

THE LITTLE FOXES

by Waldo Whiddon
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Sin is always there. It creeps in when we are the most unaware of any danger lurking even close, because most of the time we are not on the alert as we should be. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes." (Song of Solomon 2:15). There are two types of Christians. I believe that we certainly act the part of carnality when we are prone to sit on the bench of indifference, or do nothing, and let the little



Waldo Whiddon

foxes play havoc with the vineyard. Beloved, it is the little sins that hold us back when we seem to be indifferent or, shall we say, only luke warm toward our Christian duties, and seem to take pleasure in doing the ordinary things of the world that we were doing before conversion. "I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5). Brethren, we are

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STUDIES IN
I JOHN

by Clyde Everman

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (I John 2:6).

In verse 5 John tells us that to the extent that we are obedient to God's Word, is a measure of our love for Christ and our fellowship with Him. In verse 6 he states the same thing in a little different form. The phrase "in him" refers to Christ. John used the phrases, "in him", "abide in him," "to know him,"



Clyde Everman

to "love him" as the apostle Paul uses "in Christ." To be a Christian means to have a personal relationship with God in Christ. Knowing Him, loving Him, and abiding in Him is the meaning of the eternal life which we have in Christ.

Verse 6 tells us that one who claims to "abide in him" should

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THE FIRST
SERMONS
ON SOVEREIGN
GRACE

by Gene Abbott
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The Arminian might properly protest to the parallelism I'm about to expand upon from the discourse concerning wheat and tares. If it were the only discourse I could find, and if it were the only Scripture I could find, and if I could find nothing better than figurative evidence; he might protest that this isn't the true thrust of this discourse, and I'd be hard-pressed to refute that claim if I could not back-it-up with other Scripture.

Matthew 13:24-30 "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which



Gene Abbott

sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder

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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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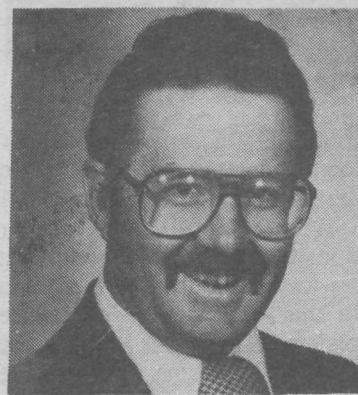
POTENTIAL TRAGEDIES OF 1988

by Sam Wilson

Ecclesiastes 7:16: "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?"

I realize that my text may seem strange to many when considering my subject of greatest tragedies. I use this text because the tragedies that I mention are mostly such that we can avoid if we are obedient to the things of God. Years ago there was a publication put out at the first of the year that listed the greatest tragedies of the preceding year. This would list such things as plane, train, and mass automobile accidents. It would list tornadoes, hurricanes, and volcanoes. It would list mass murders and other renowned crimes as being the worst tragedies of the past year. I want to make some comments on some tragedies that would never make this publication, but are probably more tragic than the above mentioned things. The tragedies that I mention are those that effect the souls of men. The soul is always more important than the physical body or the land that

might be destroyed in the above mentioned tragedies. If we could get men to understand the importance of the soul, we would be able to avoid many of the tragedies that I will mention. I do not have reference here to just lost people. There are a multitude of saved people who do not understand the importance of the soul. If we did, we would not live



Sam Wilson

the careless lives we often do. If we did, we would be more careful about protecting the soul.

I want to state now that the tragedies I mention are often times

avoidable. There is nothing we can do about a tornado or a mass murder. There are things we can do to prevent the tragedies that I will mention. If there are things we can do, and we don't do them; then we have a tragedy brought on by a tragedy. We have a tragedy brought on by ourselves to ourselves. May God enable us to prepare for and fight off these tragedies.

Let me give three definitions of tragedy. 1. A drama depicting the downfall of a great man. 2. A drama depicting the struggle between a man and a superior being. 3. A disastrous event. These definitions from Webster will show that the things I mention in this article are indeed tragedies.

I. Let us first notice some possible tragedies concerning the pulpits of America.

Concerning the pulpits of America; there are tragedies in the pulpits of false churches. Let me explain to you that I am not overly concerned with the pulpits in these false churches. I am concerned for them only in that

(Continued on Page 3 Column 2)

FLAT BROKE

Harold Brunson

"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him the most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou has rightly judged" (Luke 7:41-43).

While I was a full time

evangelist, one of my most embarrassing moments happened early one morning at beautiful Love Field, Dallas, Texas, in the restaurant there. I had just closed one revival campaign and had to catch a late plane from a distant city in order to get to Dallas, Texas, to begin another campaign with Brother D. C. Dunson and his congregation. When I arrived in Dallas that morning I was hungry, and I ordered the No. 1 breakfast which was about \$1.25. I don't

think I have ever enjoyed a breakfast any more than that one. The waitress left the bill, and when I got to the cashier, I discovered what money I had left was in checks on churches, far distant from Dallas, and I had only 90 cents in change. I frantically ran through every pocket, and to my disappointment couldn't find any more than the 90 cents. The cashier must have thought I had an honest face because when I

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ADDITION AND
SUBTRACTION: A
MATHEMATICAL
ROAD TO HELL

Doug Newell
Assistant Pastor

Revelation 22:18-20, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophesy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take



Doug Newell

away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen... Even so, come Lord Jesus."

This is an interesting portion of the Word of God. These

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

THE LAW IS GOOD PART I

"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). I am well aware of the fact that the word "law" is used in Scripture with varying meanings. We cannot adopt one definition of the word and apply it to every usage thereof. One of the Biblical uses of this word refers to the Ten Commandments. That is the way I am using the word in this sermon. For some years now there has been a loud outcry against the law of God and much opposition thereto. Men insist that the Ten Commandments have

nothing to do with our day and age. There was a time when the law of God occupied a large place in the preaching from the pulpit. The Ten Commandments were often expounded and applied. Children in Sunday School, early memorized these Commandments. Christian homes taught and honored the Ten Commandments. Start fifty years ago and go back through church history, and you will find a far different attitude toward the law of God from that of this wicked and anti-nomian age.

One of the reasons for this is

the overdoing of dispensationalism. I verily believe that there are some dispensational distinctions in the Word of God. I consider myself a moderate dispensationalist. I am well aware that my belief about the law of God will disqualify me from being accepted as a dispensationalist by many. So be it. The Scofield Bible type of dispensationalism tells us that the Ten Commandments were never given to any except Israel, and to them only for a definite period of time - from Sinai to Calvary. I believe

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LAW

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that the Bible teaches that they were given to all men of all time. I am sure that this teaching of a multitude of dispensationalists is to a large extent responsible for the present day attitude toward the Ten Commandments.

A second reason for this is an over emphasis, rather a perversion, of the doctrines of grace in the salvation of the sinner. Many men have turned the grace of God into disgrace by their perversions thereof. Men have turned the liberty of grace into a license for sin. Of course, salvation is solely, only, totally by the free, sovereign, effectual, and eternal grace of God. But this glorious truth does not do away with the law of God. The law of God has its proper place in the eternal Word of the living God.

Salvation does not deliver one from the obligation to live right. All men, saved or unsaved, are always thus obligated. If anything, salvation increases that obligation. Love and gratitude to the redeemer surely increases one's obligation to live according to God's laws. Salvation gives the desire to live right. If you do not have this desire, you are not saved. Salvation also brings the power of the Holy Spirit, enabling one to live right. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom.8:4). "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye

shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal.5:16). God has given us His Holy Spirit, not that we might live as we please, not that we might disregard His holy law; but that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us in our daily lives. God saves us by grace, not that we might ignore His holy law, but that we might have the desire and power to obey it. I have said that salvation does not relieve us of the obligation to live right. Now, God's standard of right living is His holy law. We are not under the law for salvation - no one ever has been; but we are under the law as the rule of life for the believer.

Let us notice a few things about the Ten Commandments. "...but thy commandment is exceeding broad"



Joe Wilson

(Psa.119:96). The Ten Commandments are an admirable summary of all sin and of all holiness. A full and proper exposition of the law would set this forth. I doubt that there is a sin that is not included in the condemnation of this law. I doubt that there is a virtue, or an attitude or act of holiness that is not included in the Ten Commandments. They cover the whole field of that which is sin. They cover the whole field of that holiness demanded by God. I believe that the only ones who will argue with this are those who have not yet dug into the depths of this portion of God's Word. If we will study our Lord's exposition of some of these Commandments in His Sermon on the Mount, we will see this. He was not there opposing the law of God; He was expounding it. He was opposing men's weak and false applications of the law. He was setting forth the breadth and depth of God's law. Men of old time might say that the seventh commandment only condemned the literal act of adultery. Jesus explained that it condemned the thought, the desire, anything that led to it, and anything that came from it. If we will take His exposition of some of these laws and apply it to all of them, my thesis will be established.

The Ten Commandments are hard against sin. God knows that, in this weak and compromising age, one of our greatest needs is to take a hard-nosed attitude about sin. We have all but destroyed ourselves with our soft, easy-going, criminal rights, compromising, pity the poor criminal, attitude about crime. We are doomed to destruction if we do not come back to a hard attitude about crime. But know this: Society may change its standards, human laws and courts may change in their attitude as to what is sin and what to do about it; but God's Word never changes. The Ten Commandments are still the proper standard of right and wrong.

Each Commandment includes all kindred, contributing, and consequent sins. Each

Commandment goes back of the literal act and involves the thought and desire that leads thereto. It involves anything that contributes to the sin. It involves anything that results from the sin committed. Let me illustrate. The seventh commandment condemns the literal act of adultery. It also condemns any and every sex sin. It condemns lust as it wells up in the heart. It condemns pornography with its pictures and writing about sex sin. It condemns a woman or man dressing in a manner that promotes sinful sex desires. It condemns acts, such as kissing, hugging, or fondling that often lead to adultery. It condemns producing, promoting, or watching T.V. programs and movies that make light of sex sin, or motivate one to sex sins, or arouse sexual passions. Wow! It condemns the broken hearts and homes and other consequences that come from adultery. Yes, God's law is exceeding broad. Now apply this type of exposition to each of the Ten Commandments, and you will begin to understand the reach of God's law.

Each Commandment includes the opposite virtues. Not having any other gods includes that the Lord God shall be your God, and that you shall worship and obey Him. Not taking His name in vain involves that you shall reverently and properly use His name in praise, prayer, and testimony. Not lying involves that you shall always speak the truth. Not killing implies that you should do all in your power to preserve the health and lives of others. Not committing adultery involves the having of a good, loving, and proper sex life with your properly married companion. Keeping the Lord's Day as a proper day dedicated to Him involves the using of the other days to provide for the needs of self and family. There is a "work" law implied in the "rest" law. To make a complete list of the sins condemned and the holy virtues commanded in the law of God would cover the entire fields of sin and of holiness.

The two commandments of Matthew 22:37-40 do not do away with the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20:1-17; rather they are a summary thereof. To love the Lord with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength involves the keeping of Commandments one through four. To love one's neighbor as himself involves the keeping of Commandments five through ten - search and see.

Love does not do away with the Ten Commandments, but is the necessary motive for keeping them. "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom.13:9-10). This is a greatly misunderstood Scripture. Many interpret it thusly: love is my only law; if I have love, I do not need any laws to direct my life. The true meaning is that love is that which gives the proper motive for the keeping of the law, and that love is involved in the true keeping thereof. Love is

commanded by the law. It is not all that is commanded. The law tells me what true love requires me to do. The wife loves her husband, but she needs to know what he expects of her as ways in which she shows her love. Children love their parents, but the parents need to set forth things that they require of their children; and in doing those things, the children show their love. Love is the power in the engine that drives the locomotive forward. Laws are the tracks along which the power moves the train. Tracks without

power, and the locomotive remains still. Power without tracks, and the locomotive wrecks havoc as it moves forward.

The law is good. Who can even imagine what this world would be if all men obeyed the Ten Commandments of God? Why, we would not need to die and go to heaven; we would already have "days of heaven upon the earth" (Deut.11:21). One would think that even unsaved people would admit that this world would be a much better place in which to

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FROM THE EDITOR

This should be in the first TBE of 1988. Last year was one of many trials and heartaches. It was also a year of many blessings. The heartaches did not relate to the ministry of The Baptist Examiner. It was a good year for the paper. Circulation increased, and we had (maybe) more letters than usual concerning blessings received therefrom.

Now, a new year is here. I hope it will be a good year for this paper. We would like to greatly increase our circulation. If the paper is a blessing to one, it could be such to a thousand. If its message is needed by one, it is needed by a thousand. I do ask all our readers to take it upon themselves, as a personal mission, to help us increase the number of readers of The Baptist Examiner this year. If each reader would renew his or her subscription this year, and send in one subscription for someone else, this would double our circulation.

We send many hundreds of papers overseas without any money coming back for them. We desire to do this as long as we can, but, of course, we must have the help of others to do this. We would like to greatly increase this in 1988.

We would truly like to obtain the new equipment I have written about before. It would be good if we could do that this year. Remember that any purchased equipment will belong entirely to Calvary Baptist Church. We feel that such equipment would help us in many ways in improving T.B.E. It should also decrease our printing bills for the paper. If you desire to help in this, please mark your gifts so we will know this.

The Baptist Examiner is a great paper. It has greatly blessed many lives. But there is much room for improvement therein. I know this as well, if not better, than anyone else. I probably know the areas in which improvement is needed as well as anyone. But I will be happy to prayerfully consider any suggestions for improvement that any of our readers may send us. Feel free to do this. I praise the Lord that I do realize that I do not know it all; and I am willing to receive, and even desirous of, constructive criticism.

I hope to do all I can to improve the paper this year. However, to do this as I would like to, I need the help of many others. I especially need men to write for the paper. I am weary of saying this, as you likely are of reading it; nevertheless, it remains true. Preachers could extend their ministries, be a blessing to more people, open doors for future ministries, and be a great help to me by writing articles for T.B.E. This ministry could prove especially helpful to young preachers. The experience of the discipline of writing a sermon now and then might even benefit one's pulpit ministry. Preachers, help me. Church members: if your pastor is a good preacher, and his ministry blesses you; urge, even insist, that he write some sermons for T.B.E. Of course, I am referring to preachers who, in the main (and I mean very close), believe as we do.

The Baptist Examiner is a missionary work, as much so as any other. We are not at all ashamed to ask others to support us as a part of their mission work. We do a great mission work through this paper. We send the truth to a multitude of people who have no other available means of learning these truths. Of course, I mean besides their Bibles. If you could sit here and read my mail, or if you could listen in on my telephone conversation you would readily agree that this is a great mission work. I get a few such that severely criticize us. I get a few who request that we cancel their subscriptions. But the vast majority of my calls and letters, relative to The Baptist Examiner, tell me of the great blessings received therefrom. We have gospel sermons in this paper. We have articles urging people to obtain Scriptural Baptism and thereby join a true, Scriptural church. We teach people the truth about the church and the ordinances. We try to teach the whole counsel of God in the pages of this paper. So, by any criterion, we are a mission work, worthy of the support of true Missionary Baptist Churches.

May it please the Lord to grant T.B.E. a good and spiritually beneficial ministry this year. May the Lord bless our readers in every way as it pleases Him. Some of us will be gone to glory before this year is over, and we all might be by way of the rapture. Some who read this may be in hell before the year is up. Oh, dear friend, if you are unsaved; hear the gospel. Jesus Christ is the virgin born Son of God. He came into this world. He lived a perfect and sinless life. He died on the cross for the sins of all those who will ever trust in Him. He arose from the dead. He is coming again. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

We pray for those to whom we minister. We send forth each issue with prayer to God to bless it and use it greatly. Please pray for us here. Pray especially for me as I lead in this great ministry, assuming the responsibility therefor as to the paper's contents. I need God's wisdom, grace, and strength. Pray for the others who help me in sending you this paper. Pray for the men who write the material contained therein. Help us in any way that you can. You can send us subscriptions. You can send us helpful criticism. You may be able to help us financially. You can tell others about this paper. You can pray for us, and certainly this is the most important thing you can do. Will you please help the ministry of The Baptist Examiner this year? Yours for a great year in 1988.

LAW

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live if all men would keep the laws of God. I am sure that the unsaved man would like for everyone else to keep the law of God, even if he did not want to himself - except for those he wants to join him in sin. Certainly, any saved man will gladly admit that this world would be a wonderfully good place in which to live - much better than it now is - if men kept the Ten Commandments. This is so obvious as to be beyond dispute. Yes, all honest and thinking men must admit that the law is good.

With all this outcry against and opposition to the law of God, with all this pulpit seeking to do away with the law of God; I would like to ask a question: What is wrong with the Law? What is bad about the law? You preachers who seek to throw God's law into the waste basket of disuse, neglect, and oblivion: What is wrong with God's law. I challenge, any person who is against the law to tell me one single thing that is bad about one single Commandment of the Ten.

All the good laws that men have made have some connection with one or the other of the Ten Commandments. All the bad laws that men have made are in opposition to one or the other thereof. The law is holy and just and good and right; and there is nothing bad about any of it. It is all good, and well would it be for men if they would tenaciously adhere thereunto. I am not saying that any sinful man can perfectly obey God's law. I am not advocating salvation by the law. But I am adamantly saying that the law is good. Men often tell me that we are not under the law (totally misunderstanding that statement of Scripture). I always reply by asking them, "Which one can we break?" This usually puts them to stammering and stuttering, and they beat a hasty retreat or try to change the subject.

Certainly, we are not saved by the law. Who ever said we were? But, neither are we saved with a total disregard of the law. If there were no law, there would be no sin, and there would be no need of salvation. No law, no sin, no salvation; it is as simple as that. "...by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Without the knowledge of sin, there would never be the desire for salvation. Without the law there is no knowledge of sin. Therefore, without the law, there is no salvation. Men are not saved by the law. Neither are they saved without the law. One who has no understanding of the law, will have no understanding of salvation. He will not understand the need of salvation. He will not understand how salvation is wrought. He will not understand the way of salvation. Let us beware of pitting grace against law. They are not enemies, but friends. Grace saves in a way that meets all the demands of the law, and in a way that magnifies the law. Grace must save in such a way, or not save at all.

I see that I cannot finish this message in the space I like to allot to one article, so I will, God willing, continue and finish it in the next issue. May God bless you all.

POTENTIAL

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they affect the pulpits of true churches.

Whenever there is sin and scandal in the pulpits of false churches; this spills over to the pulpits of true churches. Though we hate the work of Jim Bakker never supported it in any way, our pulpits were still affected by his scandal. There were people in Gladwin who gloated over this scandal. They immediately gave their opinion that all churches and all preachers are money hungry crooks. It is a shame that the pulpits of good, sound churches have to be affected by this one man's sins; but every pulpit in America suffered shame and reproach from the world. Beloved, this is a tragedy. I have to suffer for this person's sins. I have all I can do to keep myself straight without being judged by the failures of another. Listen world: every pulpit in America is not corrupt. There are some good and godly men in these pulpits. Be careful how you judge these men or else face the consequences of not just offending these men, but of offending God.

I also mention that there is little esteem in many false churches' pulpits. The pulpits in Gladwin are oftentimes a disgrace to God. I am not saying all of them, but let me give you a few examples. There was a preacher who had about as bad a reputation and was about as disliked as any person in town. He was known to cheat, curse, and fight in the town athletic leagues. This man is gone from Gladwin now; but the choice to leave was his, not his church's. There is a preacher in Gladwin now who drinks about as much as anyone I know in the city. The worst language I can ever remember hearing at the little league fields came from this preacher. I was told by one of his members that he told his church that "he is not saved; he is just getting saved like the rest of them." At least he told the truth in the first part of that statement. After I performed a wedding in the Methodist church building; a leading member of that church came and told me that I had preached the first gospel in that church in a long time. She continued to tell me about the wicked actions of her pastor and said she doubted he was even saved. (Yet she still keeps on attending there.) It is not fair; but brethren, the pulpits of false churches often have a tragic effect on the pulpits of true churches. This is a good reason for us to be sure we keep our pulpits above reproach. It is not always our own actions that have a tragic effect on us.

Secondly; there is the tragedy of the pulpits of true churches. I hope I didn't give the impression above that our pulpits are above reproach. I did not mean to imply that we do not need to do some house cleaning of our own. I did not mean to imply that we do not hurt ourselves from time to time.

Beloved, we are not above scandal. Far too often we hear of sin in the pulpits of true churches. Too often we ignore this sin in our pulpits while degrading sin in the pulpits of others. Do not think for a moment that our pulpits are exempt from sin. We can fall just like anyone else. We can bring a tragedy to the pulpits of America. When we fall, it is the worst tragedy of all; because we are commissioned of God to lead His church in serving Him.

Beloved, this is a tragedy we can avoid. We may not be able to control the pulpits of other churches, whether they be in sound churches or false churches; but we can control our own pulpits. If we preachers will realize the dangers that lie before us. If we will recognize that we can fall into sin and thus bring tragedy upon the pulpit, then maybe we will start now preparing ourselves for any temptation that might come our way. May God help us to keep our pulpits free from tragedy. I might also mention that there is the possible tragedy of heresy coming into our pulpits. Far too often, when heresy comes into the pulpits, it spreads over the whole church. Churches: be warned, do not follow your pastor into heresy. Do not allow his tragic departure from the faith to bring tragedy on the whole church. It grieves me that there have been so many tragedies in our pulpits concerning heresy. I think sometimes we become proud, and in our pride we want to come up with a new doctrine that is not in the Bible. May we study and pray that God will always lead us into a deeper knowledge of the truth that we not bring the tragedy of heresy into the pulpits of true churches.

The third thing I mention about the pulpit is the tragedy of the empty pulpit. Beloved, it is frightening to look at the age in our pulpits. Many of the leading men in our circles are getting older and closer to that time when they will go to be with the Lord. I write this realizing that God is sovereign, and that these men could live a long time and some younger preachers die before them. It grieves me that there seems to be so few young men called into the ministry in our true churches. There is the possible tragedy of empty pulpits because death will invade our ranks. This is a sad thought to me. Many of these men have meant so much to me. They have been so much help to me in my ministry. I dread the day when I no longer have these men to help me in my work. There is the tragedy of the churches who want and need a pastor but cannot find one. The question could be asked; "Will there be a preacher shortage for churches or will there be a church shortage for preachers? Either wait is a tragedy for these pulpits to be empty.

The last thing I want to mention about the pulpit tragedy is some reasons why this is so tragic. First, we must realize that the pulpit is very important in God's plan. God has ordained the pulpit as the major way in providing spiritual food for His people. I am afraid that many churches will dry up if they have no pastor to preach to them. Many times division will creep into a church except there be a pastor in the pulpit. It is a shame to have saved people who are hungry and thirsty for God's Word, and yet they have no one to preach to them. Beloved, may we avoid this pulpit tragedy as long as we can.

II. The second tragedy I mention is that of the empty pews. Let us notice some reasons for the empty pews. First, we will have the tragedy of empty pews because of the possible death of faithful members. Many of our churches are getting an old look to them. Please don't think I am complaining about this, but I am concerned. Many of these people have been very faithful in serving God through the church. They

have been very faithful in attendance to God's house. I have a woman in my church who fits this description. You pray with us for Adeline Kern. She is afflicted with Alzhiemers Disease. This dear lady was a very faithful member to the church here in Gladwin. She was there in her seat for all services. I cannot remember this dear lady ever missing a service unless she was sick or out of town. She was as faithful in paying her tithe as anyone, even though she was on pension and social security. She did not complain or cause trouble in the church. She is now in a rest home, and people, I for one miss her. This is an example of the tragedy of the empty pew. I think of dear Brother Shepherd in Griffin Ga. He has meant so much to the church there. He is in a rest home and recovering from hip surgery. I don't know if he will ever be able to attend church again. Another example of the tragedy of the empty pews. I do want to pause here for a word of praise to the membership of the West Griffin Baptist Church. Beloved, these people are very faithful in taking care of and going to visit Brother Shepherd. There is one brother in the church who takes him stew every Friday and has lunch with him. They, as a church, love and care for this man, and I commend them for it. There is the fact that some of our dear members are going to die and go to be with the Lord. I know this is far better for them, but how we miss them. This is another example of the tragedy of the empty pews.

Another example of this tragedy is that there will be empty pews because of excluded members.

The members of true churches need to realize how important their membership is. Beloved, there is nothing worse than to be excluded from a true church of Jesus Christ. I am writing this article from Perry, Ga. This church is pastored by Brother Gordon Buchanan. I believe he told me that they have excluded around 90 people since he came here as pastor. Beloved that created the tragedy of a lot of empty pews, but it is a worse tragedy when God's churches do not practice discipline. The fact is that we are better off with empty pews than pews full of sin and neglect of the things of God. Still, this creates the tragedy of the empty pew.

HOW CAN I DEVELOP SELF-DISCIPLINE IN MY LIFE?

1. **Start small.** Start with your room. Clean it, then keep it clean. When something is out of place, train yourself to put it where it belongs. Then extend that discipline of neatness to the rest of your home.
2. **Be on time.** That may not sound very spiritual, but it's important. If you're supposed to be somewhere at a specific time, be there on time! Develop the ability to discipline your desires, activities, and demands so that you can arrive on time.
3. **Do the hardest job first.** Doing that will prevent the hardest jobs from being left undone.
4. **Organize your life.** Plan the use of your time; don't just react to circumstances. Use a calendar and make a daily list of things you need to accomplish. If you don't control your time, everything else will!
5. **Accept correction.** Correction helps make you more

Lastly, we have the tragedy of the empty pews because church members are unfaithful. Anyone can be faithful to the church. Everyone cannot preach, teach, or sing; but everyone can be faithful. Beloved, we need faithful members in our churches. Our churches are often small, and we miss those who do not attend regularly. It is a terrible sin against God for you to miss church. It is usually a premeditated and deliberate sin against God. It is also an insult to your pastor and to the other members of the church. Don't you be the guilty party in the tragedy of the empty pew.

III. The third thing we mention as a tragedy is the fact of sin in the life of the believer. It is high time the believers began to clean up their lives. Living right is also something that every child of God can do. The membership of true churches should especially strive to live right. First, there are the sins of neglect by our members; the sins of omission. The failure of saved people to engage in Bible reading, prayer, and witnessing is a great tragedy. People who could be so useful in God's work, and yet they are great failures. These sins of omission will always lead to greater sins of commission. There is the tragedy that sometimes God's people are overtaken with a besetting sin. Beloved, God can and will deliver you from any besetting sin you might have. He is faithful and will always provide a way of escape. Lastly, there is the tragic fact that some of God's people will just live a bad life. They will go to the wrong places, hang with the wrong crowd, and thus wind up doing the wrong things. Don't let yourself become a victim of this tragedy. This is a tragedy that you can do something about. You can prevent this type of tragedy from affecting you. Live godly. Be faithful in the things of God and you will not be a victim of this horrible tragedy of sin in the life of the believers.

IV. The fourth tragedy I mention is the tragedy of the broken home. One out of every two marriages will end in divorce. This is a solemn fact that we must face. This is a reality that we must be aware of. Don't think that this tragedy eludes Christian homes. I am thinking now of a couple with whom I used to be

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disciplined because it shows you what you need to avoid. Don't avoid criticism; accept it gladly.

6. **Practice self-denial.** Learn to say no to your feelings. Occasionally deny yourself things that are all right just for the purpose of mastering yourself. Learn to do what you know to be right even if you don't feel like doing it. Cultivating discipline in the physical realm will help us become disciplined in our spiritual lives.

7. **Welcome responsibility.** When you have an opportunity to do something that needs to be done, volunteer for it if you have a talent in that area. Welcoming responsibility forces you to organize your self. —Copied.

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT
THE BAPTIST EXAMINER—P.O. BOX 60—ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

What about preachers using "Reverend," "Doctor," or other titles? Does this dishonor the Lord?

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Psalm 111:9; **"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name."**

Let me answer the question about "reverend" first. I personally do not like for this title to be applied to ministers. I feel like this is a title that the Bible has ascribed to God, and we should leave it as such. I recognize that there are many good men who are called by this aim to dishonor God, but that does not mean that God is not dishonored by their using this title. The text says, "reverend is His name." We do not assume other names of God, and I do not feel like we should assume this one either. It is my understanding that this title is another invention of Catholicism. Beginning around 1449 the Catholic church began calling their bishops by reverend names. They have the very reverend; the right reverend, the most right reverend, and in reality none of them are reverend.

I see nothing wrong with the Biblical titles given to ministers. Two of these titles are "Elder" and "Bishop". I like the term "pastor" if it is being used by a member of the church I pastor, or if the office I represent is being spoken of by someone who is not a member. This is not a subject that I am vehement about, but, no, I do not think ministers should use the title "reverend."

The second subject mentioned is that of titles such as "Doctor." I guess some will say my answer has sour grapes in it because I am not a Doctor. I would not say that this title in any way dishonors God. I would say that I think it could be a detriment in our jobs as pastors in churches. I know that there are churches who are looking for Doctors to fill their pulpits. I feel this is very dangerous. It does not matter what kind of degree a preacher has as long as he has a "B.A." degree, I mean "Born Again." I know of some men who do not have any degrees at all, yet they are much more knowledgeable in the Scriptures than many who have their Doctorates. I am not slighting anyone who has worked hard in earning these degrees. I applaud you. I am saying that there are times when using this title can have a negative influence for you.

Some will always think you are boasting. Some will think you should know everything there is to know about the Bible. I believe you can be just as useful in God's work and possibly more useful if you do not use this title. The question arises; Why do you use it? Is it a matter of pride? Does it detract or add to the work of God? Using this title may offend some; not using it will offend no one. May God bless you all.

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There are only three titles given in the New Testament to designate the minister of the church. Those terms are bishop, elder, or pastor. Any other term is unscriptural and unnecessary.

Many preachers like to use the title "Reverend". This is most definitely unacceptable. The only reference in the Bible to this title is when it is applied to God. **"He sent redemption unto His people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name"** (Ps. 111:9). "Any man who assumes this title is assuming a title that belongs to God only. No man has the right to do so. This most definitely brings dishonor to God.

As for the title "Doctor; any man that does the necessary work to earn this title has the right to use it. If I had such a title relative to my ministry, however, I would still prefer the Biblical titles. There is no title as great as "Bishop", "Elder" or "Pastor."

The following Scriptures speak of these titles: Ephesians 4:11 - Pastor; Phillipians 1:1 Bishop (see also I Timothy 3:1; Titus 1:7); I Peter 5:1, 2 - Elder.

Let us use the title God uses and not what man chooses.

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The only place we find the word "reverend" used in the Scripture is in Psalm 111. There we find why and of Whom it is used. This Psalm is one of praise. We are to praise Him for His works; which are great, honourable, glorious, and true. They are to be remembered. We are to praise Him because He is gracious and full of compassion. His commandments are sure and stand for ever. The thing which the Psalmist

presents here is that God's people should know Him, and knowing Him should cause us to praise Him. In verse 9 he says, **"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever; holy and reverend is his name."**

The writer of this Psalm has shown that God is the One who is holy, that He is the One who is to be had in reverence. He is the One to be worshipped, the One to be praised. We are to stand in awe of Him, for He is the One Who is holy. The word "reverend" means, "to be feared" as the next verse bears out, which says, **"the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."**

When men are called reverend, they are placed along side of God. The word reverend should never be used except when referring to God. Spurgeon said concerning this, "How good men can endure to be called 'reverend' we know not. Being unable to discover any reason why our fellow-men should reverence us, we half suspect that in other men there is not very much which can entitle them to be called reverend, right reverend, very reverend, and so on."

The title "doctor" is used to indicate one's educational attainment and is a title used in many fields of study. As it is never used in connection with God, I see nothing wrong in its use for those who have earned the right to use it. The Scriptural title for ministers of God is pastor, elder, or bishop. The word "bishop" has been used by those who have no right to it to the extent that we (Baptists) do not use it, which leave only the first two for us if we want Scriptural titles for our ministers.

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Psalm 111:9 says, **"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name"**. This verse tells us that "reverend" is one of God's names. It means, "to be held in great respect, or reverential fear". The word "reverend" is also applied to the clergy in distinction to the laity; both distinctions being unscriptural and birthed by Nicolaitanism. Since "reverend" is one of God's names, I do not believe that it should be applied to men, let alone women, in the ministry. All the more so, when it is remembered that the term is used to bring glory, or great respect to the flesh and mortal, foible man rather than to the Lord. If these reasons were not

enough, one has only to look at some of those wearing the title "reverend" today along with their public and private behavior to find still another reason to take off the title and lay it aside. Using the word "reverend", "doctor", or some of the other titles before a minister's name is usually to gain recognition, or advantage by position. Please do not misunderstand me. I am not condemning men, but motive. To call your pastor, "pastor", or "brother", or "elder" is not inappropriate. Respect is in order. The attitude and motive of many clergy in the world today is easily identifiable with the religious, title seeking clergy of Matthew 23:1-12. **"But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi, But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren"** (Matt. 23:5-8). The motive and attitude of many in using these titles is wrong, and certainly is dishonoring to the Lord. We are to bring glory to Him, in the church certainly, but also in our personal lives. As His preachers we are to point to Him. We are to draw attention from ourselves to Him with whom we have to do. We should stay within the Biblical examples in addressing bishops, or elders. The title of missionary, pastor, or preacher is Scriptural and identifies us by word. Our mouths and our lives, however, will identify us by deed. No title can ever overcome conduct, or behavior. One of the marks of the Nicolaitan clergy was to usurp power and position over God's people. The use of these titles by many today smack of that which is dishonoring to God. Let us follow the admonition of I Peter 5:3 which says, **"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock"**. We are fellow laborers in His vineyard.

POTENTIAL

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very close. They were members of a true church of Christ. They spent nearly every New Year with us up in Gladwin. They very often attended Bible conferences and enjoyed hearing the Word of God. Their children and my children were good friends. This couple ended up getting a divorce after around twenty years of marriage. Neither of them attend a true church today. Beloved, this is a great tragedy. The major victims in this tragedy are their children. It is no wonder our young people do not keep their commitments; they see their parents reneging on their marriage vows. There is a great amount of temptation in the world we live in today. We must stay close to God and to each other in order to defeat this temptation. With the exception of death; the broken home is always the result of sin on the part of one or both parties. The home that is broken up by death is a tragedy, but not like the one that is broken up by sin. This is another tragedy that we can do something about. May God save our homes. May God draw us closer to one another so that the

tragedy of the broken home does not hit us next.

V. The fifth tragedy that I mention is that of new heresies. We have seen many of our dear brethren depart from the truth and turn to foolish and hurtful heresies. Oh, how we grieve over these. The truth is that we are all susceptible to such departures. If we get puffed up and cease to depend upon God for knowledge and wisdom, we may all fall into some heresy or the other. Men have gone into post-tribulationism. Many of these have gone on into the even worse heresy of A-millennialism. Many have gone into the New Hardshellism of regeneration without the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many have gone into that absurd and harmful heresy of the Priesthood of the Church. Some, going into this, have gone to the extreme of heresy, even denying salvation to all except Baptists. Some of them have said that you can't have the Holy Spirit unless you are in a Baptist church. Some say you are not a son of God (though a child), you are not justified, you cannot pray, you cannot learn, etc. unless you are in a Baptist church. When men turn away from the truth, they are often turned to the most absurd of teachings.

May God keep us from losing any more of our people to heresy. Many, now in the above mentioned and other heresies, were once totally with us. We stood together. Now, we are so terribly divided. This again is a tragedy that we can do something about. Let us study hard, pray harder; and God will keep us true to His Word.

VI. The sixth tragedy I mention is that of divisions amongst ourselves. There is something bad wrong with us when we cannot get along with one another. This applies to us in our own churches where there is often strife and division, and it applies to us as churches who strive with one another. The vast majority of these strifes come about by jealousy. If we will start worrying about the work of God and stop worrying about ourselves so much, there would not be all of these divisions. I know of one church that demanded a preacher apologize to them, but would not allow that preacher to stand before his accusers and give an explanation as to the supposed offense. This is the height of injustice. I have very little doubt that this took place out of hostility and jealousy. Beloved, we are destroying ourselves. It is a great tragedy when we who believe so much alike, and have the authority from God to do His work; and instead of doing His work we fight among ourselves. Let us stop this fighting among ourselves and join together fighting sin and heresy. Let us avoid this tragedy.

VII. The seventh tragedy I mention is the tragedy of lost souls dying and going to hell. What a horrible thought! It could be some of our loved ones. I know that we cannot save them. I also know that we can do our part in trying to win their souls to Christ. We can witness to them. We can live a godly life before them. We can pray for their salvation. All of these are things we can do, but that we often don't do. God forgive us for our cold hearts when it comes to the lost. When a lost person die; it is the beginning of an eternal tragedy. If you are reading this and know not

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The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT
THE BAPTIST EXAMINER—P.O. BOX 60—ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0063

What was Israel seeking in Romans 11:7?

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Paul has already answered this question in the previous two chapters of this Book of Romans. Paul said in Romans 9:31-33, "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Again in Romans 10:3, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

What was it that Israel strove for which she did not obtain? Well, from these verses we can plainly see that it was righteousness. But instead of submitting to the righteousness of God, they went about to establish their own. We are told in the first chapter of the Book of John that He came unto His own, but His own received him not. Israel was looking for the Messiah. He was in their midst, and they wouldn't have Him. Instead, they crucified Him. However, there was among them those who were God's elect, for Paul says the election obtained it. So what Israel kept striving for, she did not attain to; but those elected attained to it, and the rest were blinded.

The election of grace refers to those He foreknew of verse two who have obtained eternal righteousness imputed by the Son of God who bore their suffering and paid their sin debt on Calvary's Cross.

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"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God; the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6). The nation and people of Israel were chosen by God to be His people. This choosing was done by a sovereign God. He had love as a basis for this preference. The word choose in the Old Testa-

ment means to select or prefer. God exercised His preference and selected Israel as His people. This will never change, the nation of Israel will always belong to God. They would not always follow or serve Him, in fact He would cast them away for a time and turn to another people. "Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall not see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Act 28:26-27).

What Israel had done was to ignore God's direction to seek His righteousness because of their sightless and unhearing condition. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). In fact, Israel could not even keep the law of righteousness. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness" (Rom. 9:31). They did not seek righteousness by faith. Faith is the way to righteousness. There is no other way. "For with heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

Israel then, has not obtained that which she sought, a national righteousness; but the election (choosing) of God hath obtained righteousness for some of Israel. From the time of Abraham unto this present time, until the time of the tribulation will individual members of the house of Israel come to know the righteousness of God. This situation typifies for us the two methods of seeking salvation; by faith, and by the works of the law. The elect sought it by faith, and the others were blinded.

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Israel had a zeal for God, but it was not according to knowledge. Romans 10:2 "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Having a zeal is not enough, one must have knowledge with it. There are numerous people in the religious world who have zeal for God, but not according to

knowledge. There was not anything wrong with Israel's zeal, but they had no knowledge with their zeal.

Salvation is by the grace of God, (Ephesians 2:8). Salvation can be had in no other way. Salvation is in Christ Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life. No one can find life, except they find it in Christ Jesus, our Saviour and Lord. No one will ever be a recipient of the salvation that is in the Lord Jesus by his own merit. Salvation is not by the performance of man, but by what Jesus did. Salvation is by the work of God, and Jesus Christ performed this work while on the earth in the days of His flesh. He is our passover, He is our sacrifice, He paid the price for sinners like unto ourselves.

Jesus came to the earth and did what we could not do. He lived a perfect life, fulfilled the law of God, and satisfied every precept of the law. Then Christ satisfied the justice of God. The way he did this was to make His soul a ransom for many. When God saw the travail of His soul He was satisfied (Isaiah 53:11).

God is never satisfied, nor will He ever be satisfied with the works of men for salvation. Men are sinners and therefore their works are imperfect and God demands perfection. The righteous works of men are as filthy rags in the sight of God when men depend on them for salvation (Isaiah 64:6). We must have the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. When His perfect righteousness is given to us and our sins are put on Him, He takes them as if they were His very own, and He suffers the penalty and the guilt of them, in this way we have salvation (II Corinthians 5:21).

Israel sought after life and righteousness by the law, that is to say, the works of the law. They thought that it was by the performance of the things that they did, their obedience to the law, that they would gain righteousness. Therefore they did not obtain what they sought after, because they sought it not by faith (Romans 9:32).

Never has salvation been by him that runneth, nor by him that willeth, but salvation is of God who shows mercy. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Romans 9:16).

Salvation is the subject under consideration in this verse. How do we know this? Because in this same verse we have this statement, "...but the election have obtained it..." That is, those who were the elect of the Jews and those who were elect among the Gentiles.

The elect of God obtain and receive this salvation, grace and mercy which is in Christ Jesus, not by any good thing in them, but by the mercy of God. It is

all because of what is in God and not by what is in man. It is by the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39).

POTENTIAL

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Christ as your personal Saviour; then please consider the tragedy for which you might be headed. May God spare your soul this horrible tragedy.

VIII. The eighth and last tragedy I mention is the tragedy of another wasted year for the children of God. How many of us reflected on last year and realized that we had greatly failed our God. Don't have the same tragic event happen to you next year. Beloved, we have already wasted so many years that could have been used in faithful service to God. There is work to be done; let us be busy about doing it. Will you waste this year like you did the last one? I pray that you will not, and ask that you pray the same thing for me.

Beloved, this is another tragedy that we can avoid. We must start right now in order to avoid it. We cannot wait until the middle of the year, but must be busy now working for God. May we not be guilty next year of the tragedy of another wasted year in serving God.

Let me make just a few comments in closing. Please give consideration to these tragedies. Think about the ones that you can avoid by simply being obedient to God and His Word. Think about the ones over which you have no control and rest yourself in the sovereignty of God. May 1988 not be a tragic year, but a productive year. May we use this year for success and not failure. May it be a year in which we do more for God than we have ever done before. You are now aware of the possible tragedies of the year ahead. May we prepare for these tragedies and do all we can by God's grace to avoid them. May God bless you all.

BROKE

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handed her the check for \$1.25 and said, "Lady, all I have is 90 cents," then she kindly said, "Sir, that is perfectly all right and I hope that you enjoyed your breakfast and will come back to see us again."

Leaving the restaurant, I knew I had to call Brother Dunson, so I headed to the pay phone still not conscious of the fact that I was "flat broke." When I realized I didn't have a dime to make the call, I walked over to the Delta Air Lines counter and asked the gentleman in charge if he could loan me a dime to make a phone call, he said, "What is your name?" and I said, "Brunson, sir. I just came in on your flight which was Flight 45." He looked down on the desk, not knowing that I knew he was checking the roster of Flight 45 to see if I was lying. He, too, must have thought I had an honest face (that is, after he found my name on the roster) because he said, "Mr. Brunson, come around to my desk and make your call." This flat broke experience at the beautiful Dallas terminal is a different type of flat broke-ness

to what we will think about in this sermon, but it does illustrate how helpless one feels when he is flat broke.

We shall occupy ourselves with three thoughts found in the words of our Scripture. These thoughts are: The Sinner's Indebtedness; The Saviour's Forgiveness; and The Summation of Simon.

THE SINNER'S INDEBTEDNESS

As we view the sinner's indebtedness, there are three things which are very obviously revealed in this story preached by the Master. First, every sinner is in debt. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:10). Every person is in debt to God and should realize his indebtedness.

Second, every sinner is deeply in debt. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord" (Psalm 40:1-3). Here in Psalm 40, David says that he was lifted out of a horrible pit and out of the miry clay. The Psalmist would have us to understand that he was deeply in debt to God, and that his feet were stuck in the miry clay. This is the position of every lost person. He is in a deep pit; he is in a dark pit; and in this deep, dark pit, his feet are immovable in the miry clay.

Third, every sinner is so deep in debt until it is impossible for him to ever pay out. "For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money" (Isa. 52:3). "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Peter 1:18-20). Multiply the wealth of Fort Knox, Kentucky by the stars of heaven, and multiply the wealth of Wall Street by every leaf on every tree, and then multiply all of this by infinity and if such an astronomical number could be reached even this could not buy the soul of one sinner.

To sum it up, every sinner is in debt, every sinner is deeply in debt, and every sinner is so deep in debt until it is impossible for him to ever pay out. Every sinner is flat broke!

THE SAVIOUR'S FORGIVENESS

One of the most beautiful thoughts that can come to the human mind is the thought that our Saviour is a forgiving Saviour. His forgiveness is marked in every book of the Bible, from the first book to the

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last book. First, He forgives frankly. "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?" (Luke 7:42). The phrase, "He frankly forgave them both," is a revelation that it was not just on the surface or a superficial forgiveness. It was frank and from the heart. It would be wise to remind ourselves that Christ always frankly forgives.

Second, He forgives freely. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6). "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). One man owed fifty pence, and the other man owed five-hundred pence. Neither of these men could pay what they owed, and we see the free forgiveness of the Saviour coming alongside of His frank forgiveness. How marvelous it is to experience the Lord's free forgiveness, especially is it marvelous when viewed in the light of the fact that our forgiveness cost heaven its brightest star, its most precious jewel, God's only begotten Son.

Third, He forgives fully. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:12-14). "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Isaiah 38:17). Oftentimes human forgiveness is based upon certain reserves and conditions. The Lord's forgiveness has no reserves. It is full, that is, to the nth degree. Every reader has heard someone say in their life time, "I'll forgive you, but I won't forget it." However, the Lord's forgiveness never has this burning reminder attached to it. He frankly declares that our sins and our iniquities will be remembered no more. "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10:17).

THE SUMMATION OF SIMON

In the summation of Simon, his answer to the interrogation, "...which of them will love him most?", reveals a marvelous aptitude for the truth. We see three things in his answer.

First, the forgiven debtor will love. John declared, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Whenever you see someone completely devoid of love for the Master, you may readily know that he has not experienced the Master's forgiveness.

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Second, the forgiven debtor will love in proportion to how much he was forgiven. "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke 7:42-47). How many times have we seen a person who seemingly was beyond hope, only sometime later to be saved by the sovereign grace of God, and then witness that same person burn up his life in devoted service to the Master's cause. A person like this exemplifies the truth, "he which is forgiven little, loveth little, and he which is forgiven much, loveth much."

Third, the forgiven debtor will express his love. In this case Simon had given the Master no water for His feet, but the repenting woman had washed His feet with her tears, and then dried His feet with the hairs of her head. It is well to note that the Bible says, "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (1 Cor. 11:15). This weeping lady washed His feet with her tears, and then dried them with the flowing locks of her beautiful hair. Simon had given the Master no kiss, but the repenting woman had not ceased to kiss His feet from the time He came into the house. Simon had not anointed the Master's head with oil, but the weeping, repenting, loving, forgiven woman had anointed, not the head, but the feet of the Master with ointment. All of these gestures were expressions of her love to the One who had forgiven her sins.

Today, when few people carry the load of the cause of Christ, and while the multitudes journey the ways of the world, the mark of distinction is simply this: the forgiven express their love while the unforgiven have no love to express!

Though this woman came to the house to Simon "flat broke" spiritually, she left eternally rich because her faith in the Master had saved her, and for the first time in her life she could go on her way in peace. "And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50).

The following is written on the fly leaf of my Bible. I don't remember where I read it or who the author is, but I think it illustrates the difference between being flat broke spiritually and rich spiritually:

"Whosoever has God is rich indeed,

If he has nothing else in the world.

Whosoever has not God is poor indeed,

If he has everything else in the world."

ADDITION

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verses reveal many things to us. I am sure that those who believe that one can be saved and lost again refer frequently to this portion of the Word of God. I am sure that these verses are misapplied over and over again. Some may be afraid to handle these verses. Thus, beloved, let us learn a few things from them.

The first thing we notice is, that the Word of God is complete. Psalm 119:89 says, "Forever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." God has given us His Word through the inspiration of His Spirit. It is this Word, the Bible, through which God speaks to us today. There are no new revelations from God. God is no longer inspiring men through His Spirit to record His words. Now, I know that there are those who today claim that God inspires them with new revelations. Those such as Oral Roberts and Jimmy Swaggart claim that God reveals things to them as He did in Bible days. I do not accept this. The Word of God is a completed Word. Those who have a revelation did not receive it from God. Those who say they have new revelations get them from one of three places: the devil, a demon, or they just lie about it. I can't understand why men want something else or something new. We have the Word of God. It is a completed Word, and a Word that will not change. I fear for those who will not accept it but insist on having something new. Now, verses 18 and 19 make it very plain that we are not to add to this Word, neither are we to subtract from it. This means that this is what God said, and what He said is perfect. There is no need of change, neither is there any benefit in change. What He said is settled in heaven. Thus you can see the utter foolishness of one trying to add to or subtract from God's Word.

Another thing I would like to point out about these verses is the fact that they do not teach one can lose his salvation. The "any men or man" spoken of in these verses are and were reprobates from the beginning. The Bible, if it teaches anything, teaches the doctrine of election. It is clearly taught that God chose a people unto salvation. Adam fell, mankind fell in Adam; and the whole race was separated from God because of sin. But, God in mercy and Grace, before the world began, chose a people whom He would save from their sins. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came and made an atonement for the sins of these elect people. Now all of the elect shall be saved, and there is nothing in this earth nor beneath it that can prevent this from happening. So, the "any men" spoken of in these verses cannot be the elect of God. One of the characteristics of the reprobate is his desire for something different from the teachings of the Bible. He will not be satisfied with the Bible, but will seek to have something else. Of course, I speak primarily of the doctrine of salvation. I don't think this means that you have to be right on every doctrine in the Bible in order to go to heaven. You can be wrong on many things and still go to heaven. You can be wrong on several important doctrines and still go to heaven.

You may not belong to a Baptist church. You may be in one of Satan's synagogues, but you still may be on your way to heaven. You may not believe in the doctrine of election and still be on your way to heaven. Yes, you may be mixed up on many doctrines in the Word of God and still go to heaven. If you are trusting in the blood of Calvary's Lamb for the redeeming of your soul; you are on your way to heaven regardless of some of the error you may be holding to. So, I believe, that those who are referred to in these verses are reprobates who never trusted Christ as their Saviour. They are those who are not satisfied with the Word of God, thus coming up with their own traditions and commandments.

Let us now look at those who add to the Word of God. Addition can be very dangerous as far as your soul is concerned. This is one kind of math that will cause you to burn in hell through all eternity. We teach our children the importance of learning how to add, and it is important. But, when it comes to the Word of God, we do not want to add to it at all. Men have added to the Word and have come up with new ways of salvation. The Bible says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Adding anything to Jesus Christ will cost you your soul in hell. It will be Jesus or nothing at all. When people add things to Him they show that they are not trusting in Him alone. Baptism and Jesus will not do. To say that you have trusted in Christ and then depend upon Baptism is an addition that will cost you your soul. Trusting in good works and Jesus will not do. Belonging to a church to save you will not do. It must be Jesus and Him alone that you are trusting in. The Bible says, you must be saved in the name of Jesus, and that name alone. Of course, the elect will trust in that name. The sheep will call upon the name of the Lord. The sheep will hear His voice and follow Him. But, the reprobate will not trust in the Lord. The reprobate will add to the Word. The reprobate will not be satisfied with Jesus, but he will seek to add something else to Him. They don't believe that Christ alone can save them from their sins. They do not believe in the sufficiency of the atonement. Our text seems to indicate that these are a religious people. It seems to indicate that they are professing God, and at the same time they trust Him with a hypocritical faith. Yes, Beloved, they will say that they are trusting in Christ, and at the same time they are trusting in an addition to the doctrine of salvation.

In the next place, there are those who will follow the writings of men over the Word of God. In 1823 there was a demon-possessed man named Joseph Smith, who dared to claim that he had a vision from heaven. He claimed that he was visited by an angel named Moroni, who gave him a revelation from God. Thousands have followed this man's teachings right into hell. Yes, they are religious people. Yes, they are a sincere people,

but they have added to the Word of God; and those who follow the Mormon teachings are not trusting in Christ as Saviour. Many have followed the Catholic common book of prayer to hell. This is something that this religious cult has added. This is another addition, which if trusted in, will cost you your soul in hell. Listen, it does not matter what you add to Christ; whatever it is, it will cost you. The Bible says, believe on Christ and be saved. Yes, addition can be a dangerous thing. It is clearly seen, that there are many preachers today who can be likened to those of our text.

While addition is a dangerous thing, subtraction can be equally dangerous. While many things have been added to the complete Word of God, there have been many things which men have tried to subtract from it. Some have subtracted the blood of Christ. They will not have any part of His blood. Some go as far as to say that His blood is offensive. Some do not rejoice in singing about the blood, so they have removed it from their song books. Listen my friend, anyone with such an attitude is doomed for hell. Any person who does not love to sing of the blood of Christ, and to hear of the blood, cannot be a saved individual. Notice the danger connected with the subtraction of the blood of Christ. Colossians 1:14 says, "In whom we have redemption thru his blood, even the forgiveness of sins". Revelation 1:5 says, "...unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." When the blood is subtracted there is no forgiveness whatsoever. Salvation is impossible without the blood. Without the blood there is no washing, and there is no redemption. Oh! Praise God for the blood of His Son Jesus Christ. Praise God that Jesus was willing to come to this sin cursed earth and shed His blood that sinners might be redeemed. Any who will subtract the blood of Christ from the Bible have mathematically condemned themselves to hell.

Another way men are subtracting from the Word is that they are subtracting from the law of God. Some will subtract from it to ease their conscience. Many are troubled when they hear the law of God. Many

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The question is asked, "What think ye of Christ?" The question has to do with thoughts, not words, written creeds, and religious traditions. The question has to do with your thoughts, not of your church, your preachers, nor the old writers; but what do you think of Jesus Christ. A person's salvation depends on his thoughts of Christ; his thoughts of Christ depend upon his understanding of the person and work of Christ; and his understanding of Christ depends on what he has heard, learned, and been taught of Christ by the Father (John 6:44-45). Tell me what you think of Christ Jesus, and I will tell you what you believe about the character of God, the condition of men, and the way God saves sinners. Tell me what you think of Christ Jesus and you reveal whether you understand and believe the gospel of a "just God and a Saviour."

PLAIN PROPHECIES FOR PLAIN PEOPLE

John R. Gilpin, Sr.

"But I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

This is the fourth of a series of messages on prophecy. In the first of these messages we studied prophecies concerning Jews, and only the Jews, and only those prophecies which relate themselves to the Jewish families. In the second of these, we studied the prophecies which had to do with other nations which lived around the Jews at the time the Jews were a powerful historical nation. Then, in the third message we studied a number of prophecies which had to do with the Lord Jesus Christ, showing you prophecies that had been given about Christ prior to His coming and also showing how these prophecies were fulfilled in the coming and in the life and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now today, I want to show you prophecies which have to do with you and me from time to time until the Lord Jesus comes again, or in other words, the prophecies which relate themselves to the church age, or this Gentile age in which we live.

I prefer, as I have often said, to refer to this age as the church age, because the institution which is most paramount in this age is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. I call it the Gentile age because the majority of the people being saved today are Gentiles rather than Jews. So this is the church age and the Gentile age in which we live, and I want to show you some of the prophecies which are going to be fulfilled in this age until the Lord Jesus Christ comes back again.

I. I would like for you to notice the prophecies which had to do with the characteristics of this age. The Word of God tells us that opposition to God and to God's people will never let up until Jesus Christ comes back again. **"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many" (Mt. 24:9-11).** This would indicate to us that until the Lord Jesus comes back again, opposition to God, and to God's people will

never, never let up.

I used to think when I was a boy preacher that surely the time would come someday when it would be popular for a man to preach the Word of God. I thought surely the day would come that in most any community a preacher would be ultimately able to get around him a group of people whose hearts the Lord had touched to such an extent that he would be able to preach without any difficulty the entirety of God Almighty's Word. But, beloved, one day a long time ago, I read this Scripture with the realization that here is a characteristic that is laid down concerning this



age in which we live, wherein the Lord Himself said that opposition to God and to God's people would never, never let up until the Lord Jesus Christ comes back again.

If you are inclined to desire a life of ease, and if you are inclined to desire an easy time, then I would suggest to you that so far as your are concerned, you are going to be sadly disillusioned in what you desire.

The old song says:
"Must I be carried to the skies,

On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,

And sailed through bloody seas?"

Remember, beloved, how that song goes on to talk about how there shall be fighting for you and for me. As surely as God looks down upon us today, we can rest assured, and we can be mighty certain from the Word of God, that there will never be a time but what there will be opposition against God and God's people.

A second characteristic of this day is that religious contentions and religious controversies will never let up. **"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not" (Mt. 24:23-26).**

This would tell us that there are going to be religious controversies right down to the time when Jesus Christ comes back again. Some are going to say, "There is Jesus; He is already come," and some are going to offer other statements, so that there will be controversies and contentions religiously until our Lord shall come again.

I am not expecting that the whole world will ever be in unity concerning the things of the Word of God. There will be in-

creasing activity as the days go by as to unionism, but beloved, there is a world of difference between the denominations uniting in theory and unity in principle. I say to you, fraternalism and unionism will continue, but as far as unity or principle and doctrine is concerned, it will never take place in this world until Jesus Christ returns. Mark it down, there will be controversies, there will be debates, there will be religious contentions, and there will be religious dissensions right down to the time when Jesus Christ comes back to this world.

Another characteristic of this age in which we are living is that human nature is going to continue and remain the same until the Lord Jesus Christ comes back. **"But as the day of Noe were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, unto the day that Noe entered into the ark" (Mt. 24:37, 38).**

Here is a statement showing that human nature is going to continue just the same down to the time when Jesus comes, as it was in the days of Noah. There isn't going to be a bit of difference to what it was in the days of Noah. They married, they gave in marriage, they ate and they drank. In other words, here is a flesh statement as to the appetites of those people in the days of Noah, and Jesus said that it is going to be just the same when He comes back to this world.

Oh, brothers, sisters, mark it down, science and educations have done wonders in improving some things, but science and education will never, never improve human nature. Human nature will be the same, and society will ebb and flow just as it has since the flood. People may become more refined, civilization may advance to a higher stage, and science may be able to make life easier, but listen to me, beloved, it will never make human nature any better than it was at the time of the very beginning of the flood.

Furthermore, it is prophesied here within God's word that society will become more and more corrupt until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, for we read: **"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark" (Mt. 24:37, 38).** "For whosoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Mt. 24:28).

Many times I have spoken in the past to remind you that the word for "eagle" is the word "buzzard." Whenever you see a buzzard floating around in the air, you know there is something dead down there upon the earth. Jesus has said that society will be just like an old putrefying carcass here in this world. In other words, moral conditions of society will get worse and worse until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know I never in any wise at all could become a post-millennialist because the post-millennialists believe that until Jesus comes, everything is going to get better, and finally we are going to get the world in such good condition through education and civilization and science that God will look from Heaven and say, "My, it is such a wonderful place; I think I would rather live there than up here in Heaven." Accordingly, He is going to come down and make His residence.

Listen to me, beloved, I never could be a post-millennialist, for I don't believe the world is getting better. I believe, in contrast, what our Lord said through Paul to Timothy: **"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13).**

I believe as surely as there is a God looking down upon us today that conditions will be worse tomorrow than they were today, and that conditions will be worse a year from now than they are today. I definitely believe that we can expect to become more and more corrupt as the days pass by, looking forward to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me fall back on the Old Testament story in that respect. You remember that time when Nebuchadnezzar had that vision. He dreamed, and in his dream, he saw a great image, with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and mirey clay. When Daniel came to interpret that dream, he said, "Nebuchadnezzar, as king of Babylon, you are represented by the head of gold." Then he said, "The chest and arms of silver are to represent the kings of Media-Persia; the belly and thighs of brass are to represent Alexander the Great of Greece, the legs of iron are to represent Rome as a divided nation, divided into the Roman Empire; those feet of iron and mirey clay, going out into ten toes, are to represent the nations on down to the time when Jesus Christ shall come again."

Notice that this dream started with gold, and decreased in quality, on down to iron and mirey clay. This vision that Nebuchadnezzar had was nothing more or less than a dream of history. He saw history unfold page by page until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and seeing it unfold, he saw a decrease in finer qualities — gold, silver, brass, iron, and mirey clay.

I contend, beloved, that we are right now down to the end of the toe, looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ at an early date. And as surely as we are, society will become more and more corrupt as we wait for the return of the Lord back to this world.

II. Let's notice some prophecies which have to do with the closing of this age. First of all, Jesus is coming back. I always like preaching about the second coming of Jesus. I like to tell the congregation that Jesus is coming back. I don't say that maybe He is coming, but beloved, I say that it is a fact that Jesus is coming back.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again" (John 14:1-3).

When we read in Acts 1 of that day when He ascended back to the Father, how He went out to the Mount of Olivet and lifted himself up little by little into a cloud, and on into the skies, the angels of God said, **"...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall come in so like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).**

Then when the Apostle Paul gave to us the institution of the Lord's Supper, he said: **"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, by do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26).** Every observance of the memorial Supper is a silent sermon that our Lord is coming again. Every time that the bread is broken and the wine is poured, it is a silent sermon that Jesus Christ is coming back to this world a second time.

The Word of God tells us the same thing in the Scripture which I read as my text. Listen: **"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thess. 4:16).**

Thank God, He is coming back! I don't try to tell you when He is coming. To tell you the truth, I don't know when He is coming, for we are explicitly told that nobody knows the time of His coming. **"The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of" (Mt. 24:50).** "And He said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put into his own power" (Acts 1:7).

In the Greek, the word "times" means "in the longer periods," and the word "seasons" means "in the shorter periods." An he says it is not for us to know the longer periods and the shorter periods. In other words, it is not for you to know when He is coming. **"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not" (Luke 12:40).** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10).

When a thief comes, he does not send you word that he is coming to your house; he just comes when you are least expecting him. When a thief comes prowling around your place, you haven't any idea that he is coming. He doesn't write you a letter and send it first-class, special delivery to tell you to be on the look out for him at such-and-such an hour. He comes when you least expect him. My

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PROPHECIES

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brother, that is like the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is coming, but I don't know when He is coming.

We have another prophecy that when He comes, all the sleeping saints are going to be resurrected out of the ground.

Some time ago I was driving along with a preacher friend. We drove by a cemetery and he said, "Some of these days, Bro. Gilpin, that cemetery is going to look a lot different to what it does now."

Brethren, that is the truth. Some of these days every cemetery is going to look a lot different to what it does today. Every child of God who has died will come out of the ground when Jesus comes in the air. Oh, I can't speak it forcefully enough and can't speak it with enough emphasis, but I would remind you that when He comes in the air, every redeemed child of God who has died is coming out of the ground to be caught up with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, brother, sister, doesn't it thrill your heart to know that the loved ones who have died in Christ, who fell asleep with the hope of Christ, are going to someday come out of the ground when the Lord Jesus Christ comes in the air for His own. Let me read it to you:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4-6).

Oh, let me emphasize it, beloved. If you have some loved one close his eyes upon this life's scene for the last time. If you have seen the individual put down in the ground, thank God, you can go out to the grave and say, "Victory is coming because Jesus is coming." When Jesus comes, there is going to be a resurrection of those who have died in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember at the time of the raising of Lazarus when Jesus stood beside the tomb, that He spoke and said, "Lazarus, come forth." He specifically designated Lazarus by name, and Lazarus did come forth. I think there is a reason why Jesus put Lazarus' name at the beginning of that statement. I think there is a reason why He particularly spoke to Lazarus. I think, beloved, if Jesus had merely said, "Come forth" that every individual in that cemetery would have come out of it, but He was specifically raising Lazarus and Lazarus only, and He didn't want the others to arise at the time.

Beloved, when Jesus comes again, He is going to specifically call the righteous dead. All those who have died in Christ shall be made alive in the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only are the righteous dead going to be raised from the grave, but all the living believers are going to be translated and transformed in a moment's time. You don't know what you are going to look like when that day comes.

I have often tried to imagine myself shaving and combing my hair getting ready for a day's work. I have often tried to imagine myself going through a little simple maneuver in the mor-

ning to make myself somewhat presentable for the day. I have tried to imagine my Lord coming in just that hour. Oh, beloved, if He does, there will be a transformation as I stand before that mirror that morning. Oh, beloved, there would be a transformation take place, the like of which you and I could never, never, never imagine.

Conclusion: I come back to this fact: Jesus is coming back again. Are you ready for His coming? Would you be glad to see Him today? Would you be glad to see Him in the skies, or would you say, "I have a few

things I would like to do before He comes?"

Listen, beloved, a true child of God, I think, ought to be looking up, wistfully expecting, and prayerfully desiring the return of Jesus Christ to this world every day. May our prayer be that of the man of old, who said, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." May God bless you!

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members of the True Vine as branches. All our spiritual livelihood depends upon the Vine Himself supporting us. We

should be warned of the dangers of leaving the vine unguarded by willfully neglecting our duties of safeguarding the vineyard against the wiles of the devil, by allowing our sins, unconfessed sins, unrepented of sins, to dominate our lives to such an extent that we are sickly, unproductive, weak, lukewarm branches, no fruit to speak of. We are the grapes of the vine, the fruit. Yet, allowing our carnal nature to arise anew, making way for the "little foxes"; we as Christians with little or no care, we hang there pale, wan, only a half crop,

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SUNDAY SPORTS

by Geoff Thomas
August, 1987

I once met a New Zealand Test Match batsman who had played cricket at Lords against England. He was one of three Christians who represented his country at that time, all of them refusing to play cricket on the Lord's Day. He then became a master in a Christian school in Christchurch, and when he spoke to me he had a problem. He had been reading a magazine which taught that in fact it was "Old Testament" to keep one day in the week special and that New Testament Christians were free from any responsibility to keep a day holy unto God.

This had rocked his convictions to their foundations. Had he been a legalist during those years when he refused to play sport on a Sunday? Was it in fact a mark of maturity to express your liberty in Christ by doing your own thing on the Lord's Day? It was a pressing matter for him because his school was facing new challenges on this very issue. There was a move in sports-loving New Zealand to hold inter-schools competitions on Sundays, and his own Christian school was being asked that year to play neighbouring non-Christian schools on Sundays. He knew that his own opinion would carry some weight when he spoke out on this theme, but this article had thoroughly confused him. Was it Christian maturity to say, "Yes, we can play cricket on Sundays," or to say that we should not because Sunday was special for us?

Since the film "Chariots of Fire," this issue has become understandable to many people who do not attend church. Occasionally they hear of evangelicals who refuse to play sports on Sunday. Thirty-one year-old long jumper, West Indian born Barrington Williams from Sheffield who jumped 7.64 metres for England in the Gateshead International on June 13, is one such Christian. "I have made a promise to the Lord that I will not take part in sports events on Sundays," he says. "Even if it is at the very top I will jump on Saturday night and Monday morning, but not on Sundays."

In a totally different competitive sphere twenty years ago the Barr brothers, Reformed Presbyterian farmers from Ulster, reached the last rounds of the World Ploughing Championships in Italy. The final was to be held on a Sunday. They refused to take part, and so hurriedly the officials arranged for them to compete on Monday. They were happy to do so, and

won.

In June, the crack New Zealand All Blacks had to make their way to the final of the Rugby World Cup by first playing Wales in the semi-final on a Sunday. It gave no problems to the 15 Welsh players, but it was a question of conscience for 22 year-old New Zealander Michael Jones, a back-row forward, and one of the most talented individuals of the World Cup. Gentle persuasive talks with him, even from Graham Mourie the former All Black captain who discovered him three years ago, were fruitless. Peter Bills, the "Guardian's" sports reporter, certainly did not find in him a tradition-bound legalist, "He is not only an unusual rugby player but a man of honesty, faith and natural reserve," he wrote ("The Guardian," June 5, 1987).

Why does Michael Jones take this attitude? He says, "Since I was young I have not played on Sundays, and I do not intend to start now. Sunday is the Lord's Day. Rugby is very important to me, but there are other things in life. It is up to the individual, but I certainly feel happier adhering to my principles and standards of never playing on a Sunday. It would be hypocritical to change my mind now just because there is a World Cup semi-final coming up. I would love to play in terms of the opportunity, but I put God first. I hope people can understand and accept that." He is aware that these convictions might compromise his long-term playing career, but he says, "There is currently a lot of talk here about playing all the big rugby matches on Sundays. There was a vote in favour of the idea recently. If that were to happen, I would still play the game for someone on Saturdays. But I would not be as involved as I'd like."

New Zealand, even without Michael Jones, overwhelmed the Welsh team on that Sunday going on to win the final; which was played on a Saturday. Within three weeks we had the men's final at Wimbledon which for the last ten years had been played on a Sunday. More and more soccer matches are taking place on the Lord's Day too, and there is an attempt being made to introduce horse-racing on Sundays.

What is the Christian attitude to this? Was Eric Liddell right not to run on a Sunday? Is he to be revered just for having convictions and sticking by them at whatever the cost? Or is there more than that? Does God actually forbid us from playing team sports on a Sunday?

To be sure, our first task in answering that loaded question is not to find out what we may not do on the Lord's Day but what we must do. We must keep this day as a sign of the rest from sin which only Christ can give and which has been received by all who believe on Him. To properly observe this rest from labouring and being heavy laden we need a whole day in which all of us recipients can gather together to praise the Lord and engage in acts of worship. There is a New Testament commandment which binds every Christian and it says, "Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is" (Heb. 10:25). This will answer most of our questions such as: "Can I?", "May I?", "Should I?"

It is a privilege for us to keep Sunday special, to think about God our Creator and Saviour, and to entrust ourselves entirely to Him and worship Him as the living God. On the Lord's Day there's no sweat nor tears, but smiles and peace. On this day the former slave is a free man: he is neither slave nor tyrant; he is a royal priest, he is at ease and lives the regally-joyful and priestly dedicated life. The world, cursed because of his sin, is again his Father's world with some majestic and yet delicate music of the spheres.

This is the day that Jesus rose from the dead, and so it is Jesus' day of victory. In Him we have received freedom from the enslavement of sin. For years sin gave us no rest as it said to us, "Don't pray. Don't read the Bible. Don't believe in Jesus. Worship your TV screen. Read the Sunday papers. Follow sport whithersoever it goes." And we obeyed, because we were slaves to sin. But Jesus came and released us by His death and resurrection. We don't have to obey sin any longer. We have been saved by grace. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. All things must work together for good. Don't we have enough reasons to keep Sunday not just as a holiday but as a holy day?

So we look at sport and entertainment and cultural events in the light of this. It is not that helpful to have an 8 a.m. service on Sundays and then for the rest of the day you can do your own thing. I think that we are really blessed with the five day work week. Many have the opportunity to be out on Saturday and keep it as a family day. This is good and salutary, but Sunday should be a day of rest for worship and fellowship in the church as well as in our homes. During the week we are so much

on our own; we need to be together on Sunday. The preacher who holds services early to accommodate picnics might see his flock, the people of God, end up only picnicking. When no effort is made to celebrate the day as a people who are royal priests then we might as well bypass the church altogether.

We need a day when there are no tensions about how our favorite team is going to do, or whether we are going to beat our friend on the golf course after the service, or of frustration because we lost against an old adversary on the tennis court just before we came to the evening meeting. We need a certain leisurely preparation for holy things and a certain winding down time of thinking about what we have done and heard subsequently.

Michael Jones, Barrington Williams, my new Zealand cricketing friend and other Christian young people today who, for example, refuse to go training with the youth team on Sundays, have all seen the real issue at stake here. Sport is not their God. Jesus Christ is Lord, and Sunday is His day. We need to meet with all those who have received His rest through coming to Him. We must worship Him before the eyes of the watching world, and sometimes that is a costly action that may mean the loss of the captaincy, or a place in the team, or even of promotion.

This is a small beginning of obedience, and we are looking forward to a better more glorious sabbath of God's own week. On that day Jesus returns. On that day we will see the new Jerusalem. On that day the tabernacle of God will be with us. Yes indeed, on that day all time will come to rest. In God's sabbath we will finally be free from pressure and hurry not just to relax and play, but to give ourselves wholeheartedly, with body and soul, to the celebration of the day of Him whom we love. God still tells us.

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isa. 58:13-14).

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ADDITION

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become upset when they are confronted with the commandments of God. So, naturally they will try to do away with them or to change them to suit their own depravity. Well beloved, let men add and subtract all that they want; the Word of God shall remain, and every man will be judged according to the law of God. Men will subtract from it to try to escape judgment, but their judgment will only be worse because of their tampering with the completed Word of God.

There are those who will subtract from the sovereignty of God in order to put God on their level. They will take away from Him all of His power and authority in order to have a God whom they can manipulate and order around. The reprobate want a God who is dependent upon the will of man. They want a God who is ordered around by their traditions. Yes, depravity does not want a

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leaving the Vine, as far as we are concerned; it would appear, bare and open to public shame.

sovereign God, so they subtract from Him all that makes Him God in order to suit their wickedness. Some are even subtracting from His name by calling Him Holy mother instead of Holy Father. Such mathematical practices are surely of the devil. To subtract anything from God or His Word is sin.

Yes beloved, addition and subtraction is a deadly game to play with the Word of God. The Bible gives us a very plain warning in our text of the result of adding and subtracting. For adding to the Word we see that the plagues of this Book will be added to them. Yes my friend, people do reap what they sow. All of those who are busy adding to the atonement of Christ and preaching Him in a false way have these plagues to look forward to. Many who call themselves preachers will have these plagues to face. Read of the great plagues found in chapters 7 and 16. The plagues men will face in that day will be such as has never been on the earth before. How terrible to have these plagues upon you. But, this will not be the worst of it. Chapter 20 declares that there is a great lake of fire in the which all unbelievers shall be cast and there remain forever

and for ever. Yes, addition is a deadly game. Your soul is at stake when you add to the Word.

Subtraction also is not without its warnings. The Bible says that their false hope shall be taken from them. Their part shall be taken out of the book of life. Remember, they are reprobates and they think that they are on their way to heaven, but they shall one day have a rude awakening to the fact they never really trusted Christ. The Bible says they will not come into the city of God. Most people believe that you go to the city or to the gate of the city to be judged, but this is not the case. The non elect shall not set foot near the city of God. He shall never know the blessings found in that city. No, for him there will only be pain and suffering in the lake of fire. So, there are plain warnings telling us not to tamper with God's Word. Notice lastly that this is not just my opinion, but rather, this is the testimony of Christ. **"He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly"** (Rev. 22:20).

The Vine is none other than the Lord Jesus who bought us with His precious blood that we might escape everlasting damnation with the unbelievers of the world, the same world that

we seem so readily and eager to hang onto.

May God help us to see the cunning workmanship of Satan as he uses the small means of his aides in his beck and call to work large sins in our lives that invariably bring reproach upon Him that loved us so. Oh how we should guard against this by watching for the small errors, the "little foxes" if you please, which eat at the vine while we sleep. Satan uses the evil spirits which are his to work these things to his advantage. He never lets up. He never sleeps. We must be ever alert to his wiles. We may be guilty in these modern times, and some are, of reverting back to some of the old ways and refer to it as very

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walk as He walked. We must not only keep His Word, but we must follow the example that He set. This is test number two to prove that we abide in Him. Our claim is false if we fail to behave like Him. To walk as He walked, we need to know how He walked. How did He walk? While He walked this earth, He walked in the will of His Father. When He was 12 years old, His mother and Joseph found Him in the temple asking and answering questions, confounding the doctors. His answer to His mother and Joseph as to why He was there was, **"...wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"** (Luke 2:49). He was doing His Father's will. In John 4:34 Christ said, **"...My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."** In John 17:4 in talking to His Father He said, **"...I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."** When Jesus said, **"It is finished"** in John 19:30, He had completed everything exactly according to His Father's will and purpose. During His entire life here on earth He was completely submissive to the will of His Father.

When we walk in fellowship with the Father we, like Jesus, will be submissive to His will. But how can we know His will? It is only as we are obedient to His Word that we can know His will for our lives. The more we study the Word, the more we hide it in our hearts, the more we will know His will.

To walk as He walked is not only to be obedient as He was obedient to the Father, but we are to love as He loved, **"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another"** (John 13:34). How did He love? He laid down His life for us. To walk as He walked we are to forgive as He forgave, **"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"** (Eph. 4:32). **"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye"** (Col. 3:13). To walk as He walked we are to serve as He served, **"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world"** (John 17:18). To walk as He walked we will pray as He prayed, **"At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father**

himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16:26, 27). What He is saying here is just as I come unto the Father, because of your love for Me you can come to the Father in My name. To walk as He walked is for us to yield our lives to God so that He might live His life through us, **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"** (Gal. 2:20).

"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:7, 8).

John has been talking about keeping the commandments of God as proof that we are what we claim; children of God walking in fellowship with Him. He now singles out one in particular as another test of our fellowship. This is the one concerning love for our brethren. Although he does not name this commandment, we can see from the following verses that is the one intended. He says it is not new, yet in a way it is new. In John 13:34 Jesus told His disciples, **"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another"**. The commandment to love one another is not new. It is the kind of love that is new, **"as I have loved you"**. How does He love us? He gave His life for us. It is this kind of love that we should have for one another, **"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"** (John 13:35). Walking in love for fellow Christians is another proof that we are in fellowship with God. If we are walking in the light, then we will have a love for God's people. In Romans 5:5 we are told, **"...because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"**. This means that if we are Christians, we have that divine love; and as a result, we will have a love for one another.

Note that John has said that the believer walks in the Light as He is in the light (1 John 1:7), that he is in the light (1 John 1:9), and he abides in the light (1 John 1:10). Love shows where he lives. On the other hand the unbeliever is in darkness, **"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now"** (1 John 2:9). A man may say he is in the light; but if there is hate in his heart for others, he is still in darkness. He has never been in the light, **"is in darkness even until now"**; has never been in the light.

"He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (1 John 2:10). Here we have love and light. The two go together just as hate and

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CHOOSING COMPANIONS

What company do you keep? By that I mean, in what kind of company do you prefer to be? The Bible shows that companionship is a gift from God. Immediately after the creation of Adam, God said, **"It is not good that the man should be alone."** Eve was then provided by God to be of help and benefit to Adam. However, it is equally clear from the Bible that not all company is helpful and beneficial to us. In school, college, university, and at work, we are with different types of people, and we have no choice in the matter. But when your work is over, and you have some time to spend with others, what company do you choose?

Can you truly say, like David the Psalmist, **"I am companion of all them that fear Thee,"** or do you secretly despise those who fear the Lord, and avoid their company if possible? People generally choose company where they feel most at ease. They prefer to be with those whose interests are similar to their own. Do you shun the company of the Lord's people because you feel ill at ease there, have no interest in their conversation, and have nothing in common with them?

How sad it is that many of you, who have been brought up in homes where the Word of God is read regularly, and who have been taken to the house of God from an early age, should choose the company of worldly people, who have no place for God, His Word, His people, His day, or His worship, and who openly express their hatred of these things and take great delight in mocking them. Is that really the company in which you find pleasure? If so, then you are in a very dangerous situation. **"...Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God"** (James 4:4). The book of Proverbs warns: **"A companion of**

fools shall be destroyed."

Perhaps you feel that there is "safety in numbers." You enjoy being with the crowd, regardless of the conversation or activity engaged in. But the Word of God warns you, **"Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished"** (Prov. 11:21). May you realize the danger you are in before it is too late. We who have heard the good news of the Gospel have great privileges which carry with them tremendous responsibility in view of judgment and eternity. We should be praying that what we hear would be blessed to us, so that we would see that we are great sinners, and that we need that suitable and all-sufficient Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Dear young friends, may you realize this, repent of your sins, and believe in Christ to the saving of your soul. Then you will love the company of those who fear the Lord, and it will be true that **"...Ye are not more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God"** (Eph. 2:19).

Some of the great blessings which belong to those who fear the Lord are: forgiveness of sins, peace with God, and the prospect of eternal happiness. In a sinful, restless, unhappy world, are these not things greatly to be desired? People nowadays spend a great deal of time and money trying to find happiness, but what is a fleeting time of happiness here on earth, compared to the endless happiness in heaven promised to the people of God? Is this then good company in which you would like to be, or have you made up your mind to follow the world and its jading pleasures, whatever the cost might be? Well, remember what Jesus said: **"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"** (Mark 8:36, 37).

It may be that, deep down in your heart you would like to be in the company of the people of God, but you are afraid that, in attaching yourself to them, you would have to give up too much, and would have to suffer the mockery and persecution of your worldly companions. Let me mention, for your encouragement, two well-known Old Testament characters who, in choosing the company of God's people, both had to give up much, but did not regret the choice they had made.

You all know the story of Moses, born of Hebrew parents, but brought up by Pharaoh's daughter in Pharaoh's palace. He could have continued to enjoy all the princely privileges and riches which he was entitled to, but he gave all that up, **"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt"** (Heb. 11:25, 26). He was then greatly honoured by God in being chosen to lead His people out of Egypt.

Then we have the wonderful story of Ruth, who was willing to give up all her family and friends in the land of Moab, to be in the company of godly Naomi, her mother-in-law, on her way back to Bethlehem. There, in the good providence of the Lord, she met and married Boaz, and thereby is included among the ancestors of David and Christ. She never had any cause to regret her resolve, expressed thus to Naomi: **"Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee... thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God"** (Ruth 1:16).

Let it be your earnest prayer, then, that you would, like Moses and Ruth, be given the will and strength to give up your worldly companions and make the choice which they made.

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darkness go together. In verse 11 we read, "But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes". For a Christian to say that he loves other Christians while he hates another believer is for him to lie. Some one has well said, "It is impossible to be in fellowship with the Father and out of fellowship with another Christian at the same time". The church of our Lord is a place for fellowship of other Christians as well as with the Father. We are to live in fellowship with one another. For one to say he is walking in the light, yet hates a fellow Christian, is really walking in the dark. If that one has hatred in his heart, he is living a lie. He is not only in darkness but he is a cause for stumbling for others. It is bad when he hurts others. To walk in darkness where there are stumbling blocks is dangerous. The one who hates not only will stumble himself, but will cause others to stumble. He is not like the blind man who carried a flashlight when he walked in the dark, who, when asked why he carried the light said, "I carry my light, not so I can see, but so that others can see me. I cannot help being blind but I can help being a stumbling block." The man who hates can help being in the darkness as well as being a stumbling block for others. To love other Christians is to treat them the way God treats them — the way God treats us.

The one who hates can not grow spiritually. One who walks in the darkness cannot find his way. On the other hand, what are the results if we love one another? First, we will be living in fellowship with God and fellow Christians, we will not stumble nor cause others to stumble. Also, we will grow spiritually. Love produces joy. Hatred makes one miserable, but love always brings joy. What about you? Have you joy in your heart or are you miserable?

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came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said Nay; lest while you gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

It could be, of course, that there is no significance to the fact that Christ chose to use two different types of seed rather than to use some illustration of genuine articles being mixed with the counterfeits. If we expound that there is truly a significance, however, we must

conclude that there is indeed good and bad seed in a sense of the word. The seed can have no control over what it will become at maturity. It was truly destined to become wheat on the one hand and tares on the other.

The Arminian mind is, of course, thinking this is pure speculation and I can understand it, but let us look now at verses 36-49. I won't print these extended words here, but will merely quote from this passage. All readers are urged to read this passage independently, or at least to refer to it. Verses 37 through 39 verify that these two seeds represent children of the God on one hand and children of Satan on the other. Verse 46 is about a valuable pearl. This also was made such, without power to be anything else. Verses 47 and 48 tell of sea creatures of every kind being caught, then sorted. These two are of a pre-determined species. None of the parables portray anything that developed out of private choice.

It would be utterly foolish of me to choose a favorite passage of the Arminian to prove my point, would it not? It would be ridiculous of me to quote John 3:16, so perhaps I'd better not. I will be stupid enough, however, to suggest that you read it and then look back to John 3:1-20 to consider the entire context, because we are about to examine this with a microscope to see just what it contains. Let us look first at verse three. You may have already heard the argument that one can not be born of his will (own will, that is) and you may not choose to be impressed by that. You might not feel there is any genuine parallelism between inability to be born compared to inability to be reborn. Only figuratively here, too, you might argue. Have you also really thought about the question of Nicodemus in verse four? Dumb old Nicodemus, do you think? Was he so dumb that he thought physical birth and rebirth was all Jesus was speaking of? He was only a poor ignorant Pharisee, and a leader among the Jews! Not too swift, huh? What else could he think? Well, he might have understood what Jesus meant. Have you ever considered that? If he did, what question was Nicodemus really asking? I'd say he was saying (in essence) "I don't think a man can be reborn; because he can't control birth or rebirth. He had nothing to do with birth and could have nothing to do with rebirth." If this wasn't what he thought, what do you think he did think? What do you think verse twelve would mean? It certainly doesn't mean that man can enter the womb, and therefore can cause his own rebirth. Look back to verses five through eight.

I wonder how many of you notice that it says man is born of the Spirit before he can enter the kingdom of God. Yes, it said water also. Some spiritualize water to mean washing of the Word, but maybe that isn't necessary. Maybe we don't need to spiritualize this verse at all. Maybe this means his first natural birth is in water (it is you know) and that the rebirth is by the Spirit. It is you know! Ridiculous, you say? Then, I'm afraid you have never really thought about verse six; because that's exactly what it says. Well

isn't it? That which is born of flesh (the natural birth) is (just) flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit (is the rebirth) is spirit (a born-again Christian). Do you still protest? Read verse eight, considering verse seven which says not to be amazed that one must be reborn. It would appear to me that this verse declares that the person who is born of the Spirit does not know what brought the rebirth about, because he cannot tell where it came from, or even where it is heading. I suppose that could be taken to mean that he cannot tell who else is going to be reborn. I know I can't anyway. I won't know until the thing mentioned in verse 16 occurs. Yes, that's where it says "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish" and that is what all of this is all about. The "whosoever" of verses 15 and 16 are the result of what we have reviewed in the first eight verses. It is not the cause of the first eight verses as the Arminians would have us believe.

I believe it was a fellow named Cooper who once said (in some fashion) that we should not spiritualize Scripture whenever the plain obvious meaning makes sense. Have you stopped to realize just how little spiritualizing I've done with this passage from John three? I've actually moved away from using "water" in verse five to assume washing, and have avoided inserting a reference into it regarding the Word. Neither is any washing or the Word directly mentioned. Birth is mentioned, and I find no reason to think the water refers to anything other than the watery pouch every human being is born in at the natural birth. It is the birth of the flesh, which must precede spiritual rebirth. I do not believe that I found it necessary to use allegory any where it was not used. I did not even contend that the wind represented the Spirit; but merely compared it to the action of the Spirit, as it seems, Christ had already done when He implied that a man does not know what causes his rebirth and do we not all know that it is brought by the Spirit. Even the Arminian will admit the Spirit has "some" influence in the matter.

I have said Calvinism would better be called Paulism, Johnism, or Christism. Well, I am stressing Christism in this message. It was Christ who told of the wheat and the tares. It was Christ who said we couldn't be reborn except by the Spirit, but this was not all. If He were living today, would Christ be called a hyper-Calvinist? Let us look at some more of the words of Christ on this matter. Let us not look at parables or allegories just now. Let us look at out-and-out teaching. Let us look at the sixth chapter of John. The words we'll be looking at are not John's words, however, they are the words of Christ which were recorded by John. Christ's sermons would likely be called sermonettes today, since they were usually concise, unless only a short portion was recorded. This being as it may, I'll contend that His sermons were loaded with the teaching of sovereign grace, at least until the Arminian mind begins to toy with them. I'm restricting this discourse very closely to the ministry of Jesus.

I'm not citing all the passages in Romans, Ephesians, and the epistles that are such excellent sovereign grace passages. I'm doing an examination of the views of Christ Himself on the matter.

Luke 10:21-24 declares very definitely to the objective mind (just read it) that God decides who shall believe and withholds this ability from others. At least this is the case unless we elect to decide that Luke only recorded the words that Jesus spoke, and we further decide he was mistaken. I've heard it suggested that Paul was a male chauvinist. With such thinking, perhaps one could decide Jesus was either in error, or didn't mean what He said. I believe the Arminian must take one of these views. This theme is echoed by Jesus, however, in Luke 8:10, Matthew 13:11, John 6:44-45, John 6:65, and John 15:16.

Matthew 22:14 tells us that many are called, but that only a few are chosen. I don't believe I've ever had the opportunity to read or hear how an Arminian would explain this verse away. Go ahead! Read the parable that leads up to this verse! You will find nothing in the context to justify any alteration of the meaning. People were generally invited, but some who came weren't genuine. Those who were chosen were genuine unless (of course) John 6:37 is incorrect. Some were "chosen" and not merely judged to have passed muster. The only question is to the condition and time of the choosing. They were either chosen before being called, or after. If we are to believe Ephesians 1:4, the choosing (whatever the nature) was before the foundation of the earth. Why not here?

Editor's note: I disagree with the author in his interpretation of "born of water" in John 3:5. I believe that "water" there refers to the Word of God. I believe that the verse teaches us that the new birth is by the Spirit and the Word. The Spirit uses the Word (the gospel) in

giving spiritual life. But I confess that many do agree with the author of this article on this point.

TITHING PART 8

E. J. Daniels

I am sure that you see that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, teaches that we should tithe; that we rob God if we do not; that we lose dollars when we keep tithing cents; that it is cheaper to tithe than not tithe. Also that the Lord will prosper and bless us if we "Bring all of the tithe into the storehouse," and that the nine-tenths — our part — will go father than ten-tenths — our part plus God's part. When we keep all, we rob God and have His "rod" upon us, but when we tithe, we have His blessings upon us and the remaining nine-tenths. Surely it is God "that giveth the power to get wealth." If we honor Him, He will give us the power. It doesn't matter if we receive but one dollar per week, if we will but tithe this, God will see that we are blessed. The ten cents paid God will be worth several times more than if we kept it.

Forgetting all about the blessings, I want to again say that it is our duty to tithe. It is not left to your desires or the leading of the Spirit; it is a clearly revealed Bible truth. But if you will follow the leading of the Spirit you will certainly tithe, for He inspired the Book that teaches it. You must do it, else you are a robber of the blackest dye.

What we give to God and His work does us the most good anyway. Those who store away money usually lose it before death, or they die and leave it all, to be squandered or to ruin the family left behind. It doesn't matter how much we make—we only have what we store up with God anyway.

That which we give to God is stored up in heaven "where moth and rust doth not consume nor thieves break through and steal." That which we give to Him we shall have for

(Continued on Page 11 Column 1)

I SING THE MIGHTY POWER OF GOD

I sing the mighty power of God,
That made the mountains rise;
That spread the flowing seas abroad,
And build the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained
The sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at His command,
And all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord,
That filled the earth with food:
He formed the creatures with His word,
And then pronounced them good.
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed,
Where'er I turn my eye:
If I survey the ground I tread,
Or gaze upon the sky!

There's not a plant or flower below,
But makes Thy glories known;
And clouds arise, and tempests blow,
By order from Thy throne;
While all that borrows life from Thee
Is ever in Thy care,
And everywhere that man can be,
Thou, God, art present there. Amen.

— Isaac Watts

TITHING

(Continued from Page 10)

eternity--we keep. That which we give to His work pays the best dividends. Suppose you tithe is one hundred dollars a year. This will support a native missionary. Suppose that he has ten conversions, you have an interest in those souls--saved from hell to heaven; souls that are more precious than the universe. Indeed, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." For he who gives shall receive many fold back again. Will you, dear reader, withhold God's money that He hath ordained should be used to carry the gospel to the world, and thereby prevent poor, lost souls from having an opportunity to hear of Jesus, and His blessed salvation? May you not be guilty of this most wicked robbery.

Not only will you be happier and richer here if you tithe, but hereafter as well. What we give to God's work after all makes us truly rich. How foolish to spend our lives in things so fleeting as those of earth and not lay up true riches in heaven where we can enjoy them for eternity. This is well illustrated by the following story:

TRUE RICHES

It was a cold December night. The cold winds sighed and moaned among the tree tops and whistled through the cracks in the window sills of the little parsonage, causing the couple within to draw up their chairs nearer and nearer the fire. "Put some more wood on the fire, Mother, it seems so cold tonight," says the old minister, moving his chair closer to the stove.

"Yes, I will," she answered, "but you know the wood is scarce and we must be very saving of it, or we may not have enough to last through the winter."

"I guess I will go down and see how Elder Parker and his wife are getting along tonight," said Mr. Newton, as he laid aside his newspaper, arose from his chair and put on his overcoat. "I dread to face the storm," he added, glancing around the warm, comfortable room; "but I am afraid those old people will suffer this cold night. They have so little to make them comfortable." So drawing his fur collar up around his ears, he opened the door and walked out into the darkness and down the street through the blinding snow storm. How fortunate I have been, he thought to himself as he walked along. I have always had plenty of money and everything I wanted in the world, but there are those old people who have nothing but poverty to contend with. His rap at the door was responded to by the happy-faced old gentleman.

"Good evening, Brother Parker," he said, as he entered their humble home. "Well, you are just as happy as ever, are you? I thought I would find you gloomy in this old house on so cold a night as this."

"Oh, no," answered the aged minister. "I am happier on nights like this than ever, because I have a shelter from the storm."

"Well, I should consider it a poor shelter," said Mr. Newton with a smile. "It always was a problem to me that you were so contented and happy here in

your old age. You have nothing to look forward to. You will soon be too old to take charge of a circuit, and you will have to leave this parsonage, and you have spent all your life trying to help others and have forgotten your own interest, and now as a result of it you are soon to be homeless. If it were me I should be very much discouraged, and feel like my life was almost a failure."

"Yes," answered the old man, with a calm, serene look on his face; "for forty years I have been laboring for my Master and trying to lead souls to Christ. True, I have never laid up treasures on earth, but yet I am rich."

"Rich! What do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Newton, in surprise. He had been very successful in a business career, but he knew nothing of true riches.

"Well," answered the preacher, "suppose I were a young man and had great sums of money to invest but was not going to live in this country, but expected to spend the greater part of my life in Europe; would you consider me wise if I should spend my fortune here, and then when I was ready to go to Europe, where I was to live in the future, I would have no money with which to buy a home?"

"Oh, no," answered Mr. Newton, "you would be very unwise indeed."

"Well," said the old gentleman, "that is what I thought. I always knew I should spend only a few short years here, then I shall go to my eternal home. So, for many years, I have been investing in a mansion in heaven. Now you see why I am happy because I will not need a home here long and I know that I have many treasures laid up above. You have spent all of your life securing the wealth of this world, and you, too, are growing old and will soon leave the shores of time. But to you that would mean to leave your treasures, while I come into the possession of mine, which I can enjoy through the long eternal years."

"Oh, yes, I see," answered Mr. Newton, dropping his head a moment. Then he arose and started toward the door.

"Will you stop with us a few minutes while we have family prayer? Mother and I always pray before we retire at night."

"Yes," said Mr. Newton, as he sank back into a chair.

The old minister opened the Bible and read: "Let not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions: If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you..." He read a few more verses, then closed the Book. Then slowly and softly he sang:

There is a land far away,
'mid the stars, we are told,

Where they know not the sorrows of time,

Where the pure rivet flows through the valley of God,

And where life is a treasure sublime.

'Tis the land of our God, 'tis the home of the soul,

Where the way-weary traveler reaches his goal,

One the ever green mountain of life."

The song being ended, they knelt in prayer. When they arose from their knees, Mr. Newton bade them good-night

and left the house.

Weeks and months passed away. The long, hard winter yielded to the touch of spring. The birds warbled merrily in the trees; the flowers were springing from their leafy beds and unfolding their tender leaflets in the gentle breeze as they passed.

"Lift me higher, higher, Mother," said the aged veteran of the cross, as he lay on his pillow dying. "I want to catch a glimpse of the rays of the rapidly setting sun. It is growing so dark. Oh, so beautiful! Over the distant hills I see a city. Its walls are like jasper, and its gates are of pearl. "And the city hath no need of the sun, the Lamb is the light thereof," he murmured, as his spirit took its flight.

Slowly tolled the bell in the old church tower as loving hands bore the casket, which held the cold form of the aged minister, out of that church in which for so many years he had been a faithful ambassador of the truth. As they laid him to rest in the quiet graveyard, to them the spot was more hallowed because his dust rested there.

"Wife," said Mr. Newton, as they were returning from the funeral, "I understand now, what I never did before, the meaning of those words the old minister spoke to me last winter. Truly my life has been a failure. Now he is exceedingly rich, but I am miserably poor. Today, beside that open grave I promised God that from now on I will begin to invest in true riches."

Will you not begin today to lay up true riches? Stop, right where you are, lift your heart to God, and pledge Him your obedience, your tithe. Won't you do it for Jesus' sake? Surely you will do this for Him, when it is your duty and He promises to bless you, too.

Perhaps you, like some others, do not believe in pledging to tithe. I am sure that you would not feel this way if you would study the many Scriptures which teach, even ask us, to pledge to God. Jacob pledged, vowed to tithe, and God accepted it. God often called Israel to vow and renew their vows to Him. In II Corinthians 8:8-12, we hear God through Paul, telling the Christians to pay up their pledges. This is saying that it is God's will to make pledges, and to keep them. If one who has not kept his pledge

ADDITION

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moderate. Some will actually take a sociable drink for the sake of a friend. Some may on the spur of the moment speak ill of another person. Sometimes one will seem to enjoy a smutty joke from time to time. Beloved, these things are an abomination, and should never be done. This is no less than allowing the little foxes to run rampant in the vineyard spoiling the tender grapes before they are mature, leaving them to grow into larger, more dangerous sins as they ripen on the vine. Satan enjoys "vine ripe" fruit. Let it hang there until perfectly ripe and it is harder to get away from. This tickles Satan no end.

When I was first converted I had some concern about my friends. Would they accept it? Would they accept my new way, or throw me down. It really concerned me. To my surprise I found that I had nothing to

to God to tithe reads here, let him renew his vow now.

If you will now begin tithing your life will never be the same again. You will be more successful in life than you can possibly be otherwise, for God's blessings will be upon you. "Bring ye all of the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, and there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of the ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 3:10-11). Accept His challenge! He will keep His promise! Prove Him!

THE FIRST CONVERT

by T.B. Freeman

It all came about by the Divine Providence of our sovereign Lord, when Paul at this time was forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia, and was turned westward by a vision in the night (Acts 16:6-9). Therefore, coming to Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia, on the sabbath day, they went out of the city by a river side, and engaged in a prayer meeting. Paul's party sat down, and spake to the women which resorted thither. Not many people are interested in a prayer meeting now days. Not long ago, I read of a church which had eight hundred present for Sunday morning services, and only forth present for Wednesday evening prayer meeting.

Our sovereign Lord opened Lydia's heart (Acts 16:14). Out of the heart are the issues of life. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." (Matt. 15:19). As our brother John Bunyan has written saying, "A man's heart is like fallow ground, God's Word is a plow,

worry about. They not only did not like the new man, but they did the leaving, taking the worry off my shoulders. Now, as the years have gone by, my friends, my true friends, my brethren in Christ never leave me. They are God-given friends, brethren in Christ, dependable because they are believers in the true Vine. Satan would have us to continue to practice the "little" sins that we afore mentioned. These are only a few of many sins that Satan would have you to cultivate daily in your life.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16). Brethren, we will not bring forth much fruit if the little foxes are allowed to run rampant over the crop while it is yet tender. Remember, these friends who are being used to

and His ministers the plowmen." To open the heart, therefore must be to break it. David, in his prayer says, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Psalms 51:17). This opening of the heart must be done by the Holy Spirit as He uses the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit. There is a difference between sinners being cut to the heart (Acts 7:54), and cut in the heart (Acts 2:37). Without sinners being cut in the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Word of God, they will never be converted to Christ. They must be effectually called to repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). This call comes by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thes. 2:14). This is the work of God in regeneration by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the gospel. Professions short of this, produce stoney ground professors without saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. For it is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness (Rom. 10:10). Saving faith operates in the new heart which is the gift of God. "A new heart also will I give you" (Ezek. 36:26). "The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit that quickeneth" (John 6:63). Dead sinners can only produce dead faith, a non-productive faith which will not save (James 2:17). Christ alone is the author and finisher of saving, living, and productive faith.

Lydia's heart, being opened, she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. This is so wonderful, and attests to the true work of grace God wrought in her heart by opening it to His word. For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:14). Moreover, she followed her Lord in Baptism (I Peter 2:21). Furthermore, she opened her house to these men of God (Acts 16:15), sharing her material blessings with those she had received spiritual blessing through. This was the love of Christ flowing from His internal work of grace in her new heart (Phil. 2:13). All to the praise of the glory of His grace.

PLAN YOUR VACATION AROUND OUR BIBLE CONFERENCE! ONLY 20 WEEKS. BE THERE!

hurt you by Satan are not your friends anyway, but enemies. This might be a little help to you in that field, "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17-18). Brethren remember this, to be forewarned is to be forearmed. May our Lord richly bless you and me in my prayer...Amen.

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A TWENTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

What a great day it was! The New Testament Baptist Church of Kirtland, Ohio observed its twenty fifth anniversary on November 8th. I was greatly honored and privileged to preach at this anniversary service. Our church mothered this church. Since I am now the pastor of the mother church, I received this great honor.

This church is a very unusual church among our kind of churches. I wish all our daughters were doing as well as this one. I even wish the mother was doing as well. This church stands true and strong for the doctrines that are taught by the mother church and which are frequently set forth in The Baptist Examiner. This church has stood for these things throughout her history.

Elder Paul Tiber is the very fine and able pastor of this church and has been from the start. It is next to impossible to get him out in public, preaching at other churches or to get him in print; but those of us who know him and have heard him are well aware of his many fine qualities as a man, a pastor, and a preacher. I wish he would not keep his light so totally confined to the New Testament Baptist Church, but would let it shine forth in some other places. Brother Tiber is very knowledgeable in the Word of God and very able in presenting its truths to others. I suppose that his preaching excels in making the truths of Scripture clear and in applying them practically to his hearers.

In my acquaintance with Brother Tiber it seems to me that, if he excels in one part of his work more than another, it is as a pastor. I have known great preachers who were not much as pastors. I have known great pastors who were not great preachers. I do not mean to imply that Brother Tiber is not a great preacher; but I am just saying that it seems to me that he really stands out as a pastor. He seems to truly have the shepherd's heart that is so necessary to a pastor. I have known some men, and Brother Tiber is one of them, who have made me greatly desire that I could be as good a pastor as they. I think that every preacher should try to excel as a pastor. I think that every pastor should try to excel as a preacher. But I think that, if I should make one or the other more important to the office we hold, it would be that we seek to excel at being a pastor (I will hear about this). One does not spend much time talking with Brother Tiber before he learns that the man has a great love for his people. He is a tender and compassionate man. We need more of this.

This church is truly a great church. By whatever criteria we judge the greatness of a church, this one meets all of them. Faithfulness in attendance, liberality in giving, holiness in living, spirituality in thought and speech, faithfulness in witnessing, zeal in serving God through His church, love for one another - in all these and many others, this church passes the test of greatness as a church. If I should be asked to name what I think are the chief virtues of this church; I would say faithfulness, zeal, and love.

This church, with all its

doctrinal soundness and with all its concentration on love and fellowship within the body, is certainly an evangelistic church. They have seen several saved and baptized this year. They are constantly endeavoring to reach the unsaved. They witness to them. They work hard to get unsaved people to attend the services. The pastor preaches frequently to the unsaved. They pray much for the salvation of others. In conversing with them, one often hears them speak of someone who is lost, in whom they are interested, and for whom

they are praying and hoping that he or she will soon be saved. I often hear them say of such and such, "I believe that he (or she) will be saved soon."

Katie went with me on this trip, and this added to my enjoyment thereof. We arrived at the Tiber home about 4:00 P.M. on Saturday, November 7th (there were other great blessings on this trip that I will write of later). It is always a blessing to visit the Tiber home. It is also quite an experience. They have a large and lovely home; a tour of which is always enjoyable. Their home is a

very busy place. Seldom can one find peace and quiet - peace maybe, but not much quiet - in this home. It is usually like a popular restaurant at rush hour. Paul has a large family, most of them live nearby, and usually some of them are there. The home is also open to any and all, and usually one will meet many besides the family when spending a few hours there. This time was no exception. We were treated royally. We had a great meal. We had great fellowship with the Tibers, many of the children, and many others during our brief time there. Katie and I were given the master bedroom - a special reward for my having Katie with me. We felt like the king and queen.

After the special anniversary service, the church treated us all to a fine meal at a nearby restaurant. We had great fellowship during this meal, and afterward. Following the meal, Brother Tiber made a brief speech about Baptists that was a great blessing. More about this later.

The most blessed thing about this day was the service in the church that Sunday morning. When we arrived at the church, our car was parked by one of the men of the church. They were expecting a large crowd and thought this best. Folk began arriving early. I suppose that there were around 125-150 present for the service. I do not know that a count was made. I do know that the auditorium was crowded. One would have to be there to fully believe the enthusiasm and love manifested as these people greeted one another upon arrival. It was a wonderful experience. Oh, that all our churches had much more of this.

Brother Paul hosted the service in a blessed and remarkable way. He also led the singing - a talent I had not known of before. There were several specials in song.

There were two groups of young people singing. I really cannot remember how many groups they had to sing during this service. I think there was only one solo by a church member but it was a very fine one. I did greatly enjoy this part of the service. They have much talent in the church, and I hope they will continue to use it. I say this because it seemed from Brother Tiber's remarks that some of these groups were new, and even a surprise to him. I felt rather foolish singing with all the talent they had displayed, but I had been asked, it had been cleared with administration; and so I did. I was

very frightened, but the Lord did help me.

Elder Butch Bugansky was the first speaker. He brought a fine message on Biblical Loyalty. It was very appropriate to the occasion, commending the loyalty of the church's past, and stressing the need of continued loyalty. He defined for us very well what loyalty meant, and different areas in which we need to manifest such.

Elder Jim Hobbs brought the second message. He spoke to us on Christian Love and brought a fine message on the subject. He stressed the need of love within the church because of its being one body.

I brought the final message. I had been asked to preach something on the Law of God. I had not considered such until requested to do so. I did feel that the Lord was with me in the message. That message is to appear in two parts in The Baptist Examiner beginning with this issue. The message was well received. Oh, these people are easy to preach to. They are so receptive of and responsive to the message. One could preach on and on and on, but Brother Tiber had set a thirty minuted time limit.

The service was over. It had been a great, blessed, and memorable one. I feel sure that those present will long remember it. We were told to not stand around and talk, but to get our cars (we did it ourselves this time) and hurry to the eating place. Most of us did not need too much urging to do this.

We had a great meal, great fellowship, and a short talk from Brother Tiber that was a blessing. I have already spoken of these. Following the meal, we had a special song by an impromptu gathering of some of the men. It was a blessing. The church then presented to Brother and Sister Tiber a gift of an all expense paid trip for two to Hawaii (Churches: are you listening?). We all fellowshiped a while longer. Then Katie and I were on our way for a part of the trip I will write about later. Many of the people then went to the Tiber's home for a time of further fellowship. It was a great experience. It was a great blessing. I will long remember it. May God continue His wonderful blessings on this church, and even increase them. Pray for this church. If you ever have opportunity to visit them, please do so. You will have an unusual and blessed experience.



Four preachers at the special twenty-fifth anniversary service. Left to right: Joe Wilson, Butch Bugansky, Paul Tiber, and Jim Hobbs.



The impromptu "men's chorus" who blessed us after our lunch.

HOW WE CLOSE OUR WORSHIP SERVICE

by John Pruitt

I can't really say that there is any set way in the Scriptures for closing the worship service unless you want to consider Matthew 26 when our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." Nevertheless, we do not close our service the same way every time.

My own preference is to let the circumstance dictate as to what I do. If we are teaching some kind of doctrinal lesson on Wednesday night, we will usually simply sing a hymn, have prayer, and dismiss. I usually call on one of our men to pray. However, if I have preached an evangelistic message whether it be Sunday, or Wednesday I will offer an invitation for lost peo-

ple to make a public profession of faith. If I suspect that there are lost visitors, or people who are looking for membership; I will issue an invitation. I let the circumstance dictate, and try to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

As for visiting speakers, my personal rule is to allow the preacher to close the service the way he wants to as long as it is within reason. By that I mean, not some long drawn out affair.

The reason why the gospel is not enough for so many people is because the gospel speaks of Christ's righteousness, and Christ is not enough for them. They go about to establish their own righteousness and will not submit themselves to the righteousness of God in Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Faith Baptist Church of Lawtey, Florida will have special services January 7-8 with Elder Wayne Crow of Tampa as speaker. There will be a fellowship on the 9th with different speakers. Marty Hoffman, new pastor of the church, will be ordained at this time. There will be a meal following. For further information call Marty Hoffman at (904) 782-3106.

The editor will be speaking at

an area wide fellowship meeting at the Jordan Baptist Church at 920 Upsala Rd. in Sanford, Florida, Friday night, Jan. 8th. He is to speak at the Temple Baptist Church of Ocala, Fla. Sunday morning Jan. 10th. He is to speak at the Park Ridge Baptist Church of Gotha, Fl. on Sunday night, Jan. 10th. He may preach elsewhere on Saturday night or Sunday afternoon. For further information call Elder Elgie Hornsby at (305) 323-9072.