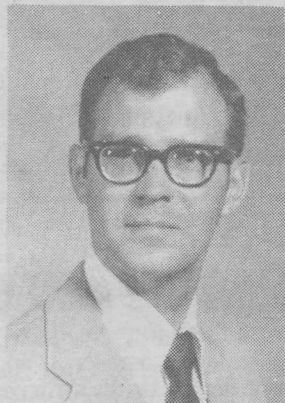


THE OLDEST MAN IN THE BIBLE

by Jon H. Rule
(Genesis 5:21-32)

Everyone knows that the oldest man in the Bible was Methuselah, the first-born of Enoch. I wonder if anyone ever investigated why God, who grants length of days and duration of life, allowed Methuselah to live



Jon H. Rule

longer than anyone else.

Methuselah was the son of Enoch, the man who walked with God, and who was translated into heaven without dying. Genesis 5:21 records that Enoch was a relatively young man when Methuselah was born, only 65, and that he was translated at a fairly young age, only 365.

At the birth of Methuselah, God evidently revealed to Enoch that judgment was reserved upon the world. This revelation is recorded in Jude 14-15, and it, (Continued on Page 10, Col. 1)

THE SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE

by C.H. Spurgeon
(Now in Glory)

Yet, further, these words mean that we are to hold perpetual communion with God. When Jesus said "I have set the Lord al-



C. H. Spurgeon

ways before me," He meant that He was always in fellowship with the Father. Very frequently the fellowship was exercised in prayer, for our Lord, though He is described as praying very much, no doubt prayed infinitely more than any evangelist has recorded, for He was praying when no one knew it but Himself and His God, when even His lips did not move. His public prayer, or the prayer which could be observed by others, was made manifest for our sakes and their sakes who stood with Him, but it was only a cropping up upon the surface of the great rock of prayer which laid the foundation of His

(Continued on Page 6, Col. 2)

All must be saved by the merits of Another, or not at all.

MISSIONARY

PREMILLENNIAL

BIBLICAL

BAPTISTIC

The Baptist Examiner

Baptist Is Our Middle Name

Paid Circulation in All States and in Many Foreign Countries

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

VOL. 60, NO. 25

ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, DECEMBER 24, 1988

WHOLE NUMBER 2550

WHY I AM A BAPTIST NOT A ROMANIST

by William M. Nevins

The answer to this question hangs upon two or three propositions, which I shall proceed to state.

First Proposition: When Christ was upon earth, He set up a visible church, organized, officered, with authority to receive and exclude members.

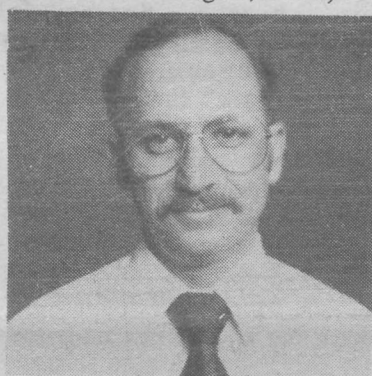
"Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). "If he shall neglect to hear thee, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17).

Many make the mistake of confusing the church and the kingdom. The Saints, as they call themselves, or Church of God, have no church roll and no organization. The followers of (Continued on Page 8, Col. 3)

THE OLD MONSTER IS STILL ON THE LOOSE

by John Pruitt

"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes," (Judges 17:6). This statement appears three times in this book. After the death of Joshua, there was no one to lead in the ways of God. They soon began to ignore (Continued on Page 9, Col. 3)



John Pruitt

FRUSTRATING THE GRACE OF GOD

by Don Schunck

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. O FOOLISH Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you" (Gal. 2:21-3:1). This article is written to those of you who would put anything in the place of the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ, by which you would either be or remain justified in the sight of God. Much confusion exists in the religious world about how a man may be just, before God. I implore you to examine the Word of God carefully because an error at this point is to destroy your own soul, for God has but one (Continued on Page 10, Col. 2)

THE GOD THAT MAN HAS MADE

by Pastor Bob McCurry

Santa Claus is coming to town! In fact, he has been in town for quite a while now. He is growing fatter, more elaborate, more impish, and more attractive every year. To his shrine flock millions of worshippers every year, driven by his priests, commercialism's money-changers, and the doting parents who feel that "it is wrong to rob the children of their belief in Santa Claus." The Christmas season with Santa Claus and his reindeer has become the most highly commercialized season of the

year. The Christmas bells with the merriest jingle are on the cash registers.

Christmas is hailed as a great religious holiday -- the day when we are to especially remember the birth of Christ. Yet everywhere we look we see holly, mistletoe, and trees decorated with tinsel and bright lights. We see images of the rotund Santa Claus with his white beard, dressed in his red suit, along with the elves and fairies. There are sounds of bells and songs about reindeer and sleighs.

Yes, there are also the "manger

scenes" and Christmas carols. But what about the living Christ of God -- conceived of the Holy Ghost -- born of a virgin -- crucified on a rugged cross -- buried in a tomb -- resurrected from the dead and coming again?

Is there anyone who will deny that it is Santa Claus the myth -- not Christ the reality that gets top billing and is the featured personality of the Christmas season? Would you not agree that Christmas could not survive if there were no commercial benefits and no Santa Claus? The (Continued on Page 3, Col. 2)

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

(USPS 042-340)

by Fred C. Beard

We hear so much about what man calls being born again. Every church one goes into will have a tract of man's idea about how man comes to this new birth. And unless we are indeed born anew, born of the Spirit of God, we will never receive eternal



Fred Beard

life. Now, this subject of being born again is not something to be taken lightly. In truth, this subject is the most important one in all of the Word of God. Christ Jesus gave His church the great commission for this very purpose.

He said to us in Mark 16:15-16 "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" And in Matthew 28:19-20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I (Continued on Page 7, Col. 5)

BIBLE TRUTHS AND CHRISTMAS LIES

by Doug Newell,
Assistant Editor

John 4:24, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship



Doug Newell

him in spirit and in truth."

The Bible declares unto us that God, if He is truly worshipped, is worshipped in truth. When it comes to the worship of God, it is to revolve around the blessed Word of God, which is, my friend, truth. It is so sad in this day when many will claim that they worship God and yet their worship revolves around lies. I would like to ask you, can you worship God in a lie? Who do you think is the father of lies? (Continued on Page 7, Col. 2)

The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

CRYING

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes...." (Rev.21:4). The Bible has much to say about crying. God is not indifferent to the tears of men. God will judge those who make others to cry. "...put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?" (Psa.56:8). God is especially concerned about the tears of His people. He keeps a record of each tear we shed. In this message I want to say three things about crying.

1. There is a place where there is much crying. That place is this world and this life. Crying is

sorrow of heart relative to certain situations. Literal crying, of course, involves the shedding of tears. But there can be crying on the inside when there is no outward expression thereof. How much one cries literally is no satisfactory indication as to the sorrow felt in the heart. People are different. They express their inward feelings differently so far as outward expression is concerned. In our society we do not rend our clothes, put on sackcloth, or put ashes on our head. Still, we often feel great sorrow of heart. I am including this inward sorrow of heart under the thought

of crying.

There are many things in this life that move men to tears. There are many tears shed over the physical pain and suffering of self or loved ones. Oh, there is so much of this in the world today. Go to the hospitals. Go to the nursing homes. Go into the homes of the sick and suffering. It is enough to break the heart. I visit the sick often. I tell you that I often feel great inward pain over the sorrow and suffering of the sick. There are so many like this today. I feel so helpless. I desire so much to be of help. (Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)

The Baptist Examiner

JOSEPH M. WILSON, EDITOR
Office Ph. 606-325-2012
Home Ph. 606-329-1758
3205 Floyd St.
Ashland, Ky. 41101-5836

DOUGLAS P. NEWELL, III.
ASST. ED.
Home Address
Rt. 2 - Box 170-H
South Shore, Ky. 41175
Home Ph. 606-757-4714

Editorial Department, located in ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, where all subscriptions and communications should be sent. Address: P.O. Box 60, Zip Code 41105-0060.

PUBLICATION POLICIES: All matter for publication should be sent to the editor. All manuscripts sent should be typed and double spaced. All such material becomes the property of TBE and will not be returned unless requested by the writer. We reserve the right to edit and condense all materials sent to us for publication. Church news items must reach us one month prior to publication.

The publication of an article does not necessarily mean that the editor is in complete agreement with the writer, nor does it mean he endorses all this person may have written on other subjects.

COPYING PRIVILEGES: Unless otherwise stated, any article published in the paper may be copied by other publishers, provided they give a proper credit line stating that such was copied from this publication, and the date of publication; provided that such materials are not published for profit. If we are not on exchange list with the publication copying, it is requested that a copy of the issue containing the articles be sent to our address. All copyrighted materials may not be copied without written consent.

PUBLISHED EVERY 2 WEEKS at 3339 - 13th St., Ashland, Ky, with paid circulation in every state and many foreign countries.

A contribution of \$6.00 per year would be greatly appreciated to help with the cost of mailing.

PLANNING TO MOVE? — Notify us three weeks in advance. The post office does not forward second class mail unless the addressee guarantees the forwarding postage. They charge us 30 cents for each "change of address." Please save us this expense and the post office time.

Second Class Postage paid at Ashland, Kentucky.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Baptist Examiner, P.O. Box 60, Ashland, Kentucky 41105-0060.

CRYING

(Continued from Page 1)

There is nothing I can do except to pray for these folk. At times like these I almost become infuriated at these fake faith-healers. They make a big show. They get rich from the sufferings of others. If they have this gift of healing, why do they not go into the hospitals and go from room to room, and heal the sick? Why don't they go into the homes of the sick and heal them? Why do they make such a show? Why do they demand that the sick come to the healing services? If (and I do say "if") these men have this gift of healing, and they use it as they do, and especially fail to use it as they do; they are among the most cruel and heartless, of men. They are close akin to the Catholic priest who charges money to say a mass to shorten the stay of a person's loved ones in purgatory.

There are many tears shed over inner hurts. These are often the greatest sufferings. The heart can hurt so much worse than can the body. Oh, there is many a suffering heart hidden behind a smiling face. We never know what others may be suffering in their inner being. There are the tears that are shed when one is hurt by a loved one. It lies in the power of love to be greatly hurt. Some have determined to stop loving so as to spare themselves this great hurt. I would not advise this. It is better to love and hurt than it is to not love at all. But loved ones can and do hurt us. I suppose that the greatest heartaches on earth are those caused by loved ones. There are relationships that demand love. Do not cause hurt to those to whom you owe love.

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER
DEC. 24, 1988
PAGE TWO

Dear friends, there are enough tears in this world. Let us endeavor most earnestly to see to it that we do not increase them. We should never do anything to cause someone else to cry needlessly. We should consider the feelings of others. We should not do or say anything to hurt another. We should be thoughtful, kind, and gracious to all others. Oh, this would do much to lessen the ocean of tears in this old world.

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Rom.12:15)- We should never be glad when others are sad. There are a breed upon this earth,



Joe Wilson

(I do not know how to describe them or what to call them) that seem to get pleasure out of the sorrow of others. I am an adamant foe of laughing at the calamities of others. I see nothing funny in someone falling down. I would not laugh at another's flat tire. I get no joy out of telling another some bad news. Our making others to cry and being glad when they are sad is an evidence and manifestation of the depravity of our hearts. I think it would be one of the greatest blessings God could give me if He would give me a great big handkerchief and enable me to go around drying up the tears of men and women. If I can make some sad heart glad, I will be most happy myself. Blessed are those who try to comfort the sorrowing, dry the tears of the weeping, and bring joy to the sad.

There are many tears shed because of sin. We weep because of our own sins. We who are saved have lost the ability to totally enjoy sin. Like Simon Peter, we often are made to weep bitterly because of our sins. We love the Lord. We desire to live clean, holy lives. We do this to some extent. But, alas, we often fail. We are still in the flesh. We do things that we hate. Praise God, we do not enjoy this. We do not boast of this. We are sorry for our sins. We weep before our God because of them. Then we are often made to weep over the sins of others, especially loved ones. We sometimes weep over sin in general - over the sinfulness of this world in which we live, over the sins we hear about, over the sins of men we hardly know. It is a sin-cursed world in which we live; we cannot but weep at times over this. But it is the sin of loved ones that cause us more weeping. We love them. We earnestly desire their salvation. We know what sin will do to them. We reach out to them to draw them from the paths of sin, but we can't do it. They will not listen. They go on and on, deeper and deeper into sin. Our hearts are broken. We weep out of the great hurt we feel in our hearts. This may well be the source of the majority of our tears.

Let me say a surprising thing. It is good for us to cry here. Tears are often a blessing in disguise. It is often good that the unsaved are made to weep. God sometimes uses this in bringing

men to Christ. Dan Phillips' oldest child had just passed away. A crowd was gathered at the home to comfort Dan and his wife in their sorrow. T.B. Freeman passed by, saw the crowd, stopped, learned what had happened, and sought to comfort Dan and his wife. God sent T.B. Freeman to lead Dan and Lois to Christ at this time. God used that heart-break and those tears in bringing them to Christ. I do not at all say that this is always the case. There are many who weep many tears over earthly sorrow, and go on to hell. But I do believe, and have heard many testimonies concerning the matter, that the Lord often uses sorrow, sadness, and tears in bringing souls to saving faith in Christ. I know that the Spirit uses the Word in regeneration. But, God in His providence, uses different things in bringing men to see the need of the salvation experience.

It is good for the saved to cry here. I believe that tears often have a sanctifying effect upon God's children. I agree that sometimes God washes our eyes with tears that we might see more clearly. **"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better"** (Ecc.7:2-3). Tears, down here, have a way of weaning the believer from the world. The believer is often caused thereby to lift up his eyes to heaven and long for that glad and gladsome day when he will leave this world. Tears often are used of God to draw the believer closer to the Lord. Tears surely move one to prayer. I am sure that we pray more through our tears than through our laughter. It is often a cross; suffering and tears that draw us nearer to our Lord. It is not safe to be free from sorrow until we are free from sin.

Praise God that we don't cry all the time here. God is merciful and gracious. He mingles much joy and happiness with the sorrows of life. Often we rejoice. Often we have much to be happy about and thankful for. I would say that most of God's children have far more joy than sorrow, more laughter than tears. In the differing days of life that God gives to His children, there are many days of great joy.

2. There is a place where there is nothing but crying. Oh, friend, consider this well. Imagine such a place. A place where there is never a smile, never any laughter, never any joy or peace. A place where there is never any lessening, even for a moment, of the intense suffering of the flames of hell. There really is such a place. It is not a horror story invented by men. It is a reality, created by God, as the eternal prison house of those who die without Jesus Christ. **"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"** (Matt. 25:30). I can but wonder at the exegetical ability of some (thank God, they are few) preachers who make this one to be a saved person who just misses out on some Millennial rewards. **"...to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"** (Mk.9:47-48). **"And in hell**

he lift up his eyes, being in torments....for I am tormented in this flame" (Lk.16:23-24). **"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night...."** (Rev. 14:10-11). **"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"** (Rev.20:15). I wonder what those who sing **"Whosoever surely meaneth me"** do with the "whosoever" in this

verse? I wonder what those who say that "whosoever" means everyone does with this verse?

If these Scriptures (and many more could be given) do not teach everlasting, conscious torment in hell for the unsaved, then the Bible has lost all meaning and teaches nothing at all. No man can truly believe the Bible and deny eternal torment in hell for those who die without Jesus Christ. There is no rest in hell. There is not sleep in hell! There is no lessening of the terrible pain in hell, even for a moment. There are no "shots for pain" in hell. There is no getting used to the pain in hell. Oh, what a horrible place is hell! There is nothing but crying there. There is no joy in hell. The unsaved, when parting, say, "Have fun." But there is no fun in hell. No one in

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

FROM THE EDITOR

THE FAITH OF DEVILS. "...the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jms.2:19). We are saved by grace through faith. There is a faith that does not save. Oh, we need to examine ourselves, and to examine our faith. Do we have the faith of devils, or do we have the saving faith of God's elect? Let us examine briefly the faith of devils.

It is a real faith of some sort. The Bible says that the devils believe. This even causes them to tremble, and many professed Christians have never been made to tremble before God. The devils believe the Bible. I suppose they believe all of it. They may seek to cause men to doubt that the Bible is the Word of God, but I doubt that any devil really believes that the Bible is not God's Word. They believe that Jesus Christ is the virgin born Son of God. They believe that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. Though the devil is the author of every heresy, I suspect that he, himself, knows the true doctrines of the Bible. At least, the faith of devils is a real faith of some sort.

The old writers said that there are three ingredients of saving faith; knowledge, assent, and reliance. The faith of devils has this knowledge. The devils know as much about the facts of the gospel as do the children of God. Now, let us notice some defects in the faith of devils. These defects differentiate the faith of devils from the saving faith of God's children. Unsaved professors may have a faith similar to the faith of devils.

The faith of devils is a faith without assent. They believe the facts of the Bible and of the gospel, but they do not give hearty assent thereto. They wish they were not so.

It is a faith without reliance. The devils do not rely on the gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation. They know a great deal. They believe that these things are true. But they do not trust Christ and His gospel for salvation. It is a belief in facts, not trust in a person.

It is faith without repentance. The devils have never repented for their sins. They believe, but they have not repented. They have never been sorry for even one sin against God or man. They do not know the heavy burden of guilt that the saved person has known.

It is faith without love. They believe in Jesus Christ. They believe that He is the Son of God, but they do not love Him. Saving faith is accompanied by true love for the Saviour. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he is not saved.

It is believing in the intellect, and not believing with the heart. Only a heart faith can be a saving faith. Millions believe in Jesus in the intellect, who have never trusted Him from the heart. They are, at present, as lost as the devils.

It is a faith without works. The faith of the devils never moves them to do any works that are good and acceptable to God. Therefore it is not a saving faith. Faith without works is a dead faith, and can no more save the soul than can works without faith. Both are dead things that cannot save. The faith that saves the soul is a faith which worketh by love. (Gal.5:6) Yes, men are saved by grace through faith; but they are saved unto good works. Some of the unsaved are predestinated to be saved. All of the saved are predestinated unto good works (Eph.2:8-10). God has married saving faith and good works, and let not man put asunder that which God hath joined.

The faith of devils is a faith without a changed life. The devils believe and tremble, but they go on living as before. This belief does not change the way they live. Not so with saving faith. The true believer is in Christ. He is a new creature in Christ. Old things have passed away. All things have become new. He cannot; he will not, live as he did before trusting Christ. A faith that does not change one's way of life is no better, and has no more saving power than does the faith of devils.

These are only a few things about the faith of devils. I fear that a multitude of professing Christians, of church members, have no better and no different faith than the faith of devils. Such faith does not save the devils, and it will not save men who have no more than this. Examine yourself. Examine your faith. It may be the faith of devils. It may not be saving faith. You may be like Simon in Acts 8, who believed, but was still in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of iniquity, and whose heart was not right in the sight of God (Acts 8:9-23). You might be like those who, for awhile, believe, but in the time of temptation fall away (Lk.8:13). You might be like those disciples, (by profession) who went back and walked no more with Him (John 6:66). And where did they go? They went to hell. Where do believing devils go? They go to hell? Where do professing Christians who have only the faith of devils go? They go to hell.

There is a vast and an eternal difference between the faith of devils and the saving faith of God's elect. My friend, which do you have?

CRYING

(Continued from Page 2)

hell has ever sent a card back to earth saying, "Having good time, wish you were here."

Many here do not believe in hell, but their lack of belief does not change the awful fact of hell. Many will not take even a moment of time to think about hell. Imagine that! The greatest tragedy that a man can ever face, and he won't even think about it. There is this great tragedy facing man, there is a way (only one) to escape this tragedy; and many will not even think about the matter. Many will treat one rudely if he attempts to discuss this matter with them. How awful! Many here are busy about other things, but too busy (?) to think or talk about hell. How foolish is this! The unsaved man will have the desires of the flesh in hell, but no means of satisfying them. Oh, through all eternity (and "through" is not a good word, for it is never through) men will weep, wail, and gnash their teeth for very pain. Yes, there is a place where there is nothing but crying.

3. There is a place where there is no crying at all. Praise God for this! I want to go to a place like that. My text says, "GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Isaiah 25:8 says, "...and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces...." Some think that there will be tears in heaven for a brief time. They think tears will result because of the judgment seat of Christ, where believers will be judged for works and be rewarded or suffer loss of reward. They also think this because they say there must be tears for God to wipe them away. I do not agree with this. I feel that "wipe" just means that there will be no tears, and no cause for tears there, that God will do away with everything that brings tears in this life. I am not adamant about this. Anyway, the main thing is that, even if there are tears at the judgment seat of Christ, and they are then wiped away, still there will be an eternity when and where there will be no crying. And this will not be a crying on the inside, but not on the outside, it will be no crying at all.

Oh, in heaven, in heaven? No tears, no tears up there! There will be nothing to cry about. We will not cry over the unsaved. Eternal conditions will set in, and the lost are lost forever. We will have no need of the soul winner's tears then. Oh, we do need them now, but not then. We will not cry over the past. Our sins are blotted out. We have been forgiven for the past. Now, we may still weep over this at times, but we won't then. We will not cry over sin; there is none there. There will be no sorrow in heaven. There are no broken hearts there. There is no sickness in heaven. There is no pain among the blessed in heaven. There is no night there. There is no death there. There may well be those there who were doctors, nurses, or morticians down here; but they will have a new line of work in that fair land. There will be joy, full joy, total joy, and eternal joy in heaven. There will be no sorrow, not even a little, mixed with that joy. Only glory, only glory by and by. And this will be true forever. The day of eternal blessedness will be a day without a night. It will never end. We can hardly imagine such a place, but it is real; and all the

saved will one day know the reality thereof.

We are now in a place where there is a good bit of crying. We are headed for a place where there will be nothing but crying, or where there will be no crying at all. This place where we now are, is our temporary abode. When we leave here, we will move into our eternal abode - nothing but crying, or no crying at all. What is it that makes the difference as to which one of these abodes we will dwell forever? Oh, what an important question. I am glad to be able to provide the answer. Jesus Christ makes the difference. Our good (?) works do not make this difference. Our religious rituals do not make the difference. Our sins do not make the difference. It is not simply sins that send one to hell. It is sins, unrepented of and unforgiven. Many great sinners (are there any other kind?) will not go to hell, for their sins have been forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ. Oh, my friend, listen. Listen for your life! It is Jesus Christ who makes the difference. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son, no matter what else he may have, does not have spiritual and eternal life. Heaven will be filled with those who were sinners on this earth. But, by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, they have repented of those sins and trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. They have been washed from their sins by the blood of Jesus Christ.

How is it with you my friend? You are now in a place where there is much crying. You are aware of that. You have shed many tears yourself. How will it be in eternity? Will you be where there is nothing but crying? Will you be suffering in the burning flames of an eternal hell? Or will you be in that blessed land where there is no crying at all? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. You can know that you are saved. You can know that you are eternally saved. May God bless you all.

THE GOD

(Continued from Page 1)

"Christmas spirit" is created each year, not to honor Christ but to sell merchandise.

The commercial world has successfully blended the "Little Baby Jesus" into its world of fantasy and make-believe -- exploited for selfish gain -- who will be forgotten and disregarded on Christmas Eve as quickly as the wrapping on the packages on Christmas morning. "When Christmas is over," said a merchant to a minister, "it's over, and it's our job to rid the store completely of Christmas in a day."

How the Santa Myth Began

The image of Santa Claus began in the 4th century when Nicholas, the (Catholic) bishop of Myra, Asia Minor, gave treats to the children. After he died, mothers told children that good Nicholas might visit them again at Christ's mass. He came to be celebrated by a feast on December 6, with festive sports and gifts for children, and was "regarded as a special friend and protector of children." The St. Nicholas story grew into a legend, and the legend finally metamorphosed into a myth.

The name "Santa Claus" came into American English through

the Dutch (Saint Nicholas or Nicolaus to San Nicolaus or Sinter Klaas and eventually Santa Claus). In America, his visit was soon popularly associated with Christmas rather than St. Nicholas' Day. In Holland, St. Nicholas appeared, as he still does today, in the colorful regalia of a medieval bishop, including the red miter upon his head and the long cape draped from his shoulders. In America the miter and cape became the colorful cap and suit of our Santa Claus, both bright red and trimmed with fur. Instead of the serious mien of a bishop, he became a fat, jovial figure with white beard and ruddy nose and cheeks, a mixture of human and supernatural attributes.

"Better Be Good"

In Holland and other European countries, the original St. Nicholas was a stern gentleman who left a whip instead of toys for naughty children or at least threatened to do so. Knight Rupert (Knecht Rupprecht) made rounds ahead of St. Nicholas in the German Black Forest area to frighten and threaten children with punishment for misconduct. But in America today, little of the disciplinarian remains to spoil the jovial Santa Claus. The idea prevails nonetheless that he is more generous with children of good behavior.

North Pole, Reindeer and Chimneys

The association of Santa Claus with snow, reindeer and the North Pole suggests Scandinavian or Norse traditions of the Yuletide season. His 'eight tiny reindeer,' in Moore's poem, "A Visit From St. Nicholas", fly 'up to the house-top' with their 'miniature sleigh.' In Norway, the probable origin of this lore, St. Nicholas was assisted by Kriss Kringle, whose reindeer and sleigh could glide miraculously over the house tops.

"Clement C. Moore calls his St. Nicholas 'a right jolly old elf,' and the diminutive size and supernatural powers are displayed in coming down chimneys and bring presents to all."

Truth vs Mythology

The purpose of this article is not to deal with the subject of Christmas per se. Whether or not you observe Christmas, I trust you will think seriously about this battle between the truth of Christ's birth and the myth of Santa Claus. Each one has had a tremendous influence on our society: The one, the truth of Christ's birth, leads men to God. The other, the myth of Santa Claus confuses men about God. One story is true (although the date of Christ's birth is not known). The other is a substitute for the truth, a lie intended to lead men away from the truth.

Santa Claus has become one of the most popular, and widely accepted, and unopposed myths ever to be successfully interwoven into the fabric and framework of Christianity. It is a fact that Christ was born (although the date is unknown) and that truth should greatly rejoice the heart of every Christian -- although it should not be reserved for a once-a-year holiday observance. The Santa Claus myth distorts the truth of Christ's birth by subtly and successfully blending this truth with the lie of Santa Claus.

Santa Claus a God-Substitute

"Is the Santa myth just good,

clean, wholesome fun -- a game that will help to develop your children's imaginations? Or is it another subtle device of the serpent -- another substitute for the true and living God?

Santa Claus a God-substitute? Listen again to the popular song that children sing each Christmas:

You better watch out, you better not cry,

Better not pout, I'm telling you why--

Santa Claus is coming to town!

He's making a list and checking it twice,

Gonna find out who's naughty and nice--

Santa Claus is coming to town!

He sees you when you're sleeping,

He knows when you're awake,

He knows if you've been bad or good--

So be good for goodness' sake!

Oh! You better watch out, you better not cry,

Better not pout, I'm telling you why--

Santa Claus is coming to town!

Now think about the Santa myth in general and this song in particular in the light of the attributes of God. Here is a partial listing:

1. GOD IS HOLY -- This means that God is distinct from all of His creatures. He is a unique being; there is nothing in heaven, on the earth, or under the earth that is like God. So is the imaginary Santa Claus. There is no other being in the universe like him. He may go by different names in different countries, but there are no other Santa Clauses -- only one, He is unique.

2. GOD IS ETERNAL -- So is the imaginary Santa Claus. He has no beginning (Who were his parents? Where was he born?) and he will presumably have no end.

3. GOD IS UNCHANGEABLE -- Santa Claus hasn't aged a day since I was a child. He still looks the same and he still does the same things he has always done. He appears to be a changeless being, like God.

4. GOD IS OMNISCIENT -- So is the imaginary Santa. "He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been good or bad..." That sounds a lot like what David says about Jehovah in Psalm 139: "O LORD, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and my uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off."

5. GOD IS OMNIPOTENT-- Is there anything that Santa Claus can't do at Christmas? The parents who maintain the myth may not be able to afford the expensive toy their child wanted, but that's no defect in Santa.

6. GOD IS OMNIPRESENT-- Santa is not exactly omnipresent -- everywhere at the same time. We all know that he spends most of his time at the North Pole. But somehow from that vantage point his eyes peer out over the whole earth watching children day and night, without any rest. As Christmas approaches, he can be found in every department store in the city, and on Christmas Eve he manages to travel the whole world over, leaving presents at every house. Even with our space-age technology, that's quite an accomplishment. While that's

not quite the same as being omnipresent, it certainly is close.

7. GOD IS SOVEREIGN -- So is Santa Claus. To whom is Santa responsible? Is there anyone who has authority over him?

8. GOD IS GOOD -- Santa also reveals his character by doing good unto others. His whole purpose is to give gifts unto men.

9. GOD IS JUST -- So is His mythical substitute. "You better watch out, you better not cry, better not pout, I'm telling you why..." Santa Claus is coming to town, and he's coming in the character of a judge. Children who have been good during the year will receive presents as their reward. But children who have been bad can expect stockings filled with cinders and ashes. Santa Claus, then, is the judge over boys and girls, and they had better live their lives in a way that is pleasing to him.

10. GOD IS RIGHTEOUS -- Has anybody ever found fault with Santa Claus? Are there any moral imperfections in his character or conduct? Has he ever needed to confess his sins to anybody else?

Well, perhaps the Santa myth is not so innocuous after all. In all of these things Santa Claus is a children's substitute for the living God. But can it really be harmful to let our children believe in a myth? INDEED IT CAN! And in several ways, Let me explain.

First, if Santa Claus is a God-substitute for the pre-school generation, then what do young boys and girls learn about Deity during the highly impressionable years of childhood? In an excellent article published some years ago (Dec. 3, 1971) in "Christianity Today", Samuel Mateer argued convincingly that Santa Claus is a reflection of the secular man's concept of God. As a child accepts Santa to be his judge, he will also accept all or some of the following ideas:

1. Acceptance with God -- "He's making a list and checking it twice, gonna find out who's naughty and nice..." The child soon learns that he can be acceptable to Santa by being "nice." Being nice guarantees rewards; being naughty means cinders and ashes. The way to be acceptable in God's sight is to do your very best. Sound familiar?

2. God's Word -- The child knows that Santa has promised blessing upon niceness and cursing upon naughtiness. As Christmas approaches, he is continually reminded of his own behavior. He has not been perfect throughout the past year, and he knows it. In fact, he has had some spells of nastiness while out shopping with his parents. But, he reasons within himself, everything will be OK. He's never known a kid yet who got cinders and ashes from Santa Claus. Nothing that he's done is bad enough for that. And Christmas morning, just as he expects, his faith in his own goodness is rewarded again. He's OK just as he is -- his behavior, though not perfect, is acceptable. And all this talk about cinders and ashes is just talk. Whatever God says, and whatever the child does, in the end God will reward everybody anyway.

3. God's interest and involve-

(Continued on Page 5, Col. 5)

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

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

Can a church that practices the mourner's bench be a true church?

SAM WILSON
1490 North
Spring St.
Gladwin, MI
48624

PASTOR
Grace
Baptist Church
Gladwin, MI



I Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

Without further explanation at this time, let me say that I believe our text gives a proper description of what a true church is. That description is; "the pillar and ground of the truth." The question before us is, "Can a church that practices the mourner's bench be a true church?" To me, this is another way of asking about recognizing Arminian churches as true churches of Jesus Christ. My answer does not change. I do not recognize Arminian churches as true churches of Christ. In a moment I will give you several reasons for this, but first let me qualify the statement I just made. This is my view and the view of the church here in Gladwin; and I believe without doubt, the Biblical view. If a church was started Arminian, we do not recognize it at all as being a true church of Christ. I believe in the Bible principle that like begets like. I do not know of a sovereign grace Baptist church that would start an Arminian church. If one did exist, I would have very little confidence in that church. If a church was started right; and believed the doctrines of grace, but then went into Arminianism, I believe God would grant them a space for repentance. If they did not repent and come back to the truth, then I am convinced that God would remove the candlestick and they would cease to be a church of Christ.

Beloved, this view is logical, Scriptural and consistent. No other view is. Let me mention here, that many have brought up the question; "What is an Arminian?" How pathetic! We have been denouncing these people and their heresy for years and all of a sudden we must define them for some of our weak and compromising brethren. I am not opposed to defining what I mean by an Arminian. I will not get into the discussion of two pointers or three pointers. To me that is a most ridiculous discussion. I do not label a person who believes in the sufficient, efficient theory of the atonement as an Arminian. By Arminian, I mean a person who believes the final decision in salvation resides in the free will of man. I mean those who use the mourners

bench as a place where people come up and pray through for salvation. How could you recognize an assembly with such blasphemous practice, as a true church of Christ? Just because a person believes in eternal security does not mean they are not an Arminian. To say that it does is absurd. It is an absurdity to try and make a distinction between the Arminian, "so-called Baptist" and the free-will "so-called Baptist." Neither of them are true Baptist churches.

This answer requires an article, not just a couple of pages. Let me briefly give you some reasons for my view on this subject.

First, our text tells us that the church is to be the "pillar and ground of the truth." Is Arminianism truth? Is the use of the mourner's bench truth? Certainly not. Not only is it not truth, it is some of the worst kind of heresy. It attacks the very plan of salvation. It attacks the very character of God. It is a dangerous heresy. It has deceived millions with its easy evangelism. But worse than that, it has removed God from His throne and placed God at the mercy of man in salvation. I am not saying that a church has to believe all truth in order to be a church, but something as vital as the way of salvation, I think is necessary. I wish I had more space to deal with this aspect of my answer. Secondly, read Psalms 119:104. The Bible tells us there that God hates every false way. Arminianism is a false way and is hated by God. God literally hates Arminianism. He detests and despises what it does to His character. He will not allow or accept as a true church something that He hates so much. Thirdly, I mention the general trend of Arminian churches. Few were started right. Most are full of many other heresies. They are heretics on the ordinances, the woman's place and a multitude of other things. Surely you don't think God will recognize this as one of His true churches. Fourthly, I mention that the church is referred to as a candlestick. A candlestick is a light holder. The light is the truth. The Arminian bears no light in the truth concerning salvation. How then can they be a candlestick of God? Lastly, let me refer you to a few verses of Scripture for study. Titus 3:10 tells us that we are to reject a heretic after the second admonition. Are you trying to tell me that we are to put a man who is a heretic out of the church after we have warned him twice, but that we are to accept a whole church that holds to the same heresy as being a true church of Christ? That is the height of ignorance. I assure you that God will also reject the heretical church that practices the mourners bench. Read Romans 16:17. This verse will also tell us about how we are to deal with heresy and heretics. I assure you that God deals with them in the same way. With the afore mentioned stipulations, no, I do not think a church that practices

the mourners bench is a true church. How can you? May God bless you all. P.S. If you do recognize them, then many of you owe them apologies for your past criticisms. You should be joining in and fellowshiping with them.

CLYDE T. EVERMAN
108 Burdall Ave.
Ft. Mitchell, Ky.
41017

DEACON
Calvary
Baptist Church
Ashland, KY.



In I Timothy 3:15 we are told that the church, "is the pillar and ground of the truth". Now, we know that the use of the mourner's bench is not Scriptural, and therefore is not of the truth. But the question arises, How much truth can a church live up, or how much error can she have and still be a true church? Going to the Word of God, we see that many of the churches in the New Testament had errors. Many of them of a serious nature. Looking at the Corinthian church we find many things wrong, yet she was addressed by the apostle Paul as, "the church of the living God". Also it seems that some of the churches in Galatia had even begun to depart from the gospel as the way of salvation. Paul wrote, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6).

Looking at the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2 and 3, we find that even in these there was much error that had sprung up, yet it was only the church at Ephesus God warned that He would remove the candlestick unless she repented of her sins. When does a church cease to be a true church? I believe we can be safe in saying she is in danger of losing her candlestick if she begins to preach and teach salvation by works, or if she takes in as members those who have not received Scriptural baptism. Many other errors may cause her to cease to be a true church, but only the Lord can be judge as to that.

It would seem to me that the use of the mourner's bench would be a contradiction to the truth of salvation by grace through faith. It would imply that the sinner must beg and plead for the Lord to save him, which is completely false. But is that any more wrong than after a sovereign grace sermon a long Arminian invitation is given, implying that it is the man giving the invitation, rather than the Holy Spirit, that will cause the sinner to come to Christ? Both methods are contrary to the Word of God, and could very likely lead to more serious sins that could cause them to cease to be true churches, but I do not believe it is for us to say when a church ceases to be a true church. We must leave that to our Lord.

JOHN PRUITT
Rt. 1 Box 452-B
Williamson,
GA. 30292

PASTOR
W. Griffin
Baptist Church
Griffin, GA.



According to Webster's New World Dictionary, a mourner's bench is used in certain revivalist churches; a front row of seats reserved for those who are making professions of penitence. Every so-call mourner's bench that I have seen was a bench eight to ten feet in length, constructed of wood, sometimes upholstered, standing about 24 inches high. I remember, as a child, seeing them in some (Baptist) churches. The preacher would give an invitation for people to come to the front to either get saved, or get right, whatever the case may have been. People would go down to the front and kneel at this bench and pray, or have someone pray for them.

Most holiness type churches that I have been in (I have been in a few), have one of these benches where people flock to during a service to get saved and/or get the "baptism of the Holy Ghost". To my knowledge the Bible says nothing at all about using a mourner's bench, prayer bench, or as it is sometimes called, an altar. Of course, all man-made altars were done away with in the substitutionary death of our Saviour.

The question at hand may seem simple at first, but let us not be too hasty in deciding the fate of one of the Lord's churches. I very much doubt that the Lord would remove His candlestick from a body simply because they had a wooden bench 24 inches high, and eight to ten feet in length sitting in front of the pulpit. Do not misunderstand me; I would not approve of such a piece of furniture in the church building, but then many churches have things or do things that I personally would not approve of. Nevertheless, I am not ready to unchurch them because I don't approve of something that they do. I am afraid that some people are much too hasty in judging a given church, and much too anxious to remove their candlestick. Beloved, let's leave the candlestick removal business to Jesus.

Now, as to the mourner's bench. I believe that it would depend entirely on three things. (1) Was this body ever a true Baptist church in the first place? Was it properly set in order by another true Baptist church? (2) What is the bench being used for? If people are being invited to get on their knees and pray for some "Holy Ghost" experience or "pray through" to salvation, then obviously that church is not teaching pure and free grace. You can't be a true Baptist church unless you are teaching grace in its purest form, that the power of salvation lies with the all-powerful and sovereign Saviour, that it (God's sovereign power) is manifest in the preached gospel (Romans 1:16). (3) Are they practicing the ordinances set forth by our Lord during His earthly ministry, and exemplified by the apostles and the early New Testament churches? I would suggest that you investigate these three things before you make a judgment as to whether they are a true Baptist church. So my direct answer to the question is, if a body of be-

lievers is practicing the mourner bench in the traditional fashion, as I understand the traditional fashion, they cannot be a true Baptist church. Thank you for your question.

Assistant
Editor



I Timothy 3:15, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

A characteristic of a New Testament church is that she is a pillar and ground of the truth of the Word of God. This can only be said of Sovereign Grace Baptist churches. The truth was given to the Lord's true churches that they might proclaim it to the world.

The question arises then, if a church is found in some heresy, can she still be a church of the Lord Jesus Christ? Let me say that I believe that churches can hold some heresy and still be true churches. Some churches may have their women to be without headcoverings in the service, which is not proper, yet they are still true churches, I believe. Some churches may, as a church, celebrate heathen holidays such as Christmas and Easter, and still be true churches. Churches can be wrong on some things and still not have the candlestick removed. But on the other hand, there are some things that I believe to be essential, as to the belief and practice of a Baptist church. When a church has completely divorced herself from the sovereignty of God, and uses devices such as a mourner's bench to try and get people saved, as they use the term; I don't believe that God will recognize that church any longer. True churches have existed in the truth since the day that Christ first organized a Baptist church.

I contend that a church must be sound in doctrine when that doctrine is of the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't believe that a sound church would even consider having a device of the devil, such as a mourner's bench. Such things are evidence that, that church does not believe that God has the ability to save sinners on His own.

So my answer to the question is, no. A church is not a true church if she holds to such doctrine. I would not ordain a man who held to this doctrine. I would not be in favor of organizing a group into a church who held to this doctrine. I don't believe that God will recognize such a church. I would not fellowship a church who held such a doctrine. I would not let her preachers preach behind a Baptist pulpit. When John spoke of apostasy He said, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (I John 2:19).

The Baptist Examiner Forum II

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

A church excludes a member. How should sister churches regard and treat that member? Should they receive, or use the excluded member in any way?

DAN PHILLIPS
Rt. 6, Box 611A
Bristol, Tenn.
27620

PASTOR
New Testament
Baptist Church
Bristol, Tenn.



The answer to this question is easy. The Bible is very clear on this, and we should listen and take heed as to what it says. Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

Most churches are so sentimental and hard up for members that it does not matter what the Bible says. They will take a sister church's disciplined members and place them in good, standing with their church. What does the Bible say? The Bible says in Matthew 18:17 "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

This is as plain as day and night. Those who have been excluded by a sister church are to be treated as a lost person until he gets right with his own church that has disciplined him. He is to go back to the church and repent of his wrong, and then act like it by being faithful to serve the Lord and the church.

It is a trend of the day for disciplined members to run to another church and cry on their shoulder and ask to be received as a member. I might add, there is always a church that preaches discipline but never practices it, that will put their arm around them and receive them with gladness. No! a sister church should not receive such a member or use the disciplined member in their services.

DAVID S. WEST
2829 South
Live Oak Drive
Moncks
Corner, SC
29461
PASTOR
Landmark
Missionary
Baptist
Church
N. Charleston,
SC



The sound churches of the Lord are divided and are dividing over issues that ought not to divide them. Selfishness is causing some of this. Men love to have their own way. Some feel that they should satisfy their own desire. If it was not for this, maybe the churches would stand for the truth better. Every man looks on his own things rather than on the things of others. Some disregard the desire and authority of the Lord's churches. I wonder if some just shut their eyes to the real truth of the matter.

If a member is excluded by a church, then all other sister churches should recognize this

and respect the right of the excluding church. All will at once say, "we do". What many mean is that if the excluding church had a good and satisfying reason to exclude the member. Some will say that the reason the excluding church did not have a reason that was enough, was that there was not sufficient evil involved. So the sister church will take the member in without any recommendation from the excluding church. Who is going to judge whether the misconduct was sufficient to exclude a member or not? What evil does one have to do to be excluded? Some will draw the line one place and some in another. One church will say this or that sin is not enough to warrant excluding a member. My brethren, when a church does that, they are passing judgment on the other church and her authority to exclude members and practice discipline.

When in the eyes of the church, she sees one of her members doing a thing that, in her judgment is not right, and this continues on and exclusion follows, other churches should recognize her authority to do so. Some may question the excluding church by saying that the disobedience was not such that the member should have been excluded. Well, what should the sister churches do next time? Well, that sin wasn't quite bad enough either. Where does one stop? Or where does one start? The thing that should be done is for sister churches to recognize the authority or right of the excluding church.

Let us notice this: That if the sin was not so much or great, and the member should not have been excluded, then that would make it all the easier for the matter to be corrected; and the member that was excluded could be reinstated.

If all sound churches would stand together on church authority, then most of our problems would be solved along this line.

"Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (I Cor. 8:13).

There are certain things that we may do that is legal and right for us to do; that is, maybe lawful in the eyes of the law of the land, but not in the eyes of the Scripture, nor in the eyes of the church where one is a member. Paul certainly had the right to eat meat, but if eating meat offend his weaker brother, then he would not eat meat any longer. If what one does offends the church, then don't do it, no matter how it may seem in the eyes of the offender. If a member continues to do that which offends and the church excludes the member, then other churches of like faith and order should recognize the right of the excluding church. If a sister church receives the excluded member, then what the receiving church is really saying is that the

offense was not of such a nature that one should be excluded. This amounts to passing judgment on the church which excluded the member. The receiving church is saying that the church did not have sufficient wisdom to know what she was doing. No, sister churches should not receive nor use excluded members until or unless reconciliation is made.

JAMES O. WILMOTH
1747 Fullington Rd.
Toledo, OH 43614

TEACHER
Grace
Baptist
Church
Toledo, OH



When a church excludes a member, it should be the end of a process that is outlined in Matthew 17:15-18. The church that recognizes its responsibility and carries out its God given authority is pleasing unto God. However, this process does not end with exclusion; it is only the beginning; the beginning of trouble for the excluded member. It is sad when a person offends the church, and in some situations receives praise, rather than what their actions deserve. There are at least four things that should accompany the exclusion of a church member to bring that person back to a right standing with God.

First, along with the exclusion, the person is to be admonished. "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (II Thes. 3:14-15). To admonish someone is to put them in mind of what they have done. They should be continually reminded of their offense. Secondly, they should be rejected as far as fellowship is concerned. "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:10). A heretick is a factious person. Something that is factious is that which will cause dissension. Thirdly, they need to be marked as someone that has caused an offence or a division in the body. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom 16:17). The word "mark" carries a meaning of watchfulness. This person is not to be abandoned, but is to be prayed for, and if possible, brought back into fellowship with the church. We are to continually seek their repentance. It does not happen

too often today, but when it does, the church still has a responsibility.

Fourthly, to restore that one to fellowship. "Brethren, if a man be over-taken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). Restore means to bring back to a former or normal condition by rebuilding the prior relationship. Sister churches of the excluding church are to regard and treat the member that has been excluded exactly as what they are; an excluded member. To do any other thing is a disservice to the excluded member, as well as being offensive in the sight of God. Sister churches are to recognize and uphold the actions of a church that is carrying out its responsibility and authority. They need to be of assistance, not a hindrance, in the restoration process. If they take the proper stand with the excluding church, they will neither receive nor use any excluded member in any way. To do otherwise is to condone and accept the sin of the offending party.

Assistant
Editor



Matthew 16:19, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

I wish that Baptist preachers and Baptist churches would read and read this until the meaning of this verse would sink in. Those to whom the keys are given in this verse is the local New Testament church. Each and every true church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an independent body and has her own authority given to her by the Lord Jesus Christ. The local church has all authority of and over her membership. This question is how should other churches of like faith treat that authority. If a church excludes a member on proper and Scriptural grounds, that authority should be respected by churches of like faith. When one is properly and Scripturally excluded from a local church, that action is bound in heaven. There is no breaking that bind or annulling that action. No church should receive into her membership one who has been disciplined by another true church. To do so is to show total disrespect for that church and the Word of God. To do so would be to become partakers of the sin of the one who was excluded. It seems that some are so hungry for members that they are willing to neglect this great truth of church authority. God help those who are guilty. Church discipline is a means of keeping the church pure and should be a means of bringing one to the place of repentance that they might be restored to fellowship. But with so many out there who will gladly accept the excluded member, it's usefulness in restoration is becoming a thing of the past.

Now, for the second part of the question, should they be used in our service? Absolutely not. Again to do so is to disrespect the authority of a sister church. Matthew 18:17 says, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." When one is excluded from a church, he loses his privileges in that church. He cannot vote, pray, preach, teach or sing specials in that church. Now if this be true, he in turn should not be asked to do these things in sister churches of like faith. This is respecting church authority. I hope and I pray that we will be more careful and considerate as to these things in the days ahead.

THE GOD

(Continued from Page 3)

ment -- Santa watches his people from a distance 364 days a year, but he only visits them once -- and then only when they're asleep. They can write to him at the North Pole, but he never answers their letters. Though he has a host of "angels" (elves) who assist him in his work, they generally stay at the North Pole and have little contact with children. Santa is not really interested in the whole life of the child, and certainly is not in a position to help him with his problems. God is seen as a friendly old man with a long white beard who generally stays aloof from the world but occasionally checks on it to make sure it's still running.

4. The child's faith -- Belief in Santa Claus is not something that has a dominant life-forming influence on the child. That is, it's not something he thinks about every day. He only needs to be concerned with Santa as the day of judgment (Christmas) approaches. So God is not One with whom we have to be concerned every day of our lives. We only need to worry about God when the day of judgment is approaching, when we know that soon we will die. And then we don't need to be overly concerned, as long as we can say we've done our best. No one has ever yet got cinders and ashes in their stocking, have they?

Secondly, playing the Santa Claus game can have a harmful effect upon the child's relationship to his parents. The child looks to his parents to furnish everything that he needs -- food when he's hungry, love when he's lonely, comfort when he's hurt, courage when he's afraid, and truth when he asks questions. When his bright eyes look up at you and he says with all seriousness, "Can Santa's reindeer really fly?", What will you say? If you answer, "Yes, Rudolph and the others really can fly," then you are no longer playing a game. You are lending your personal authority to the myth, giving it the ring of reality. He who has always trusted you for the truth, now believes you. The lie becomes truth for the child. And children will actually fight their playmates to defend the credibility of their parents. "My daddy says..." can be a fierce battlecry in the small world of children.

(Continued on Page 6, Col. 1)

THE GOD

(Continued from Page 5)

Time moves on, and the child begins to see that his parents have been pulling the wool over his eyes and laughing behind his back all these years. It begins to dawn on him that he made a fool out of himself fighting for what Mom and Dad said was true. What happens to their credibility now? Why should he even believe what they say, let alone stick his neck out to defend them? Sadder, but wiser, he asks himself how he can ever be sure that they aren't fooling him again. That relationship that was characterized by trust and confidence is now shot full of holes; doubt and suspicion linger long in the child's mind.

Thirdly, the Santa Claus myth can have a harmful effect upon the child's faith relationship with the true and living God. He once believed in a man with God-like qualities who turned out to be fake. Why should he commit himself again to belief in a man who claimed to be God manifested in the flesh? If you get burned once, it's pretty silly to put your hand back on the stove, isn't it? Mom and Dad and even the television newsmen told him about Santa Claus, and it was just a trick. How can he be sure that Mom and Dad and the pastor aren't all trying to pull the wool over his eyes now? If Santa was just for little kids, maybe Jesus is just for older kids. But still just for kids. The gospel may turn out to be only another God-game, after all.

No doubt Santa Claus will continue to grow fat on the souls of American youth, but he ought to be starving in the churches of Jesus Christ. What harmony is there between Christ and Santa Claus? Christian parents will not spoil Christmas for their children by expelling Santa Claus from their homes and churches; they will increase their joy.

Let Christians Be Jealous For The Truth

Now, I'm not grumpy or surly; neither am I a sour and an unhappy soul. But I am jealous for our great God, and lament to see the very attributes that belong only to Jehovah God heaped with such reckless abandon upon a myth and an imagination. Christians, it should not be so with us.

Naturally, the children will want to know about Santa Claus, because they will see his picture everywhere; they will see him in department stores and on TV; the radio will be filled with songs about him; and their schoolmates will speak lovingly of him. Tell them the true story. Let them know how it came about. Let them know he is only a myth -- only imagination. Remember the clear teaching of the Scriptures; "Lie not one to another..." (Colossians 3:9); "...putting away lying..." (Ephesians 4:25); "Thou shalt not bear false witness..." (Exodus 20:16).

Most important of all be jealous for the truth as it is revealed in Christ and the Word of God. Tell your children of Christ and the great miracle of His birth. Read the Old Testament prophecies and the New Testament fulfillment of His birth to them and tell them how He came to redeem and save sinners.

It will be truth -- not myth -- that will lead them to God.

--Copied

SECRET

(Continued from Page 1)

holy living. Right well did He say, when at the grave of Lazarus, "And I know that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it." He was always in converse with the Father, who was indeed the only one upon whom He could cast Himself. What consolation could He gather from Peter and James and John? He was like a father with a number of little children around Him, who could not so much as understand their father's troubles, much less support Him under them. As our Lord was always in sacred fellowship with God, He had great sorrow from beholding the sin of mankind, knowing as He did how grievous it was to God. He would mourn before His Father the people's sin, and continue still to intercede, praying all His life as He prayed at last, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Thus was He at all times in deepest sympathy with the God of love.

I doubt not that our Lord often spoke with the Father in the form of praise, for while on one occasion only it is recorded that He rejoiced, yet doubtless He rejoiced evermore in God. How could His pure nature do otherwise than joy in the Lord? His whole heart and soul and mind ran in one line with the mind of God. I am of course now speaking of Him as man, and as man His heart was in perfect harmony with the heart of God -- there was nothing in Him contrary to the will and design of the Father, but His whole human nature was carried along in a parallel course with the mind of the Most High, and hence it was that He was always at peace.

Oh, brothers and sisters, may God grant us grace to commune constantly with himself. Prayer should not be a matter of mornings and evenings alone, but all the day our spirit should commune with God. Father, thou art so near us, and yet how slow we are to speak to Thee. Teach us, thy children, to be always talking with Thee, so that while we walk on earth our conversation may be in heaven. The Lord give us to hold holy commerce with heaven, hearing what God the Lord will speak, and speaking to Him in return. Be it ours to hear the words of the inspired Book, and to regard the monitions of the gracious Spirit, and then may our spirit in its turn speak with God, and make known its requests unto Him. I hope you will be reaching out towards this by the divine anointing of the Holy Spirit. For this is the grand secret, the sure foundation of a happy life. Perpetual communion with God is the highest state of joy which can be known on earth. Learn to say truthfully, "I have set the Lord always before me," and you have the Lord's secret.

Once again upon this point, dear friends, if we are to be happy, we must follow this life of nearness to God because of our delight in it, and from the joy which we feel in it. Indeed, such a life cannot be lived in any other manner. Mere duty and law cannot operate here. If any man shall say "What a dreary affair this communion with God must be! How dull must be this walking

continually with God!" then I reply, your speech bewrayeth you, you have not the first essentials of such a life, neither can you so much as guess what it means. Indeed, I am not talking to you at all, it would be useless to press such a theme upon you. Excuse me, you know nothing of the spiritual life, nothing of what it is to be a child of God, or else communion would not be despised by you. You must be born again, and till you are born again such exhortations as those which I am now giving will not apply to you at all. Does some mere professor sneeringly enquire, "What, are we always to live to God's glory, and are we to do nothing but what would glorify Him? This is laying down very straight rules, and making the road to heaven very narrow indeed." Do you think so, friend? Then I will tell you plainly my solemn suspicion about you, -- I am persuaded that you do not know the Lord, for if you did the way of holiness would be your delight, and you would not ask for license to sin. I can understand your sinning, but I cannot understand your finding pleasure in it, if you are a real Christian. The pleasures of the world are to a true believer as the husks which the swine do eat; and if you find them to be good bread for your soul, then assuredly you are none of His: the hogs may be satisfied with hogs' meat, for providence meant it for them, but the child of God, even when He is a prodigal, cannot be satisfied so; He would fain fill His belly with the husks, but it is impossible that he should thus be satisfied. I am sure if you are the Lord's, you will look upon living near to God, and delighting in Him, not as being a severe task, or a weariness, but as a luxury, and a delightful privilege, after which your soul hungers and thirsts. You will say with David, "My soul panteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" To you, the choicest place is that which is nearest to your Lord, though it may be in the dust of contempt, or in the furnace of affliction. It is your ambition to be subdued by the Lord Jesus unto Himself most completely, and then to be henceforth the place of His abode, the instrument for His use, and best of all, the object of His love. I would dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, as a child at home considering the present world to be a lower room of that house, and heaven above as the upper story of the self-same abode. The presence of God is our bliss.

Now, is there anything about our Lord's life which looks like being under restraint, or being compelled to act otherwise than He would have wished? Can you suspect in His whole career that He was any time acting against His inclination? Was His life constrained and unnatural? Did He walk like a man in irons? Did He live as one pressed into the army of the righteous, denied pleasures which would have been His choice, and forced to forms of piety which were distasteful to Him? Not at all. Christ is a free man, living out His inmost self, following His heart's best desires. You can see that wherever He is He acts according to His nature, and is as free in what He does as the fish are free in the sea, or the birds in the air. Now, such is the Christian in this matter of setting the Lord always before Him. He acts not of constraint but will-

ingly, for the Lord has given Him a nature which delights in that which God delights in. He does not say, "Woe is me, I am caged like a bird, my life is so precise and Puritanic that I am weary of it." "Nay," says He, "if I had these worldly joys, and might indulge in them, there is nothing in them to please me. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Others are saying, 'Who will show us any good?' but my one petition is 'Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon me.'" He says, "Let others do as they will, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The Christian is never so free as when he is most under law to Christ, He is never so much Himself as when He denies Himself, and never so delighted as when He delights Himself in the Lord, and lives only for the glory of God. Now, if such be the case with you, dear brethren, you have learned the secret of joy.

The text may be read in the Hebrew, "I have set the Lord equally before me," that is equally at all times. He speaks of the solitary night watches, and then His reins instructed Him, for He was with God. In the morning He exclaims, "When I awake I am still with thee." We are to have the Lord equally before us under all circumstances: in our business pursuits as well as in prayer meetings and hearings of sermons; in seasons of recreation as well as in hours of devotion, in the days of health as well as in the hour of death. If you break the chain of communion by going where you cannot expect to have the Lord's presence, or doing what the Lord cannot sanction, the broken link can be restored, but it will always show the rivets. You may lose your roll like Christian in the arbour, and you may go back again and find it, but it is very hard going back over the same ground, and after going back it is difficult to take to the onward path again. The hardest part of the road to heaven is that which has to be traversed three times: once when you go over it at first, a second time when you have to return with weeping to find your lost evidences, and then again when you have to make up for lost time. Backsliding causes unhappiness, but abiding with God creates peace like a river, flowing on and on in one long-continued stream. Dear friends, here is the method of a blissful life: try it, and the result is certain.

II. I will speak very briefly upon the second head. The second part of the secret follows upon the first, -- that is TRUSTING ALWAYS IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE. Here is confidence in God: "because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Here is confidence that God is near us; confidence that God loves us, for He is not only near us, but in the place of friendly fellowship; and confidence that God will practically help us, for the right hand is the dextrous hand, the hand which does the work, and thus God is nigh unto His people with practical assistance, to sustain and to deliver them. How blessed it must be to feel that we have nothing to be afraid of in all the world, for God stands at our right hand to take care of us whatever may happen.

David says, and Christ says through David, "I shall not be moved," that is, first, I shall not be moved with any regret or remorse as to the past. Ah, brethren, if we have set the Lord

always before us, we can sit down and meditate upon our course of action, and it will bear reflection. The man who knows that he has lived as in the sight of God will not have to wish that he had never been born: on the contrary, he will bless the Lord at all times for all that happens to Him. Christ had many sorrows, but no regrets. What a life was His! He never had to look back upon a single act and repent of it. All was done with the Lord before Him, and He was not moved. A lady once said to a minister that she was attending the theatre, and she remarked, "There are so many pleasures connected with seeing a play; there is the pleasure of anticipation before you go, there is the pleasure of enjoying it when you are there, and there is the third pleasure of reflecting upon it afterwards." The good man replied, "Ah, madam, there is another pleasure which you have not mentioned, and that is the comfort it will afford you upon a dying bed." The irony was well deserved. I may mention this as being the greatest recommendation of setting the Lord always before you, that it will bear reflection and yield comfort and sickness and death. If by divine grace you are able to live a life of unbroken communion with God, constantly having an eye to His presence, you will not have to mourn over a mis-spent life. Your retrospect will be full of pleasure: as for sin, that is already covered by the blood of Christ, and beside that you will have been kept from a thousand snares by having the fear of God always before your eyes; and so in reviewing the past you shall not be moved with bitter remorse. Many things which we now do we may have to lament in the future though now we think we are acting very wisely and well, but if the Lord is always before us, our steps will be established, because they are ordered by the Lord. Even if you make a mistake as to policy, you will be comforted by the knowledge that it was a fault of your judgment, and not of your heart, if indeed you desired alone to serve the Lord.

Beloved, it is well for us to live near to God, that we may not be moved from our consistency in the way of true religion. There are many professors whose lives are jerky; they are walking with God after a fashion to-day, but anon they wander into crooked paths; then they begin again, but ere long they start aside as a deceitful bow; like Reuben, they are unstable as water and do not excel. In our Lord's life there is no break, it is one continuous harmony. The unities are observed in his grand career, it is like His garment -- without seam and woven from the top through-out. Now, brother, if you set the Lord always before you, you will not be moved, but your path will be like that of the sun in the heavens, rising from dawn till noon.

Setting the Lord before us prevents our being moved with terror. It is said of the believer, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." The believer is not moved with staggering fear. A great trouble is coming upon Him, but He has set the Lord before Him, and He is not cast down. If, like Jesus Himself, He is for the moment swayed with exceeding great sorrow, yet doth He say, "What time I am afraid I will trust in thee," and when He prays He is (Continued on Page 7, Col. 1)

SECRET

(Continued from Page 6)
heard in that He feared.

Such a man is not moved by temptation so as to be swept into surprising sin. If I set the Lord always before me I shall not be carried away by a sudden temptation. It is when you are off your guard that sin comes, and you fall. You speak unadvisedly, you get into a hot temper, you make sad havoc of your Christian life, and all because your eye was off your Lord. If you could but have known that the trial was coming, you would have been protected against it; and if you had set the Lord always before you, you would have been prepared for the world, the flesh, and the devil, and shielded from every fiery dart of the wicked one. Let us dwell in God, and He will be a wall of fire round about us. He will keep us every moment, lest any hurt us: He will keep us night and day.

Thus you will not be moved so as to fall into failure at last. You must all have felt the dread lest after all at the end of life it should turn out that you are not saved. Have you not feared that you have deceived yourselves, and were not converted when you thought you were? What if it should turn out to be so? What will you do when the bubble of false hope shall burst? Ah, but if you set the Lord always before you, you shall not be moved with that fear, for you will know that your Redeemer liveth; you will have such a consciousness of the divine presence that you will commit your departing spirit unto God as to a faithful Creator. You will not be afraid to die, for as Jesus said, **"My flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption,"** so will you say, "My flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, and though I see corruption as to my body, yet shall I be raised in incorruption in the likeness of my Lord, for I know that my next of kin liveth, and though, after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall behold for myself, and not another." Oh, the joy of thus abiding in God and trusting in his present power, -- having the Lord at your right hand, and then abiding in calm assurance that you cannot be moved.

Just four things, and I have done. First, to any of you who are unhappy. Some of you are not Christian people, but altogether of the world. You are not happy, and yet I dare say you have a great many things to make you so. You are placed in easy circumstances, where you can enjoy yourselves as much as you like. The sorriest thing in the world to enjoy is yourself. I can enjoy other people better than I can myself: to enjoy yourself needs a very depraved appetite, for selfishness is sordid, and like the serpent, has dust appointed to be its meat. If you think that you will find pleasure in worldliness, I should like you to recollect one who tried the method very thoroughly. I mean Solomon of old, who had all the wealth a heart could wish, and all the wisdom a brain could hold, and yet was both poor and foolish. He ransacked the world for joy, but found it not. At one time He gave all his thoughts to architecture, and built splendid palaces, and after He had built them all he said, **"Vanity of**

vanities, all is vanity." He took to His books and studied very hard, but after He had pored over them long he said, **"Of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh."** He tried singing men and singing women, and the peculiar delights of kings, but when He had enjoyed Himself in this manner to the utmost possibilities of human nature, he said, **"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."** He planted gardens, and laid out water courses, and practiced engineering; he inclined at one time to the pleasures of a fool, and anon he was eager in the nobler pursuits of a wise man; sometimes he was sober with science, and at other seasons he was excited with laughter, -- he tried everything, and found all earthly joy to be as deceitful as the apples of Sodom which are fair to look upon but turn to ashes in the hand. Nothing beneath the skies, and nothing above the skies, can make any man happy apart from God, search as you will. Apart from God you may make a hell, but you cannot make a heaven, do what you please. Oh, I beseech you, unhappy man, if you have grown weary of the world and are sick of everything, if you are in the sere and yellow leaf; though not forty years of age, remember that there is a place where your leaf can be made green. If thou wilt set the Lord always before thee, thou shalt find peace in him.

And, next, I may be addressing some who think themselves perfectly happy in the world. I confess I do not envy you, but still I like to hear you sing your song, and tell the tale of what bliss the world affords. Yet, note on what frail pillars this fairy palace of yours is erected! You are healthy, that is at the bottom of it -- your bodily frame is in good order, and you are merry. But suppose you should fall sick? Or suppose those few grey hairs should, ere long, be multiplied; where would be your mirth? Or if your wealth should take to itself wings and fly away, what then? Or if you come before the Lord in judgment, what then? Oh, sir, let this frail foundation go; it is not meet to rest your eternal hopes upon. You are like a little child building his little sand house by the seaside: the tide is coming up; O child, leave your sand and flee from the waves! There is a rock on which you may build with massive stones a house eternal, a palace of happiness that never shall be dissolved. Go, get you there!

Now, you Christian people, if any of you are unhappy, I wish I could preach you out of it by reminding you of this text, but, as I cannot, I leave you in the hands of the Holy Spirit. If you draw near to God you will be as happy as the days are long in midsummer, your doubts and fears will flee, and you will be as merry as birds of the air.

And you, happy Christians, you of the bright eye and the elastic footstep, you can be happier still by coming yet nearer to God, and abiding in fuller

(Continued on Page 12, Col. 1)

BIBLE

(Continued from Page 1)

Did you know that the Bible says of the devil in John 8:44, **"Ye are of your father the**

devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." The devil is the father of lies, and any false doctrine there is, he is behind it. So, our worship to God must be in spirit and in truth.

As I have mentioned, the Word of God is truth. It is to be accepted and believed as such. The Word of God is not the opinions of men, neither is it the word of the devil; but it is the Word of God, and is completely true. Baptists have always believed the Word of God and have practiced according to its directions down through the ages. Baptists are concerned about the truth. Baptists are concerned that the truth be preserved and observed. Baptists have little patience for the doctrines of men but are fully and completely satisfied with the teachings of the Word of God. Let me assure you, at the onset, that Baptists believe in the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe, and do so adamantly, that without the virgin birth of Christ there would be no redemption. We believe that it was absolutely necessary that Jesus be born into this world by way of a virgin that He might be the God, man, the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that this virgin birth provided a sacrifice acceptable unto God, which would take our sin and bear it at Calvary in Christ Jesus. Oh, how Baptists love to preach upon this. Oh, how Baptists have preached this blessed doctrine and even died for this doctrine at the hands of wicked men. In no way do I slight the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning work when I attack this festival of Christmas.

The first thing I want to say about Christmas is that it is full of lies. Now, I know that the story centers around the virgin birth of Christ. I know that the virgin birth is indeed a portion of the Word of God. Do not mistake me as not believing in it. But, my friends, this season of Christmas has taken the truth of the virgin birth and mixed it up with lies and presented it for truth.

One lie that we will look at is the lie that the wise men brought gifts to the newborn Christ. If the book of Luke is carefully studied one can see this. Luke tells us in Matt. 2:11, **"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."** Notice that the Word of God and its account of this event is not even close to that which is presented at the Christmas season. Why, from the time of early childhood, children are taught that the wise men came the night that Christ was born, and that they gave Him gifts because it was His birthday. Luke's account does not say that. It tells us that they came to a house. They did not come to the manger, as the Christmas story goes, but they came to the house where the young child was, and not a new-born babe. Why has the story been so perverted? I will tell you why. This thing of Christmas is not of the Lord. It was devised of men who were not

Holy Spirit influenced, but rather influenced by the father of lies himself. Think about this for a moment. Would God invent something that is so contrary to His own Word? I think not.

Another lie I might bring to your attention is that of the wise men, being there at the night of His birth. Matthew 2:1 tells us of the wise men that, **"...there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem."** They followed a star that they had seen in the east, that is, in another country, and they had followed it to Bethlehem. Now, be reasonable for a moment. In those days there were not any such thing as jets, planes, or trains. It would have been impossible for these men to travel from a far country in one night's time. No, they traveled for some time. I believe the total time to have been about two years. I believe this because of the event that takes place in Matthew 2:16, **"Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men."** Had this taken place all in one night, Herod would only have needed to kill the new born babes.

Another lie is that trees are to be brought into the home in order to worship God. My, isn't it a shame the things people will do and say in order to keep tradition. Would you believe that there are many who have been saved by the grace of God who will put a tree in their home and say it is for the worship of Christ Jesus. Well my friend, let me save you some money, time, and trouble by telling you that Christ does not like that tree in your home for His worship, but rather He would rather be worshipped in spirit and in truth. The Bible says in Jeremiah 10:2-5, **"Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."** The Lord tells us to not learn the way of the heathen. Now, if you will be honest you must agree that the season of Christmas is foreign to the Word of God. All of the rituals, ornaments, and traditions are not found in the Word of God. In fact, there is not one commandment in the Bible which tells us to set a day apart to observe the birth of our Lord. Where did all of these traditions come from? Beloved, they came from the devil. Oh, how the devil delights to see men worship God in a false way.

Another Christmas lie is that of Santa Claus. Did you know that it is easier to get by with talking about Christ than it is Santa Claus? Little children may

take the Lord's name in vain, but oh, let them not ridicule Santa Claus. The Bible tells us of those such as Saint Nick, **"Thou shalt have no other gods before me"** (Ex. 20:3). If Santa was taken out of the celebration, it would completely destroy the meaning of Christmas for many. Don't tell me that Santa Claus is not a god to people. Thousands will put him in the place of the true and living God this year. They will tell of his all-knowingness. They will tell of his great power. They will tell of him as the judge of good and evil. Yes, these things will be told, and not a word will be spoken of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have always contended, since coming to the truth of Christmas, that if it were of the Lord, the masses of people who now celebrate it would have nothing at all to do with it.

There are other lies that I could mention concerning this season of Christmas. I suppose the biggest lie of them all though is that God enjoys it. Oh, what a lie this is! I know and believe with all of my heart that God hates it. I am convinced that the whole thing is a stench in the nostrils of a holy and righteous God. I am reminded of what God told Israel in Amos 5:21-26, **"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves."** Beloved, the same can be said of Christmas. God despises the feast day. When the Christmas carols are sung with all of their idolatry the Spirit of God is grieved. When the star is placed on top of the tree and the family will look up and sing to it "Oh, Christmas tree Oh Christmas tree" surely the Spirit is grieved. Oh, can we even think for a moment that God can be worshipped in a lie? I have said time and time again, and I'll say it again this year, we don't need Christmas to worship God. The very name of it tells us it is not of God. Mass is celebrated by Catholicism, and it is an ungodly act at that. Mass is blasphemous toward the true God of heaven; and there is no truth in it. Will you glorify the God of the Bible and steer clear of it, or will you, again, join with the devil and his Christmas lies?

SALVATION

(Continued from Page 1)

have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This, therefore, is the most important work that anyone can be involved in going, preaching, teaching, and then baptizing those that receive the (Continued on Page 8, Col. 1)

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

DEC. 24, 1988

PAGE SEVEN

SALVATION

(Continued from Page 7)

gift of salvation. But this must be done according to God's plan of salvation, and not according to man's idea or plan of salvation.

Man's plan is taken from the Word of God; but like any idea that man gathers, it is gathered in bits and pieces, a little here and a little there. Man's plan goes like this. Romans 6:23 says "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, there is nothing wrong with the Scripture. I believe what that Scripture says, and so will everyone that believes God's Word. So man says, "see, that's what God's Word says". Now look to Romans 3:23 and God's Word tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" To that, again, I say Amen. But man says, well, if all are sinners, and the wages of sin is death, then there has to be a way out of this problem." So man looks and finds Romans 10:9-13 and reads, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Man says, "now that's the end of it. All you have to do to be saved is to read these few scriptures, believe that they are God's Word, then say some prayer, and you are saved." Man's plan of salvation completely wipes out all the rest of the Word of God, and even parts of the very Scriptures which man uses for his weak plan, a plan with no strength and no weight.

Let us look to Romans 6:23 again. There we read that sin has brought us death. All of us will die. But man's plan skips over the second part of Romans 6:2-3 "...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Scripture says eternal life. It says that salvation is a gift of God. God gives salvation, and He gives the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. You can not obtain salvation by words coming out of your mouth. Romans 10:9-10. Tells us to confess, but it also says, "...believe in thine heart," "...with the heart man believeth unto righteousness..." Sure, you can ask anyone, "Do you know that you are going to die some day?" They will tell you, "yes, of course." "Do you want to live forever?" And who is it that would say to you "no"? Of course all want to live forever. Now, tell others that if they will confess themselves as sinners and call upon Jesus they will be saved, and you will have numbers of people believing they are safe. You see, that's why so many join a church thinking that they are saved when all they have done is

turned over a new leaf in the book of their lives. Being born again, renewed in spirit, saved, or however you wish to label it, is not according to man's plans, but according to God's plan of salvation.

Now, may we look at God's plan of salvation. Let us turn to Romans 8:28-30, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Herein we find God's plan of salvation. God's Word says to us that God knew you beforehand. That's what the word "foreknow" means. God knew you before you were born. He knew you before your mother and father ever were. God knew you, and you, and you, and you, yes, everyone that has ever and will ever be born again, God knew them beforehand. He knew them, each and every one of them, before ever this world was spoken into being. Isaiah 46:9-11, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure; Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." Here God says to us that He knew the end from the beginning. He tells us that from ancient times, that's eternity past; God knew of those things not yet done. God says His counsel shall stand. God's talking about a counsel held before the foundation of the world. And God says of this counsel, He will do all His pleasure. And He goes on to tell us something that most of mankind, yes, even those of our own ranks, care not to hear; but God said it! God says that He calls forth the ravenous bird, the man that executeth his counsel. Acts 15:18, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." God foreknew all that is, all that was, and all that ever will be.

Our text tells us that God foreknew us. Then it continues, telling us of the realm in which God foreknew us. He foreknew us to be conformed to the image of His Son. He foreknew us in salvation, having chosen us in Christ to this end. Ephesians 1:4-5, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." God foreknew us, having chosen us before there ever was a world. God's foreknowledge has nothing to do with what we do, or say, or

believe. God's foreknowledge came from His choice of whom He would have as His children. "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..." (John 15:16)

God's plan of salvation began with His election of those that were to become His children. Out of that election came the foreknowledge. As a child of God today, God knew you in salvation before He ever spoke the world into existence. God's plan of salvation continues in our text. God says, having foreknown us, He did predestinate us to be conformed to the image of His Son. God has a plan. His plan was and is for a people to be Christ-like. And I have to say here and now, that only an unbeliever could hold such an idea as that anything that God plans will not come to pass. If one will but read Ecclesiastes 3:1-15, he will find that God says there is a time for everything and every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, a time to die, a time to kill, a time to heal, a time to build, and a time to tear down, a time to weep, to dance, to war, and a time to love. And then verse 15, "That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." Do you believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins? Well, if you do, then know that He surpassed it in eternity past. And in the time appointed, God, by the Holy Spirit called you unto belief. It's all of God. God chose you, God paid for your sins, God calls you unto belief, God gives you faith to believe. God's plan does not depend upon man. God's plan is for man, but depends upon God Himself; for He and He alone is dependable.

Galatians 4:1-6, If you will read it, you will see that verse one tells us that as heirs before our time was come, we were like anyone else; servants, but even then Lord of all. Verse two and three tells us that in God's appointed time we came out of bondage, set free, separated from the world. Verse 4-5 tells us how, "...God sent forth his Son, made of woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Verse 6; God makes it clear that we received Christ not of our own doing. "...God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." And verse 7 tells us that after the working of the Spirit upon our hearts, and only then, are we no longer servants to this world about us, "...but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Praise God! He didn't leave anything to me. He knew I'd mess it up.

God's plan is complete. God chose you, God predestinated every event in your life from birth to death, God calls you in His appointed time. God's Spirit does the work of faith in your heart, making you able to believe. Our text says, "whom he called them he also justified." That means that you, as a child of God have been made just in the eyes of God. It's as if you had never ever sinned. You have been made white as snow, Christ-like. "...And whom he justified them he also glorified."

Would you look at how the Scriptures are written! God's Word is God's Words; and what God says is as if it is already finished. And as far as God is concerned it is. Daniel 4:35 says "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" "God, what doest thou?" What ever He wants to, that's what. What ever He has purposed is as good as already done. Our glorification is in the purpose of God. Paul says to us in Romans 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Our glorification is yet to come, and come, it shall. We shall, some day, sit at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, having been conformed to His image, raised with a glorified body, made Christ-like; not by anything that we have done, not for anything that we have said, not for anything we will do; but because God has purposed it to be so. He, having purposed it, it shall come to pass.

Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose." Do you know? Do you love God? Are you called? May God bless.

WHY

(Continued from Page 1)

Alexander Campbell insist that when a person is saved, he is in the church without a vote of the church. The views of the Saints, and the followers of Campbell both show confusion of mind or this subject. A person can be saved and not in the visible church, and one can be in the visible church and not be saved. We must distinguish between the kingdom and the visible church.

Again, we repeat the proposition that when Christ was upon earth, He set up a visible church with officers, organization and the power to receive and exclude members.

Second Proposition: Christ gave to His visible church the ordinances to administer and to keep till He comes again.

Notice, there are two things the church is to do: to administer and to keep these ordinances. These two ordinances are baptism and the Lord's Supper. The church is to keep them, not change them, "keep the ordinances, as I delivered them unto you" (1 Cor. 11:2). The church is to administer them, not some one else. The church has the authority. No one else has. For some one else to administer them is to act without authority. To change them is to destroy them. This visible church that Christ set up is to administer them and preserve them.

Third Proposition: This visible church that Christ established has come on down through the ages, is in the world today, and will continue till Jesus comes.

Look again at Matthew 16:18, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ says He will build it, that it is His church; and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, that is, it shall exist through all

the ages. It is not necessary to trace the continuity of the church. The words of Christ are sufficient to prove this point. He says the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and heaven and earth shall pass away, but His Word shall not pass away.

Now, then, we have the three propositions before us:

I. Christ set up a visible church.

II. He gave to this church the ordinances to administer and keep.

III. This church is in the world today.

The question is, therefore: Which of the many so-called churches in the world today is the church that Christ set up when He was upon the earth?

There are many churches so-called. There are more today than yesterday, and there will be more tomorrow than today. All are not the church that Christ set up. Which one is? By two methods of proof we are able to arrive at the correct answer to this question.

First Method of Proof: The method of historical elimination. Any church whose origin was in mediaeval or modern times is not the church that Christ set up, for the simple reason that it was not in existence when Christ set up His church, and did not come into existence for a long time after. Here are the names of some of them showing their human origin and the date of their birth:

Christian Science,	Mrs. Eddy	1879
Mormon,	Joe Smith	1830
Christians,	Alexander Campbell	1827
Methodists,	The Wesleys	1736
Episcopalians,	Henry VIII	1534
Presbyterians,	John Calvin	1530
Lutherans,	Martin Luther	1529

These are the principal ones, and thus we could do with the others if we took time and space.

Now, by this method of historical elimination, we have removed all claimants of being the church that Christ set up save two, and these two are the Baptists and Roman Catholics.

These two go far back in history and are lost in the dark ages.

In 200 A.D., one hundred and thirty years after the death of Paul, when many who were almost contemporaneous with Paul were still alive, we find, according to the historians that the Baptists and Catholics were quarreling over baptism. It was not the mode of baptism that was the point of controversy. The Roman Catholic church up to the middle of the fourth century immersed as did the Baptists. The controversy arose because the Baptists would not accept as valid, Roman Catholic baptism, saying they had no authority to baptize, and insisting on baptizing all that came to them from the Catholics. Whereupon the Catholics were made angry, dubbed them Anabaptists (re-baptizers) and held some church councils about the matter.

Permit me to cite some historical statements in elaboration of this. I cite first a statement from Ignatius, one of the apostolic fathers, and probably a contemporary with John and Paul: "It is not lawful for the bishop (Pastor) either to baptize or celebrate a love feast, but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that every-

(Continued on Page 9, Col. 1)

WHY

(Continued from Page 8)

thing that is done may be pleasing and valid" (Ante Nicæan Fathers, vol. 1, p.90).

Now hear Tertullian, 200 A.D.: "There is to us one and but one baptism. One God, one baptism, one church in the heavens. But it must be admitted that the question, what rules are to be observed in regard to heretics, is worthy of being treated. Heretics have no fellowship in our discipline. Their baptism is not one with ours, either, since they have it not duly, doubtless they have not at all. Nor is that capable of being counted which is not had" (Ante Nicæan Fathers, vol. 3, p.676).

Neander, another historian, in speaking about how the churches planted by Paul stood as a unit against alien immersion, says: "It was a Roman bishop, Stephanus, who, instigated by the spirit of ecclesiastical arrogance, issued a sentence of excommunication against the pastors of Asia Minor, Cappadocia, Galatia, and Cilicia, stigmatizing them as Anabaptists, a name, however, which they could justly affirm they did not deserve by their principles: for it was not their wish to administer a second baptism, but they contended that the previous baptism given by heretics (other sects) could not be recognized as a true one" (Neander, vol. 1, pp. 318,319).

The above is given to show that as early as 200 A.D. there was a controversy between the Baptists and Catholics as to who has a right to administer baptism. As to which was right, the Baptists or the Catholics, we do not undertake at this point to say. That would be begging the question. But we have at least proved our point that both of these Christian bodies go back, and are lost in the dark periods of early history.

Here, then, is our dilemma at this point. Historically we have eliminated all but two that claim to be the church that Christ set up; but we have two contenders left, the Baptists and Catholics. Both claim to be the church that Christ set up, both go back into the dark ages of history. How shall we decide between these two?

There is only one way to decide, and that is by the process of identity. Second Method of Proof: It is the process of identity. We must compare these two religious bodies, the Baptists and the Catholics, with the church that Christ set up. The one that is identical with that church in organization and doctrine, that is the church that He set up, and that is the church that has the right to administer the ordinances.

Let us take the church at Jerusalem, therefore, as an example of the church that Christ set up, note its characteristics, and compare them with the characteristics of the Baptists and Catholics.

Characteristics of the Jerusalem church: 1. A Holy Spirit church. "AND when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven...And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost...Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand

souls" (Acts 2: 1, 2, 4, 41).

We see, therefore, that the Jerusalem church was a church that depended on the Holy Spirit to fit people for membership in it. It is even so in a Baptist church. In a Baptist church there must be an experience of religion in the heart through the work of the Holy Spirit within. In the Catholic church, members are taken in in infancy, and confirmed when they have reached the age of accountability.

2. A Church Where Believers Only Are Baptized: The second mark of the Jerusalem church is that believers only were baptized. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41).

There is no record here, nor anywhere else in the Bible for that matter, where baptism was ever administered to anyone but a believer. Phillip said to the eunuch, "If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest" (be baptized). It is even so with a Baptist church. The Catholic church, however, is made up almost altogether of those who were baptized in infancy, for which practice there is not a Scriptural foundation.

3. Baptism was administered by immersion only: A third mark of the Jerusalem church is that baptism was administered by immersion only. This needs no argument. All scholars admit it.

The Catholics admit that they changed the ordinance of baptism in the fourth century because sprinkling is more convenient. I quote from "The Faith of Our Fathers," pages 316 and 317, which is Catholic authority: "For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity baptism was usually conferred by immersion. But since the twelfth century baptism by infusion has prevailed in the Catholic church. Baptism is the essential means established for washing away the stain of original sin, and the door by which we find admittance into the church. Hence baptism is as essential for the infant as for the full grown man. Unbaptized infants are excluded from the kingdom of heaven. Baptism makes us heirs of heaven and co-heirs with Jesus Christ."

John Wesley in his commentary on Romans 6:4, where Paul says, "We are buried with him by baptism," says: "This refers to the ancient mode of baptism which was by immersion." So say all the scholars. This mark, therefore, is like a Baptist church and unlike the Catholic church.

4. Only baptized believers came to the Lord's table: The fourth mark of the Jerusalem church is that only baptized believers came to the Lord's table.

"Then they that gladly received the word were baptized, ...and they (those that had believe and been baptized) continued in the ...breaking of bread from house to house." This mark of the Jerusalem church is identical with the teaching of a Baptist church. A chief tenet of the Baptist faith has ever been that only the Scripturally baptized could come to the Lord's table. For Christ's sake they have stood by this Scriptural truth, although to do so meant to be misunderstood, and be called selfish and narrow by other denominations.

5. The Jerusalem church was a pure democracy. There was no ecclesiastical authority over them; no pope, no bishop. The word bishop in the Bible is used

interchangeably with the words elder and pastor (I Peter 2:25; Titus 1:7; I Tim. 3:1-2; Phil. 1:1). The Jerusalem church elected their own officers, called their own pastors, elders or bishops, as they are variously called; and one member had as much authority in the church as another. So it has ever been in a Baptist church, and so it is not in the Catholic church.

Therefore, as between these two claimants, we conclude:

1. That the visible church that Christ set up was a Baptist church.

2. That it has come down through the ages, and is in the world today.

3. That to it was given the ordinances to keep, and do it alone.

4. That others that presume to start churches and administer the ordinances do so without divine authority.

It is our firm conviction, irrespective of how much truth and error inhere in the organizations, that Joe Smith has as much right to start a church as Alexander Campbell, John Wesley, Henry VIII, Mrs. Eddy or Martin Luther. Our contention is that none of them had the right. Campbell's statement that up till he started the reformation the line of succession was with the Baptists was true, and is still true. With them has ever rested, as the historians quoted assert, and still rests, the authority to baptize and set the Lord's table. We affirm that this question of authority must be settled before we can have a clear definition of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The immersion of a believer in

water, therefore, will not do as a definition of baptism, any more than to take bread and wine in the home constitutes the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It must be administered, both baptism and the Lord's Supper, by the proper authority before it is baptism and before it is the Lord's Supper.

The Anabaptists were right, and the modern milk and water Baptist who is continually publishing definitions that leave out the question of authority is wrong. All the facts of Scripture show, and these facts are attested by the facts of history, that Christ set up a visible church; committed to it the ordinances; that this church has come down through the ages; that it was a Baptist church; that imperfect as it was in the beginning, and imperfect as it is today, yet as the earthen vessel that we carry to the spring serves to carry the life-giving water, imperfect

though it is, so this imperfect organization has kept and preserved the ordinances and the doctrines, and handed them down to posterity, in spite of the apostasy of Rome, in spite of persecutions, in spite of all the forces of the evil one, and will continue to do this till Jesus comes.

Now, if you, my reader, from a careful study of this question, with these facts before you, laying aside all prejudice, believe likewise, you ought to join a Baptist church, and receive Baptist baptism, provided you have believed to the saving of your soul. If you do not believe it, then it is your duty to find the church that Christ did establish, and unite with that church. Be satisfied with nothing less than that.

MONSTER

(Continued from Page 1)

God's commandments to utterly drive out the heathen from the land. God had given them many victories under the leadership of Joshua since they had crossed the Jordan River on dry ground by the miracle of God (Joshua 3:17), and taken the city of Jericho without firing a shot. Judges 1:21 tells us that Benjamin did not drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem, and in chapter 1:27, Manasseh did not drive the heathen from Bethshean. (Judges 1:28), "And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out."

Israel sowed the seeds of corruption, and reaped a harvest whose fruit had rotted on the vine, and was decaying the branches. (Judges 2:8-10), "And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel."

In borrowing a thought from Arnold Lunn, an English writer, we cannot assume that men will continue to behave like Christians long after they have ceased to believe like Christians. Usually a farmer can tell early on if

his crop is diseased and will either treat it, or plow it under and start over. Israel failed to detect the canker in their crop until it brought forth its corrupt fruit. (Judges 6:1-3), "AND the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and Amalikites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them."

H. L. Willmington in his "Guide To the Bible" says that the period of the Judges was perhaps the "dark ages" of the Old Testament times. Not only were they experiencing physical defeat, but they were also in gross moral and spiritual decay. The result of this massive, nationwide epidemic of sin was defeat by the very ones with whom they sought to be friends. As I observe the world system today I find that the only difference in our time and the times of the Judges is that spiritual and moral corruption are much worse, and more widespread. In those days every one did that which seemed right in his own eyes, because they had departed from the law of God.

The subject of right and wrong has become obscured and clouded by the philosophies of Secular Humanism. These have left God and His law out of the picture.

Moral standards and ethics are being minimized, made light of, and in many cases denounced all together by those whom the masses look up to; such as government officials, movie stars, great and well known musicians, politicians, and church leaders. The message of today is that every one has a right to do that which seems right in his or her own eyes. Every person is his or her own god, and we must all strive for self autonomy. This is the doctrine of the secular humanist, and is permeating every phase of society from the Supreme Court to the average home. The educational system from kindergarten to the universities of so-called higher learning are teaching this doctrine as the only sensible, and reasonable position to take. Even the world of Christian religion is accepting the humanist doctrine as its standard of morality and ethical conduct. "The greatest danger lies, not simply in the corrupting power of widespread sin, but in the fact that the very foundations of truth and morality have been undermined by secular education, theological liberalism and the moral and ethical antinomianism which has infected both evangelical and liberal groups." (The Doctrine of Right and Wrong In These Times, by Chester E. Tulga, D.D." The Baptist Challenge," Volume 27 No. 10)

Dear beloved friends, I sound this warning because Satan will not hesitate to try and convince even God's people of this corruptible philosophy. He may try to get to you through public entertainment, or peer pressure, or even through you own children. He may come from the pulpit of your church, or your job. One thing for sure, he will try. The damnable doctrine of secular humanism is already every place you look, but the main outlet which Satan uses to channel it into society seems to be through the youth. I might remind you that our children are the future adults who will one day be our preachers, politicians, teachers, and lawmakers who will be setting the standards for yet another generation. According to the Humanist Manifestos I and II, man is his own god, and outside or apart from man himself there is no supreme. They regard the universe as self-existing and not created. "While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are, or will become. No deity will save us: we must save ourselves." (Humanist Manifesto II on Religion). We have a warning from the Word of God in Psalm 11:3: "If the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

The most effective way to destroy a house is to wreck the foundation. Huge buildings are brought to the ground in seconds by demolition experts. They set their explosive charges at the foundation. In the Humanist Magazine January/February edition, 1983, John Dunphy stated, "I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that

(Continued on Page 10, Col. 1)

MONSTER

(Continued from Page 9)

recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers; for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level--preschool, daycare, of large state universities. The classroom must and will become an area of conflict between the old and the new--the rotting corps of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery; and the new faith of humanist, repellant in its promise of a world in which the never realized Christian idea of 'love thy neighbor' will be finally achieved."

Dear beloved friend, if there was ever a time when God's people needed to cry from the housetop, and proclaim Biblical truth; it is today. It is said that the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ by the early church "turned the world upside down."

We are seeing this action today in reverse. It is the proclamation of the gospel of secular humanism that is turning churches upside down today. This is the reason that churches of our kind who are still preaching the doctrines of free grace and the sovereignty of God are few and far between. Any church or preacher preaching salvation by works, or by the free will decision of man is preaching a "Christianized" form of secular humanism. If there was ever a time when parents needed to constantly affirm and reinforce the principles of God's law to their children, it is today. I praise God for every Christian teacher in the public school system who will not be intimidated by the threats of the ungodly humanist who are bent on dictating to them what they can or cannot say in the classroom pertaining to God, creation, morality, the law of God, or salvation. However, I am afraid that most of the Christian teachers are being forced into submission or at least coerced into gagging themselves and not speaking out one way or the other. But dear teacher, to be silent is to compromise to a certain degree. In most cases, for those who will bravely stand firm in their convictions, they are like a few sandbags trying to hold back a tidal wave. Therefore, you the parent must repetitiously, on a daily basis, point out these dangers to your children and instill in them principles of godliness and holiness. Your children are a field open to the wicked one. The wild seeds of humanism is being sown in their minds by the public education system, and watered by all the worldly activity that they are exposed to. So when these seeds sprout you must quickly pluck them up, or better yet, kill them before they have a chance to germinate. Do whatever is necessary to shield them from these fiery darts of Satan.

OLDEST

(Continued from Page 1)

like most prophecy, has a two-fold fulfillment. It not only speaks of the flood recorded in

Genesis 6; but it also speaks of the next judgment which will fall upon the earth, the battle of Armageddon in Revelation 19.

In ancient days, when children's names had significance, Enoch's oldest son was given a name which indicated that this judgment would not fall as long as he lived. Methuselah means "when I am gone it shall come" or "at his death the sending forth of waters," meaning which surely had no significance apart from Jude's revelation. As long as Methuselah was alive God would withhold His hand of judgment upon mankind. How significant it is to notice that Enoch "walked with God" after Methuselah was born. The promise of the judgment upon the ungodly is one motivation to godly living for the elect (II Peter 3: 10-14), who do not look for a judgment but a "blessed hope."

Did God then wait for Methuselah to die before sending the waters? Notice carefully the man's lineage. Methuselah lived 969 years, which means he had 782 years to live when Lamech was born (5:26). Lamech lived 182 years and then Noah was born (5:29), which means that Methuselah had 600 years to live when Noah was born. When did the flood come? According to Genesis 7:11, in the 600th year of Noah's life, the 17th day of the second month. Doubtlessly, it began to rain the very moment Methuselah died.

Why was Methuselah the oldest man? Because God withheld His judgment and extended His longsuffering for the duration of his life to allow man time to repent. God always gives man time to repent, to turn from his wickedness to the Lord Jesus Christ. God's longsuffering would be as long as Methuselah's life, and God let him live longer than any man before or after him. However, there came a point at which the longsuffering of God was exhausted and the attribute of justice was exercised. This justice was carried out speedily and thoroughly upon all the unrepentant.

Hell awaits the unrepentant and the sinner today. It is as inevitable as if you were already there, if you do not repent. Sinner, do not mistake God's longsuffering and grace to be eternal attributes toward you. Someday they will be exhausted; and your judgment will be just as speedy, just as thorough, and just as undeniably just as was the antediluvian world's. May God grant you repentance this day, and the ability to turn in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ.

GRACE

(Continued from Page 1)

way of justifying sinners and unless you are in that way, eternal loss and ruin will be your portion.

1. Self-righteousness condemned: As Paul said to the churches of Galatia I would say to you who are self-righteous enough to think you can add something to the grace of God in Jesus Christ in order to obtain or sustain the favor of God - you are indeed foolish and who has bewitched you? Paul, by the Holy Spirit here says that when someone tries to throw law-works in their justification, the grace of God is frustrated. Of course, the grace of God in operation is never frustrated. What is in view is the intention or the doctrine of the grace of God. It is very much

like Galatians 3:21-22: "...for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." All of us, considered as we are without Christ, are under sin. We are condemned and guilty, we are alienated from God and "by nature children of wrath." Justification is the opposite of condemnation, it is a courtroom term. To be justified is to be declared not only innocent, but absolutely righteous, and this before the all-seeing eye of God. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8:33). Now, it is certain we are not, as yet, truly righteous in and of ourselves. No, No, we are declared to be so in the court of heaven, justly, because, when a sinner believes the gospel, God pardons the sinner on the ground of His Son's righteousness and death. Listen to Romans 8:34: "Who is he that condemneth?" In other words, can a sin be found that will ultimately condemn the believer? No, a thousand times no. Why? Because, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God." God cannot punish my sin in the person of my surety - Jesus Christ, and then punish me too! No, God's justice is completely satisfied with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Do you see what Paul meant when he said if your righteousness came by law-works then Christ would have died in vain. In other words, if Jesus Christ didn't die to satisfy justice and provide a perfect righteousness by which we are saved, then to what purpose was His death? No, Jesus didn't die in vain. He was "delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

2. Christ's righteousness received by faith: We are justified by faith and faith alone. It is true that the faith that is real and a product of the Holy Spirit will be an obedient, working faith as James 2:14-23 clearly shows. However, the meritorious ground of our salvation is in the "...righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22-23). Salvation is bound up in the doctrines of imputation and substitution. God having sent His only Son into the world to suffer for sin under the law in order that those who were guilty could be forgiven and restored to fellowship. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (I Peter 3:18). He was the sinner's substitute, and when we believe in Him, God imputes (legally accounts) His death as our death, His perfect righteousness as ours. That's how a man is justified in God's court of law.

Despite this clear evidence, there still are those who think God will accept something they have done, in order to justify them. Indeed they have not considered the absolute holiness of God, nor the awful depravity of

their own heart. Indeed they are foolish. To them, we admonish to renounce their own so-called righteousness as "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6), and to humbly accept of the righteousness of Christ - even as the apostle Paul who had much more to boast of than we ever could - "...I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"

(Phil. 3:8-9). If you're as good as you think you are, then why did the Lord of glory leave the glories of heaven to hang upon a Roman cross and die? Indeed if men are righteous enough to either gain or sustain their standing with the infinitely holy Jehovah - then Jesus Christ did die in vain and the grace of God is frustrated. There is hope for you however - in the Lord Jesus Christ! Cast yourself upon Him in faith and He will save you and you will be justified through Him. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28).

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Main Street Baptist Church of Burnside, Ky. is planning to have a Bible Conference Labor Day week end of 1989. Brother Wendell P. Furlong is the fine and able pastor of this church. I have preached for this church several times, and look forward to attending this conference. We will have more information about this conference when the time gets closer.

There will be a New Year's Bible Conference, December 29th thru 31st, 1988 at First Baptist Church, 104 Washington Street, Alexandria, Kentucky. Services will begin at 7:00 p.m. Thursday and Friday, all day Saturday. For further information contact Pastor Carl Morton at 606-635-9029.

JUST ONE MORE

Now, now my child.

Just one more mile.

Just one more tear and one more smile.

Just one more sheep bring to the fold.

Just one more suffering to refine thy gold.

Then my child you will find.

That a sovereign God knew best all the time.

Faye Moore

A HOLY LIFE

by L. R. Shelton, Jr.

My friend, a holy life always follows true conversion because it is the life of God in the soul. If this holy life does not follow the salvation that we profess to have, it is not God's salvation; for Christ came to save His people from their sins and not in their sins! (Matthew 1:21).

A holy life must follow the salvation that God gives in Christ, or God's purpose in saving us would be defeated; and this cannot be, for we read in Ephesians 1:4: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

A holy life must follow the salvation that God gives in Christ or God's purpose in calling us would be defeated; and this cannot be, for we read in I Thessalonians 4:7: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

A holy life must follow the salvation that God gives in Christ, or God's will would be turned aside, and this cannot be, for we read in I Thessalonians 4:3: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...."

A holy life must follow the salvation that God gives in Christ, or God's grace would not reign in the believer's life, and this cannot be, for we read in Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and

worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Also Romans 5:20-21 declares, "...But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

A holy life must follow the salvation that God gives in Christ, for the God Who cannot lie (Titus 1:2) said: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4).

A holy life must follow the salvation that God gives in Christ or God Himself is unholy and that cannot be, for we read in I Peter 1:15-16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (behavior); Because it is written Be ye holy; for I am holy."

A holy life must follow the salvation that God gives in Christ or the eternal purpose of God for us in Christ would be defeated, and this cannot be, for we read in Romans 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...." And the only way that we can be conformed to the image of Christ is in holiness! (Continued on Page 11, Col. 1).

holy life

(Continued from Page 10)

A holy life must follow the salvation that God gives in Christ, or God erred when He said in Galatians 1:3-4 that He has delivered "us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."

A holy life must follow the salvation that God gives in Christ or Galatians 5:24 would be wrong, for we read: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

A holy life must follow the salvation that God gives in Christ Jesus, or Galatians 6:14-15 is wrong, for we read: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

And I could go on with Scripture after Scripture showing you that a holy life must follow the salvation that God gives poor sinners in the Lord Jesus Christ, but this is enough to show us that sanctification is a vital part of our salvation and that if we are not made partakers of God's holiness, we are not saved, for, "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). Therefore, a man who has just a profession of life with no fruit of the Spirit, my friend, is living in the sin of hypocrisy! We may say we are acquainted with justification and forgiveness of sins, but if we are not acquainted with the other part of God's salvation which is holiness and sanctification of life, then we are not saved! No matter how much we have believed,

A BOOK HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BY THE EDITOR

I feel that the controversy about what is called "The Lordship Gospel", a title coined by its adversaries, is one of the most vital controversies of our day. Men who oppose the truth to which they have attached this label have, in my opinion, greatly dishonored the Lord, terribly cheapened the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, controverted a goodly portion of the Word of God, and done great damage to the souls of men.

The salvation experience set forth in the Word of God and that which these men set forth are two greatly different things.

I recently looked, I intended, briefly at a book. I became so interested that I dropped everything else until I finished this book. I plan to read it again, and again. It is the most powerful book I have read in many a day. It is "The Gospel According To Jesus" by John MacArthur. I have ordered several for our book store. I most earnestly urge you to order this book, and then to devour it. I do sincerely urge at least every preacher to get this book. I consider it the most important book published in a good while.

Order this book from our book store, or get it anywhere you will, but get it. It sells for \$14.95

embraced, or what experiences we may have had, if we are not being progressively sanctified by the grace of God, by the work of the Holy Spirit working in us, we are not saved; we're living in the sin of hypocrisy; we have profession without life; we have nothing but hell still in our souls, and Christ is not ours! Therefore, I ask this important

question: Have you and I "...put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24)?

(Taken from booklet "Profession of Christ Without Life Exposed/ Possession of Life in Christ Explained" by LRS, Jr.)

INTERCOMMUNION: INCONSISTENT, UNSCRIPTURAL AND PRODUCTIVE OF EVIL

by J. R. Graves
Chapter 6

Do Baptists agree with Methodists as to the essential doctrines of salvation?--What does Methodism teach sinners they must do to obtain the remission of sins and regeneration? The teachings of Mr. Wesley, the founder and finisher of its faith.--Bishop Morris--The Discipline--The Hymn Book--The General Conference--The Church before Christ, and Water before Blood in every case!

Where are we to look for the doctrines of the Methodist "church"--those that every minister has professed to believe, and has obligated himself to teach, and every Methodist is pledged to uphold and defend?

Bishop McTyeire tells us in his work, "Westley's Sermons and Works," "The Discipline," "The Methodist Hymn Book," and the works issued by their Book Concerns. To these, then, let us go to ascertain the way of life and salvation as preached by Methodism. It is presumable that the father and founder of a system of faith understands that faith. Let us now hear what John Wesley taught and required his followers to believe and teach concerning the way of salvation.

The Efficacy of Baptism
In his "Treatise on Baptism" works, vol. 6, pp. 15, 16, New York edition, 1832, issued by the "Book Concern" of that church, Mr. Wesley says; "By baptism, we who are by nature the children of wrath, are made the children of God. And this regeneration, which our church in so many places ascribes to baptism, is more than barely being admitted into the church, though commonly connected therewith. Being children of God by adoption and grace--John 3:5. By water, then, as a means,--the water of baptism, we are regenerated and born again, whence it is called by the apostle 'the washing of regeneration.' In all ages the outward baptism is a means of the inward. Herin we receive a title to, and an earnest of, a kingdom which can not be moved. In the ordinary way, there is no other way of entering into the church or into heaven. If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism, seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved unless this be washed away in baptism."

The very last book Wesley ever wrote was his "Notes on the New Testament." In reference, to the baptism of Paul on the words, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord," he observes: "Baptism is both the means and the seal of pardon, and God did not ordinarily, in the primitive church, bestow this grace upon any save through this means."

In his note on Colossians 2:12, speaking of "the faith of

the operation of God," Mr. Wesley says: "Which he wrought in you when you were, as it were, buried with him in baptism." On John 3:5: "Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit; except he experience that great inward change by the Spirit, and be baptized (wherever baptism can be had) as the outward sign and the means of it," i.e., the means of the baptism of the Spirit, or regeneration.

There can be no doubt as to the doctrinal sentiments of Wesley, and these are adopted and endorsed by the General Conference today without modification, and they are bound never to reject them.

I will quote a paragraph here from the sermons of Bishop Morris: "Baptism is one of the means of grace; and, therefore, suitable for penitents, who need all the help they can get. So Peter understood it, as it appears from the advice he gave those who were smitten under his preaching: 'Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' Here, in Acts 2:37,38, we can but mark the difference between the system of some calvinistic teachers and that of the gospel. Their system is: 1. Conversion; 2. Repentance; 3. Pardon; and lastly, Baptism. But Peter's arrangement is: 1. Repentance; 2. Baptism; 3. Pardon; and, 4. The witness of the Spirit" (Morris's Sermons, p.243).

Methodism teaches practically today that baptism precedes pardon and regeneration, and is the divinely appointed means of securing them. Let us open the Discipline and examine the office for the baptism of adults, and see if we do not meet throughout with the self-same expressions as in the office for infants, and which Wesley says teaches there is no salvation without baptism. We must admit they mean the same thing in both offices. I, therefore, insert adult for infant, and reassert Wesley's language.

It is certain that the whole office for the baptism of an adult proceeds upon the fact that every adult baptized by the Methodist Episcopal "church" is an unregenerated sinner, and comes to baptism to seek release from his sins, and to receive regeneration of heart in the act of baptism.

Let us notice the wording of each part of the Ritual--1. The exhortation the minister is required to make to the applicants: "I beseech you to call on God the Father, through our

Lord Jesus Christ, that of His bounteous goodness He will grant, unto these persons, that which by nature they cannot have!" [this thing is regeneration of heart, unquestionably], "that they may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost." By this latter baptism every Methodist understands the spiritual baptism, or regeneration of heart. The language teaches that the applicants have never received what they here seek in baptism, and what the congregation is exhorted to pray they may have.

The first prayer--"We call upon Thee for these persons now to be baptized, Receive them, O Lord, as thou hast promised, by thy well-beloved Son, saying, Ask and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. So give now unto us that ask; let us that seek find; open the gate unto us that knock; that these persons may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing."

This washing prayed for is the washing of regeneration, and therefore implies that those who apply for baptism have never received it, but come to baptism for it. If there is the least doubt of it, the instructions of the minister following will remove it: "Then the minister shall speak to the persons to be baptized on this wise: Well beloved, who are come hither, desiring to receive holy baptism, ye have heard how the congregation hath prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive you, and bless you, to release you of your sins, to give you the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life. And our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in His holy Word to grant all those things that we prayed for, which promise He, for His part, will most surely keep and perform"

Then the last prayer-- "O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in these persons may be so buried that the new man may be raised up."

This supposes that the old man has never been put to death in them, nor the new man raised up in them--and they depend upon their baptism to accomplish this in and for them: "Grant that all carnal affections may die in them, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in them."

This statement on the part of the minister, and an admission on the part of the minister and an admission on the part of the applicants for baptism, that they have never died to sin, or risen in the new life in Christ, and that they come to baptism seeking this change from nature to grace, from death in sin to spiritual life: "Regard, we beseech Thee, the supplications of this congregation; and grant that the persons new to be baptized may receive the fullness of thy grace."

This grace had never been received, or it would not be sought in baptism. Every intelligent reader knows that this ritual was copied, almost verbatim, from the ritual of the Church of England, concerning which Bishop Melville, one of the most eloquent ministers of the Church of England, of this generation, speaks: "We really think that no fair dealing can get rid of the conclusion that the Church holds what is called baptismal regeneration. You may dislike the doctrine; you may wish it expunged from the prayer-book, but so long as I

officiate according to the forms of the prayerbook, I do not see how I can be commonly honest and yet deny that every baptized person is, on that account, regenerated."

The office does not recognize or admit the idea that they are already Christians saved, pardoned, or regenerated, or that



they can be without baptism. There is no ceremony or prayer for the baptism of a believer, of a recognized regenerate person, in the Discipline! Therefore, the baptism of a professed Christian, is unknown in the Methodist Episcopal church. Every one baptized by Methodist ministers must be baptized as a confessedly unregenerate sinner, and baptized to receive the grace of remission, regeneration

I now open the hymnbooks of two divisions of Methodism, and examine the hymns on baptism. In the Northern book, besides the invocation, there are nine hymns--eight are for infants, and one that may be used for infants or adults; but each teach the self-same doctrine--baptismal efficacy, spiritual regeneration effected by baptism, as a sacrament!--that it is the seal that imparts and ratifies the benefits of the covenant of grace. I will give one, found in both, No. 280: "Father, in these reveal thy Son; In these, for whom we seek thy face, The hidden mystery make known, The inward, pure baptizing grace. Jesus, with us thou always art; Effectual make the sacred sign; The gift unspeakable impart, And bless the ordinance divine. Eternal Spirit, from on high; Baptizer of our spirits, thou; The sacramental seal apply, And witness with the water now."

These hymns teach that in no one who comes to baptism has Christ been revealed; to no one has the hidden mystery of baptism been revealed, or the inward grace of the Spirit; and the prayer is that the sign may be made effectual in the act, and the unspeakable gift of pardon and salvation be imparted, and the seal of the Covenant of Grace, which is sacramental, be applied to the subject who comes, not professing to have been pardoned or regenerated, but as a seeker of them only, in and by the rite.

Finally and conclusively: The action of its general conference establishes the fact that Methodism, like the Roman Catholic Church and the Campbellites, teach that baptism is essential to regeneration, because the appointed means of it. I refer to this because the leaders of the unreading people aver that, "however they might have viewed some things in Wesley's day, the Methodists of this day do not believe or practice baptism as a means of regeneration." I reply, Do they

(Continued on Page 12, Col. 1)

SECRET

(Continued from Page 7)

communion with him; and though already you are singing, you shall be yet more blessed if you become more obedient, more submissive to the divine will, more in sympathy with Jesus, and more abidingly in communion with the Father. This is heaven below: God grant it you for Christ's sake. Amen.

INTERCOMMUNION:

(Continued from Page 11)

not still use the self-same Discipline? repeat the same Ritual? pray the same prayers? and for the same thing? Are not Methodist ministers bound by the same vows to hold, teach and practice the same doctrine?

The last Methodist General Conference, that met in Memphis, endorsed an official report declaring that the present growing practice among Methodists--to baptize persons on the profession of regeneration before baptism--was an evil that should be discontinued! I copy a part of that report: "Baptism, too, has been unnecessarily deferred, not only in case of children, but sometimes postponed to an indefinite period in case of adults. The practice of requiring a public profession of regeneration before

baptism has resulted in evil; and that the design of the sacrament is perverted, and the people encouraged to expect the divine blessing without the use of means [baptism]! We call attention to these evils that we may seek diligently to remove them." Copied from the Methodist Advocate, official conference paper.

This is conclusive that this denomination, as such, holds and teaches that there can be no remission or regeneration without baptism!

What Baptist will presume to say that it is an "Evangelical Church," a "Christian denomination," and in full agreement with Baptists touching the essential doctrines of salvation? Or can we say that any one, though immersed by Methodists, with the above design, and for the above purpose--as every one baptized by them is--has received Scripture baptism? Can we accredit such baptisms as Scriptural and valid? Can we claim to be in our right minds if we say that such an organization--originated less than one hundred years ago, holding doctrines that are subversive of the whole plan of salvation, as they are of the ordinances of the Church of Christ--is, indeed, any church at all?

MY LORD HAS NOT TOLD ME TO DO IT. The Christian and "Christmas"

We have nothing to say in this message to the world, nor to anyone who does not belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. Our appeal is to those who love Him and desire to please Him in all things. To such devoted persons we would like to point out some important facts about the holiday known in the world as "Christmas," keeping in mind that the Word of God is the only true and sufficient guide for the child of God. (Read II Tim. 3:16-17).

The fact that God has not commanded the celebration of the birth of His Son is sufficient reason for any child of God not to have any part in such practice. There are many other reasons that may be stated for the true believer having no part in such unfruitful works of darkness, but this is enough: "My Lord has not told me to do it!"

As for the word "Christ-mass," we prefer not even to take it on our lips. Think of associating the title of our blessed Lord with the abominable, Romanized, heathen mass! The modification with the Greek initial (Xmas) is preferable to us, for it at least leaves the precious name of our Saviour out of the shameful affair.

Some will ask: "Do not Christians the world over observe this holiday?" To which we would say: "It is more generally practiced by the world and by nominal professors than by true Christians. And whatever the world practices ought to be held in suspicion by the believer in Christ, for 'all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' And 'we know that we are of God, and the world lieth in wickedness.'" (I John 2:16 and 5:19).

We regretfully admit that many Christians, whose salvation we could not doubt, are too badly misled by men's traditions and too blind to the importance of taking guidance solely from God's Word, to take any godly stand against this Xmas monstrosity. But all who acknowledge the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures to direct in such matters, will most certainly have no more to do with his unholy holiday after their attention has been called to it.

As to its origin, Xmas was originally a Roman heathen celebration of the birthday of the sun god. It was taken over by the Catholics, with such changes as suited their abominable idolatry. And then the Protestant daughters followed the "Mother of Harlots" (Rev. 17:5), and modified it a little more till they think they are now honoring the Lord by its observance.

The Xmas tree, the mistletoe, the holly wreaths, candles, and the child-deceiving tradition of Santa Claus, are all of heathen origin. There is not one word in Holy Writ in favor of any of them. But listen to what the Word of God does say about it:

"Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the heathen... for the customs of the people are vain; for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold: they fasten it with nails and with hammers that it move not" Jer. 10:2-4).

God has not told us to observe any special days. Instead, He has warned us about getting entangled with them. To the Galatians, who had been led off by such traditions, He said: "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." (Gal. 4:10). To the

Christian there should be no special holy days; every day should be alike holy unto the Lord, though it is the believer's blessed privilege by divine order and precedent to meet together on the first day of the week for fellowship and remembrance of the Lord's death on the cross.

The fact that the world joins in the celebration of Xmas is a proof that it is not according to the will of God, "For the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7).

If they would not link the name of our blessed Lord with their heathen ceremonies, then we would hold our peace. If it were like the 4th of July celebration we would have nothing to say. We see pictures of elaborate mangers on bill boards and magazines, and the whole world glories in its shame -- that the eternal Son of God came into the world and the best it would give Him was a cow barn to be born in! But for the believer, not one possible argument has any weight, since "My Lord has not told me to do it."

God has not allowed us to know the time of the birth of His Son. It is not His birth that we are asked to remember. It is His death on the cross, His precious blood, that paid for our sins, that we are told to remember. And that is what the world tries to soft pedal. "The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish" (I Cor. 1:18).

What may be said of Xmas may also be said of Easter, just another religious heathen celebration, in which religious professors have joined the rest of this Christ-rejecting world in putting our Lord to an open shame, associating eggs and bunnies and fancy hats with the solemn spectacle of the cross, the empty tomb, and His resurrection! Let every genuine believer in Christ hang his head for any part he ever had in such unholy business.

The most notable birthday celebrations in the Bible are Pharaoh's and Herod's, both accompanied by murder. The most outstanding merry-making and gift-sending part in the Bible is in Revelation 11:10, where God's two faithful witnesses are finally slain and people rejoice and send gifts to each other because they will not have to listen to God's message any longer! Let every true Christian take his stand openly on the Lord's side, by having nothing to do with these festivities which are the inventions of modern Babylon.

"For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." (Rev. 18:5). "Earnestly contend for the faith." "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Jude 3, Eph. 5:11).

(Copied)

In Christ there is no great and small, no important and unimportant, but only sinners saved by His grace; we are all brethren.

No sin makes less noise, but done so surely damns the soul, as unbelief.

--J.C. Ryle

FOURTEEN REASONS NOT TO OBSERVE CHRISTMAS

by David J. Blauser

Sin is giving any meaning to any thing other than the meaning God has given to it.

There are at least fourteen reasons why one should not observe Christmas. With indepth Scripture searching many more could (and should) be constructed. Scripture nowhere specifically forbids the celebration of Christmas but this is only because Christmas was not invented for several centuries after the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (Note that Christmas is an invention of man and has gained the status of a tradition.) However, several principles are established in Scripture that have a bearing on the observance of Christmas. These principles of separation, holiness, devotion to and worship of God only, reasoning "from" the Scripture instead of "to" the Scripture, and others are presented briefly in some of the following arguments. In addition, several obvious non-Scriptural reasons are presented based on common sense and historical grounds.

1) Christmas is a Roman Catholic religious holiday; the Roman Catholic church is not Christian. (Note that the Roman Catholic church not being Christian is another subject entirely and beyond the scope of this tract.) If you are not Roman Catholic why are you observing one of their holidays?

2) Most scholars agree that Christ was probably born in the spring and not in December.

3) The origins of Christmas are found not in Scripture but in Babylonian paganism - worship of the Babylonian sun god who dies every winter solstice (i.e., Dec. 22/23) and is "born again" on the 24th. Babylonian paganism is based upon the worship of the sun, moon, and stars which is specially forbidden by Scripture (Deuteronomy 4:19, 17:2-7, Isaiah 1:12-14, Galatians 4:8-11). The ancient Romans changed this to the worship of the god Saturn and called it the Saturnalia. The Roman Catholic church kept the same holiday for their masses of pagan "converts" calling it a "mass for Christ"; hence, Christmass or Christmas.

4) Christians are commanded in Scripture to remember Christ's death (I Corinthians 11:23-26) but are nowhere commanded to remember His birth.

5) Even though the "whole world" celebrates Christmas, we need to note what they are really celebrating; it is not the Christ of the Scripture. Take a glance about you and ask yourself what the majority of people are celebrating. Is what they are celebrating really of Christ?

6) Each year professing Christians strive to find again the "real spirit of Christmas," never dreaming that it is not to be found in the Scriptures but in the world. To really and truly "find" the spirit of Christmas, look to and in the world. Do not look for something where it is not to be found.

7) Things of God are of the Spirit and not earthly or of the flesh. One glance will show that the observance of Christmas is only of the flesh. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5). "...the flesh lusteth

against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh..." (Galatians 5:17) It is here, at this point, that we mention that this message is being written to the true child of God and not to the nominal Christian nor the bulk of humanity.

8) The observance of Christmas is a snare to the unwary professor. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (I Corinthians 5:6). It tends, subtly like sin, to drag the victim in deeper and deeper until it becomes impossible to only celebrate the "Christian" portion of Christmas (Job 14:4). The world sees only that the Christians are celebrating Christmas the same as they.

9) Those that observe Christmas tacitly agree with all the teachings of Christmas which include (but are not limited to): Santa Claus (and all this implies), various legends of Christmas (see your TV guide for further listings), the financial burdens incurred with shopping (there are only 56 more shopping days til Christmas!), the last minute sudden outpouring of emotionalism (that lasts about two weeks), and riotous living and parties that are improper for man himself and not honoring to God.

10) The nativity of Our Saviour was of a humble origin (read Matthew and Luke). We should imitate Christ, not the wise men of the East. If we wish to honor Christ, let it be of an humble spirit that seeks to serve and worship God in spirit and in truth and not in the giving of gifts. Yet, today Christmas is the giving of gifts (a practice that many can ill-afford).

11) The birth of Christ was of a two-fold purpose: the incarnation of the Lord God Almighty and to fulfill the Scriptures. The manger points only to the cross - He owned nothing but the souls of men. His birth was associated with the poor, weak and ignoble, i.e., those God was pleased to save. What is Christmas associated with today? Certainly not Christ.

12) There was no room for Christ in the inn. Is there room for Christ only for a brief season each year? O generation of vipers, you dishonor God greatly.

13) People want a Christ that is a babe. As a babe, He makes no demands upon them. (Indeed, He does not even command that His birth be remembered, at all!) However, as Sovereign God, Creator, and coming Judge, His demand upon them is to "Repent and believe the gospel" (Matthew 4:17). This they are unwilling to do, so they make much ado about the Babe and try to ignore the King.

14) Christmas, in the final analysis, is sheer and utter rebellion against God and His Holy Law. Christmas, in effect, says, "we will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:12-27). If ever there was an example of an unclean situation for Christmas to come out of, it is the observance of Christ-mass (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

Christian, pray and search the Scriptures to see if these things be so (Acts 17:11) and when the Holy Spirit opens the Scriptures to you be careful to align yourself with revealed Truth. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).