

GOD'S GREAT DISPLAY OF LOVE

by: Don Schunck

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). If these words of scripture were properly weighed, there is no doubt but that they would be found to be His most glorious Words in all of the Bible. Our hearts should melt before such astounding language. Of course, if you don't know yourself to be a sinner it is but little good news to you, for the text says God loves sinners. But to those of us who have been brought to see that we were condemned, vile, and unworthy as sinners, rejoice to read a verse like this! Nothing can cheer the despondent Christian's heart like a sense of his Savior's love.

I. GOD'S LOVE COMMENDED. This means that God exhibited or displayed His love for us. God proved beyond a doubt that He loved sinners when He sent His only begotten Son into this world to give His life as ransom. This was the greatest

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**BE AT OUR
BIBLE
CONFERENCE
MAY 26-28
A GREAT TIME!**

WHY BAPTISM IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

By JOHN R. GILPIN

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20).

I thank the Lord for this text. It tells us how to understand and



John R. Gilpin
(Now in Glory)

explain the Scriptures. It tells us that Scripture must be interpreted in the light of Scripture. No text can be taken out of its setting and away from its context. No text is to be interpreted by itself but in the light of all the rest of the Bible. That is how every doctrine is to be dealt with.

Particularly is that true with the doctrine of baptism. There are those who believe that baptism is essential to salvation. A preacher thus believing said to me some-

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To slander a brother is to do the devil's work.

MISSIONARY

PREMILLENNIAL

BIBLICAL

BAPTISTIC

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

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EASTER 2000 B.C. to Date

"Prove all things" (I Thes. 5:21).

Is the name "Easter" of divine origin simply because it is found in our Bibles, in the King James translation of Acts 12:4 "...intending after Easter to bring him forth?" The R.V. renders it "after the passover", as it is given in the original. In reading the following lines every honest mind will be able to discern whether or not the celebration of Easter and also Christmas has divine sanction.

We search our Bibles in vain for any authorization of celebrating the resurrection of Christ. The setting of different dates for Easter from year to year is ex-

plained thus, in Schaff-Herzog Ency. of Religious Knowledge, Vol. 2, p. 682: "The present variable time was appointed by early Romanism in amalgamation with the very ancient pagan spring festival to the goddess of spring. It was fixed on the Sunday immediately following the 14th day of the paschal moon which happened on or first after the vernal equinox." Please note Col. 2:16, "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath." Spiritual Christians do not celebrate the resurrection of Christ; they demonstrate it.

The Babylonian "queen of

heaven," Semeramis, the wife of Nimrod, was the original impersonation of the heathen goddesses, Astarte and Venus of the Greeks, Juno, of the Latins, Ashtoreth, of the Zidonians, Ishtar, of the Babylonians, and Eostre, the goddess of spring, of the early Anglo-Saxons. The Druids held religious festivities in her honor and of the sun-god in April, calling it "Easter Monath." Hence the careless insertion of the word "Easter" instead of "passover" in Acts 12:4 by the King James translators. It is a blot inexcusable on their otherwise excellent work.

This Ishtar, or Eostre, was (Continued on Page 3, Col. 2)

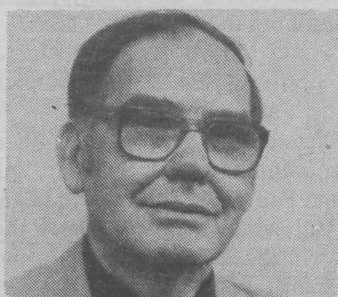
STUDIES IN FIRST PETER 1:1-5

by C.T. Everman

As we begin the studies in First Peter we need to remember that although we refer to the apostle Peter saying this or saying that, it was the Holy Spirit who inspired him to write what he wrote. This letter was written to testify that "this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (I Peter 5:12). This grace is not only the grace that saves, but also is the grace that we receive each day to face the trials along the way. As we study this letter we will find much is said concerning sufferings. We are told that we need to look upon it as the normal thing for the child of God as he travels in this life. Some one has well said, "A Christian's life consists in doing good and suffering evil." We need to rejoice for the privi-

lege of suffering for that One who, with His own blood, redeemed us from our sins. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41).

The why of suffering has been a question down through the



Clyde Everman

ages. Suffering is one of the things we inherited from Adam and Eve through the fall. Becoming children of God does not exempt us from pain, sorrow, or trouble in this life. All, I say, all suffering of God's children is ordained by Him for their good. The "all things" of Romans 8:28 include the trials and sufferings encountered along the way. Through our suffering we can better understand what our Lord went through for us. Isaiah 53:3 tells us He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." God sometimes uses suffering to keep us from sin. The apostle Paul said, "And lest I should be exalted above measure..., there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of (Continued on Page 8, Col. 1)

The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

A RUNAWAY SLAVE ILLUSTRATES GOD'S GRACE

"I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on my account" (Phile. 1:10-18).

Salvation by grace is one of the prominent doctrines in the Bible. From one end to the other, there is not a jarring note.

Wherever the Bible touches upon the subject of how God saves sinners, it always teaches emphatically that it is by grace. If you are at all familiar with the Word of God you are aware of this fact.

Salvation, wholly or in part by works, is the predominant heresy of all ages, and all false religions. False religions may differ in many respects, but they all unite with one voice in teaching salvation by works. There are actually only two religions in the world: the truth of salvation by free, sovereign, unconditional, irresistible, and everlasting grace (Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)

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OUR PRECIOUS CHRIST

by T.B. Freeman

I Peter 2:7, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner."

The word precious means something of great price or value.



T.B. Freeman

Peter, in V. 4, refers to Isaiah 28:16 where the prophet by the Holy Spirit speaks of Christ as a sure foundation stone and calls Him a precious corner stone. Whether then this word "precious" is derived from this Scripture as the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to use this word about Christ, or not, I don't know. I do believe the New Testament is a commentary on the Old Testament in some measure. Anyway this word "precious" is a precious word and especially in speaking of Christ.

Now, Peter writes of four special things being precious in his epistles. In 1:19 he speaks of the precious blood. In his second epistle he writes of the precious faith, (1:1). In 1:4 he writes of the precious promises. Then in the first epistle, 2:7 he writes of the precious Christ. Also in this same chapter he makes mention of the precious Christ in vs. 4, 6.

Let us consider here that without the precious Christ we could not have the precious blood. For it is Christ's blood that Peter is writing about in his epistles. Nor could we have the like precious faith, for Christ is the author and finisher of our faith, (Heb. 12:2). Neither without Christ could we have exceeding great and precious promises. "For all the promises of God in him, are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (II Cor. 1:20).

Let us observe here beloved, the application of the text, that is, as to its limitation. Peter speaks here of two classes of people, the elect and the non elect. We read in v. 4. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious." Isaiah writes of Him, by the Holy Spirit, saying... "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53:3).

The apostle John writes of Him saying... "He was in the (Continued on Page 3, Col. 4)

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RUNAWAY

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and salvation by works.

The Bible teaches salvation by grace by direct statement over and over again. Then, wherever we have a case history of the salvation of one of God's elect, we see illustrated the truth of salvation by grace. Here, in the story that heads this article, is a classic example.

The church at Colosse met in the home of Philemon. Onesimus was a slave of Philemon. Onesimus stole some money from his master and ran away. In the providence of God, Onesimus came under the ministry of Paul in Rome and was saved. Onesimus tells Paul of his past history. Paul sends this converted slave back to his master, and writes this letter for Onesimus to give to Philemon. Let us examine this story, and see the grace of God manifested therein.

I. We might go back of the story and emphasize the truth of Onesimus's condition by nature, and see therein the need of God's grace if such a one is to be saved. Onesimus was a totally depraved being. He was conceived in iniquity, and he was born in sin. He went astray as soon as he was born speaking lies. From the top of his head to the soles of his feet there was no soundness in him, but wounds, and bruises and putrefying sores. The Bible has much to say about the depravity of man, and all of it fits Onesimus perfectly.

Onesimus had a heart that was deceitful above all things and desperately (incurably) wicked. From within, out of his heart,

proceeded all manner of filth and sin. Why, his heart was a very hell-hole of iniquity. Onesimus had a mind that could not receive the things of the Spirit of God, neither could he know them. The things of God were foolishness to Onesimus. Onesimus had a will that would not come to Christ. He was at enmity to God and could not please God.

I am sure that Philemon insisted that his children and slaves attend the services that met in his home. I feel certain that Philemon had often talked with Onesimus about his lost condition and about his need of Jesus Christ. But, you see, Onesimus could not understand what Philemon was talking



Joe Wilson

about. He had no desire for the things Philemon told him of. Onesimus was violently and unalterably opposed to the appeals of Philemon. I think that, maybe one of the reasons Onesimus ran away was because he would not listen to Philemon, and was tired of all that preaching. I think we all know by experience and observation something of the awful hatred of the natural man to the gospel.

So you see the need of God's grace. If salvation were by morality, Onesimus was doomed. If by works, he had no hope. The only hope that such a sinner would ever be saved lay in the sovereign and almighty grace of God. Surely, you have perceived by now, that I speak not only of Onesimus, but about you and me and all of mankind. The only hope of salvation for dead and depraved sinners such as we are is in the grace of God.

II. Let us notice the grace of God in the election of Onesimus. Who would have thought that he was among God's elect family? If you had seen him in his rebellion against the gospel, in his stealing, in his running away and probably using his stolen goods in pursuit of sin; you would not have thought of him as one of the elect. But he was. See him there. He wallows in the muck and mire of sin. But upon him there is a mark unseen by mortal eye. It is the mark of election. He was predestined before the world began to be the object of saving grace, and no matter how hard he struggled, or how deep in sin he was, he was yet to be made the recipient of a work of saving grace.

Why, Onesimus was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that he might be holy and without blame before Him. He was chosen from the beginning to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth. His name was written down in the Lamb's Book of Life from all eternity.

Now this election is a sovereign and unconditional election. It was not based upon anything foreseen in Onesimus, but was according to God's sovereign will. Brethren, if the Arminians were right, and election was based on what God

sees or foresees in man, who among us would have been elected? The Arminian must have a mighty high and proud opinion of himself to preach such a doctrine. Not so, beloved, we have nothing that we did not receive, and it was God that made us to differ from the reprobate.

God's unconditional election is the only hope that anyone will ever be saved. God's election is a Baptist doctrine. It is a Bible doctrine, a doctrine made most prominent on the pages of Holy Writ. God's election is the guarantee of heaven, that a great multitude which no man can number, will be saved with a gracious and everlasting salvation.

III. Now let us notice the grace of God in the providence that governed the life of Onesimus. Now, providence is God's governmental control of all His creatures and all their actions. This is a most precious truth. Predestination is the purpose of God concerning all things. Providence is the power of God controlling all things according to His eternal predestination. Things are not out of hand. All things are in the hands of a sovereign God, and they are all working His purpose. Not a sparrow falls to the ground, but it was included in the plan and providence of God.

Now there goes Onesimus. He has stolen money and is running away. As far as he knows and is concerned, he is free to go in any direction. He can go to Alexandria, to the Orient, to a thousand different places. What was it that directed his footsteps to Rome? It was the mysterious, all pervading, all powerful providence of God. I tell you that Onesimus took off running. He ran from punishment for his crime. He ran from being returned to his master and, I think, from the preaching in the house of Philemon. But, praise God! praise God! when he got through running, he was sitting at the feet of a Baptist preacher listening to the Word of God.

God Almighty had elected Onesimus. He had predestinated the very time of salvation for Onesimus. God had made an appointment between Onesimus and Paul before the world began. And when the time came they were both in their appointed place. All hell could not have broken that appointment. The failure of God's children in witnessing the rebellion of the unsaved cannot break that appointment. God will see to it that the elect sinner and the one ministering the Word come together at the predestinated time.

One may be a native in a heathen land far away. Another may be a Baptist preacher in America. But God will bring the one from half way around the world, to be in the appointed place at the appointed time with the Word of saving grace.

We are not Hardshells. May God forgive the man who calls me a Hardshell. I hate Hardshellism with a holy passion. Men are born again of the will of God and with the Word of truth. They are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, even by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. God does not elect men to be saved irrespective of whether or not they ever hear the Word. I tell you God elects some to salvation. He appoints the time of their salvation. He appoints the one who shall give them the message of life in the

gospel. He predestinates the means as well as the end. No, no, we are not Hardshells. We believe that the providence of God will bring the elect sinner under the saving message at the appointed time. Again I say, that when Onesimus stopped running, he was sitting at the feet of a Baptist preacher listening to the glorious gospel of saving grace.

IV. Now, let us notice the grace of God in the effectual call of Onesimus. This being under the Word was not enough. He probably had heard that Word before with the outer ear. There must be an effectual, irresistible work of the Holy Spirit, if our message is to be effective, if the elect are to be saved. The man must be elected by the Father, redeemed by the Son, but he must also be called by the Holy Spirit.

Oh, that we might see our helplessness as we preach to the

valley of dry and dead bones. Oh, that we might pray for the Holy Spirit to come and breathe on these dead that they might live. Brethren, the success of the gospel does not lie in the education, personality, nor oratorical ability of the preacher, but in the life giving power of the Holy Spirit.

Well, Onesimus was one of God's elect. The providence of God had him at the appointed place at the predestinated time. The time of his salvation was at hand. So there goes forth with the message of Paul a supernatural and irresistible power. Onesimus had heard and heard; but now he hears with a hearing ear, and sees with a seeing eye. He is made to see his need, to desire salvation, to listen intently and believe savingly the message that he heard. He probably had heard this before and had not responded. Wherein lay

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FROM THE EDITOR

"Brethren, pray for us" (I Ths.5:25). I feel sure that, though this Scripture speaks of "brethren", that sisters are not excluded therefrom. I know that I desire the prayers of the sisters, and have as much confidence in their prayers, as much as the brethren.

I am in the process of trying to get my church members to pray at least once a week for every other member. I don't know that I will succeed, but maybe we will do more of this. Would it not be a great thing if our churches did this? Each member would have the number of prayers prayed for him or her equal to the number of church members. Do we believe in prayer? Do we believe that God answers prayer? How could such praying fail to help the person prayed for?

None of us have too many people praying for us. If our own church members will not pray for us, who will? How many members of other churches are going to do much praying for members of this church? Of course there will be some such. Some have Christian friends or relatives who doubtless pray some for them. But really, how many prayers do you believe are prayed weekly for you by friends and relatives?

All of us stand in great need of prayer. Surely, we are going to pray much for ourselves. But is that all the praying we need done for us? Does not the Bible speak of intercessory prayer? Is this not prayer that one prays for another? Are we not commanded to do this? Really, how much do you pray for others in a week's time? How many others do you pray for each week? In Genesis 18:23-33 Abraham interceded for Sodom. Surely, Lot was much on his mind in this prayer, though not mentioned. Genesis 19:29 says, "...God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt." Do we believe in prayer? Do we believe that God answers prayer? Do we believe we can help others by praying for them? Do we believe others can help us by praying for us? If we do, let us do this, and let us seek to have others do this.

I cannot but believe (I must believe this if I believe the Bible) that if every member of our church would pray for every other member at least once a week, we would soon see some effects therefrom. It would help the person doing the praying. I believe that prayer is a God-ordained means of obtaining things from God for self and others. I also believe that, apart from obtaining such things, prayer has a beneficial and spiritually good effect on the one praying. What! can one go earnestly, humbly, sincerely into the presence of God; have communion with God, and this not prove to be a blessing to that one? Just being in God's presence and communing with Him in petitionary or intercessory prayer will help and strengthen and bless the one doing this.

Then, the member who prays for every other member of the church will be blessed by having a wider heart. As one reaches out in love and concern and prays for another, the heart will grow in love and grace. Oh, our hearts are too narrow. We need to reach out with a wide heart of love that embraces a multitude. I cannot but grow in love for the one for whom I pray sincerely. Surely, if every member of the church would pray for every other member of the church each week, there would develop much more love between them; and we surely need more love in our churches. If we sincerely prayed for one another as church members, we would want to know more about the needs of one another. So, I think that this would draw us closer together, and give us more concern about and love for one another.

Believing that God answers prayer, I believe that God would do many things for the members of the church in answer to the prayers of the other members. And God doing things for the members would result in good for the church as a whole. The church is made up of her members, and the spiritual good of the members will result in spiritual good for the church.

Now this is relatively a simple thing. It would not take too much time. It would not cost any money. I cannot think of many things that could be so easily done that would result in so much good. No one would suffer because of this. All would profit thereby. Who but God knows what this might eventually accomplish?

In some large churches, this might be impractical. But all of our kind of churches that I know of are small enough that it would be no problem for this to be done. Our churches are in great need in many ways. I believe this would be one way of improvement in and blessing upon our churches. I hope I can get my church, at least many of them, to do this. Others might want to suggest this to their churches. May God bless you all. Yours for more praying.

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the difference? Ah, right well do we know the difference. It was true in our own experience, was it not? That night, that night! Shall I ever forget that night while the ages of eternity roll on and on? That night when I heard a voice other than that of the preacher. When that voice said, "Joe, it is your time, you will come tonight." Right gladly did I come to Jesus that night, and the glory of it all has not left me yet, no, and never shall. What all the efforts of man could not do, one visit by the irresistible Spirit of God accomplished, and that forever.

V. Now let us notice the grace of God in the new life of Onesimus. Shall this man, saved by a miracle of Divine grace be the same as before? Not so. Not so. A man who has been made the subject of the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit can never be the same again. I have no time, nor inclination, nor desire for that which is called a work of salvation that leaves man where it finds him.

Onesimus had been born again. He had been made a new creature in Christ. He had been raised from spiritual death. Shall there be no change? Shall not such a marvelous work be evidenced in the after life of Onesimus? Most assuredly it shall. See him now. No longer running away, confessing his wrong treatment of Philemon. See him willing and desirous of making amends. Willing to go back and take that station in life that had been appointed him by sovereign God.

I tell you, salvation finds a man headed in one direction. It leaves him headed the other way. And anything short of this is not saving grace.

I think I see it now. Yonder stands Philemon and Mrs. Philemon on the porch of their home in Colosse. They observe a figure making his way toward their home. Mrs. Philemon says, "That surely looks like Onesimus." Philemon says, "No, he would not have the courage and audacity to come back here after what he did." But the Mrs. insists that it certainly looks like Onesimus. Finally, Philemon says, "Why, I do believe you are right, why it is Onesimus, what on earth can he want?" Then Onesimus, with tears of joy streaming down his face tells of God's saving grace, and hands them the letter. Oh, what joy there was that day, as they joined in singing "Amazing Grace."

Conclusion: Now just briefly, let us notice the illustration in verses 17 and 18 of that work of Christ by which runaway slaves are saved. Paul says to Philemon, "If you count me a partner receive Onesimus and treat him just as you would me." Then Paul says, "If Onesimus owes you anything, charge that to me, and I will repay it."

Surely, this is how we were saved. The Lord Jesus Christ lived a perfect life for us, clothed us with that perfect robe, and asked that the Father receive us as Himself. The dear Lord Jesus requested that the Father would charge to Him all the sins of the whole elect family of God. Then one day, outside a city wall, He climbed a hill called Calvary, laid Himself down on an old rugged cross, and paid the full and complete price for the redemption of the elect of God. And this is the price that was paid for the salvation of runaway slaves.

EASTER

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worshipped as the goddess of love and fertility, and as the life of nature. In Babylonish mythology this "queen of heaven" was worshipped as the goddess of the sexual impulse. In Hastings's Ency. of Religious Ethics, p. 117, we read of these ancient "easters": "A spring feast was celebrated. These occasions were marked with great sexual license." This is the vile Phallic worship referred to in Isa. 57:5-8 and Ezek. 16:17. The "groves" connected with the "high places" that Israel so frequently "went a whoring with" (Ps. 106:28-39) were the images and places where these filthy "queen of heaven" festivals were carried on. The word "groves," found forty times in our English Bible, comes from the Hebrew word "Asherah" and is always associated with the worship of Ashtoreth, alias Ishtar, Eostre, the goddess of spring.

The so-called "Lent season" is of purely Babylonish origin. The word "Lent" came from the Saxon word "Lenc", meaning "spring". Pagan Mexicans also celebrated forty days in April. Forty days in the vernal equinox in April was celebrated by the devil worshippers of Koordistan in honor of the sun-god. This was brought from Babylon where 2000 B.C. it originated in the weeping for Tammuz, the supposed reincarnation of Ishtar's (or Semeramis') husband (Nimrod). In the spring his death and reappearance was celebrated. A time of mourning was followed by one of joy. God condemned Israel's partaking in this celebration as given in Ezek. 8:13, 14, "He said unto me turn thee yet again and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north, and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz."

Modern Easter Customs

One may well ask, What connection have buns, eggs, rabbits and new clothes with the resurrection of Jesus Christ the Lord of glory? The origin of modern "hot cross buns" is sufficiently explained in Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19; "The children gather wood and the fathers kindle the fire and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke me to anger." Surely God's anger is still being provoked when Christians take up these heathen customs in connection with the resurrection of His beloved Son.

The custom of giving eggs in April can be traced to the philosophy and theology of the Egyptians, Persians, Gauls, Greeks and Romans, among whom the egg was an emblem of the universe -- the work of the supreme Being. The dyeing of eggs can be traced to the Chinese. Eggs were the sacrificial emblem of the Druids. Rome made the egg to become the consecrated emblem of Christ's resurrection. Pope Paul V taught people to pray at Easter: "Bless O Lord, we beseech thee this thy creature of eggs that it may become a wholesome sustenance unto thy servants, eating it in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ancient Babylonians believed an egg fell from heaven into the Euphrates river and the fishes

rolled it to the shore where the doves hatched out "the Queen of Heaven", or Ishtar. Hence the egg became a symbol of Ishtar, the licentious worshipped goddess of the ancients, and is used today by deluded, unthinking Christianity in its celebration of Easter. What an ungodly travesty!

The rabbit fad at Easter time can be traced back to pagan Germany. Children were told that if they were good, a white hare would steal into the house while they were asleep and secrete any number of beautifully colored eggs in odd corners of the house. Here, then originated the modern "Easter egg hunt" provided for innocent children. Any custom or pastime that takes the child's mind away from the glorious truth of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, through which He conquered Satan, death, hell and the grave, pleases Satan well.

The hare, from ancient times was a symbol of the moon, it being a nocturnal animal. The hare is the only rabbit born with its eyes open. The Egyptian word for hare is "un", meaning "to open." Thus the hare was associated with the opening of a new season, spring, in April, at the vernal equinox. The hare and eggs were mutually symbolical in Egypt of the opening of their new year, at which time eggs were ceremoniously broken.

But whence came the custom of wearing new clothes at Easter? Answer: In early England it was considered unlucky not to wear some new article of clothing at Easter time.

Lastly, what about Easter sunrise services? Do they too come under divine condemnation? Regardless of how or when they started, we need only to look to the criterion of God's holy Word, for "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word" and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 10:17; 14:23). Hebrews 11:6 states that without faith it is impossible to please God. It is also true that without tradition it is impossible to please men. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (the truth of God's Word), we read in John 4:24.

When God's people, Israel, took to the idea of "sunrise services," God expressed His disapproval in Ezek. 8:15-18: "Turn thee yet again and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house and behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men with their backs to the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east... AND though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." Reading this in God's Word and knowing that the sun-god, Baal, or Tammuz, the "husband-son" of Semeramis (Ishtar) has been given idolatrous homage from the very beginning of all idol worship, the spiritual, God fearing Christian will have no part with a Christ rejecting world in seemingly innocent and sentimentally "beautiful" Easter sunrise services or in any and all Christ-deflecting customs which are of proved, Satan inspired, pagan origin.

Christians should "not fol-

low a multitude to do evil".

"That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

"Be ye not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect (complete) will of God" (Rom. 12:2). See also II Cor. 6:14-18:7:1, 2.

In II Tim. 2:8 we are told to "remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead," but "days and months and times and years" are not to be religiously observed (Gal. 4:10, 11). Christ, as "Sun of Righteousness" will soon return from heaven. Are you looking for Him, reader?

The apostle Paul acknowledged that he had much "religion" (like multiplied thousands today) but that he was a lost soul until he obtained "through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (see Gal. 1:13-16; Phil. 3:4-10). Unsaved reader, will you not receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour from eternal judgment as did Paul, who explained for us in all its simplicity how to receive Him to be instantly and eternally saved? Here it is, in I Cor. 15:1-6: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."

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world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (John 1:10). Is this not the same attitude the non-elect world has toward Him today? What think ye of Christ my friend? Is He precious to you? Were it optional for you, would you give up Christ for all the money in this vain world? Is He more precious to you than any thing or anyone you know of? Remember Judas sold Him for thirty pieces of silver.

Let us elaborate a little here and say that there are millions of religious people in the world to whom Christ is not precious. Those who believe you can be saved by works or human merits are missing Christ as being a precious Lord and Saviour. How about the liberals and modernists who preach another Jesus, preach another gospel, and come with another spirit? How can Christ be precious to them except they repent? On the other hand consider the godless professors or the Antinomians who have the shadow without the substance, who have a name that they live and are dead, as the Scripture says of them. "...They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

Now my friends, let us leave the negative view of our message and go on to the more positive survey. Please consider here something of the preciousness of

Christ in the eyes of His Father. Hear Him say... "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). He hath commanded the angels to worship Him "And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. 1:6).

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." For He is the only Saviour. While we think little of rocks and dirt because they are plentiful, diamonds and jewels are precious for they are scarce articles. Peter, addressing the Sanhedrin said by the Holy Spirit, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). We read also Christ's words in the book of John 4:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" Notice, He did not say, "I am a way," but "I am the way". This excludes the Pope, and all other names. All who trust in any other name than our Lord Jesus Christ for salvation are as sure for hell as a crow is to fly. Please take a look now at the Scripture in Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." All who trust in any other name for salvation are among the deceived, and the Word of God says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

My friends, as I realize, after preaching the gospel of Christ for near fifty three years, my time of ministry for Christ is not much longer. As I look back over the pathway, there is one thing I have a clear conscience in, and that is that by the grace of my Lord I have never mislead or misinformed anyone as to the Scripture teaching of the way of salvation. I say this to the glory of God alone. This, therefore, gives me much joy and peace of mind as the time of my departure draws nearer than ever before. Praise the Lord, our sovereign and merciful God of all grace, for this kindness and love to my soul. While I realize in many things I am an ignorant man, in this respect of the truth regarding the salvation of souls, He has kept me from spiritual blindness. The greatest knowledge in the world is to know the truth of God Almighty as to the way of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and praise now and forever.

It may seem that I have gotten away from my text. A fellow was said to have three notable things about his preaching; first, he took a text; secondly, he left it; and thirdly, he never returned to it.

Beloved, I would like now to point out to you, in relation to our text, that Christ is a precious friend. Solomon has written in the book of Proverbs saying... "A man that hath friends must show himself

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

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

Was there sin on earth before Adam and Eve?

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Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

I think this verse supplies a sufficient answer to the question. No there was not any sin on the earth before Adam and Eve. I am aware that many who believe in a gap theory believe that such sin did exist. I do not believe in the gap theory, therefore I do not believe that there was any sin on the earth before Adam and Eve. I do not believe that anything like a "humanoid" ever existed and sinned before the account of creation in Genesis one.

Genesis 1:31 says; "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good..." I do not believe that God would have called everything He had made "good" if sin had already come from His creation. I do not believe that God destroyed the earth and started all over again because of

sin. I believe, without question, that sin came into existence in man with the fall of Adam. I might add here that I do not believe there was sin in heaven before God's creation of the earth. I believe that God created all things in the six day period recorded in Genesis one. When the Bible says that He created the heavens and the earth, I think that includes all the things that are in the heavens and earth. This includes angels. It includes Lucifer, who fell. I readily admit that I do not have an abundance of evidence to back this up, but I feel as if I have more evidence to prove this true than you have to prove it untrue.

I assure you that I am not adamant on this belief and would welcome any help given.

Let me answer again before closing. No, there was not sin on the earth before Adam and Eve. Sin entered this earth through Adam and has been passed along to every human born since then. The important thing is not how sin entered into the world, but how to get rid of it. Thank God that Jesus Christ came and died for the sins of the elect. If you are born of woman, you are a hell-bound sinner. Your only hope of escaping hell for your sins is the shed blood of Jesus. May the Holy Spirit grant you repentance and faith in Christ. May God bless you all.

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Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

I remember reading an article a number of years ago by a man who was writing about the history of sin and all the destruction that it had caused. He declared that sin had been the destroyer of the race and civilization of people that inhabited the "old creation" before Adam and Eve. His article contained many other erroneous statements including teaching based upon the "gap theory" held by many imaginative people in Christian circles. Since there was no habitation of the earth by another race before the creation of Adam and Eve, nor any destruc-

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friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Who, then, is this friend that sticketh closer than a brother? We read in the Song of Solomon these words... "His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem" (Song of Solomon 5:16).

When I was a boy of ten years old I attended a one room school. All eight grades in number were around thirty students. Our teacher was, as we called him uncle Jerry Mottern. He opened the school each morning with a hymn or two and read a chapter in God's Word and had prayer. There was one song I heard in those days that stuck in my weak brain. It was "What a friend we have in Jesus." To me that is to this day one of the most precious songs in our hymns of praise.

Matthew Henry, in his commentary, said, "A man without a friend moves the compassion of God." I thank God for my dear friends. Across the years of time, God has given me some wonderful friends. However, you and I who are in Christ must say that Christ alone is our dearest friend in heaven and in earth, to whom be glory forever.

While there are so many ways in which Christ has befriended us, there is one special way He has manifested His friendship to us who believe in Him as our Lord and Saviour; and that is by the way of redemption. Job said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth." He had a real friend in a friendless world. He had a living Redeemer amidst a dying world. He had true riches

while in the depths of poverty. He had surety in a world of uncertainty. He could say of Christ, "For I know that my redeemer liveth." When we survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died and know of a truth it was for us He paid the awful penalty for our sins, and rose for our justification, and that He ever lives to make intercession for us, and that He is coming for us to receive us unto Himself as heirs and joint heirs with Him in His everlasting glory and Kingdom; can we not say with the song writer... "What a friend we have in Jesus?" Many years ago I preached in a revival in the First Baptist Church, at Essex Canada. Brother John Greenleaf was pastor of the church. One Saturday evening during the meeting, the Mayor and City Council was present for the service. There was a special choir of singers that came from another church in Canada to sing for the service that evening. Before they sang, the song leader, an elderly man, gave his testimony. He said when he was a boy living in Russia, that one night Communist police came to their home and shot his three brothers dead, then beat his father down in the floor with the butts of their guns. His father said to one of the officers, "I will pray that you may be saved." The ungrateful wretch clutched his gun and said, "This is all the God that I have." Then the father and mother with this boy were taken to a prison camp. The song leader said when his dad came to die in that camp, he said to his wife, "Ma, I am afraid it's not enough" to which she said, "what do you mean?" He said "What I have done for Christ." She said, "Pa, what about what Christ has done for you?" He said, "That's enough

Ma, that's enough."

Moreover, for them who believe in Christ as Lord and Saviour, He is a precious Shepherd. As David wrote, saying of Him "...The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." (Psalms 23:1).

Our precious Christ is a three fold shepherd. As the Good Shepherd, He gave His life for the sheep (John 10:11). Secondly, Christ is the Great Shepherd of the sheep, as we read in the book of Hebrews these words, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Thirdly, He is the Chief Shepherd for we read in I Peter 5:4, "And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Now, may I share this with you also? We who believe in Christ as our sovereign Lord, have Him as a precious Priest. We read in the great book of Hebrews these words, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" (Heb. 4:14).

He is called our Advocate (I John 2:1). He is the propitiation for our sins. He is now appearing in the presence of God for us, (Heb. 9:24). He ever liveth to make intercession for us, (Heb. 7:25). This work of Advocacy is the work of Christ for sinning saints. They, being once for all saved from the guilt and condemnation of sin and justified through the imputed righteousness of Christ, can never come into condemnation (John 5:24). God never deals with them as a judge dealing with a criminal, but rather as justified sons. While they have no sin judicially, and having passed from death unto life, the believer in Christ is put into a justified standing forever. Nothing can be laid to their charge. However, the saved person does sin experimentally as a child of God. The work of Advocacy, then, being done by Christ our great High Priest, because of the eternal efficacy of His blood, restores them to fellowship.

Christ also is always praying for His saints. You remember He said to Peter... "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31, 32).

I read of a lady who opened her heart and trouble to her pastor in her sorrow and said, "My dear Pastor, if I only knew you had my problem at heart and would earnestly pray for me, it would mean so much." Her Pastor replied "Sister I can tell you something much better than that; last night the best friend you ever had prayed all night for you." She looked amazed for a moment, and then she remembered the Scripture that says "...Seeing he ever liveth to make inter- (Continued on Page 5, Col. 4)

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"And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Gen. 1:31).

When God had completed His work of creation, including man, He looked upon His finished work and pronounced it "very good." He had created a perfect place for man to dwell. He had made man "in His own image", a perfect man, a man without sin, to dwell in a perfect world. It was perfect and complete in every detail. Although we have very little information as to the physical conditions before the fall of man, we can assume that it was much like the restored earth will be as described in Isaiah 11 and 35 where it said that the earth will bring forth abundantly, and there will be peace between the animals as well as between animals and men.

It is true that many able Bible scholars: C.I. Scofield, Arthur W. Pink, and others have a theory that there was a great period

of time consisting of millions of years between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. This theory is called the "gap theory". Like the theory of evolution which it attempts to get around, it is based upon supposition and not upon the Word of God. The theory states that after God had created the heaven and the earth and had created a prehistoric man; that after millions of years some great cataclysm occurred (a great upheaval) that brought judgment by God upon the earth, and He destroyed all life upon it, and the earth became void and waste. This theory has death in the world before Adam sinned. What is wrong with this theory? There is no truth in it. There is no Scripture to prove this. How do we know this theory is false? The Word very plainly states, "Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned: (Rom. 5:12). "For as in Adam all die" (I Cor. 15:45).

As the Bible states that it was by Adam that sin entered the world, the answer to the question; Was there sin on the earth before Adam and Eve? The answer is no. The Scripture very plainly stated that sin entered the world by Adam.

GOD LOVES HIS ELECT

The Baptist Examiner Forum II

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

Does predestination only pertain to saved people, or does it pertain to all people and all things?

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PREDESTINATION. A word that some hold very dear because it is the springboard for precious doctrinal truths. For others, it is a point for refutation because it is not consistent with their liberal outlook on the Scriptures. The word is an integral part of the omniscience of God. It describes the very actions of God. It is a result of the will of God. By definition, predestination means to determine or to mark out beforehand. It is also characterized by the word, foreordain. It is used four times in the New Testament.

First of all, we know that this word applies to the saved. Each time it is used, it refers to the saved. One verse is sufficient to show this fact. "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," (Rom 8:30). This is done according to His purpose and good pleasure. The ones to whom it applies are determined by Him. Predestination is grounded upon foreknowledge. Anything that God does for a sinner is done because the sinner cannot do it for himself. Does God do anything for the unsaved relative to determining beforehand?

God has, by sovereign decree, appointed the bounds of man's habitation. "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Act 17:26). The word habitation means a settlement or dwelling. It refers to the localities divinely appointed as the dwelling places of the nations. This does not refer to just saved people, but to all people.

God has determined beforehand how long man will live upon the earth. Not just those who are saved, but all men. "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass" (Job 14:5). God has an established number of years for man to live, but the exact time is determined by Him. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away..." (Ps 90:10). It does not matter what length the period of time is, there will be a time when it is cut off. That time is determined by God and man does

not have power to alter it. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and here is not discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it." (Ecc 8:8)

In all that He does, God is sovereign, and man has no right to question what He does or for what reason He does it.

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Predestination pertains to both saved and lost people. Predestination also pertains to all things. The fall of Adam was included in the divine plan of God. The forces of evil are under God's perfect control. Sinful acts occur only by God's permissive will. No! God is not the author of sin, He permitted Satan to fall, who in turn caused, our first parent to fall, and we fell in him.

God predetermined to permit the fall of Satan and Adam, therefore His predestination is absolute. Ephesians 1:11 tells us that God works all things after the counsel of His own will. Nothing takes God by surprise, nothing happens that He did not ordain. His plans were made in the counsel halls of eternity and are unfolding in time.

Ephesians 1:4 says, "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." 13:48 says, "And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Now the lost! Romans 9:22, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Romans 9:21, says, "Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Jude 4 Says, "For there are certain men crept in unawares who were before of old ordained to this condemnation."

Now, all things. 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?"

I believe the Bible teaches that God does what He wants to, when He wants to, where He wants to, and how He wants to. He is the sovereign.

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There is an abundance of Scripture that shows that predestination pertains to saved people. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself..." (Ephesians 1:5). This Scripture refers to the saints at Ephesus, and what is true with them is true with all saints. The eleventh verse of this chapter teaches this truth. "...being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 2:11). And again in Romans, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called...." (Romans 8:30).

The Scriptures given above should be sufficient to convince anyone that predestination pertains to saved people. There are other Scriptures which show that saved people were elected in eternity past by God the Father, purchased by the Son in the sacrificial atonement in the shedding of His blood on the cross, called and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. This is made real to the elect by the preaching of the glorious gospel. There are numerous Scriptures which show that predestination relates to the saved, even though the word predestination is not used in many Scriptures, yet they eat out the fact that the elect of God were predestinated in eternity past to be saved in time.

The second part of the question, "Does predestination pertain to all people and all things?" The Scriptures teach that all things whatsoever are predestinated. God foreknows all things. If God did not foreordain all things, then He could not know the future. God foreknows and knows all things because He decreed all things to be. If God did not and does know the future, and did not foreknow all things, then He is not perfect in knowledge. To suppose that God does not foreknow all things whatsoever is to suppose that God is imperfect. But God's understanding is infinite, therefore He can and does know all things future and present. "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Psalms 147:5). When God made provision for the sins of His people before the fall of Adam; this proves predestination.

May the quieriest take time to read proverbs 8:22-35. And I call your attention to this Scripture, "Who hath saved us, and, called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Timothy 1:9).

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever he will" (Proverbs 21:1). The meaning of this Scripture is that as the king's heart is in God's hand, so He is in control of his life. If God can and does control the king, the most powerful man on earth, He also controls every other man.

God is in control of the clouds and the rain and the grass. He maketh grass to grow on the mountains. "Who covereth the heavens with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow on the mountains" (Psalms 147:8). God maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good (Matthew 5:45).

God predestinates all things whatsoever, both animate and inanimate. His decree includes all angels, both good and evil. God predestinated the crucifixion of Christ. It was by His ordaining counsel. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain". (Acts 2:23). It was decreed and determined by the counsel of God that Christ be crucified for the elect of God, and God determined before for this to be done, and it was by the hand of God and by His counsel it was determined before to be done. But both Herod and Pontius Pilate will stand in that day of all days before the God of all the earth to account for the great sin they committed against Christ the Lord.

Yes, it is the teaching of God's Word that predestination pertains to the saved, to all things, and to all people.

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cession for us" (Heb. 7:25). It is wonderful to have God's people pray for you, but how much more wonderful to have Christ always praying for you.

Consider also, dear brethren that Scripture that says, "...For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15). We read again from the book of Hebrews, chapter two, these words, "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17).

In the relation to the Priesthood of Christ there are two more things I would like to point out to you here. First, let us consider His boundless compassion. He can be touched with feeling of our infirmities. Oh, the many infirmities we do have in our Christian lives, both spiritual and physical. He knoweth our frame

that we are dust. We read in His Word, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Psalm 103:13). He wept at the grave of Lazarus because He cared. Peter writes to the suffering saints saying, "Casting all your care upon him: for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7).

Another thing I would like to call to your attention here is His wonderful faithfulness as we read, "This I recall to mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lament. 3:21-23). My brethren, do remember He is faithful to keep His promise. "For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). I have heard so many promises by men that were never kept; not so with our faithful Lord. Truly, truly, He is precious to them that believe.

As you know, our text could be expanded in so many ways, but time and space fails me here to go further, other than to say, He will be yet more precious to us when we see Him face to face in all His glory. "Jesus, the very thought of thee: With sweetness fills my breast, but sweeter far Thy face to see, and in Thy presence rest."

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:2).

"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalms 17:15).

WHY

(Continued from Page 1)

time ago, "Why, brother, if our blessed Master had not been baptized He would have gone to hell surely." In the light of this statement, since Christ of necessity (so this preacher said) must be baptized, then, of course, every person in this world must be baptized in order to be saved. Any man with one eye and half sense ought to know better.

I believe that baptism is essential, but it is not essential to life. My hands and my feet are essential for that for which they were appointed. A bird's wings are essential, but not to life. A horse's hoofs are essential but not to life; so, with baptism; it is essential for that which it was appointed of the Lord, but it is not essential for salvation.

There are some reasons why baptism is not essential to salvation:

1. The plan of salvation in all the Bible is one plan - faith in the death of Jesus Christ. "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John

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3:16). "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16). "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

2. The model case of Abraham likewise shows that baptism is not essential to salvation. Abraham is the one model which God uses in the Bible whereby He illustrates salvation. In this model case, Abraham is saved apart from baptism. "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered... And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4:1-3; 5:22-24).

3. The only direct question as to how one may be saved is given in Acts 16:30, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer is found in the next verse, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). In this instance there is no baptism. The Philippian jailor was not baptized until much later as we read in verse 33, "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized,

he and all his, straightway" (Acts 16:33).

4. The Bible declares that we are saved by the gospel. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

Baptism is no part of the gospel. "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (I Cor. 1:17).

Then, by all the laws of logic, baptism is not essential to salvation.

5. In the book of Romans, baptism is described as a burial. "Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

We bury a man because he is dead and not in order to kill him. We do not bury a live sinner in baptism. We wait until the Spirit of God kills him to sin.

6. The Apostle Paul declares that we are not saved by works of righteousness, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

However, Jesus said that baptism was a work of righteousness. "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him" (Matt. 3:15).

In the light of this syllogism, how then could one believe in salvation by baptism.

7. When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he thanked God for the fact that he had baptized very few. "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius" (I Cor. 1:14).

If baptism were essential for salvation then Paul thanked God that he refused to perform one of the things that were necessary whereby sinners might be saved. Surely no one in sound mind could believe this in the light of the missionary and evangelistic zeal of the apostle!

8. In Ephesians we read that every saved person is the workmanship of Christ, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

This could not be true, though, if baptism were essential to salvation for under those conditions we would be the workmanship of baptism rather than of Christ.

9. If baptism is essential to salvation, then all the Old Testament fathers are lost since none of them were baptized. However, the Scriptures declare that many of them are saved. Read the list of worthies who are spoken of as redeemed in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 8:11). "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God

Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:3).

10. During our Saviour's personal ministry, all sins were remitted without baptism. "When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mark 2:5). "Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet, my head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace" (Luke 7:45-50). "And Jesus said unto him, receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke 18:42).

If sins were remitted then apart from baptism, there is no reason to believe that there is a change in the plan of salvation today.

11. If baptism is essential to salvation, then Jesus Christ never saved anyone, since He never baptized anyone. "Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples" (John 4:2).

12. If baptism is necessary for salvation, then salvation is a matter of works: works on the part of both the preacher and the believer, yet over and over again God forbids works in the realm of salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; It is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Tim. 1:9).

13. When Paul was converted and sent out by the Lord as a missionary a special commission was given him. This special commission shows that baptism was not essential for salvation. "But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:16-18).

14. The general commission which was given to the churches by Jesus Christ, shows that there are three steps for each church to follow: (first) make disciples, (second) baptize disciples, (third) teach disciples. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in

earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world". (Matt. 28:18-20).

15. Every recorded instance of baptism in the New Testament follows the order which Jesus Christ gave in this commission. Then let twentieth century preachers who would dare to change the commission and the order thereto, beware lest they send souls to a first century hell.

It is the testimony of the prophets that believing secures the remission of sins. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

If it is believing that does this then it is not baptism. Which will you believe, the prophets or man?

16. At least one man in the days of Jesus went to heaven without baptism -- the thief on the cross. "And one of the malefactors, which were hanged railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. and Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

17. If He saved one then without baptism, surely He can save all today without baptism.

In I John 1:7 we read, "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." If the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, then there are no sins left for baptism to cleanse us from. Therefore, baptism is not essential to salvation.

18. The Jews were saved in Egypt on the night of the passover. Compare Exodus 12. Three days later they were baptized in the Red Sea. "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Cor. 10:2).

This clearly illustrates the difference between salvation and baptism so that instead of baptism being essential to salvation, the converse is true, salvation is essential to Scriptural baptism.

19. It was the practice of the early church to baptize only believers. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47). "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my

house and abide there. And she constrained us" (Acts 16:14, 15). "And Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

This example of the early church shows unmistakably that Baptism is no part of salvation.

20. If baptism is essential to salvation, then each time a believer sins he should be rebaptized. God's people do sin. "The thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24:9). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:8, 10).

In view of this fact, then, one must be baptized daily to be assured of salvation, if baptism had aught to do with salvation. How utterly foolish!

21. The argument of analogy proves that baptism is not essential to salvation. I might baptize an ink bottle hundreds of times but the presence of water on the outside would only show how black the inside really is. Every man is as dead spiritually as any ink bottle. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).

Baptizing a dead sinner only shows by his subsequent life how black his heart really is.

22. By His example, Jesus separated conversion and baptism, "When therefore the Lord knew the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John" (John 4:1).

He made disciples and afterwards baptized them. May we seek to follow His example.

23. The Scriptures declare that both Jew and Gentile are saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17). "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). Then this leaves no room whereby baptism might have any part in salvation.

24. Baptism cannot represent both a birth and a burial. "Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). This verse declares that it represents a burial; therefore, it cannot be the new birth or even the means of the new birth.

25. The statement of the Apostle John clinches the argument once for all. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:7, 8).

No sensible person would be willing to baptize a man before he professed to love the Lord. If he loves the Lord he is saved. Therefore, baptism is not essential to salvation. Baptism professes a change which has already

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INTERCOMMUNION: INCONSISTENT & UNSCRIPTURAL: ECCLESIA, WHAT IS IT?

Part II, Chapter 4a

by J. R. Graves

The Kingdom of Christ. The views of our standard writers variant and contradictory--Some Advance none--False theories of the kingdom of Christ give rise to unscriptural and pernicious practices, and maladministration of the ordinances. Views of Dr. Williams, Dr. Gardner, Dr. Dagg, Dr. Fish--The author's theory stated and illustrated.--A composite of the admission of these authors.

There are, among Baptists, quite as many and as contradictory views of what constitutes "the kingdom of Christ" as there are concerning what is a church of Christ. Scarce two authors take the same view, and hence the confusion of ideas that everywhere prevail among our people. Very few ministers, and scarce a member, if called upon, could give a clear definition of his own conception of what it is, having but an indefinable impression that it is something, or, possibly, several very different things--as Christ's Spiritual reign over the heavens and the earth, or His Spiritual reign in the hearts of His subjects or the Christian dispensation, or the family of the regenerate, or the regenerate who have been baptized, etc.

The majority of our authors who have given us "Church Manuals," and able treatises on the church, and its polity and communion, do not even mention the kingdom of Christ, and only some few barely mention it without defining, or define it so indefinitely, that their readers cannot apprehend what they really mean. Certainly no work on church polity is complete without a correct definition of the kingdom, and of its relation to the churches.

It is but a natural consequence that unscriptural theories concerning the kingdom of Christ inevitably give rise to unscriptural and pernicious practices, especially in administering the ordinances.

I submit the views of a few of our leading authors on communion, and the practices, based on proof of my statements.

Dr. A. P. Williams, in his work on communion, says:

1. "Jesus Christ has a kingdom on earth, and He has churches. No one of His churches is His kingdom, but each one is an integral portion of His kingdom."

This, so far, is very clear. If a local church is an integer of the kingdom of Christ, then churches alone compose it, since its integral parts must be all of the same denomination. If churches are the integers, or units of its composition, individuals cannot be. This I accept.

But the rest, Dr. Williams says, only makes manifest the confusion of his own ideas of the kingdom:

2. "It is by faith and baptism that we enter His kingdom. The eunuch, from the moment of his baptism, belongs to the kingdom of Christ."

3. Any one belonging to the kingdom of Christ is eligible to membership in any one of His churches. [Not by right, however, for he says.] But in order to become a member, the consent both of himself and the church is necessary" (p.92).

If the kingdom of Christ is composed of the local churches--a fact with which Dr. Williams starts--how can one become a subject of the kingdom without first having become a member of one of the integral portions of that kingdom? Impossible.

Dr. Gardner says: "Baptism, therefore, is the initiatory ordinance into His visible kingdom, and the vestibule to His churches in that kingdom; and none have a



divine right to cross the threshold and enter these sacred enclosures until they have received the print of the sacred name in the appointed way by a properly authorized administrator" (p.13).

He further says that "all ordained ministers are the accredited officers of Christ's kingdom" (Page 203).

According to Dr. Gardner all the local churches are in the kingdom, and we know they can be in it only as its constituencies; or, as Dr. Williams says, "integral portions of it," and if so, visible churches alone, as such, are members of Christ's kingdom, and individuals, as such, cannot be--therefore individuals can only be in the kingdom as units of the constituents or "integral portions of the kingdom," as I can only be a member of this Republic by being a citizen of some one of the states. But these excellent brethren both hold and teach that the kingdom has one ordinance, at least, (baptism), and that all true ministers are the accredited officers of the kingdom to whom this ordinance is intrusted, and that by the kingdom before they become members of a church; and, therefore, they may live and die good members of Christ's kingdom and never become members of His church!

Here, then, we have two distinct and independent organizations, each having its laws, ordinances, and officers, and subjects, and, of course, separate jurisdiction, but the brethren fail to inform us how the officers of the one can officiate in the other!

Now the fatal defects of this theory, aside from its lack of Scripture warrant, are--(1.) The kingdom of Christ has no officer save its one, King and Lawgiver, who never baptizes, and hence cannot administer an ordinance to anyone.

(2.) The kingdom of Christ has no ordinance, and therefore no one ever yet received baptism as an ordinance of the kingdom.

(3.) The kingdom of Christ is not composed of persons, as integral parts, but of churches, as kingdoms are of provinces, and therefore no person ever was, or can be, a member of it "only" as a member of one of Christ's churches.

(4.) But, if one ordinance be-

longs to the kingdom, then both do, for what God hath joined together let not man attempt to sever. The advocates of this theory will not admit that the Supper belongs to the kingdom, but to the churches, and therefore baptism belongs to the churches, since both were delivered to the same organization--the local church.

(5.) But, if the theory be correct, then, when the church excludes a member, she can only put him back into the kingdom, where she found him. Think of it--all her excluded members are in the kingdom of Christ, and there is no authority on earth to put them out!

(6.) A member of the kingdom by baptism, applies to a local church for membership, and is refused, he still remains where he was, a citizen of the kingdom of Christ, and there is no power to exclude him from it, however unworthy!

(7.) And more, the churches have no disciplinary jurisdiction over ministers, since they belong to the kingdom, if they can administer its ordinance. If these are distinct organizations, as these teach, one cannot interfere with the subjects of the other!

(8.) These brethren cannot find a command or exhortation to the members of the kingdom to become members of Christ's church, or a reproof given to anyone who failed to do so; and from what source can the members of the kingdom learn that a further duty is required of them?"

Thus we see that unscriptural theories inevitably beget unscriptural and harmful practices.

Those who accept and advocate the above theory, as a rule, teach consistently with it that the ordinances--baptism at least--was not delivered to the churches to guard and administer to those whose Christian experiences they can fellowship, but to the ministry to be controlled and administered by them when and where they may please, and to whom they may judge qualified. They claim that it is their right to baptize applicants in a city filled with churches, as well as in remote rural districts where there are no churches, and to baptize in the very baptistry of those churches, if they can get the consent of the sexton, and even the members of one of those very churches, should they deem them unbaptized though the church does not, and would not give its consent if asked! If this is not presumptuously assuming the prerogatives of the local churches, I cannot conceive what would be an usurpation, taking from them as it does the control of their own ordinance.

This theory compels its advocates to teach that persons, after their baptism, before they can be members, must make a formal application to some church, produce proof of their baptism, and be received by the unanimous vote of the church; that the vote of the church, after baptism, alone introduces into a local church. Now if this be so, then it follows that there is not a person on this continent, who is a member of a Baptist church, for there is no one, living or dead, who was ever so received, and the advocates of this theory are not themselves members of a Baptist

church or entitled to come to the Lord's table, for they were not received into a church. And the last conclusion of this destructive theory is, that it annihilates every Baptist church from this continent for "we have no such custom, neither have the churches of God."

But Dr. Dagg declares that both these authors are wrong, since their views are not authorized by the Scriptures:

"As theological writers have maintained that there is a 'visible Church Catholic,' distinct from the Spiritual Universal Church of the Scriptures, so some of them have maintained that there is a visible kingdom of Christ--a society of external organization, into which men enter by baptism. But the kingdom of Christ is not a society of men bound together by external organization, like a family, a nation, or a local church. This view of it is not authorized by the Holy Scriptures" (Ch. Order, p.140).

He defines the kingdom of Christ thus: "The kingdom of Christ is properly the kingly authority with which he is invested; and the phrase is used, by metonymy, to denote the subjects of His reign, and especially the obedient subjects, on whom the blessings of His reign are conferred. But the tie which binds these obedient subjects to their King, and His reign, is internal...The family, the nation, and the local church [i.e., all the churches], are all institutions in His kingdom, or under His reign; and the external organization of these institutions should be regulated according to the will of the Sovereign King; but the kingdom itself exists independent of all external organization."

I understand him to teach that Christ has no visible kingdom on earth, and, therefore, no visible constituents, no laws, ordinances or officers; but that Christ's reign in the hearts of men is His kingdom, and that all regenerated men on earth, and all holy angels in heaven, are the subjects of it.

Dr. George B. Taylor says: "The kingdom of God is that community of professed believers in Christ peculiar to the new dispensations...Baptism is the appointed act for professing allegiance to the kingdom of God, and thereby becoming a citizen of that kingdom...A profession of subjection to the kingdom of God, made by baptism, constitutes regular qualification for participation in the Lord's Supper."

Since he holds that the Supper is a church ordinance, he must be understood as holding that baptism introduces into a local church, and that churches are the constituents of that community of believers peculiar to the New Testament.

Professor Curtis defines it thus: "The Christian dispensation--all those living under the domain of heavenly or Spiritual principles; and all acknowledging one supreme head--Christ."

If this definition does not fritter away every thing visible and tangible from the idea of kingdom of Christ, I will submit one that certainly does.

Dr. E. J. Fish, in his "Ecclesiology," thus defines it: "The kingdom is of such a nature that it may be spoken of as either entering men, or being entered by

men (Luke 17:21; John 3:5). The kingdom is of such a nature that one may enter it when already in it (!)--that is, enter it still more deeply (I Thess. 2:12).

A man is born into the kingdom by the second birth. The kingdom, considered as a collection of Spiritual intelligences, proposes nothing. It does not even elect its executive, the church. It simply is, believes, loves, expands, basks in glory. Stretching over the world's continents, islands and oceans, like an invisible empire of thought and experience, paying no regard to dynasties or powers earthly, it receives what Christ and His church may impart!!

I could fill pages with such like definitions, but these are sufficient to show that there is no generally accepted definition of the term which we may call standard among Baptist writers and theologians. I propose a definition which will commend itself for three reasons:

1. It will embrace all the ground truths of the above contradictory theories, and harmonize them by omitting what is not truth; and--

2. It will have this advantage over them--agreement with the Scriptures and common sense; and--

3. Susceptible of being comprehended, at least, by the reader.

(1.) The term "kingdom," in all languages, implies organization, and, consequently, visibility. No definition of kingdom is correct that wholly ignores the above notions--as Dr. Dagg's theory most certainly does, making the language meaningless.

(2.) Throughout the Scriptures, the kingdom of Christ, whether spoken of as "the kingdom of God," or "of heaven," is spoken of as something that was to be brought, or was brought, into existence at Christ's advent; and that its locality is on this earth, and nowhere else (see Psalms 2). John, the herald of the kingdom, proclaimed to the expectant nation of Israel--"The kingdom of heaven has approached." Christ's first proclamation was in the same words, which clearly imply, that, prior to that time, it had not existed.

Dr. Dagg's theory utterly ignores the prophecy of Daniel 2:44, because "the whole number of the saved" was never organized or "set up," and because the kingdom, as he defines it, existed from the days of Abel; and those were empty words uttered by Christ--"On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell [even if it means death] shall not prevail against it" --for what could prevail, in any conceivable way, against the saved in heaven, or those God had ordained to save? This theory I can but esteem as violative of the laws of language, and the teachings of God's Word.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:8-10).

WHY

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taken place and pledges allegiance to the Master. It does not procure that change, but simply indicates that it has already taken place.

Years ago a newcomer from the east, settled in Texas, called on a nearby neighbor, who was an old settler. A peculiar dipper attracted the newcomer. He asked where it came from and expressed a desire to secure one for himself. The old settler told him it was a gourd and that it grew in abundance on the rear garden fence. He gave the visitor one of beautiful shape, with the following instructions: "Cut the gourd, take out the seed, soak in water several days and then you will have a dipper as good as mine." The newcomer took the gourd, tied a rock around it, and sank it in the little stream that flowed hard by his house. When he removed it days later from the water, instead of a useful dipper, he had a decomposed gourd. He called again on his neighbor and said, "How about this? The gourd you gave me was no good. When I took it out of the water, it was decaying and offensive and I had to throw it away." The old settler inquired as to the process he had used, and when told, he replied, "Oh, you did not follow my directions. I said to first cut the gourd and take out the seed, before you placed it in the water. Unless you do this, the water will do no good, but rather harm." So with baptism. Unless the heart has been cut by contrition and cleansed by repentance and faith, baptism will do no good, but rather harm.

STUDIES

(Continued from Page 1)

Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. (II Cor. 12:7). God also uses suffering as a means of chastisement for His children. "...My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:5, 6). Suffering brings us into a closer fellowship with our Father. As we travel this road of trials and troubles we are encouraged to look to the rewards that lie ahead, and it will make us forget all "...our light afflictions, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17).

This letter pictures the Christians as traveling through a foreign land. As the children of Israel traveled through the wilderness meeting unfriendly people, Christians are pictured as pilgrims or strangers passing through this unfriendly world.

Chapter One

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto

you, and peace, be multiplied" (Verses 1, 2).

Peter, the inspired writer of this letter, begins the letter by using the name which was given him by the Lord. His original name was Simon, but the Lord told him he would be called "Cephas, which is by interpretation. A stone." The English word for the Greek word for "stone" is "Peter". In the Greek there are two words for stone. One refers to a small detached stone, while the other refers to a massive, huge rock. Both are used in Matthew 16:18 where Christ said to Peter, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, (a little stone) and upon this rock (that massive rock, the Son of God) I will build my church. Peter was given this name to describe him as a man who, like a rock, would stand sound and true to his Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The phrase "an apostle of Jesus Christ" means he was sent by Jesus Christ as His ambassador with authority to preach the gospel and teach all that which Christ had commanded. This authority to preach and teach was not given to Peter alone, but as we find in Matthew 28:19, 20 Christ commissioned His church to "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:--".

The letter is addressed "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." The word "strangers" in the Greek means those who are dwelling in a city or county not their own; those who are sojourners in the land. Here it refers to Christians who live among those who are not saved. While this letter was most likely written primarily to the Christian Jews scattered through that region, it also applies to all Christians, even to us in our day. We, who have faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, are living among those who are unsaved. We are referred to as "strangers and pilgrims" in I Peter 2:11. The thought is that being citizens of heaven, we, like David said of himself, "for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my fathers were" (Psa. 39:12).

"Elect." This word means "to pick out" or "to select out from among." In Ephesians 1:4 it is said, "as he hath chosen us in him." The meaning is that God in His sovereignty chose certain ones from the human race for His own. Peter is writing to "the selected out ones" "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" does not mean that God based His choosing upon His knowing who would believe and who would not. Foreknowledge includes the thought of His foreordaining a thing. We see this brought out in Acts 2:23, where it is said of Christ, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:" Christ's death was foreordained by God from before the foundation of the world. In like manner, God the Father foreordained and chose (elected) those whom His Son would redeem by His precious blood. The phrase, "through

sanctification of the Spirit" tells us that it is the Holy Spirit who does the sanctifying. The word "sanctify" means "to set apart." While God the Father chose certain ones from among mankind for His own, God the Holy Spirit sets them apart in that He leads them to repent of their sins and to turn by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. The act of faith is spoken of here as "unto obedience." We see the same in Acts 6:7 where it is said, "...a great company of priests were obedient to the faith." Also in Romans 10:16, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" The Holy Spirit brings the elect to the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:" for salvation.

In verse 2, the work of each of the three Persons of the Triune God in the salvation of sinners is given. God the Father has chosen (elected) those who are to be saved. God the Spirit brings those elected to faith in the blood shed by God the Son. Where is man's work in this salvation? The apostle Paul said, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). Can we not say with Jonah, "...Salvation is of the LORD." (Jonah 2:9)

"Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied". Peter closes his introduction with a prayer that his readers may receive an abundance of grace and peace. This grace is that grace needed daily for the believer while in this life. The peace is the peace in the heart produced by the Holy Spirit when one has the assurance that God is in control of all things in his life.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Verse 3.

The word "blessed" means "to praise, to speak well of". This word which Peter uses is in the sense that he speaks well of, praises Him as "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This not only shows us the deity of Christ, but also His humanity. The word "Jesus" means "Jehovah-Saviour" while the name "Christ" means "the Anointed One". The phrase, "Which (who) according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," carries the thought that there is great mercy shown unto the elect in the fact they are begotten again. They have no claim upon God, it is only through His abundant mercy that He saves us. "Hath begotten us again" means that God, being the One Who gave us life in the natural sense, is also the One who provides spiritual life by regeneration. Christ told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again" or begotten again, "he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). By the work of the Holy Spirit we were given a new life, making us partakers of the divine nature, thereby becoming children of God, a begetting anew.

"Unto a lively hope" means a living hope in contrast to that which is dead. The hope

which we have is not just a hope which we have with no assurance that it will come to pass, but it is a hope that we have the assurance upon God's Word that we have an inheritance waiting for us in heaven. As God's children, we have no right to look upon the dark things of life. We have no right to expect the worst things to happen to us. As His children, under His protection and His love, we need to look ahead to the things that lie ahead for us. A company for which I once worked had the motto, "The best is yet to come." This is certainly true for the child of God. "But the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). While this is true for the just, the next verse tells us, "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble" (Prov. 4:19). The foundation of our hope is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." The word "from" means "out from among." Christ was raised out from the rest of the dead. After three days in the grave, the body of Jesus was raised a glorified body that was reunited with His soul, thereby becoming "...the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20). It is by His resurrection we can have the assurance that we will one day be raised from the dead. If the body of Jesus was still in the tomb of Joseph, what assurance could we have that we would be raised? "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:17, 20).

"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." (Verse 4). As "begotten again" (born again ones), children of God, we have an inheritance reserved in heaven for us. Unlike an inheritance we might receive in this life, this inheritance is "incorruptible" and "undefiled", and it will never fade away. Incorruptible means it will not fade away and vanish, as many inheritances of this life do. The thought here is that it will endure forever. What inheritance we receive here in this life we must soon part with, but that which is reserved for us in heaven is eternal. Moreover it is "undefiled." That is, it is pure. It will not have been obtained by dishonest means or by fraud. Neither will it corrupt the one who receives it, as often happens to those who receive riches in this life. "and that fadeth not away" means it will not fade or wilt as the flowers fade. It is something that will endure for ever. The inheritance of the elect of God will endure in all its brilliance and splendor for eternity. Some one has well said, "The crown of glory though worn for millions of ages, will not be dimmed; the golden streets will lose none of their luster; the flowers that bloom on the banks of the river of life will always be as rich in color, and as fragrant, as when we first beheld them." The word "reserved" means "to guard, to watch, to set aside." We think of the gold being kept and guarded in Fort Knox as being safe and secure because it is guarded by forces of the U.S.A. But our inheritance which is re-

served in heaven is watched and guarded by the power of our God, the ruler of this universe. What could be more secure?

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (Verse 5).

While our inheritance is laid up and guarded in heaven, we also are under God's protective hand, "kept by the power of God". The word "kept" carries the meaning of one guarded or shielded from harm. The thought is that we are constantly being protected by God, thus assuring us of arriving safely into heaven. Our inheritance is being kept for us, and we are being kept for it. "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" is salvation in its complete and final sense which will be when this pilgrim journey in this life is ended. Peter is not speaking here of salvation of the soul which we received when we trusted in Christ, but it is the redemption of the body. This will take place when Christ returns for His people. It will be "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:52, 53). This is the salvation of which Peter is speaking. To be continued.

DISPLAY

(Continued from Page 1)

display of love ever made. "...God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). The heart of God is revealed in that little word so. In other words He loved us so much He was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, His only Son. Let us with one voice praise this God who, "...spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all..." (Rom. 8:32) And if He has given His Son to die in our stead, will "...he not with him also freely give us all things?" O Christian, behold the love of your God as He gives His Son for you.

II. NO LOVELINESS IN US. God loved us while we were yet sinners. God's love was not induced by anything lovely He might have seen in us, for we are here described as being "sinners", "ungodly" (vs. 6) and "enemies." (vs. 10) This is the part that is most incomprehensible. Paul is saying that "perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die" (Rom. 5:7). We could almost understand someone laying down his life for someone else that was worthy, someone who had been a friend, obedient and loyal. But God didn't send His Son to die for loyal and obedient friends, but rather for enemies and the ungodly - sinners! "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (I John 4:10). God's own justice declared us to be sinners, but God determined out of His great love for His people to make atonement for their sins and bring these guilty ones back to Himself through the death of His

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DISPLAY

(Continued from Page 8)

Son. The very fact that Christ had to die upon the cross proves that we were sinners needing a blood sacrifice, and that God provided that sacrifice for us because He loved us.

III. LOVES EXPRESSION. "Christ died for us." He willingly laid down His life for all who will ever believe in Him. Christ expressed His love for us by giving His very life. He died as our substitute to redeem us back to God. What He endured on our behalf proves His love for us. He endured all the physical pain of Calvary, the nails in His hands and feet, He endured the shame and mocking of the crowd. However, the most awful suffering was endured as He was separated from communion with His Father and was the object of His wrath because He bore the sins of His people "in his own body on the tree." What pain Christ has suffered for us to prove and display His love for ungodly sinners. Our salvation was paid for with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us.

Humbleness will cause one to submit, and submission will cause one to be more humble.

The knowledge of such great love as this should move us as Christians, to love Him the more "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). As Issac Watts wrote - "Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all!" If you're not a Christian, look at the bloody cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and observe God's grand exhibition of love to ungodly sinners. Outside of the Lord Jesus is nothing but wrath and condemnation, but in Him there is forgiveness and salvation flowing from the gracious love of God. God loves sinners, but His love is a holy love. Don't assume God's love if you remain indifferent to Christ and His claims. But be assured of this, Christ receives all who will come to Him. You see, He died for sinners. He lives to save sinners. That's the goodness of the gospel. He has saved many others just as ungodly as you. His blood can make the foulest clean. O enemies of God, throw your weapons down; cease to war against this gracious God. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be reconciled to God.

those two weeks.

Of course, it was an unusual experience for me to pick oranges, tangerines, and grapefruit out of the yard and eat them. The weather was very nice while I was there. I enjoyed my time in Florida very much.

I preached for the Calvary Baptist Church January 9-16 Sunday morning service. This church is pastored by Elder Wilkerson. He is a fine and able preacher of God's Word. I have had many testify as to his teaching ability and as to how much they learned from his ministry. Brother Wilkerson and his church have had a great ministry in the area. He told me of many (I forget how many, but more than most) churches his church had organized and many preachers they had ordained. I do not know many churches that have been used this much in this way. They also had a school in the church for many years, and many preachers learned much truth through this school.

We had good services during this week. The members of the church were faithful in attendance. This is always good for a meeting. I felt that the Lord was with us in the services. I had great freedom in preaching the same truths that I preach wherever I go. We had several unsaved in the services. Oh, we were hoping and praying that God would save some, but were not privileged to see this. Brother Wilkerson had filled the baptistry the day the meeting began, hoping that some would be saved and then come into the church during the week. I had not seen this heretofore, but I guess Florida weather makes such easier.

We had many visitors during the meeting. The total attendance was very, very good. I know I cannot name all the visitors. Elder Herbert Cade and his wife of Anthony, West Virginia came down on vacation and attended several of the services. Brother Cade was saved and ordained to preach at this church. They stayed with us some at the Wilkersons, and we all had good fellowship. Brother Cade brought a fine message on Sunday morning at the Sunday School time. Elders Hurlong and Clark were with us every service. We had some great fellowship together. Andy Proctor and family and some who attend his church were at two of the services (Andy alone at one of them) (I was glad Carol was with him the next time, as I did not feel like staying up that late again). Al Lyons came down to a fellowship on Saturday morning and brought us a fine message. There were other preachers present, but I can't remember them all. Elder Sheppard and his young grandson preacher, Troy, were at most of the services along with some members from their church. Well, I know I have missed some, but I did not mean to. It was a great joy to me to have all these visitors. It is always a blessing to have preachers visiting in a meeting. I always feel that they are praying for me.

We had a fellowship meeting Saturday morning. Brother Lyons and I preached. The ladies furnished a very fine meal. We had a good service and good fellowship. I greatly enjoyed this revival meeting. I became much better acquainted with Brother Wilkerson and learned to love him more. This church does not have what it used to. Many of us are that way. Oh, that the Lord would revive and bless our kind of churches, and that Calvary

Baptist Church of Tampa would be one of them. Elder Gaylord Haubert and his wife visited the service one night. I guess that no matter how long I write or how hard I try, I will still forget some of the visitors. If I do, I mean no offense to anyone.

I began a meeting with the Philadelphia Baptist Church of Tampa on Sunday night, Jan. 16th, and continued through Friday night. This church is pastored by Elder Howard Sheppard. He also is a fine, sound, and able preacher. He seems to have a real heart for the work, and to work hard at building up the church. Brother Sheppard furnished me a car to drive while I was there. I did not use it too much, but it was good to have it available and it was so nice of him to do this. As I said, I stayed with the Wilkersons during this week also, and so did not have as much fellowship with Brother Sheppard and his family as I did with the Wilkersons.

I did enjoy the fellowship I had with the family. Brother Sheppard took most of two days off work and drove me around some. He took me to the beach on two days where we spent a few hours. I got some Florida sun. I enjoyed this very much. I have always stood in awe and felt God's presence, and became aware of His great power whenever I have visited the ocean - since being saved, that is. This was the Gulf of Mexico, but enough like the ocean to about call it the same. I had never realized how large this body of water is.

We had several visitors at the services in this church also, but not as many preachers as we had at Calvary. Brother Wilkerson and his wife came to every service. It was a blessing to me to see how these two pastors co-operated in these meetings. I wish all of our kind of churches and preachers would do more of this. Brother Sheppard and some of his people were at all but two of the meetings at Calvary. Brother Wilkerson and some of his members were at all of the services at Philadelphia. Some of the difference was due to the scheduled services. It was a blessing to me and a help to the services to see this.

Brother Proctor and some with him came to one of these services. Brother Andy is a special friend of mine. He and John Pruitt are very special to me.

We had good services at this church. They are a little different as to their song services than I am used to. The older I get the more I take the attitude of "to each his own." I have no desire to dictate to others. Each church is independent and can conduct her

services as she sees fit. I preached the same truths here that I preach wherever I go, and the messages were well received. Brother Sheppard, or someone, brought one or more from a nearby rest home to all of the services. One of these asked for baptism and church membership during the meeting.

Troy Sheppard is Brother Sheppard's grandson. He has announced his call to preach, and has been preaching for awhile now. He was a special blessing to me during the whole two weeks. He went with me to Orlando one day where we attended a session of a mission conference at the church in Gotha pastored by Doug King. I enjoyed this trip and service. I had such good fellowship with Brother Troy. It is such a blessing to find a seventeen year old boy who is so totally interested in the things of the Lord. He was over at Wilkersons a good bit of the time, and his fellowship just added much to my time in Florida.

John Sutherland, Marie Sutherland, and their daughter visited at the fellowship meeting on Saturday at Calvary, and also one service at Philadelphia. Elder Tony Herald, the new pastor of Jordan Baptist Church in Sanford, and his family visited one service at Philadelphia. I heard him preach at the mission conference in Gotha. The Sutherlands are dear friends.

Elder Haubert and his wife visited one service at Philadelphia. I visited them for a few hours one day. We had good fellowship together.

After the last service at Philadelphia on Friday night, we had fellowship with the ladies providing some fattening refreshments. We had a good time of fellowship. I did enjoy my time with these people.

Well, it was Saturday morning and time to go home. I enjoyed my time in Florida, but I could not conceal my happiness at heading for home. It is good to go. I praise the Lord for all such opportunities, but it is even better to get back home. Besides, Katie misses me so much while I am gone. It was good to be home, to see Katie, and to be back at my church Sunday morning. I appreciate my church allowing me to hold these meetings. I try to represent our church and her work when I am in these meetings. But I always enjoy being back in the pulpit and with the people of our church here.

When you are in Tampa, visit the Calvary Baptist Church and the Philadelphia Baptist Church. I know you will be well received and believe you will receive a blessing. Pray for these churches and their pastors. God bless you all.

APPRECIATED LETTERS

Dear Sirs:

Find enclosed a check for ... This is for a need you have in publishing your fine paper, The Baptist Examiner. I enjoy it very much. Sincerely,
Mabel Buck, Oakland City, Ind.

Dear Brother Wilson:

Greetings in the name of Christ our Lord and Saviour. I'm enclosing a money order for ... to be used as you see best. Lord willing, I will send another offering before the end of the year. I want you to know what a source of blessing The Baptist Examiner is to me, your sermons, editorials, sermons of others and those who contribute answers to the questions in the Forums. May I say this sincerely and honestly, not by way of flattery, that I consider you and others who contribute to TBE to be Bible scholars. I feel that through reading and studying TBE, I have more knowledge of the Bible.

J. L. Sadler, Marianna, Fla.

Dear Sir:

Enclosed you will find a check for the amount of ... for the Baptist Examiner.

Sincerely yours,
Edward Alvis, Griffin, Ga.

Dear Brothers:

Please renew my subscription for another year. I love the Baptist Examiner and the truths that you stand for. May our Lord continue to bless you as you serve Him there in all of your ministries. Thanks.

Thurman C. Phillips, Dayton, Ohio

Dear Brother Wilson:

Please renew my subscription to TBE for two years. You may use the extra money to help pay mailing expenses. I enjoy your paper very much. You and your staff are doing a fine job. Keep up the good work. Your sister in Christ,

Rebecca Dorris, Carlsbad, N.M.

TWO MEETINGS IN FLORIDA

I left home on the morning of January 9th. About three hours after leaving Huntington, West Virginia, I was in Tampa, Florida. I rode to one airport with the heater on. I rode away from the other airport with the air conditioner on. There are many differences between Kentucky and Florida - some good, some bad.

Brother Wilkerson and Troy Sheppard met me at the Tampa airport. I am always relieved to see a known, friendly face upon arriving. I sometimes wonder what I would do if no one met me at my destination. I have known Brother Wilkerson for many years. I met young Troy Sheppard, I think, at our last conference. It was good to see these two and to exchange greetings in the Lord.

Brother Wilkerson drove me to his home in Tampa. I stayed with him the whole time I was there,

though I preached in a different church the second week. Brother Wilkerson furnished me a place to stay. Brother Sheppard furnished me a car to drive. It had been a long time since I had seen Brother Wilkerson, and an even longer time since I had seen his wife. It was good to see them both again.

I could not have been treated any better than I was during my stay with the Wilkersons. They both went out of their way repeatedly to make my stay as pleasant and comfortable as possible. Sister Emily took care of food, room, and laundry. She is a fine cook. I greatly enjoyed getting better acquainted with her. Brother Wilkerson went out of his way to take me around and show me the country and fellowship with me. I just could not ask for better treatment in any way than I received in their home

THE TWO NATURES

by C.D. Cole

Every believer in Christ has a conscious experience of two natures, but there are comparatively few who understand the doctrine of the two natures. Having the experience and not being able to account for it has been the cause of much sorrow and discouragement. For example, the new convert is rejoicing in his new found relation to Christ; he has broken with the past and has found association with the people of God; he is determined that the old way of sin is gone forever, and that henceforth the pathway to the city of God is a pathway of perfect peace, when suddenly he

is confronted with the stubborn fact that the old forces of sin and fleshly inclinations are in him quite as strong as ever. He is amazed, discouraged and distressed, and in many instances he thinks he has lost his salvation. Many saved people go through life with their minds in a state of uncertainty and their hearts bowed down in grief for the lack of teaching about the twofold nature of the saved person.

Much of this trouble is the re-

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MARCH 18, 1989
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STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF ELIJAH: ELIJAH AT ZAREPHATH

I Kings 17:8-16. "And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

We are studying the life of Elijah, one of the great prophets in the Old Testament. At this time we study about Elijah at Zarephath. You'll remember that these were great days of great sin in Israel, and these were days of idolatry and of persecution of the children of God and Elijah's life was in danger. But, across the Jordan river from Samaria God raised up a prophet, Elijah, and anointed him with the Holy Spirit upon his soul. Elijah prayed to God, and God sent a drought upon the land that lasted about six months; and Elijah went to Ahab and told him, "it's not going to rain 'till I say so." Already it had not rained for six months, and though Ahab knew it not, and I don't think that Elijah knew it, it would be three more years before any rain would fall upon the earth.

Then Elijah was told of the Lord to get to Cherith, and that He would feed him there, for He had commanded the ravens to feed him, and he would drink of the brook. Elijah obeyed the Lord and went to the brook Cherith, and stayed there for a period of time, drinking of that brook, and having bread and flesh morning and night brought to him by the ravens. God will take care of His people. He will use different means as it pleases Him. Usually God provides employment and health to work; but however it is done, God takes care of His people. The brook eventually dried

up, and that is where we begin the story. Now, I do not know how long Elijah was at Cherith or at Zarephath. I've read in some of my books that Elijah was at Cherith a year, but I don't know if that's true, but he was at the two places three years, because it was three years from the time he told Ahab it wasn't going to rain anymore, until the time he came to Mount Carmel, and then the rain did come, following that great event on Mount Carmel.

Now, what should we do when the brook dries up? When God has sent us to a place, and we've obeyed the Lord, and the thing that we have been depending on has gone; when the brook dries up, what shall we do? Well, I pointed out to you several times in the studies, that God leads His children a step at a time. God does not lay down for us every step of our life, but He leads us a step at a time. And we are to follow as He leads. What should we do when the brook dries up? Wait on God. If we're where God tells us to be, and things are not going as we'd like to see them to go, we are not to lean to our own understanding or shift for ourselves as best we can; but we are to wait upon the Lord for further direction, and God will lead.

Before Elijah starved for lack of food, or died of thirst, God came on the scene and spoke to him again and told him of a different way that He was going to provide for him during the rest of this time of drought. So, He sends Elijah to Zarephath. Now, Zarephath, we read in I Kings 17:9, belongeth to Zidon. The word "Zarephath" means, a smelting pot. And it was at Zarephath that Elijah was tested and tried and prepared for the great event of his life on Mount Carmel. Zarephath was a long and dangerous journey; crossing back over the Jordan river into the land of Ahab and all the way across the land of Ahab. We learn later on that Obadiah said that there's not a kingdom on this earth that Ahab hasn't sent to and demanded that they take an oath, that you (Elijah) are not there. Ahab was looking for Elijah and had he found him he would have delighted to put an end to his life. So he's got to make a long, slow trip through enemy territory. But listen, God is Sovereign over everything. God is Sovereign over our lives, He is Sovereign over the enemy, and as long as it pleases God to keep us upon the earth, He is well able to do so. Our God provided for and protected Elijah until He was through with him, and then He took him home to heaven without dying. We read of two witnesses in the book of Revelation, Chapter 11, when their work was finished, then the beast made war with them and killed them. Oh, how the beast had tried to kill them in days gone by, but God would not allow it until their work was finished. So God is able to provide in time of famine, and to protect us from all of our enemies, until that hour when He is through with us, and why would we want to be around here any longer when God is through with us in this world?

Furthermore, I want you to know that Zarephath was in the territory of Jezebel. Remember, Jezebel was the daughter of the king of Zidon, and it was the territory where Baal and Ashteroth were worshipped. And isn't it a remarkable instance of the

sovereignty of God that He provided in the land of Jezebel, in her home land, a protecting place for Elijah? And Jezebel wanted that man. She wanted his blood. She hated Elijah and she wanted to kill him, but God, in her own home land, provided a way of protection and provision for Elijah. Notice in I Kings 17:10, Elijah's obedience to the command of God. Verse 8 says, "...the word of the LORD, came unto him..." and Verse 10, says, "...he arose and went...", without arguing, without saying, "Lord that's a long way, and I don't have any way to travel". Without saying, "well, I have to go all the way through Israel and that's dangerous, "or without saying", Lord you could provide here for me as easy as you can there", and God could have, couldn't He? But Elijah obeyed the Lord. When I was a boy, I used to like to read a lot, and I remember "The Charge of The Light Brigade." Cannon to the right of them, cannon to the left of them, into the valley of death rode the six hundred. There's not to reason why, but there's to do or die." And so, it is not ours to argue and to reason things out but it is ours to obey the Lord. And how can a man be used of God to preach to others, as Elijah later was, if he is not willing to obey God himself? You cannot be a witness to other people who observe your lives, unless you are walking in the pathway of obedience to God. It was the man that was willing to obey God that was used in one of the greatest events in Old Testament history, and we'll come to that later on in our studies.

Now, let's notice in I Kings 17:9, the Lord said, "...I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." And verse 10 says, "...And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there..." Now underline those two "there's" in your thinking. God said, "...I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." (Take care of you during this famine), and when he got there, the widow woman was there. And I like to think of the fact that God works on both ends of the line. The God who told Elijah to go to Zarephath, had also spoken to the widow, or at least moved through the influence of His Spirit. I believe she was a saved woman, more on that later, but the Lord had moved upon that end of the line. He moved on this end and brought them together at the appointed time, and performed great things as a result of their coming together. God works on both ends of the line, and we can count on that. We can't say, "well, how will that widow woman know I'm coming? how will she be able to take care of me? how will I know which widow woman? There's probably many widow women there, what am I to do?" God will take care of the matter. God works on both ends and it's our duty simply to obey the Lord. Well, what kind of woman was this widow woman, and what did she know? I believe she was a saved woman, and I believe she knew the situation, for in I Kings 17:12, she said, before Elijah had time to tell her who he was or what his business was there, when he said, "bring me a little water," she said, "...As the LORD

thy God liveth..." She lived in the territory where Baal and Ashteroth reigned supreme as idol gods, but she knew that they were dead idols and that the Lord God of Israel, the God of Elijah, was the living God. Now, how can you know that unless God has made you alive? I believe this woman had been saved by the grace of God, and knew the God of Elijah. I was telling someone this week, "many times when someone is saved and you are saved, there's something that you can't describe, you can't put a name on it but there is a witness many times between two children of God. Because they both know the same Lord, they seem to know one another and this produces a sweet fellowship" And furthermore, we find in verse 15, that she did what the prophet Elijah told her to do. And that's another evidence that she was a saved woman. Now, verse 24, when she said, after the raising from the dead of her son, "...Now by this I know that thou art a man of God..." might throw some question on that, but I believe that is simply an evidence of growing in grace. I believe she already had grace, she was already saved, but now through this marvelous work of God she was even more sure, and grew in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, notice this woman's election over in Luke Chapter 4:24, 25. Jesus Christ was preaching in His home town of Nazareth and He said to those people that there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elias. (and that's our Elijah, the prophet's name in the Greek form). One of my commentaries said, "but they wouldn't have been willing to sustain Elijah". Who said so? The God who made this woman willing could have made them willing. The fact is that God had chosen this widow woman, and that is what Christ Jesus was teaching in Luke, Chapter 4. He said there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, but to none of them was Elijah sent, but unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon (or Zidon, same place) to a widow woman of Sidon. Then He said, "another case of election is Naaman", and they got so mad at the doctrine of election and reprobation that they led Christ Jesus out of the city and were going to throw Him over a cliff; but He passed through them and went His way, for His hour had not yet come. So, here is an elect widow, moved upon by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Though maybe she had been taught all her life to worship Baal and Ashteroth, she knew that this God was the Living God, and she believed in Him and obeyed the Word of the Lord at the mouth of the prophet Elijah. But notice also her impoverished condition for she said, "I've not a cake, I've a handful of meal and a little oil and I'm gathering two sticks and I'm going to make a meal for me and my son and then we're just going to die". I Kings 17:12, 13. That's all she had, so she was in an impoverished condition. Now, this of course, was a test to Elijah's faith. God said, "Elijah the brook dried up, the ravens quit coming, go to Zarephath where I've commanded a widow woman to sustain you". And when he gets there he finds the widow woman who has just enough for one meal and then she and her

son are going to die. Now what kind of sustaining is that? Can you imagine the test of Elijah's faith when he finds out that the woman that God says is going to take care of him can't take care of herself. She was going to have her last meal and die. But God can provide and sustain. Elijah believed, I think, that God could provide for him and sustain him, and that our trust must be in God and not in man.

Now, I want you to notice three positions of testing in the life of Elijah, and God's supply of grace in those times of testing. First, Elijah was tested in public. He was to go into the palace and stand before Ahab the king and deliver a very unpopular, unwelcome message that could well get him into difficulty. God gave him the courage, and the faith and the strength to stand up to the test of publicly serving God before others. Then Elijah must go in the wilderness and spend a season alone with God. He must be tested away from the limelight, away from the public, away from the fellowship with others, alone with God; so he goes there and God provides for him, and the Bible doesn't say, but I'm sure that he spent many an hour of sweet fellowship with the Lord there by the brook Cherith. Listen, you can afford to lose every friend you have, you can afford for every man on this earth to turn his back on you, as long as God is with you, and as long as God is for you. Paul said, in II Timothy 4:16, 17, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me..." Now, I hope it never comes to that in my life for I love Christian fellowship.

Thank God, if we lose every friend we have in this world, we have a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, even the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Elijah passed the test of being alone in the wilderness by the brook Cherith; he, the ravens, the babbling brook, and the Lord.

Now Elijah is tested in the home. He's been tested in public, he's been tested in private and now he's to be tested in the home. You and I face these areas of testing in our Christian life. We appear before the public, we meet other people, and we are to live a life and give a testimony before them. We have a life that we live alone with God. There is a part of our life that's just us and God. And then there is the life in the home. And how important it is that we learn to live the right kind of Christian life in our homes. I dare say, that one of the greatest failures of God's people in the world today is the failure in the home. Mama and dad and brother and sister just don't seem to be what they ought to be. And the home does not seem to be a testimony in the neighborhood of the grace and power of God in family life. We need Christianity ourselves, and we need Christianity in our home. If we are to be a mother, or a husband, or a father, or a wife, or the child of God that we ought to be; we need to learn how to live for Christ Jesus in the home.

Now, what do we see in Elijah in the home of the widow woman at Zarephath? Well, first of all, we see that he is contented with (Continued on Page 11, Col. 1)

ELIJAH

(Continued from Page 10)

God's providing. We hear no grumbling, we hear no "I'm sure tired of bread and water, I'd like to have a big steak", we hear nothing like that. We see a contentment with what God was pleased to provide for him. If you and I were living in the midst of a three and a half year drought and famine, we'd probably be very happy to have bread and water to meet our daily needs. God will provide the needs of His people. God's provisions may be meager. I don't know how long Elijah was here, but over at the brook Cherith he had bread, meat and water, and here he had bread and water, and he had that for three years in both places. And yet we never one time hear him grumbling or complaining or asking for any more than God was pleased to give him. Now, what does that do to you and me? How would we react in that kind of situation? How do we act?

Not one of us has gone the last three years with a little bread and meat and water, twice a day, and then a little bread and water; not a one of us. And there's not a one of us that has not complained more in the last three years, than (as far as we know), Elijah did. As far as we know he was content with the meager provisions which God provided for him.

We need to learn contentment. Paul said in Philippians 4:11, 12, "...for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Whatever state that God was pleased for Paul to be in, he said, "I've learned to be content." Luke 3:14, John the Baptist speaking to the soldiers said, "...and be content with your wages." I Timothy 6:6, Paul said, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." Hebrews 13:5 the Lord has said, "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "...be content with such things as ye have..." The richest man in Ashland is the man that is satisfied with what he has. The richest man in Ashland is not the man who has the most money and the finest home and the most worldly possessions; that's not the richest man in Ashland. The only rich man in Ashland is the man who is satisfied with what he's got. You can't be any richer than that. You can never, never get beyond that, to be satisfied and content with what God is pleased to give you.

We need to learn humility. Oh, how we need to learn to be an humble people, not to be proud and demanding and expecting that we ought to have more than other people have. A dear friend of mine, I think so much of her, she's been very close to me for several years, told me that when her children were growing up, she taught her children that they were as good as anybody, and better than most. They learned that lesson well, and it's about ruined them. She taught them that, and they learned it, and it almost destroyed their lives. They are not worth very much right now, because they have that attitude. We need to be an humble people. We need that the Lord will bring us

down to where we're satisfied with what God gives us and we're humble, lowly, people before the Lord. What we need to do is practice our doctrine of the sovereignty of God. If God gives you bread and water, He could give you a t-bone steak. He could give you pinto beans and that's a lot better than t-bone steak. You say "preacher you're crazy" -- well, maybe I am. I went one time on three weeks of revival meetings; Michigan, Indiana, and Alabama, one week right after the other. I was gone five Sundays, and I ate at the Country Club and at the Mayor's home in Gladwin, and you know how people always fix for a Preacher -- and the meal I remember to this hour was in an old farm house, we had pinto beans, fried potatoes, and corn bread. That hit the spot. God can give you that or He can give you bread and water. God is Sovereign, and we ought to bow before that and be thankful to God for whatsoever He is pleased to give us.

There's a verse you need to learn. It says in so many words, "Worry about nothing, pray about everything, be thankful for anything." It's Philippians 4:6. Don't worry about anything; that's my version, pray about everything, and be thankful for anything. If you'll do that, the peace of God will keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ our Lord. Well, Elijah learned that, didn't he? Maybe if God did you like He did Elijah, you'd learn that.

He learned furthermore, gentleness under provocation. The widow woman's son died and verse 18 of I Kings 17, says, "And she said unto Elijah, what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" That was uncalled for. That was improper rebuke by this widow woman. Her son would have already been dead if it hadn't been for Elijah coming there. When she first met Elijah, she was going to make one meal and die, and now her son had lived several days beyond that and she's blaming Elijah. She and her son were living on a bounty that God provided through Elijah, surely it was because of Elijah being there. But God miraculously provided her need. She knew that Elijah was a servant of the living God. And furthermore, it was God who had taken her son, and not Elijah. And furthermore, she even seemed to realize that it was due to her sin that she'd lost her son, and yet she makes a hard, cutting rebuke to Elijah. Now notice Elijah's gracious response. No taking of offense, no harsh reply to the poor heart-broken widow woman, no defending of himself, no refusal to be involved, but kindly, graciously, doing all that he could to help the widow woman in her hour of deep sorrow. We need to learn in our homes; kindness, courtesy, politeness and consideration for one another. Oh, how we need to learn that in our homes. I know they say, well, they're just like brothers and sisters fighting all the time. It shouldn't be that way. It is, but it shouldn't be. We ought to have a kind, gracious word for those in the home. There is, but there shouldn't be, this quarreling and battling and bitterness in the home. Elijah is gracious, kind, considering the feelings of this widow woman, doing what he could in her behalf.

And then notice Elijah's holy

life in the home, I Kings 17:24, she said, "...Now by this I know that thou art a man of God..." And of course, the culminating knowledge had come through him raising her son from the dead. But I believe that in this home that Elijah had lived a godly, clean, holy life. So he was tested in public, he was tested in private, and he was tested in the home. In the home he manifested a contentment with God's provisions, he manifested a gracious, gentle response in times of provocation, he manifested a holy life, he manifested a helpful spirit there in the home. How important is it that we go to battle on Mount Carmel. We need to go from a godly home, and a happy Christian home, a clean home. Oh, how strengthening it is to go from that out to the battle fields and fight the battles of war. How favorably does this man of like passions as we are, appear in public, in private and in the home?

I wonder if we might not use I Corinthians 15:10? Though it hadn't been written yet, I wonder if Elijah had known it, if he wouldn't have said Amen?

How can a man of like passions as we are, properly behave himself to the glory of God in public, in private and in the home? I Corinthians 15:10, says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am..." So it was the grace and the power and the strength of the Lord that enabled the prophet of like passions as we are, to be brave as a lion, humble, and content with just a little kind and gracious to a widow woman, with the grace of God. And that grace is available to every child of God today.

NATURES

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sult of a misconception of the doctrine of regeneration. What is regeneration? Is it repairs made upon the old man? Is it a patchwork of improvement of the condition, either of the spirit or body of a person? Is it the destruction of the old man and the creation of a new man? Is it the eradication of all the elements of sin in a person replacing them by elements of goodness and holiness? No, regeneration is none of these. Well, then what is regeneration? You answer, "It is a new birth". Quite right, but what is the new birth? You answer, "It is the birth of the Spirit". Right again, but what does the Holy Spirit do in effecting the new birth? Now, it is a patent fact that all of us owe our existence in the physical world to a birth or generation. We were born into this world. Our physical existence is the result of a physical birth. Now, what is the physical man composed of? What are his constituent elements? He has body, soul, and spirit. James says the body without the spirit is dead. Then if the natural man does not have a spirit in his body is dead. He has a spirit, but his spirit is dead to God and holiness.

Now, according to the law of generation, like begets like. Hence, that which is born of the flesh is flesh. Now, every man as a result of his first birth is ruined and is dead in trespasses and sins (Rom. 8:7). Notice that the flesh has a mind, and it is the nature of the mind of the flesh to be

against God; it is incurably rebellious. This proves that the new birth is not the improvement of the old man. To be born again means to have a new nature imparted to us. This new nature is called a new man (Eph. 4:24), and a new creature (II Cor. 5:17). It is a life from above, a different kind of life from that of the first birth. In the first birth we receive physical life; in the second birth we receive spiritual life. In the first birth we receive temporal life; in the second birth we receive eternal life. Through generation or the first birth, Adam bequeathed to us a nature that was sinful, a nature opposed to God. Through regeneration, the Son of God bequeathed to us a sinless nature, a nature that longs for God and holiness. By generation, I am a son of man; by regeneration, I am a son of God. I have two distinct natures in one personality. I am a two-fold being; a son of man and a son of God. These two men, the old and the new, are contrary to each other and as long as I am in this present body, these two natures will wage relentless warfare (Gal. 5:17), (Rom. 7:15-25).

I. THE FLESH

1. There is a nature of the flesh. (Eph. 2:3). Usually when we speak of the flesh we mean the body, but the Bible uses the word flesh in another sense -- in the sense of nature. The flesh has a mind, and a will, and a heart. These are all against God.

2. This nature came by the first birth. (John 3:6; Eph. 4:22).

3. This nature is called the "Old Man". (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22).

4. This nature is called the "Natural Man". (I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:3).

5. This nature is enmity against God. (Rom. 8:7).

6. There is no good thing in it. (Rom. 7:18; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:19).

7. This nature cannot be changed. (Rom. 8:7; Jer. 13:23).

II. THE NATURE OF THE SPIRIT

1. There is a nature of the spirit. (John 3:6).

2. This nature was received by birth. (John 3:6).

3. This nature is called "The New Man" (Eph. 4:24).

4. This nature is called a "New Creature". (Gal. 6:15).

WINDOWS OF THE SOUL

by Waldo Whiddon

The reflections of the "Christian Character," as evidence of the "Fruit of the Spirit," certainly must be from the soul, clearly visible as the light of the One who planted it there.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against Such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22-23). These evidences should always be readily seen in the everyday walk of the true believer, a reflection of Him that "...hath begun a good work in you..." (Phil. 1:6). This is the result of salvation by grace shining forth from one's innermost being because it is wrought by a just and righteous Saviour. Beloved, we could not keep it completely hidden even if we tried. It is a gift of grace because of His love and mercy, we should walk a walk of fearlessness among the enemies of the cross daily, never compromising on the doctrines of Him who saved us,

5. This nature is sinless. Peter says we are partakers of the Divine nature (II Pet. 1:4). Paul says the new man is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Eph. 4:24).

III. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO NATURES

1. These two natures of flesh and spirit dwell side by side in every believer. (Gal. 6:7, 8; Rom. 7:22, 23).

2. These two natures are not congenial and result in an inward conflict in the child of God, causing him to long for deliverance from the Old Man. (Rom. 7:24).

IV. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BELIEVER TO THE FLESH IS FIVE-FOLD

1. He must never think he can improve it and never try to make a fair show of it. (Rom. 7:18, 8:7).

2. He must starve it. (Rom. 13:14).

3. He must reckon it to be dead judicially. (Rom. 6:6, 11).

4. We are to mortify it. (Col. 3:5).

5. We are to put it off. (Eph. 4:22). We must not manifest it. We must keep it under by the power of the Spirit.

V. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BELIEVER TO THE SPIRIT NATURE IS ALSO FIVE-FOLD

1. We are to reckon ourselves as alive in the spirit. We have spiritual life as well as physical life. Our sphere of existence is not in the flesh, but in the spirit. (Gal. 5:25).

2. We are to walk in the nature of the spirit. (Gal. 5:25).

3. We are to put on the new man. (Eph. 4:24). Let the new man tell us where to go and what to do.

4. We are to feed it on the Word of God. (I Peter 2:2).

5. We are to depend on the energy of the Holy Spirit.

VI. SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. That we will not get out of the fleshly nature until death or the coming of Christ.

2. That the food that sustains one nature will starve the other.

3. You cannot feed both natures at the same time.

4. You can always sow to the flesh even as the others who have not the spirit. (Gal. 6:7, 8).

but to stand firmly on the pure unadulterated truth of the Holy Scriptures as written by Him, the Holy Spirit, who will be ever present with one as he walks according to the "fruit of the Spirit," as it shines forth from the windows of the soul.

God is one. He is in three personalities. We often hear of the eternal triangle. This is truly the eternal triangle, God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and He, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity. The number three has as much significance of purity as the number seven in the language of God because it is the number of the Triune Council of the Godhead. When a saved person is not reflecting the fruits of the Spirit shining forth as would be pleasing to God, then certainly he should seek a time of window washing, or, to be more specific,

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THE BAPTIST EXAMINER
MARCH 18, 1989
PAGE ELEVEN

TUNE IN TO THE CALL TO CALVARY

Station
WEMM, Huntgn., W. Va.

Time
Sun.—7:30-8:00 a.m.

Dial:
107.9

Watts:
50000 FM

EASTER

(Continued from Page 3)

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve."

Believe now! "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

SOUL

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we should repent and ask God to forgive us, and restore unto us the joy of His salvation. It is not a shame to be found in need of repentance. The shame comes when we are too smart, we think, to do so.

We notice nine points of the

THE HUMAN SIN-BILL

by C.D. Cole
Luke 7:36-50.

INTRODUCTION: We are living in an era of debt consciousness. Living in debt is a well-nigh universal experience. Nearly everybody is or has been in debt. Credit is the pulse beat of commerce. If there were to be a serious and determined effort to collect all debts, the economic machinery of the nations would be thrown out of gear.

There are various attitudes towards debts. Some regard them seriously and are doing their best to pay them. Some ignore their debts and figure the more they owe the more they own. Others, with good intentions make debts when they know there is no prospect of ever paying them. Some have property mortgaged to pay what they owe, so there will be no loss to the creditor in the event the debt is not paid.

Material debts are a great source of annoyance and trouble. If we ignore them, our creditors do not. I am not posing as a economist, but my advice to everybody is to make no debts without collateral to cover in case you cannot pay them. Installment plan of buying has been abused, but the principle is sound by virtue of the fact that the title to an article bought remains with the seller until last payment has been made.

I want to speak to you about a debt far more serious than any I have been speaking about. I refer to the sin-debt, or moral obligation to God. Sin is set forth in the Bible under a variety of figures. It is likened to loathsome

fruit of the Spirit. We notice also, the deep fundamental principals of what they are and what they teach. The whole life of a true Christian is brought to light here in these few words. This is the Christian life to be lived only as Christ could live in us. Beloved, if we are totally surrendered to Him, then truly will all these manifestations be readily seen in shining forth from the windows of the soul as they should be, because it is the work that He worketh in us "...both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13).

We can be thankful that God so loved us as to create in us a clean heart, a knowledge of shame when we find ourselves disobeying Him that has cleansed us and given us a new life of love without fear of being lost, and then helping us to live a joyful abundant life, with the great promise of life eternal that only God can promise and give. This certainly is the reflection from the windows of the soul if one lives as would be pleasing to the Lord. How about you? How about me? Beloved, do we need window washing? It could certainly do no harm. Thanks to a loving God for soul windows and His clearness in them.

diseases such as cancer and leprosy. It is likened to death and the sinner to a corpse. And it is represented as a debt or a moral obligation. Every man, by his personal record, is in debt to God - he is behind with his moral obligation to the Judge of all the earth. God has extended credit to all men, but payday is coming. When I go into a store and buy an article and pay cash, I go out of that store without a money obligation so far as that purchase is concerned. But if I secure credit and have it charged, I leave there with an obligation and am in debt to that store.

Moral Obligations To God

As moral creatures we have moral obligations to God. We are obligated to do all He has commanded us to love Him supremely and our neighbors as ourselves and to do this involves us in debt. Our Saviour illustrated the principle of sin-debt in the form of a parable. Told of a certain creditor who had two debtors; one owed him 500 pence, the other 50. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. He told the story in defense of a woman who had lavished great affection upon Him. Washed His feet with tears and wiped them with her hair and then kissed and anointed them. Her action was explained as being on the ground she felt she had been forgiven a big sin-debt, and therefore loved Him much. She did not love in order to get the sin-debt cancelled, but because it had been cancelled. It is God's love to us that cancels our sin-debt; not our love to Him.

Two Necessities Concerning Our Sin-Debt

I. There must be recognition of the sin-debt.

(A) Some ignore their sin-bill. They do not like to be reminded of their obligation to God. Some people are sensitive about their obligation to God. Some people are sensitive about their money debts and it is easy to offend them. And for some reason men do not like to go to church; do not like to hear God's name for it reminds them of their sin-debt to Him. But ignoring debts is not a safe policy. Tearing up the bill is not getting rid of the debt. Ignoring the sin-debt is extremely dangerous. God has a collector that will surely and finally get you. He has a sheriff who will put you in the prison of hell and keep you there until you liquidate the debt, and since this cannot be done, you will have to stay in hell forever.

(B) Others deny their sin-debt. They talk as if they were all that they ought to be in His sight. They seem willing to face Him on their own record. Like the Pharisees of old thank God they are not as other men. And like Cain bring the fruit of their own hands to him. And he who denies his sin-debt makes God a liar. To deny is to make another debt. The wise thing to do is to recognize the sin-debt face it without hope in yourself and see if you can find hope somewhere else.

II. SOME DISPOSITION MUST BE MADE OF THE SIN-DEBT. God is just and our obligations to Him must be met or we face punishment. The sin-bill must be paid.

(A) The sinner himself cannot dispose of it. No sinner can liquidate his own sin-bill.

(B) He cannot dispose of it by paying it off. He is in arrears and cannot catch up with the payment. Moral obligations can only be paid with coin of righteous living and there is none that doeth good and sinneth not. The parable says they had nothing to pay.

(C) The sinner cannot dispose of his sin-debt by pleading bankruptcy. He is a moral bankrupt, but being a bankrupt never paid a debt. Realization of being in debt does not cancel the debt. And realization of being unable to pay does not cancel the debt. But a conscious inability to pay may lead to the discovery of a way to get it paid. If a man realizes he is in debt and that he cannot pay the debt and that it must be paid or he must be punished, then it is that he gets busy to see if there is any way out.

(D) The sin debt cannot be disposed of by pleading time limit. In some states debts cannot be collected after they have run for a certain length of time. But God has no such law. No sin is too old for God to remember and collect.

(E) The sin-bill can only be liquidated by a surety. If the sin debt must be paid and the sinner, or principal, cannot pay it, then if he escapes punishment it must be paid by a surety.

(F) The Lord Jesus Christ is the surety of the salvation covenant - the covenant of grace. There are several things about suretyship:

(1) It must be voluntarily assumed. No law forced one man to sign the note of another. Jesus is a volunteer Surety.

(2) When the suretyship is assumed the surety must pay. When acting for the sinner the Saviour must pay all the sinner owes. Suretyship is costly. "He that is surety for a stranger shall smart, and he that hateth suretyship is sure." "Take his garment that is surety for a stranger."

(3) The surety must be able to pay.

(G) To those that trust Him for Salvation, the Resurrection is the proof that the debt is paid. He

died for our sins but thank God he lives. Raised for our justification. It is the same as a cancelled check coming back "paid in full."

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of North Port, Alabama was authorized by the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church (a good name of any church) of Columbus, Miss. Elder E.D. Strickland is the pastor of the new church. For the present, this church is meeting at 11 a.m. on Sunday in the home of William C. Bryant. For directions or any further information call Brother William C. Bryant at (205) 345-6202.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Baptist Standard Press of #1 Iron Oaks Drive, Paris, Ark. 72885 is reprinting John Gill's commentary. This will be complete and unabridged. It will be in nine large volumes. The price will be \$320.00. At present the sale by subscription only, which is a pre-publication sale, is continued until April 30, 1989 or until 500 orders are received. If 500 orders are not received, the money will be returned. I do highly recommend this commentary above any other. Send all orders to the above address. Do not send any to The Baptist Examiner. We are not connected or responsible in any way except we do advertise and recommend these books. The special prepublication price is \$160.00 plus 12% U.S. Postage. 18% foreign postage. They are also reprinting J.R. Graves "Intercommunion..." (which we are now printing in this paper) on the same pre-pub. plan; It is \$10 plus 12% postage. It will be \$20 after publication. The same, as to ordering, applies to this.

'THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH'

There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that sovereignty overrules them, and that sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought more earnestly to contend than the doctrine of their Master over all

creation, the kingship of God over all the works of His own hands, the throne of God and His right to sit upon that throne. On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldlings, no truth of which they have made such a football as the great, stupendous, but yet most certain doctrine of the sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah. Men will allow Him to be in His workshop to fashion worlds and make stars. They will allow Him to be in His almonry to dispense His alms and bestow His bounties.

DIVINE PREDESTINATION

Isaac Watts - 1709

(Tune: My Faith Has Found A Resting Place)

Keep silence, all created things,
And wait your Maker's nod;

My soul stands trembling while she sings
The honors of her God.

Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown,
Hang on His firm decree;
He sits on no precarious throne,
Nor borrows leave to be.

Chained to His throne a volume lies,
With all the fates of men,
With every angel's form and size
Drawn by the eternal pen.
His providence unfolds the book,
And makes His counsels shine;
Each opening leaf, and every stroke,
Fulfills some deep design.

My God, I would not long to see
My fate with curious eyes,
What gloomy lines are write for me,
Or what bright scenes may rise.
In Thy fair book of life and grace
May I but find my name,
Recorded by Thy sovereign grace
Beneath my Lord, the Lamb!