchable riches of divine grace in passing by transgression, iniquity, and sin, — these things amaze and overwhelm the penitent. He finds himself suddenly dissolved, where aforetime he was hard as adamant; for the word is entering into him, and exercising its softening power.

By-and-by the entrance is complete; for the truth carries the central castle of Man soul, and captures his heart. He who once hated the gospel now loves it. At first he loves it, hoping that it may be his, though fearing the reverse; yet owning that if it brought no blessing to himself, yet it was a lovable and desirable thing. By-and-by the man ventures to grasp it, encouraged by the Word that bids him lay hold on eternal life. One who in digging his land finds a treasure, first looks about for fear lest some one else should claim it; anon he dares to examine his prize more carefully, and at length he bears it in his bosom to his own home. So is it with the gospel; when a man finds it by the understanding, he soon embraces it with his heart; and, believe me, if it once gets into the heart, the arch-enemy himself will never get it out again. Oh, that such an entrance with the gospel might commence the spiritual life of all here present who are as yet unsaved.

What comes next? Well, the second stage is conversion. "They themselves show of us

what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned from idols to serve the living and true God." There came a turning, a decided turning. The man has come so far in carelessness, so far in sin and unbelief; but now he pauses, and he deliberately turns round, and faces in that direction to which hitherto he had turned his back. Conversion is the turning of a man completely round, to hate what he loved and to love what he hated. Conversion is to turn to God decidedly and distinctly by an act and deed of the mind and will. In some senses we are turned; but in others, like these Thessalonians, we turn. It is not conversion to think that you will turn, or to promise that you will turn, or to resolve that you will turn, but actually and in very deed to turn, because the Word has had a true entrance into your heart. You must not be content with a reformation; there must be a revolution: old thrones must fall, and a new king must reign. Is it so with you?

These Thessalonians turned from their idols. Do you tell me that you have no idols? Think again, and you will not be quite so sure. The streets of London are full of fetich worship, and almost every dwelling is a joss-house crammed with idols. Why, multitudes of men are worshipping not calves of gold but gold in a more portable shape. Small circular idols of gold and silver are much sought after. They are very devoutly worshipped by some, and great things are said concerning their power. I have heard the epithet of "almighty" ascribed to an American form of these idols. Those who do not worship gold may yet worship rank, name, pleasure, or honour. Most worship self, and I do not know that there is a more degrading form of worship than for a man to put himself upon a pedestal and bow down thereto and worship it. You might just as well adore cats and crocodiles with the ancient Egyptians as pay your life's homage to yourselves. No wooden image set up by the most savage tribe can be more ugly or degrading than our idol when we adore ourselves. Men worship Bacchus still. Do not tell me they do not: why, there is a temple to him at every street corner. While every other trade is content with a shop or a warehouse, this fiend has his palaces, in which plentiful libations are poured forth in his honour. The gods of unchastity and vice are yet among us. It would be a shame even to speak of the things which are done of the flesh are served even by many who would not like to have it known. We have gods many and lords many in this land. God grant that we may see, through the preaching of the gospel, many turning from such idols. If you love anything better than God you are idolaters: if there is anything you would not give up for God, it is your idol: if there is anything that you seek with greater fervour than you seek the glory of God, that is your idol, and conversion means a turning from every idol.

But then that is not enough, for some men turn from one idol to another. If they do not worship Bacchus they become teetotalers, and possibly they worship the golden calf, and

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THE CONVERSION OF HARLAND BOOHER

by T.B. Freeman

I wanted to tell you something about the conversion of my brother-in-law, Harland Booher, God, in His sovereign grace effectually called Harland to repentance and saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ December 13, 1950.

Harland was a hardened sinner, and while he was in Japan working for the United States Government, an airplane hanger fell on his back, and crushed his spinal cord. Consequently, he was paralyzed from his waist down until the day of his death.

In spite of his handicap, he was a courageous man, and operated his own plane and automobile. He suffered tremendously, but remained hardened in his sin. He seemed to have little or no concern for the salvation of his soul.

One day while visiting him, I asked him if he had experienced any conviction of sin, to which he replied that he had not as he knew of. I told him I was going to pray and ask God to send conviction upon him. He laughed as if I were joking. I set to daily prayer for him. My sister, Kathleen, my mother, and others including my brother, Wallace, prayed very definitely for Holy Spirit conviction to break his adamant heart, and to incline his obstinate will.

To the best of my knowledge it was about six weeks later when I visited him. I asked him if he had experienced any conviction of sin, to which he replied that there was something disturbing him and awaking him in the night with much fear, and that he now feared to meet God in judgment. I then presented the Gospel of Christ to him taking God's Word and showing him the way to be saved, to right there and then put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was approximately two months as to the best I can remember, when one morning my sister, Kathleen called me on the phone and said, "Harland wants to talk to you. I think he has some good news for you." I went to his home, and as he came into the living room in his wheelchair, I saw a different countenance on his face. It was obvious that God had visited him and lifted the burden of sin. He told me then how the Lord had saved him about two o'clock that morning. He awoke under conviction of sin and in great distress of mind and soul. He wanted to call me, but my sister told him that it wasn't necessary for me to be there, that he only needed Christ, and to trust Christ as his Lord and Saviour, and he would be saved. As he was telling me this, the tears of joy were rolling down his face. He then told me that through faith in Christ he was saved, and now all was well with his soul.

I had fellowship with Harland in Christ, and read God's Word and prayed with him a number of times before he went to be with Christ. There was evidence of his conversion and fruit manifested at times, with some measure of growth in grace.

Harland's Christian life on earth was shortened by his physical infirmities. The time came for his departure, and by the grace of God, I preached his funeral at the Grace Baptist Church, Bristol, Virginia.

We praise our Lord Jesus Christ for saving Harland Booher's soul, for being pleased to bless His precious Word, and for answering the many prayers prayed for his salvation. Oh! for more praise to the glory of His grace.

(Copied from the Park Ridge Baptist Messenger, March 1975 issue).

SUMMARY

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become covetous. When men quit covetousness they sometimes turn to profligacy. A change of false gods is not the change that will save: we must turn unto God, to trust, love, and honour Him, and Him alone.

After conversion comes service. True conversion causes us "to serve the living and true God." To serve Him means to worship Him, to obey Him, to consecrate one's entire being to His honour and glory, and to be His devoted servant.

We are, dear friends, to serve the "living" God. Many men have a dead God still. They do not feel that He hears their prayers, they do not feel the power of His Spirit moving upon their hearts and lives. They never take the Lord into their calculations; He never fills them with joy, nor even depresses them with fear; God is unreal and inactive to them. But the true convert turns to the living God, who is everywhere, and whose presence affects him at every point of his being. This God he is to worship, obey, and serve.

Then it is added, to serve the true God; and there is no serving a true God with falsehood. Many evidently serve a false god, for they utter words of prayer without their hearts, and that is false prayer, unfit for the true God, who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. When men's lives are false and artificial they are not a fit service for the God of truth. A life is false when it is not the true outcome of the soul, when it is fashioned by custom, ruled by observation, restrained by selfish motives, and governed by the love of human approbation. What a man does against his will is not in truth done by himself at all. If the will is not changed the man is not converted, and his religious life is not true. He that serves the true God acceptably, does it with delight; to him sin is misery, and holiness is happiness. This is the sort of service which we desire our converts to render: we long to see rebels become sons. Oh the sacred alchemy of the Holy Spirit, who can turn men from being the slaves of sin to become servants of righteousness!

Carefully notice the order of life's progress: the entering in of the Word produces conversion, and this produces service. Do not put those things out of their places. If you are converts without the Word entering into you, you are unconverted; and if professing to receive the Word you are not turned by it, you have not received it. If you claim to be converted, and yet do not serve God, you are not converted; and if you boast of serving God without being converted, you are not serving God. The three things are links which draw on each other.

A fourth matter follows to complete this Christian biography, namely, waiting — "To wait for his Son from heaven." That conversion which is not followed up by waiting is a false conversion, and will come to nothing. We wait, dear brethren, in the holy perseverance of faith; having begun with Christ Jesus our Lord we abide in Him; we trust, and then we wait. We do not look upon salvation as a thing

which requires a few minutes of faith, and then all is over; salvation is the business of our lives. We receive salvation in an instant, but we work it out with fear and trembling all our days. He that is saved continues to be saved, and goes on to be saved from day to day, from every sin and from every form of evil. We must wait upon the Lord, and renew the strength of the life which He has imparted. As a servant waiteth on her mistress, or a courtier upon his king, so must we wait upon the Lord.

This waiting also takes the shape of living in the future. A man who waits is not living on the wages of to-day, but on the recompenses of a time which is yet to come; and this is the mark of the Christian, that his life is spent in eternity rather than in time, and his citizenship is not of earth but of heaven. He has received a believing expectancy which makes him both watch and wait. He expects that the Lord Jesus will come a second time, and that speedily. He has read of His going up into heaven, and he believes it; and he knows that He will so come in like manner as He went up into heaven. For the second advent he looks with calm hope: he does not know when it may be, but he keeps himself on the watch as a servant who waits his lord's return. He hopes it may be to-day, he would not wonder if it were to-morrow, for he is always looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Son of God. The coming of the Lord is his expected reward. He does not expect to be rewarded by men, or even to be rewarded of God with temporal things in his life, for he has set his affection upon things yet to be revealed, things eternal and infinite. In the day when the Christ shall come, and the heavens which have received Him shall restore Him to our earth, He shall judge the world in righteousness, and His people with His truth, and then shall our day break and our shadows flee away. The true believer lives in this near future; his hopes are with Jesus on His throne, with Jesus crowned before an assembled universe.

The convert has come to this condition, he is assured of his salvation. See how he has been rising from the time when he first held the door ajar! He is assured of his salvation; for Paul describes him as one who is delivered from the wrath to come; and therefore he looks with holy delight to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Once he was afraid of this, for he feared that He would come to condemn him; but now he knows that when the Lord appears his justification will be made plain to the eyes of all men. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." And so he cries, "Even so, come Lord Jesus!" He would hasten rather than delay the appearing of the Lord. He groans in sympathy with travailing creation for the manifestation of the sons of God. He cries with all the redeemed host for the day of the Saviour's glory. He could not do this were he not abundantly assured that the day would not seal his destruction, but reveal his full salvation.

Here, then, you have the story of the Christian man briefly summed up, and I think you will not find a passage of merely human writing which contains so much in so small a compass. It has unspeakable wealth pack-

ed away into a narrow casket. Do you understand it? Is this the outline of your life? If it is not, the Lord grant that His Word may have an entrance into you this morning, that you may now believe in Jesus Christ and then wait for His glorious appearing.

II. I shall want you to be patient with me while I very briefly unfold the second half of this great roll. Here even to a greater degree we have multum in parvo, much in little; A BODY OF DIVINITY packed away in a nutshell. "To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

To begin my body of divinity, I see here, first, the Deity of Christ. "To wait for his Son." "His Son." God has but one Son in the highest sense. The Lord Jesus Christ has given to all believers power to become the sons of God, but not in the sense in which He, and He alone, is the Son of God. "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" "When he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world

he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him." The Eternal Filiality is a mystery into which it is better for us never to pry. Believe it; but how it is, or how it could be, certainly it is not for you or for me to attempt to explain. There is one "Son of the Highest," who is "God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before all worlds," whom we with all our souls adore, and own to be most truly God; doing so especially every time in the benediction we associate Him with the Father and with the Holy Spirit as the one God of blessing.

Side by side with this in this text of mine is His humanity. "His Son, whom He raised from the dead." It is for man to die. God absolutely considered dieth not; He therefore took upon Himself our mortal frame, and was made in fashion as a man; then willingly for our sakes He underwent the pangs of death, and being crucified, was dead, and so was buried, even as the rest of the dead. He was truly man, "of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting": of that we are confident. There has been no discussion upon that point in these modern times, but

there was much questioning thereon in years long gone; for what is there so clear that men will not doubt it or mystify it? With us there is no question either as to His Deity, which fills us with reverence; or His manhood, which inspires us with joy. He is the Son of God and the Son of Mary. He, as God, is "immortal, invisible"; and yet for our sakes He was seen of men and angels, and in mortal agony yielded up the ghost. He suffered for our salvation, died upon the cross, and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, being verily and truly man.

Notice a third doctrine which is here, and that is the unity of the Divine Person of our Lord; for which the apostle speaks of Christ as God's Son from heaven, and as one who had died, he adds, "even Jesus": that is to say, one known, undivided Person. Although He be God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ. There is but one Person of our blessed and adorable Lord: "one altogether; not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person." He is God, He is man; perfect God

(Continued on Page 11 Column 1)

A STUDY OF YOUR PASTOR AND HIS MINISTRY PART I

by Frank Beck

In one of the art galleries in Europe a young man stood enrapt before a portrait done by one of the great masters. As he looked his eyes filled with tears. Another visitor to the gallery noticed him standing there and said, "Young man, what troubles you?" Still looking at the painting, the youth replied, "I can't paint like that." Then his face brightened. "But, thank God," he said, "I am a painter, too."

Undoubtedly your pastor feels the same way about his ministry among you as pastor and preacher. He is humbled by his insufficiency and infirmities (II Cor. 4:5). Nevertheless, with Paul he thanks God that he has been put into the ministry (I Tim. 1:12).

The purpose of these writings is to assist churches in a better understanding of their shepherds (under Christ, I Peter 5:1-4) — and to a greater love for them (I Thess. 5:12-13).

The author has pastored five churches in his ministry of twenty-three years: one in the midst of three coal mining camps in Kentucky; one, a country church in the hills of Tennessee; another, a city church in Kingsport, Tennessee; another, a village church in beautiful upper New York State; and the one he now pastors in Boston, Mass.

There are at least three areas in your pastor's life you should consider: his preparation, his personality, and his problems.

Your Pastor's Preparation:

First of all he must have experienced God's call to salvation (II Tim. 1:9). Sad to say, not all pastors have this most important of all requirements. John Wesley did not have saving faith at the beginning of his missionary labors. In our day John A.T. Robertson, bishop of Woolwich, England, author of the highly controversial book, "Honest to God," says in it of himself: "I belong to the 'once-born' type" (p. 27, The Westminster Press). A modern

Nicodemus! (St. John 3:10). In the day of judgment there will be many prophets or preachers and healers and miracle workers who will hear Christ's "Depart from me, for I never knew you!" (Matt. 7:21-23). Your pastor must have experienced salvation.

Secondly, he must have experienced God's call to service, particularly in this instance, the service of the pastorate. For "no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:4). Thus Paul was "called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God" (I Cor. 1:1). As was the Prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5). Even before he was born. "This was according to the eternal purpose which (God) has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11, RSV).

This call to preach comes from Jesus Christ through His spoken Word (St. Mark 3:13-14).

It not only comes through the Word of God, this call is accompanied by the work of God! The one called into the pastorate is "made willing" in the day of God's power (Psalm 110:3), for God works in him to will and do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). Your pastor may have argued against the call to preach as artfully as did Moses (Ex. 3:4), but he found the desire to declare the Gospel increasing until he was forced to cry out: "Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16). Your pastor was so called of God.

Thirdly, the pastor must have experienced God's creative act in fashioning him into such a vessel of honor. "None but He who made the world can make a minister of the Gospel!" (John Newton). Austin Phelps was not the last one to feel the importance of his vocation, "The work of a pastor of a Christian Church looms up before me as one of awful grandeur, from which any man may reasonably

shrink." Long before him the Apostle Paul had penned: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our sufficiency is from God (RVS); who hath made us able ministers of the new testament..." (II Cor. 3:5-6). See how this is emphasized by Paul again in Ephesians 3:7-12.

Therefore it has taken the will of God to call, the Word of God to convert, and the work of God to create a pastor for you. And this is just the beginning. There is always the continuation of it. The preparation to preach and pray and pastor your church week by week.

Besides this it takes the wisdom of God to continue this preparation of the pastor for you week after week. No, we are not at the moment thinking of the sermons and prayers and pastor programming, but his own person.

He must be Ezra. He must prepare his heart "to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances" (Ezra 7:10, AVS).

Your pastor must prepare his heart, not only his head.

He must do this by searching out the law of Jehovah with the desire to do it himself! Then he is prepared to teach others. If he cannot be a good Laban and say to you: "I have learned the blessing of God by experience that the LORD hath blessed me" (Gen. 30:27), how can he bless you? How hollow will be his preaching. Your shepherd can only say: "Such as I have give I thee" (Acts 3:6).

But when he has been melted and tempered in the fires of God's holiness and sharpened in the discipline of God's law, he will be a pointed arrow in the bow of the Almighty to God's Church, or a keen-edged trowel in the hand of the One who builds His Church against the gates of hell — to slay or to build up, as the need may be. He has been prepared by Jehovah!

SUMMARY

(Continued from Page 10)

and perfect man; and, as such, Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man. There have been mistakes about this also made in the church, though I trust not by any one of us here present. We worship the Lord Jesus Christ in the unity of His divine Person as the one Saviour of men.

Furthermore, in our text we perceive a doctrine about ourselves very plainly implied, namely, that men by nature are guilty, for otherwise they would not have needed Jesus, a Saviour. They were lost, and so He who came from heaven to earth bore the name of Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins." It is clear, my brethren, that we were under the divine wrath, otherwise it could not be said, "He hath delivered us from the wrath to come." We who are now delivered were once "children of wrath, even as others." And when we are delivered it is a meet song to sing, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." We were guilty, else we had not needed a propitiation by the Saviour's death: we were lost, else we had not needed one who should seek and save that which is lost; and we were hopelessly lost, otherwise God Himself would not have shared our nature to work the mighty work of our redemption. That truth is in the text, and a great deal more than I can mention just now.

But the next doctrine, which is one of the fundamentals of the gospel, is that the Lord Jesus Christ died for these fallen men. He could not have been raised from the dead if He had not died. That death was painful, and ignominious; and it was also substitutionary: "for the transgression of my people was he stricken." In the death of Christ lay the essence of our redemption. I would not have you dissociate His life from His death, it comes into His death as an integral part of it; for as the moment we begin to live, we, in a sense, begin to die, so the Man of Sorrows lived a dying life, which was all preparatory to His passion. He lived to die, panting for the baptism wherewith He was to be baptized, and reaching forward to it. But it was especially, though not only, by His death upon the cross that Jesus put away our sin. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Not even the tears of Christ, nor the labours of Christ could have redeemed us if He had not given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice. "Die He, or justice must," or man must die. It was his bowing the head and giving up of the ghost which finished the whole work. "It is finished" could not have been uttered except by a bleeding, dying Christ. His death is our life. Let us always dwell upon that central truth, and when we are preaching Christ risen, Christ reigning, or Christ coming, let us never so preach any of them as to overshadow Christ crucified. "We preach Christ crucified," some have put up as their ensign, "We preach Christ glorified"; and we also preach the same; but yet to us it seems that the first and foremost view of Jesus by the sinner is as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Therefore do we preach first Christ crucified, while at the same time we do not forget that

blessed hope of the child of God, — namely, Christ in glory soon to descend from heaven.

The next doctrine I see in my text is the acceptance of the death of Christ by the Father. "Where is that?" say you. Look! "Whom he raised from the dead." Not only did Jesus rise from the dead, but the Father had a distinct hand therein. God as God gave the token of His acceptance of Christ's sacrifice by raising Him from the dead. It is true, as we sometimes sing,

"If Jesus had not paid the debt,
He ne'er had been at freedom set."

The Surety would have been held in prison to this day if He had not discharged his suretyship engagements, and wiped out all the liabilities of his people. Therefore it is written, "He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." In His glorious uprising from the dead lies the assurance that we are accepted, accepted in the Beloved: the Beloved being Himself certainly accepted because God brought Him again from the dead.

Further on, we have another doctrine, among many more. We have here the doctrine of our Lord's resurrection, of which we spake when we mentioned the acceptance of His offering. Christ is risen from the dead. I pray you, do not think of the Lord Jesus Christ as though He were now dead. It is well to dwell upon Gethsemane, Golgotha, and Gabbatha; but pray remember the empty tomb, Emmaus, Galilee, and Olivet. It is not well to think of Jesus as forever on the cross or in the tomb. "He is not here, but He is risen." Ye may "come and see the place where the Lord lay," but He lies there no longer; He hath burst the bands of death by which He could not be holden; for it was not possible that God's holy One could see corruption. The rising of Jesus from the dead is that fact of facts which establishes Christianity upon an historical basis, and at the same time guarantees to all believers their own resurrection from the dead. He is the firstfruits and we are the harvest.

Further, there is here the doctrine of His ascension: "to wait for his Son from heaven." It is clear that Jesus is in heaven, or He could not come from it. He has gone before us as our Forerunner. He has gone to his rest and reward; a cloud received him out of sight; He has entered into his glory.

I doubt not our poet is right when He says of the angels —

"They brought his chariot from on high,

To bear him to his throne;
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried,

"The glorious work is done!"

That ascension of his brought us the Holy Spirit. He "led captivity captive, and received gifts for men," and He gave the Holy Ghost as the largess of His joyous entry to His Father's courts, that man on earth might share in the joy of the Conqueror returning from the battle. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in," was the song of that bright day.

But the text tells us more: not only that He has gone into heaven, but that He remains there; for these Thessalonians were expecting him to come "from heaven," and therefore

He was there. What is He doing? "I go to prepare a place for you." What is He doing? He is interceding with authority before the throne. What is He doing? He is from yonder hill-top looking upon His church, which is as a ship upon the sea buffeted by many a storm. In the middle watch ye shall see him walking on the waters; for He perceives the straining of the oars, the leakage of the timbers, the rending of the sails, the dismay of the pilot, the trembling of the crew; and He will come unto us, and save us. He is sending heavenly succours to his weary ones; He is ruling all things for the salvation of his elect, and the accomplishment of his purposes. Glory be to his blessed name!

Jesus is in heaven with saving power, too, and that also is in the text: "His Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come." I alter the translation, for it is a present participle in the case of each verb, and should run, "Even Jesus, delivering us from the wrath coming." He is at this moment delivering. "Wherefore also He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." He is away in heaven, but He is not divided from us; He is working here the better because He is there. He has not separated himself from the service and the conflict here below; but He has taken the post from which He can best observe and aid. Like some great commander who in the day of battle commands a view of the field, and continues watching, directing, and so winning the fight, so is Jesus in the best place for helping us. Jesus is the master of legions, bidding his angels fly hither and thither, where their spiritual help is needed. My faith sees him securing victory in the midst of the earth. My God, my King, thou art working all things gloriously from thy vantage ground, and ere long the groans and strifes of battle shall end in Hallalujahs unto the Lord God Omnipotent! Christ's residence in the heavens is clearly in the text.

Here is conspicuously set forth the second coming, a subject which might well have occupied all our time, — "To wait for his Son from heaven." Every chapter of this epistle closes with the Second Advent. Do not deceive yourselves, oh ye ungodly men who think little of Jesus of Nazareth! The day will come when you will change your minds about him. As surely as He died, He lives, and as surely as He lives He will come to this earth again! With an innumerable company of angels, with blast of trumpet that shall strike dismay into the heart of all his enemies, Jesus comes! And when He cometh there shall be a time of judgment, and the rising again of the dead, and "Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." He may come tomorrow! We know not the times and the seasons; these things are in the Father's keeping; but that He comes is certain, and that He will come as a thief in the night to the ungodly is certain too. Lay no flattering unction to your souls as though when He was crucified there was an end of Him; it is but the beginning of his dealings with you, though you reject Him. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his

wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

A further doctrine in the text is that Christ is a deliverer — "Jesus delivering us from the wrath coming." What a blessed name is this! Deliverer! Press the cheering title to your breast. He delivereth by Himself bearing the punishment of sin. He has delivered, He is delivering, he always will deliver them that put their trust in Him.

But there was something to be delivered from, and that is, the coming wrath, which is mentioned here. "Oh," saith one, "that is a long way off, that wrath to come!" If it were a long way off it were wise for you to prepare for it. He is unsafe who will be destroyed most certainly, however distant that destruction may be. A wise man shall not be content with looking as an ox doth, as far as his eye can carry Him, for there is so much beyond, as sure as that which is seen. But it is not far-off wrath which is here mentioned; the text saith, "who delivereth us from the wrath coming"; that is, the wrath which is now coming; for wrath is even now upon the unbelieving. As for those Jews who had rejected Christ, the apostle says of them in the sixteenth verse of the next chapter, "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." The siege of Jerusalem, and the blindness of Israel, are a terrible comment upon these words. "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." It is said of every one that believeth not in Christ Jesus, that "the wrath of God abideth on Him." "God is angry with the wicked every day." This wrath abideth upon some of you. It is the joy of

believers that they are delivered from this wrath which is daily coming upon unbelievers, and would come upon themselves if they had not been delivered from it by the atoning sacrifice.

There is evidently in the text the doctrine of a great division between men and men. "He hath delivered us." All men have not faith, and therefore all men are not delivered from wrath. To-day there is such a division; the "condemned-already" and the "justified" are living side by side; but ere long the separation shall be more apparent. While some will go away into everlasting punishment, the people of God will be found pardoned and absolved, and so will be glorified for ever.

Lastly, there is here the doctrine of assurance. Some say, "How are you to know that you are saved?" It can be known; it ought to be known. "Surely," cries one, "it is presumption to say that you are sure." It is presumption to live without knowing that you are delivered from wrath. Here the apostle speaks of it as a thing well known, that "Jesus delivers us from the wrath coming." He does not say "if," or "perhaps," but he writes that it is so, and therefore He knew it, and we may know it. My brother, you may know that you are saved.

"That would make me inexpressibly happy," cries one. Just so, and that is one of the reasons why we would have you know it this day. God saith, "He that believeth in Him hath everlasting life," and therefore the believer may be sure that he has it. Our message is, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." God make you to escape that dreadful doom! May you be delivered from the wrath which is coming for Jesus' sake. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder Don Pennington of Warren, Ohio is a very fine, sound, and able preacher. He will be preaching for the Victory Baptist Mission in Courtland, Virginia, November 3rd-6th. This mission meets in the home of Frank Parrish at Route 1, Box 384 in Courtland. Brother Parrish's phone number is (804) 653-2616. Services will be at 7:30 p.m. Readers are encouraged to pray for, and if possible, attend these services. This mission is under the authority of Grace Baptist Church in Stanleyville, N.C. Brother Pennington will then preach for the Grace Baptist Church of Stanleyville, N.C. November 7th-9th. This church is pastored by Elder Gene Kiger, another very able and sound preacher. Readers in this

area are encouraged to attend these services.

The editor will be preaching in a revival meeting with the West Griffin Baptist Church of Griffin, Georgia, November 3rd-9th. The church is located at 1614 Piedmont Road. Services will be at 7:30 nightly and at the regular times on Sunday. On Saturday, Nov. 9th, there will be a fellowship beginning at 9:30 a.m. with the editor and others preaching in the morning and afternoon. Lunch will be served by the church. This church is pastored by Elder John Pruitt, a very fine preacher and pastor. The editor would delight to meet readers in the area at this meeting. Pray for this meeting.

APPRECIATED LETTERS

Dear Sir:

Please renew my subscription. I hate to miss a paper as I learn a great deal from the Baptist Examiner. Sincerely, Lena M. Wilkinson, Poca, W. Va.

Dear Bro. Wilson:

I read your paper that a friend subscribed for a year for me. I enjoyed it so much I would like to have it for my own family to enjoy. May the Lord continue to bless you and all who read your informative and Scriptural paper. A.L. Hickman Hobbs, N. Mexico.

Dear Bro. Wilson:

I enjoy reading the Forum, especially the issues that deal with daily living. Also my appreciation to all the writers who take the time to study and answer the questions. Praying that the God of all grace will continue to bless your ministry there. In Christ, Ray Blakely, Mansfield, Ohio.

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