

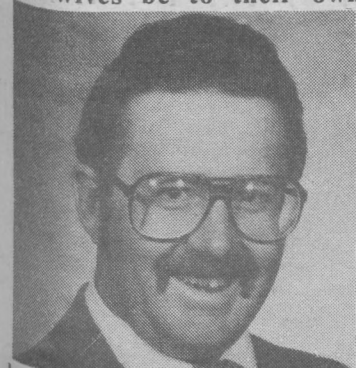
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A WEDDING MESSAGE

THE MARRIAGE OF
MARTY FOOR AND
JUDY WAGNER

Read Ephesians 5:22-33:
"Wives, submit yourselves
unto your own husbands,
as unto the Lord. For the
husband is the head of the
wife, even as Christ is the
head of the church; and he
is the saviour of the body.
Therefore as the church is
subject unto Christ, so let
the wives be to their own



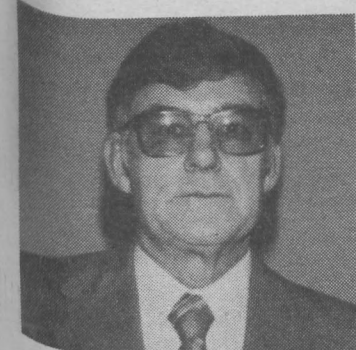
husbands in every thing.
Husbands, love your
wives, even as Christ also
loved the church, and gave
himself for it; That he
might sanctify and cleanse
it with the washing of
water by the word, That he
might present it to himself
a glorious church, not
having spot, or wrinkle, or
any such thing; but that it
should be holy and without

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THE BREAD OF LIFE

by Ray Brown
P.O. Box 203

Cannelton, WV 25036
"I am that bread of life.
Your fathers did eat manna
in the wilderness, and are
dead. This is the bread
which cometh down from
heaven, that a man may eat
thereof, and not die. I am
the living bread which
came down from heaven: if
any man eat of this bread,



RAY BROWN

he shall live for ever: and
the bread that I will give
is my flesh, which I will
give for the life of the
world. The Jews therefore
strove among themselves,
saying, How can this man
give us his flesh to eat?
Then Jesus said unto them,
Verily, verily, I say unto
you, Except ye eat the
flesh of the Son of man,
and drink his blood, ye
have no life in you.
Whoso eateth my flesh,
and drinketh my blood,
hath eternal life; and I will
raise him up at the last
day. For my flesh is meat
indeed, and my blood is

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A grumbling business is easy to set up.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

MISSIONARY

PREMILLINIAL

BIBLICAL

BAPTISTIC

The Baptist Examiner

Baptist Is Our Middle Name

Paid Circulation in All States and in Many Foreign Countries

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

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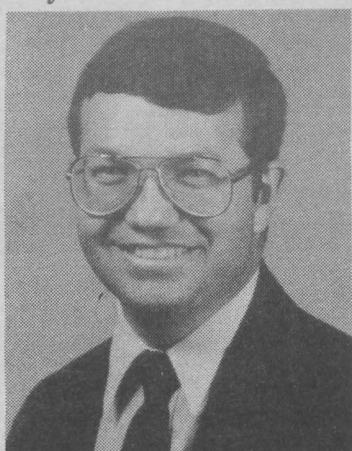
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IS THERE A REWARD FOR KNOWLEDGE?

by William Peacock

"So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart" (I Kings 10:23-24). "BUT king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go into them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods:

Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it



WILLIAM PEACOCK

came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before

(Continued on Page 5, Col. 3)

GOD'S PREDESTINATION

Messages 7 through 9

by Charles Halff
Message 7

The God of the Bible is a God of predestination. He predestinates our birth, He predestinates our days, He predestinates our death and certainly He predestinates our salvation. Let's think for just a moment of how God predestinates the death of born again believers. The Bible says, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" (Psa. 116:15). Moses said in the 90th Psalm that the days of our years are numbered. Did you know that God has numbered your days?

God knows just how long you are going to live. In Genesis 47:29 Jacob spoke of the fact that the time had come when he should die. In I Kings 2:1 it says that the time had come for David to die. You see, God has planned a certain time for our lives here on this earth to end.

In II Peter 1:14 Peter says that the time had come for him to put off this earthly tabernacle. God has an appointed time for each of us to die. And there is not anything that happens in your life or mine that is not foreknown by God. God knows the end from the beginning. Beloved, there is

no event in our lives that God does not know all about. In fact, even the hairs on our heads are numbered. Every event of our lives is known to God and was known even before the world began.

Now let us look at physical predestination. Physically you are what you are by predestination. In Exodus the 4th chapter we have the call of Moses. You will remember that when God called Moses, Moses began to make excuses. He said, "...I am slow of speech, and of

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 3)

The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST MAY COME THIS YEAR

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together

with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:15-18). What wonderful words are these! What a glad and gladsome day this will be for the children of God!

I write this on November 20th, 1989. However, it is to be in the January 6th, 1990 issue of The Baptist Examiner; hence the title. Of course, the Lord may come in

the rapture before this issue is in your mail box; it will be glorious if this is true. However, if He does not come in 1989, He most assuredly may come in 1990. With the understanding that He may come before then, I write this with reference to its title and to 1990.

The false prognosticators have already missed it again. You will remember Whisenant and others who told us that the rapture

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)

(USPS 042-340)

PRIORITY, PERSISTENCE & PROSPERITY

by John M. Alber

Introduction:

The background information of this particular Old Testament book is very rich, and it is full of many great Bible truths. Four things should be pointed out with regards to this book that will help us understand its setting. (1). The remnant of Judah have returned from many years in Babylonian captivity. (2). The "Feasts of Israel" have finally been somewhat re-instituted. (3). The foundation of the new temple had been previously laid. (4). But, the restoration of the



JOHN ALBER

Temple of God had come to a sudden and complete halt.

Two major reasons could and will be given for this stoppage of

(Continued on Page 7, Col. 5)

THE HAIRS OF YOUR HEAD NUMBERED

Part II

II. Now, secondly, here is knowledge -- God's intimate knowledge of his people. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Observe what a full knowledge God has of each one of his children. If there were nobody else in the world except you, and God had nothing else to do but to think of you, and there were no objects of his attention beyond yourself, and his eternal mind had no object of consideration but you only, the Lord would not then know more about



you than he does now. The omniscience of God is concentrated upon every single being, and yet it is not divided by the multiplicity of its objects; it is not the less upon any single one because there are so many. How it should astonish us, that the Lord knows us at this moment so intimately as to count every hair of our heads! The knowledge which the Lord has concerning his people is most minute, and

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MAY COME

(Continued from Page 1)

would most certainly occur on September 12th, 1987. When that day passed without the rapture occurring, one would have thought that they would have disappeared into the woodwork in embarrassment and shame. To our great surprise, they came forth, without blushing in shame, without confession of sin; stated that they had miscalculated due to the calendar, that 1988 should really be 1989, and that Jesus would come in September of 1989. They did thoughtfully leave some margin for error this time. Surely, we will hear no more of these false prophets. Surely, they will be ashamed to show their faces again. Maybe not. We will see. Anyway, the passing of time has proved them wrong. Please know that, when one sets a date for the rapture, we do not have to wait until that date has passed without the rapture occurring to know he or she is a false prophet. The very setting of a date proves one to be a false prophet and a liar, for the Bible has clearly told us that no man does or can know that date.

I was amazed at how many were taken in by the "Rapture Hoax" of 1988. I was surprised at how many books were sold relative to this lie and heresy. I will just say the following: 1. Those taken in, in any measure, thereby proved their ignorance. 2. Many, maybe the majority, of those taken in were not saved. 3. A saved person who was taken in to any extent at all by this teaching

thereby proved his spiritual immaturity.

I urge the reader to beware of any scheme invented by men which purports to set the exact, or even the approximate, time of the rapture. Beware of the "Six Thousand Years for Man, and then One Thousand for God" scheme. Beware of the "Something Happens Every Two Thousand Years" scheme. Beware of the "Two Thousand Years From the Resurrection of Christ, and then One Thousand Years of the Millennium" scheme. Beware of the "Generation From the Time Israel Became a Nation in 1948" scheme. Beware of the "So Many Jubilees and then the Millennial Jubilee" scheme. Beware of the "Prophetic Interpretation of the Psalms by Number" scheme. Just plain beware of any scheme of men purporting to date the



Joe Wilson

rapture. They are all false. They all prove the originators and propagators thereof to be false prophets, and we are to beware of false prophets. Now, these men are led of the devil in this work, and the purpose of the devil is to thereby discredit the truth of the coming of the Lord. When these men's prophecies prove false, men laugh at them and ridicule the whole truth of the coming of the Lord. Men put the dark cloud of the falsehoods of these false prophets over the total truth of the coming of the Lord. The truth of God's Word is discredited by the lies of these false prophets. I boldly say that these men who taught, and those who spread, these false teachings were the tools of Satan; and that the whole truth of the coming of the Lord has been harmed by these men.

But, brothers and sisters, it should not be thus. The lies of men do not affect the truths of God's Word in the least. God's Word is just as true as it ever was. Do not allow the failure of these false prophecies to discredit the glorious truth of the rapture in your eyes. Let the world do what it will, but let the people of God hold fast to the truth of, "...that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit.2:13).

Jesus is coming again. He will surely come at the time marked out on the calendar of eternal predestination. He will come at the predestinated time. He will not come before that time. He will not delay that time by even the twinkling of an eye. But, God has not revealed to us when that predestinated time is. So far as God has revealed, and so far as we do or can know, Jesus may come at any moment of time. I most assuredly believe in and teach the "Any Moment" doctrine of the rapture. I do not mean "any moment" so far as the actual taking place of the event. I mean "any moment" so far as I do or can know. Though Jesus will come exactly at the predestinated time, and though God could have made

that known to us, God has not done so. I believe that God's purpose in not revealing the exact time of the rapture is so that saints of every age and day can be encouraged, strengthened, blessed, and motivated to holy living and faithful service, by the truth that, so far as they know, Jesus could come that very day. The coming of Christ in the rapture is surely imminent. That does not mean that He actually could come at any time (He will come at the predestinated time); but that means that, so far as we can know, Jesus could come at any moment of time. We are to be always, every moment, looking for the coming of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ may come this year. Oh, this year may include in its calendar of events the greatest, most glorious, most wonderful, most joyful event of all - the coming of Jesus Christ and the rapture of the saints. Yes, that blessed event may be set on God's calendar to occur this year. Surely, each year, even each day, brings us closer to that glad and gladsome day. This may be the year, oh, praise God, this may be the year of the rapture.

The second coming of Jesus Christ is one of the most prominent teachings of the Bible. The first promise of the Bible in Genesis 3:15 relates to the second coming of Christ. The last promise of the Bible in Revelation 22:20 relates to that event. The last prayer in the Bible is for the coming of Jesus Christ. Between the first and last promises of the Bible are a whole multitude of promises that Jesus is coming again. No man can read the Bible with any real understanding who does not see throughout its pages the glorious truth of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Now, understand that this second coming will be in two phases. He will come in the air, the saved dead will be raised in glorified bodies, the living saved will be gloriously transformed; and all the previously saved will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. They will then go to the Father's house with their Lord, and will be there while seven years of tribulation take place upon this earth. Then the Lord will return to the earth (in the first phase, He does not come all the way to touch the earth), defeat the armies of Antichrist, and set up His own glorious Millennial Reign. If one does not prefer the term "two phases", he may speak of Christ coming in the rapture, and then coming to the earth a second time. Remember that He does not actually touch the earth at the rapture. Despite the ridicule of Post-tribulationists and A-Millennialists, there is much evidence to prove this teaching of two phases. I have set this proof forth more than once in this paper, and will gladly do it again; but I do not want to take time and space for this at the present time or in this article. Rest assured that I do not speak that which I cannot Scripturally prove. In this article I am speaking of the first phase of that coming, even of the glorious and blessed rapture of the saints. Note that I do not speak of the rapture of the church, but of the rapture of the saints, for all who are saved previous to that time will go in the rapture whether or not they are in true churches.

There are no prophesied events that must take place before the rapture. The rapture is the next event on God's prophetic calen-

dar. However, there are many things prophesied to take place between the rapture and Christ's coming to earth to set up His kingdom. Understand that there will be seven years between the two phases of Christ's coming. Understand that there is much prophecy relative to those, though we do not see any of the things prophesied for those seven years now taking place (how could we when they do not take place until after the rapture?), we do see the stage being set for those things to take place. We see situations developing that seemingly will lead to those things taking place. Since we do see the stage being set for the reign of the Antichrist, since we do see things developing that seemingly will lead to the coming to pass of things prophesied following the rapture; we can believe that we are likely coming close to the time of the rapture. I say "likely", for I do not want to be one who tries to prophesy the time or approximate time of the rapture. I do want to say most emphatically that Jesus may come this year.

I want it understood that I am not saying He will come this year, next year, or the next. But I am saying that things certainly

seem to be shaping up for events that will follow the rapture, and if this be true, the rapture is certainly closer than the coming to pass of those events.

The Bible speaks of men departing from the faith, of doctrinal apostasy in the last days. Surely, we are seeing that in our days. Of course, this apostasy will culminate in the reign of Antichrist. But we see this developing at a rapidly accelerating pace in our day. It seems that we are rapidly moving toward that great doctrinal apostasy of the tribulation.

The Bible speaks of great moral decline. We are surely seeing that. I see things now, openly and publicly, defended by the majority, that I never dreamed I would see when I was a boy on the streets of Winston Salem, N.C. There has always been sin in this world since the fall of Adam. But who will deny that we are living in the most sinful days of world history? Who among us with any age upon us, but that is horrified and shocked at the increase of evil in our day. There are few who have any moral standards today. We are being

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

FROM THE EDITOR

Well, the new year is here. Let me suggest some resolutions for the New Year. There is nothing wrong with making resolutions. It is wrong to resolve anything contrary to Scripture. It is wrong, at least foolish, to think that one can keep resolutions in the power of the flesh. It is wrong to break proper resolutions. But it is not wrong to make good, Scriptural resolutions, seeking God's grace and power therein. I suggest a few as personal resolutions for me. You do as you please about them.

I resolve to seriously examine my hope of salvation, and to be as sure as I can that I am truly a saved person. There is a danger of being deceived on this vital matter. The devil is a deceiver. The heart is deceitful above all things. Many have been and many are now deceived on this point. It would be a terrible thing to die thinking I am saved and be cast into hell.

I resolve to be more serious about spiritual things. I will endeavor to put spiritual things first in my life. I desire to give more thought, time, and attention to spiritual things as contrasted with the physical and material things of this life.

I resolve to read the Word of God more this year. It is important that I read, study, and meditate in the Word of God. I need to learn more of the Bible. I need to apply more and more of it to my own life. I need the food, strength, wisdom, and encouragement that is possible from a prayerful studying of the Bible.

I resolve to pray more this year. What can possibly be more important to me than this? I can do nothing else well until I have prayed well. I will pray daily. I will pray early in the day. I will pray frequently throughout the day. I will pray at the close of the day. I will have a set time and place where I can have special and as frequent prayer as possible. I want to pray more earnestly, more fervently. I want to be more detailed in the things for which I pray. I want to enlarge my prayer life, to reach out farther and farther in this. I want to pray more for the work of the Lord, especially in my church. I want to pray more and more for the unsaved. Oh, that God would save some souls this year in answer to prayer!

I resolve to gain the victory over some certain, specific sin this year. I will give thought to some sin that is specially hurtful to me, that bothers me more than some other sins do, that I fall into more easily and frequently than I do some other sins. I will pray against this sin, fight against this sin, and seek victory over this sin this year.

I resolve to grow spiritually and to be a better person this year. Surely, this is possible. I have not yet attained. I have a long way to go. I desire to be a better husband, a better neighbor, a better pastor, a better preacher. I will pray and endeavor to grow much this year. I especially want to be a better man, and I resolve to work and pray to that end.

I resolve to be more considerate of others this year. To be more thoughtful about them. To treat others with kindness, consideration, love, and respect. I resolve to try to be helpful to others in various ways this year. I want to try to not needlessly hurt anyone this year. I want to treat others as I would like for them to treat me.

I resolve to show more interest in and activity toward the salvation of the lost this year. I want to witness more frequently and faithfully to the lost. I want to visit more unsaved people, give them the gospel, invite them to our church, and pray for their salvation. I want to pray and work hard at winning souls to Christ this year.

I resolve to put Jesus Christ first in my life this year. I want to love Him more. I want to live more to His glory. I want to serve Him better.

I believe that all these resolutions are good and proper. I believe that it is Scriptural for me to desire and try to do these things this year. I know that I cannot do them in the power of the flesh. I pray that the Holy Spirit will enable me to fulfill these resolutions this year. If I do, I know I will be happier and will be more useful in the service of the Lord. May God work these things in my life this year.

MAY COME

(Continued from Page 2)

continually shocked at the depth and wickedness and openness of sin in our day. Sin today is developing with amazing rapidity towards that depth of iniquity that will prevail during the reign of Antichrist.

The Bible reveals that Israel will make a treaty with the Antichrist at the beginning of the tribulation. Israel is now a nation with the power to make such a treaty. Israel is even now looking for the man who can promise her security. The Antichrist will make such promises to Israel, and she is ready to sign on the dotted line. Israel rejected the true Christ, but will, according to Jesus, receive the false Christ - the Antichrist. The stage of world politics is set for the treaty between Antichrist and Israel that will begin the last seven years before the Millennium.

The Bible prophesies that, during the tribulation, Russia will invade Israel, and will die on the mountains of Israel. Russia is today a great world power. She is poised to the north of Israel, ready to fulfill her place in prophecy. She is an enemy of Israel. Russia and Israel are in position to fulfill prophecy as to what will take place between them in the tribulation.

China, Japan, and other Eastern nations are reaching the place of power in which they can fulfill the prophecies about the invasion of the armies from the East (Rev.16:12). Not too many years ago these Eastern countries were not much of a threat to others.

The Bible prophesies that the Antichrist will come to power over a revived Roman empire. In the territory of the old Roman empire, there will arise a ten nation kingdom. The Antichrist will come to power over one of these, and will quickly move to power over the whole. With the destruction of Russia, when she invades Israel close to the middle of the tribulation, this kingdom of Antichrist will rapidly move to world wide power for the last half of the tribulation time. The stage is certainly set whereby a ten nation kingdom could be established in the territory of the old Roman empire in a matter of days. A balance of power in that part of the world will eventually necessitate such a union of European countries to balance against the threat of Communistic countries headed up by Russia. The stage is surely being set in that part of the world for events which will take place in the tribulation time.

Many thought that the Protestant Reformation dealt a death blow to Roman Catholicism, and she would soon expire. How wrong they were. The Bible predicts that the Roman Catholic church will play an important part in the first half of the tribulation. There will be ties between the Antichrist and Roman Catholicism as he rides to world power. In the middle of the tribulation, the Antichrist and others associated with him will destroy the Roman Catholic church. Some years ago, the Roman Catholic church did not have the power to occupy such a position in the tribulation. But, one of the greatest revivals we have seen has been that of Roman Catholicism. When I was a boy, one hardly ever saw a

Catholic in Winston Salem, now they are powerful there, and throughout the South. A great power in electing Herbert Hoover as president was the fact that people would not vote for Al Smith because he was a Catholic. In our day, men do not give that matter any thought in voting. The Catholic Church is again a great power in the world, even in our beloved land. This revival of Catholicism is setting the stage for her to play her prophesied role in the tribulation.

The Protestant Churches (The harlot daughters of Roman Catholicism [Rev.17:5]) will be re-united with Rome for her role in the tribulation. Surely, we can see many evidences that the reunion is developing. A few years ago in Winston Salem, a Presbyterian and Catholic church, across the street from one another, dismissed early and met and shook hands in the middle of the street - shades of John Calvin, what does this mean? They are getting ready to re-unite as prophesied.

The reign of Antichrist will see a one world with one religion and one economy. Surely things are headed that way. The Antichrist will force men to have a mark, his name or the number of his name, in the hand or on the forehead. This will be necessary to his economy program. They will have his mark, and this connected with their own identifying mark. When they sell or buy they will run an instrument over this mark, which will be connected to a world computer, and men's financial transactions will be without cash, and in this manner. The Antichrist will have records of all men's economic transactions available at a moments notice. Are we getting ready for that, or not? Do we not have systems in use today in our financial dealings that could be easily transformed into such a system?

I could go on and on, naming different developments that seem to be getting things ready for the reign of Antichrist. I could have entered more minutely into the things I have mentioned, showing more in detail how they fit into the reign of Antichrist in the tribulation.

I hope I have established and proved my point which is that Jesus may come this year. Understand that, so far as we do or can know, Jesus could come this year without these things I have mentioned. Understand that I am not saying that these things are signs of the rapture. Understand that I am saying that these things seem to be a setting of the stage for the reign of the Antichrist, that these things seem to be the beginnings of developments that will culminate and come to full development in the reign of Antichrist. Understand that things that seem to point to the reign of Antichrist, certainly also seem to point to the rapture, since the rapture must take place before the reign of Antichrist.

I have often looked at it like this. I am sitting in an auditorium where a play will soon be performed. Under the curtain, I can see that they are setting the stage to begin the play. When all is in place, and the movement of setting the stage ceases; the only thing before the play is the raising of the curtain - then the play begins. Well, these things I have mentioned seem to be a setting of the stage for the reign of Antichrist. It seems that everything

is in place. The raising of the curtain is the rapture of the saints. This is the next event on God's prophetic program. Surely, Jesus may come in the rapture this year.

Oh, praise the Lord; Jesus may come this year. When Jesus comes all our problems will be solved, all of our troubles and trials will be over, all of our pain and suffering will be forever past - only glory, only glory following the rapture. When Jesus comes we will have glorified bodies; we will be done with sin and sickness. When Jesus comes we will be eternally united with loved ones gone to glory before us. When Jesus comes, glory beyond all other glories, we will see Jesus and be forever with Him. And this may occur this very year. Before this year is over, you and I who are saved may be with our Lord in glory. Let us look for His coming. Let us love His appearing. Let us long for this glad and gladsome, day. Let us live day by day as if we believed that Jesus might come that very day. Let us serve Him as if we only had a very little while to do so on this earth and in this life. May the fact that Jesus may come this year have its proper effect upon us and upon our lives. Jesus may come this year; let us rejoice and be happy. Jesus may come this year; let us live and work as if we really believed this. This is a great and wonderful truth. Let us rejoice therein. May God bless you all.

PREDESTINATION

(Continued from Page 1)

a slow tongue." Literally he said, "I am a stammerer. I have a stammering tongue." All right, listen to what God said to Moses in the 11th verse, "And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?" Now this tells us very plainly and very definitely that God has predetermined every phase of our life as far as our physical makeup is concerned.

If you are tall, God made you tall. If you are short, God made you short. If you are a man, God made you a man. If you are a woman, God made you a woman. If you are a blonde, or a brunette, or a redhead, or baldheaded, God made you that way. God designed all of these things. God planned these things. If you look in the mirror and say, "Well, Hollywood will never pick me out," just remember that God made your funny face just that way!

Now the Scripture is very definite about that. If you do not believe it, you've got to think about some power outside of God. But the God of the Bible, the God that I worship, knows the end from the beginning. And just as God predetermined our physical makeup, just as God planned these things before the foundation of the world, just as God determined our birth and our life and our days and our death, beloved, God has also designed the salvation of every born again believer. Many times when I preach on the sovereign grace of God--that God has a right to choose whom He pleases, that God does not have to consult any individual about what He does--people accuse me of being a hyper Calvinist, or they will say

that I am a fatalist. Now, beloved, you can call me anything you want to, but I am just giving you the Word of God.

Now there are two lines of divine truth that run through the entire Bible. You must understand these two lines of truth or you will never fully understand the Word of God. Now these two lines of truth are the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. You see, God does the calling--man does the answering. God does the electing--man does the believing.

All the way from Genesis to Revelation, if you will study your Bible carefully, you will find that God is sovereign, that God is on His throne, that God does as He pleases and as He wills. However, man is responsible to God. Now we cannot reconcile these two lines of divine truth, but they are in the Bible, nevertheless.

Let's look at it this way. Whom does God save? He saves those who believe. And why do they believe? Because they have been called. Why are they called? Because they have been chosen.

Let's look at it from another angle. In order for a person to be saved, he must have faith to believe because the Scripture says, "...without faith it is impossible to please him:..." (Heb. 11:6). Now we all agree on this. However, the Lord must give us this faith to believe. The Scripture says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). You see, the faith that God requires, He gives.

Message 8

One of the greatest truths of the Bible is the sovereignty of God. When we say that God is sovereign, we mean that He can do as He pleases.

Let's notice some Scriptures. In Daniel 4:35 we read, "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?" Doesn't that tell us that God is sovereign? And in Psalm 115:3 we read, "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."

Now we could go on and on, but these Scriptures tell us most plainly that God is sovereign, that God is upon His throne and that He does as He pleases.

Now since God is sovereign, He has a perfect right to choose or elect those whom He wishes to spend eternity with Him. And this is exactly what the Scripture tells us in Ephesians 1:4-5, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,...Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." The Scriptures makes it clear that our salvation is all according to the sovereign will of God.

Some of you are probably saying, "Well, Brother Halff, how can I know that I have been elected unto salvation?" The answer is--come to Christ. If you want the Lord Jesus Christ, come, and He says, "...him that cometh to me I will

in no wise cast out."

You see, that is the sign that you have been elected--if you come to the Lord Jesus Christ and receive Him as your own personal Saviour. That is the sign that you are one of God's elect.

But I can hear someone say, "That is the most unreasonable thing I have ever heard, to think that God would elect some people to be saved, and that He would pass others by." Well, beloved, God does not ask for your reason. Here we are, we are just poor, sinful worms of the dust, and we think that God has to give us a reason for the things He does.

What a foolish thing to bring God before the bar of human judgment and try Him in the courts of human reasoning. You know, human reasoning said that Sarah could not have a child when she was 90 years old. But God said, "Sarah shall have a son." And God provided Abraham and Sarah with a son. Human reasoning said that Jesus could not have been born of a virgin. But God's Word said, "...a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Human reasoning says that there is no resurrection from the dead. But Jesus was victorious over death, hell and the grave. He said, "...because I live, ye shall live also." Human reasoning says the same thing about election and predestination. Human reasoning says that God elects His people when they believe. But God's Word says in Ephesians 1:4-5 that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the greatest preacher on the subject of election. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples in John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:..." Certainly that is divine election.

Let me give you another Scripture. Jesus said in John 6:44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." Isn't that election? "No man can come to me," Jesus said, "except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." The Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest of all preachers, preached the great doctrine of election.

Did you ever go through your Bible and look up the word election or the word elect? Just take your concordance and see how many times these two words are used in the Bible. Let me give you a few Scriptures. Turn to I Thessalonians 1:4, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." Paul calls the Thessalonians the elect of God. He said, "You have been chosen or elected of God." Let's go to another Scripture. Romans 8:33 says, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?..." Beloved, born again believers are referred to as God's elect.

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The Baptist Examiner Forum I

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

Explain "the dead know not any thing" Ecc. 9:5.

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"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward: for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:5,6).

I have heard several people through the years quote verse 5 and try to say that it means that the dead are asleep, or in oblivion to any kind of consciousness. In other words, some try to say that the dead are in a state of non-existence, or nothingness whether temporary or permanent. The fact that this is not true is proven through God's teaching on the subject through the words of Jesus, Paul, and John in particular. The picture of the rich man and Lazarus would be sufficient to prove that the dead are conscious and able to experience comfort and discomfort (see Luke 16:19-31), but God gives many other Scriptures attributing consciousness to the dead. This consciousness is only of their dimension and state, however, not of the happenings in this world of the living.

Solomon is not telling us what death is (dead know not anything), but he is telling us what it is not. He is comparing the joys, benefits, and expectations of the living to the state of the dead who no longer have all that. The opportunities and benefits of the living are gone for the dead forever. They no longer have "reward" the verse says. The Hebrew word for reward is "sakar". It means "income", or "benefit". In other words, the dead have no benefit, or income from the life of toil in this world of vanity. The living have the benefits and opportunities of life, while the dead have not. The Spirit is showing us through Solomon that the dead have lost the opportunities of this present life and can never gain them back after death. They can no longer have opportunity to serve God, or to enjoy His gifts. Verse 6 further explains verse 5 by saying to us that everything is past for the dead including emotions toward others, and never again a share in anything happening in the world of the living. The die is cast. Solomon is reminding us that the earth and the life of the living is the only opportunity for accomplishment and its reward, or

payment. God is just and He will reward according to a man's works in the next life at the appropriate time. He rewards the saved dead and the lost dead; both experiencing the reward eternally.

The dead have no consciousness of what is happening in the world of the living, nor any share in, or benefit from that life ever again. It is my prayer that all may resolve that the time and opportunities of this life be used wisely and profitably.

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Ecclesiastes 9:5: "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more reward; for the memory of them is forgotten."

This is a pet verse of the Jehovah's false Witnesses in trying to prove there is no true and literal hell. They propagate the heresy that hell is just the grave, and a non existence. That would be nice if it were true, but it is not. Scripture must be interpreted with Scriptures, and I might add, with common sense. The above theory is not consistent with Scripture or common sense.

Let me begin answering this question by pointing out a fact. The Bible never contradicts itself. The Bible does not in one place teach that lost people just die, and that is all; and another place teach that man is a creature of feeling. We must interpret this Scripture with other Scripture. Let me mention a few facts that will help us in answering this question. First, we know the Bible teaches that man is an eternal being. This is true of both saved and lost men. The same words are used to describe the eternity of the lost as are used to describe the eternity of the saved. Another thing we know is that the Bible gives us a very accurate description of hell. Jesus Himself paints us a clear picture of this place of torment. Of the 11 times "Gehenna" is used in the N.T., 10 of those times it is used by Christ. Hell is not pictured as the grave, but as a place of eternal torment and pain. We also know that the Bible speaks of a coming judgment for the lost. If the grave is hell, then what is the purpose of this judgment. This destroys the Biblical teaching that God will render to each man his due. It destroys the teaching that "whatsoever a man soweth, even that shall he reap." This theory would destroy the teaching of degrees of punishment in hell, which is clearly taught in the Bible. Beloved, the 16th chapter of Luke surely teaches us that hell is not the grave. The Jehovah's Witness

would have a hard time convincing the rich man that he did not know and feel pain. I know that some will contend that Luke 16 is a parable. It isn't, but if it was, it is still teaching the same thing. There is so much proof that there is a real hell, and that men who go there have feeling, and some knowledge, that to refute it is most foolish. Furthermore, those who do not agree with this need far more than a theology lesson on the eternity of the soul. They need Christ.

Let me now tell you what I think the verse means. The verse has reference to the fact that their days of earthly knowledge are over. Their opportunity of ever knowing Christ and things that are important have ceased. I base this somewhat on the reference to reward. Their opportunity of doing anything good has ceased.

While they were alive, they knew they were going to die. Now that they have died, they have no knowledge of earthly things. Those feelings for loved ones they had here upon this earth are now futile. Read verse 6. "Also their love and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun." I do not believe that this verse is teaching that they will not have these feelings in hell. I believe these feelings will add to their torment. I think they rich man and his concern for his brothers back up this statement. I think it means so far as things done upon the earth, after you are dead there is nothing you can do. As the verse says, they have no more portion with anything under the sun. The verse in question in no way teaches nor implies soul sleep. The verse teaches that men had best make the most of the time they have here upon this earth, because after they die all opportunity is lost. This verse also teaches that the lost dead do not know anything that is going on here upon the earth. They have no knowledge of events that take place here. I will not enter into a discussion as to whether or not the saved in heaven know anything about what is going on here on the earth. To be honest, I do not have a clear answer to that question. Perhaps Hebrews 12:1 sheds some light on that question. Perhaps not. May God bless you all.

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As in every question on a Bible verse, it is essential that you examine the whole context from which the verse is taken. That is the first law of interpretation and will go a long way in helping

most folks understand their Bible better. This is where many people err in their Bible reading. Random reading, or reading without a purpose or plan in most cases benefits little. It is best to have some kind of study system which gives you a goal.

I was led to a better understanding of this verse by studying the context of it with an elder brother and seasoned Bible student; T.B. Freeman, whom I also consider a close friend. I will readily seize upon an opportunity to glean from the wisdom of my elders.

Though there are no doubt several spiritual applications which can be made, this passage has to do in the main with physical life and death. Notice how the term "under the sun" is used. The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes, who was most likely Solomon, was writing about physical life as he had experienced it. This being done of course, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In chapter nine he is telling us that the things of this life belong to this life. This is brought out in verse two, "All things come alike to all." When a person leaves this life he leaves every thing behind which pertains to this life. When you read verse two and this together you learn that things that pertain to this life which are normal and natural for this life, happen to the righteous as well as the unrighteous. Notwithstanding, once we pass from this life the things pertaining to this life cease.

Now we can better understand verse four through six. Solomon tells us in verse four that, as far as things pertaining to this life, God will continue to use you, and work through you as long as you are alive. Read verse one. "for all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and wise, (God's elect) and their works, are in the hand of God..." Now, coupled with verse four we learn that, as far as physical activities, those who are living can do more good, and are of much more benefit than even the greatest and most renowned saints that are dead and gone. "For a living dog is better than a dead lion." This should shed much light on verse five which is the focus of our forum question. You can see now that the statement, "the dead know not anything" pertains to anything in this life. Please understand that the context is very important. This statement has nothing to do with the life here after. When you include verse six, the whole thing comes together. The things of this life perish at physical death whether they be good or evil. However, this does not mean that we shall not answer for the things done in this life, but rather that all physical activity stops. "...but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." (Ecclesiastes 11:9). But as far as this life is concerned, "Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." Notice in chapter nine verse six he does not say in eternity, but under the sun, or in this life. Thank you for your question.

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"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun" (Ecc. 9:5, 6).

The phrase "under the sun" which is used over and over in this book of Ecclesiastes tells us that what is said pertains to this life. The meaning here is that when a person dies he/she is finished with things on earth. The part of man (the natural) which goes to the grave has no more to do with things of this life. He can no longer make decisions. He can do nothing that will bring reward. The message of Solomon in this chapter is that we are to work while in this world, as Christ told His disciples, "...the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

These verses do not teach "soul-sleep", neither do they teach annihilation, as many cults claim. The part of man, the body, that is placed in the grave has no "...knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave" (Ecc. 9:10). The apostle Paul spoke of the bodies of the saints who had departed this life as "...sleep in Jesus" (I Thes. 4:14), while waiting for their glorified bodies at the return of Christ Jesus. Ecclesiastes 12:7 tells us very plainly what takes place at death, "Then shall the dust (body) return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Jesus Himself, gave us an example of what takes place at death, both of the unsaved and of the saved. He told of a man who died and was buried (the body), but He said "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Of the other man, Lazarus, who also died, we are not told that his body was even buried, but we are told that he (his soul) was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom (paradise) (Luke 16:20).

The apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, "...to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8). When Paul was considering all the trials and troubles of his life and which was best to live or die said, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having desire to depart and to be with Christ: which is far better" (Phil. 1:23).

Solomon, in Ecclesiastes, is not telling us that death is the end for the one who dies, but is the end of his doing and thinking "under the sun" (on the earth). "...neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is under the sun."

"To Christ, the Lord, let every tongue
Its noblest tribute bring;
When He's the subject of the song,
Who can refuse to sing?"

The Baptist Examiner Forum II

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

Would it be all right for a church to have an informal meeting where men and women could both talk?

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We hear of various and sundry reasons why the women were not allowed to speak in the Corinthian church and other churches. Many of them, in fact all of them, except the ones found in the Scripture, are not the right answers. I will not take the time or space to give some of the answers that I have heard. But suffice it to say that the Bible gives the proper and Scriptural answer for women to be silent in the church services.

We read in I Corinthians 14:34, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." I Timothy 2:11, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." These two Scriptures should be sufficient for anyone to learn that women are not to speak in the regular services of the church. I don't know of a Scripture that says that we can have an informal meeting where both women and men could speak or one that says we can't. If the church felt that it would be using wisdom to have an informal meeting by dismissing the regular service and to have a discussion among all the members, I suppose it would be all right. In this way the women could voice their feelings. This would be that church's business. I would not fall out with that church just for that. However, I do not think that the early churches did that.

When a question is discussed properly and clearly and then put to a vote, the women voice their opinion by the show of the hand, which would show their approval or disapproval.

A church could have a fellowship meeting, a meal served and discussion be made while enjoying the meal together. Questions or problems could be thoroughly aired in this way.

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Yes, with some reservations. I am of the opinion when we sing a hymn and have prayer at the beginning of the services that we go into our worship services. This is a time for our women to be quiet, that is, they are not to

talk, pray out loud or lead and to usurp authority over the men. I Corinthians 14:34 says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." vs. 35 says, "And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." I Timothy 2:11-12 says, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

I use these Scriptures to prove that there is a time to speak and a time for women to be silent. I also want you to remember that the building is not the church, but rather a place in which the church meets. Now, if we meet and have an informal meeting before the church is called to order to worship, I see nothing wrong with it. We do this sometimes and find that it can be of great help toward problems we might have. Many times church problems start with women who work through their weak husbands. If you can meet together and the women can speak, sometimes the problem can be talked out and the problem can be solved. It just might save a split, or a lot of trouble in the church.

PREDESTINATION

(Continued from Page 3)

Now let's turn to Matthew 24:31. Here is a Scripture which refers to the elect of the tribulation period. We are the elect of God today. But when we go at the rapture, Israel becomes the elect of God. Listen to what this Scripture says; "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds..." We could go on and on and look at Scripture after Scripture and we would see that God has always had His elected or chosen ones down through the ages.

Let's continue our study on election. The Scripture makes it plain that God has elected a certain number who will spend eternity with Him. We cannot understand it, but let's believe it because it is God's Word.

Now let's continue to look at some more Scriptures dealing with the subject of election. Turn to Matthew 11:27. "...no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Now I want you to notice that a true knowledge of God and His Son must come by revelation. That is what Jesus said! He said, "No one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." You can see, beloved, that salvation does not come from a theology book, nor from the finest commentary, but by revelation. The Son of God must reveal Himself if a person is ever to be saved.

Another Scripture I want to bring to your attention is Acts 13:48, "...and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." It doesn't say, "Those that believed were ordained to eternal life." It says, "Those that were ordained to eternal life believed."

Now let's look at some of the objections that people raise

against the truth of God's election. Some say, "It isn't fair that God has chosen, elected, and predestinated a certain number to spend eternity with Him." A lot of people say, "That is fatalism." Others say, "It does not seem right for God to choose one for salvation and to pass another by." But, beloved, let's remember that God is sovereign, and God can do as He pleases. I chose Mrs. Half out of all other girls to be my wife. Would you accuse me of unfairness or injustice because I chose Mrs. Half and passed all the other girls by? You know that every man has the right to choose his own bride. And certainly God has the right to choose whom He will as a bride for His Son.

Now I know some of you are asking the question, "If salvation is all of God, if God has already elected His people to salvation before the foundation of the world, why does the Bible say, 'Whosoever will may come?' Beloved, let's not forget that God has to make us willing or we would never come to the Lord Jesus Christ. I would not be saved today if God had not broken down my stubborn, rebellious will and made me willing. Turn with me to the 110th Psalm, verse 3. Listen: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power..." When are men willing, beloved? In the day when God's power comes upon them.

If the power of God never came upon a sinner to move that sinner, then man would never be willing. So let's remember that God has to make us willing. He does that when He sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts and convicts us of our lost and undone condition and makes us realize our need of salvation. Some people say, "I found the Lord." Well, I found Him too, but praise God, He found me first.

REWARD

(Continued from Page 1)

Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And

likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou has not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen" (I Kings 11:1-13).

In his day, King Solomon was world famous for his wisdom and knowledge. Verse 24 tells us the whole world looked to him for his wisdom. Knowledge is an accumulation of facts. Wisdom is being able to use those facts to some advantage in our daily lives. Solomon undoubtedly reached heights of wisdom and knowledge unequalled by any other person with the exception of Christ Himself. Yet, in the verses quoted from chapter 11 of our text, we see a man who lost everything for the lack of applying this wisdom and knowledge in his own life. This proves it is not what you know but what you do with it that makes the difference. Now ask yourself the question: is there a reward for knowledge? It has to be a simple yes or no answer.

The words reward, rewarded, rewarder, rewardeth, and rewards are used a total of 106 times in all the Scriptures. Yet, in all these references to any form of this word, it is not used one time in connection with knowledge. The only exception to this statement is found in Proverbs 24:14. But after considering verse 14, along with the previous verse, we must conclude it does not negate our original statement but rather teaches us that wisdom will not disappoint us in our expectations of what she has to offer.

I. THE LOST ADVANTAGE. Despite the superior knowledge of our kind of churches in regards to the deeper truths of God's Word, it is a great embarrassment to admit we don't enjoy any great advantage over those of lesser understanding. Quite naturally, the question arises as to why this is true. We answer a question with a question: Is there a reward for knowledge? Of course, the answer is quite obvious. Proverbs 11:18 will help us in this matter. It reads "The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that knoweth righteousness shall be a sure reward." Of course, I misquoted this passage to make a point (I will blame it on the old typewriter). It should read "...to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward."

Let me illustrate between

"know" and "sow." I have a neighbor who needs help often. If she were to suddenly need medical attention, she would call me if it were possible. I know where the keys are to my car and how to drive it; I know how to get dressed, how to pick her up and put her into my car; I even know where the hospital is and exactly how to get to the emergency room. But all of this knowledge is of no avail if I don't put it into action and quickly take her to the hospital.

We cannot possibly comprehend the extent of Solomon's knowledge. Yet, from our vantage point, we can think of him as an object of pity, because he did not use his great knowledge to his own advantage. Exodus 19:5 tells us that God chose one nation. That nation was Israel. He gave the nation of Israel knowledge that He gave no other nation on the earth. But there is no reward just for knowledge. In fact, it actually worked against her. Even as Solomon was punished for knowing and not doing, so was Israel.

II. THE SECRET INGREDIENT. 1. We all know of someone who is saved but not well grounded in the truths of God's Word. Yet, contrary to our way of thinking, often times God uses them. I know this is true as I have personally seen it many times over. Why? The answer is found in the parable of Luke 12:41-48. Although there are many truths for us in this parable, let's look at only three: 1.) Both were servants, 2.) one knew more than the other, 3.) and the one with more knowledge was more accountable. The primary truth here is the willing person with limited knowledge is more rewarded than the unwilling person with vast knowledge. I know this parable is speaking from the negative view point. However, the principle still holds true. Remember, it is the person who sows righteousness that reaps a reward.

2. II Corinthians 5:10 is a sobering Scripture. I hope none of my Christian readers mistakenly think God will be impressed with them and their superior knowledge when they stand before Him at the judgment seat of Christ. The verse says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

3. And let's not forget what Brother James says in 4:17 of his book: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." This verse takes us a step further. It says very clearly that knowing and not doing is a sin. If we feel high and lifted up and look down our noses at those of lesser knowledge, this passage certainly shoots us out of the saddle. Does this seem hard? Perhaps you have thoughts of taking the easy way out. Maybe you are thinking about not learning anything else and therefore escaping all this accountability. Then we have to face another clear teaching of the Word of God: "Study to show thyself approved unto God..." (II Tim. 2:15a). Study is commanded. Knowledge (Continued on Page 6, Col. 1)

REWARD

(Continued from Page 5)

is the natural result of study. One does not have to be a genius to see that study, knowledge, and accountability are inseparable.

4. Some Christians seemingly think the blessing received from learning truth is sufficient and an end in itself. However, the real blessing comes from putting that knowledge into action for the glory of God and the furtherance of His work. We are all aware that Christ knew from all eternity we needed salvation. But this knowledge did not mean anything to us until He came and gave His life on Calvary. This vividly illustrates the truth we are trying to impress upon our readers. This great blessing of salvation did not come from what He knew but rather from what He did.

III. A WORD TO THE LOST.

1. Neither is there a reward for having head knowledge of Biblical truths, in hell. You may think I am kidding, but believe me, hell is no kidding matter. At the great white throne judgment pictured in Revelation 20:12-13, there is no indication that knowledge will be of any help. In fact, having knowledge of the Scriptures will work to your disadvantage, because the more you know the more accountable you are. May the God of grace trouble you by the working of the Holy Spirit, convicting you of your sins and give you faith to trust Jesus Christ for salvation. Even though most Americans have heard the gospel, Proverbs 29:1 says: **"He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."** And if you think moving to a third world nation will get you out from underneath this responsibility, you are mistaken. My advice is to attend one of the Lord's churches and have God's people assist in any way possible, praying that God will show you your sins by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, gloriously saving your soul by trusting in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour.

In conclusion, let me ask once again: is there a reward for knowledge? The answer is obvious. Thank you for reading this and may God bless you. Credit is given to H.C. McSwain for much help with the mechanics of this article.

WEDDING

(Continued from Page 1)

blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let everyone

of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

On September the 30th, 1989, Marty Foor was married to Judy Wagner at the Highland Park Baptist Church in Southfield, Michigan. If you want to be more formal, it was Martin John Foor being married to Judith Anne Wagner. Marty and Judy kindly asked me to co-officiate in this marriage with Dr. John Orme. My part in the ceremony was to deliver a short message on the "Meaning and Uniqueness of a Christian Marriage." I considered it an honor to help in the marriage of these two fine people. I have known Marty for many years, and he has been, and is a member of the church here in Gladwin. I have always considered him to be a fine young Christian man. He has been a good friend and member here. I have much confidence in his profession of faith in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. I have only known Judy for around a year. In that time I have learned to greatly respect her testimony of Christ in saving power. These two young people love the Lord. There is no greater foundation for a marriage than a common love for Christ. It was also very evident that Marty and Judy loved each other. Knowing these two things, I helped in this marriage with great confidence and joy. I have been asked to write up the sermonette I preached at that wedding. I do so with great pleasure. The following is a written version of, "The Meaning and Uniqueness of a Christian Marriage."

The verses of our text inform us of what we need in order to have a successful marriage. The reason so many marriages of our day fail is because couples do not have a Scriptural understanding of what marriage is all about. I had a young lady ask me if I would leave out the word "obey" in the marriage ceremony. I told her that I could not with a clear conscience. The Bible teaches that the husband is the head of the house, and a marriage entered into without that in mind is destined for trouble. I also mention that the Bible teaches the great responsibility of the husband to love his wife so that he will not become a "master over a slave" to her. The husband and the wife both need to realize their awesome responsibility in the making of a marriage.

Marriage is the first human contract, devised by the wisdom of God when He looked down and saw that it was not good for man to be alone. He thus created Eve as Adam's help mate and the practice of marriage began. Christ honored this institution by making it the scene of His first miracle when He turned the water into wine at the marriage of Cana. Christ illustrates the closeness of this relationship by using it to teach truths concerning Himself and His church. From this we learn that marriage is not to be entered into lightly, but is to be taken as the sacred union that it is. This is especially true for the child of God. We must set the example for the rest of the world. It is a poor commentary on Christianity when Christian marriages fail. Let us now think a little bit about the meaning of a Christian marriage. What exactly does it mean to have a Christian marriage?

First of all, it means that

Marty and Judy both have had a saving experience. They have both repented of their sins and believed in the shed blood of Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation. They are not going to be "unequally yoked together." So much trouble comes from saved people marrying lost people. There should be great joy in the union of two believers. Marty and Judy both being saved and loving Christ gives them a bond that will surely help their marriage. They not only can depend upon each other, but they both can depend together on Jesus Christ. I would urge young saved people not to rush into marriage. Wait until God gives you a mate. Young people, I would urge you to be careful whom you date. I remember my dad telling me, "Son, you only marry whom you date, so be careful whom you date." I give that same advice to young people today.

Secondly, a Christian marriage means they were brought together by God. Marty was born and raised in Gladwin, Michigan. Judy was born and raised in the Detroit area. This means they were raised about 150 miles apart from each other. How was God going to get these two people together? I am thankful, and am sure that Marty and Judy are glad that we serve a sovereign God. This was no obstacle to God at all. They could have been born on different planets, and if God wanted them together, He would bring them together. I also see the sovereignty of God in keeping them from others until they met each other. I told Marty a short while before they announced their intentions of marriage that he had better hurry because he was on the verge of being past child bearing years. God worked it out to where Marty went to work for IBM in Detroit. It just so happened that Judy's brother-in-law worked there, and he and Marty played softball together. Well, the brother-in-law introduced them, and from there God took over and has now made them one flesh. God deserves the glory in this union, not man. It is easy to see that God brought these two fine young Christian people together; and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

Thirdly, a Christian marriage means that Christ should come first in their home. This is why so many so-called Christian marriages fail. Everything and everybody take precedence over Christ. As much as Marty and Judy love each other they should not be first in each other's life. They are not to ever put each other ahead of Christ. If one does not go to church, then the other should go alone. They must be sure they do not put jobs first. So many marriages have been wrecked by ambition. The desire to make more money has often left wives feeling uncared for and useless. Family time is far more important than nice clothes, homes, and cars. When Marty and Judy have children, the children must not come first. There is no one, or no thing that should ever come ahead of Christ in the life of the believer. A proper place for Christ will lead to a proper place for everything else. Putting Christ first will give proper perspective on the other things of life. May all of us practice this in our homes.

Fourthly, a Christian marriage means that Marty and Judy plan

on being faithful in their service to God. Don't go to see them on Sunday, because they will be in God's house or at least they should be. They will be there together, not one of them home and the other at church representing the family. Their neighbors will know that Marty and Judy are different from others when they see them leave dressed for church every Sunday. This should not just be for Sunday morning, but also for Sunday night. Wouldn't it be nice if every married person that claims to be a Christian was faithful in Sunday services. I know this, you cannot have a Christian marriage without faithfulness to God's house.

This also means that they plan on making a habit of reading and studying God's Word. This will be done, some separately, and hopefully some together. Their Bibles are not there just to collect dust and to take to church on Sundays, but are there to be read and studied. This also means they will be faithful in paying their tithes and offerings. This is a necessity of a Christian marriage. How can you have a Christian marriage when the house is full of thieves and robbers. Some are saying, there goes the preacher, hitting them up for money already. No, I am not hitting them up for money, God did that a long time ago. I am just delivering God's message. This also means that they will be a praying family. Hopefully they will pray together. Surely they will pray for one another. This will only draw them closer. Oh, how our homes need prayer! Lastly, this means they will be a witness together to other people about their need of Christ. What better thing for a husband and wife to do together than witness to the lost. They will witness practically, with the life they live, and verbally with their lips. May God bless and help them as they begin to faithfully serve God together.

Fifthly, a Christian marriage means they will be good parents when they have children. Some child is going to be blessed by God in being born into this home. The reason I know they will be good parents is because they have an extra capacity to love that lost parents do not have. What a great gift of God to children, in giving them Christian parents. I have known Marty's parents for many years. His father John is a deacon in the church here. His mother is a very faithful member of the church here. Marty had the advantage of being raised in a Christian home. This will make him a better father. I also have met and talked with Judy's parents. She too has been blessed by being raised in a Christian home. Though I do not know the Wagners well, it did not take me long to know that they are good Christian people who raised Judy "after the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Besides, I am sure that if Marty and Judy mess up, the grandparents will be there to help. I tell you this in all sincerity; Marty and Judy ought to thank God in their prayers every night for the parents God gave them. They would do well to try and imitate them in their life. I am confident that Marty and Judy will raise their child according to Scripture. They will not be good parents because they are rich, have a nice home or are lenient. They will be good parents because they both love God, and God will help them to have proper love for their chil-

dren.

Sixthly, a Christian marriage means Marty and Judy will have a special ability to love one another. You see, God is love. God gives His people a special capacity of love that lost people do not have. Marty and Judy will not only be able to love one another as husband and wife, but also as brothers and sisters in Christ. The problem that often arises is that saved people do not take advantage of this relationship with God that can and should promote a greater love for one another. If we make proper usage of the provisions God has given us, then we will have a greater love for Christ; and this will produce a greater love for one another. May God cause the love that Marty and Judy have for one another to flourish. May that love never grow dim but only increase.

Sevently, a Christian marriage means that Marty and Judy plan on making a lifetime commitment to one another. That is the way that God meant for marriage to be. A one time, for life commitment. Marty and Judy in taking the vows that are to come will make a promise to be faithful and true to one another in all things. Christians should never enter into marriage lightly. They should never enter into marriage thinking, "well if it doesn't work, I can always get a divorce." The subject and thought of divorce should never cross their minds. In this Christian marriage there has been a lifetime commitment to one another.

Eighty and lastly, a Christian marriage means that Marty and Judy will spend eternity together. I recognize that this will not be as husband and wife. However, what a great joy it gives us while here upon the earth to know that our spouse will be with us in heaven. Maybe I am just being sentimental, but I believe there will be some kind of special relationship for family members in heaven. The joy of knowing that the most important people in your life will spend eternity with you in heaven, with the most important person in your life, Christ, is a great joy. Knowing that your spouse is saved sure makes it easier to say good bye to them when it comes time to leave this world. I know there are many other things I could mention about a Christian marriage. I have already said more than I did in the wedding. What I have written will suffice for now. Let us who are saved try and give this meaning to our marriages.

I now want to talk a little bit about the uniqueness of a Christian marriage. I want to illustrate this by relaying a message from Marty and Judy to you. I met with Marty and Judy in my study and asked them if there was anything in particular they wanted me to say. They both said that they would have lost loved ones there and that they wanted me to get the gospel in somewhere, but will not sneak the gospel in, but will declare to you out right, as I did in the wedding.

Marty and Judy want you to know as your Lord and Saviour, the name Christ that they know and love. It is very important to them that you not just share this joyous time with them here upon the earth, but that you enjoy with them the bliss of heaven. They want you to feel the peace, joy, comfort, and love that they feel. They do not want you to go to

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STUDIES IN ACTS

"Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison" (Acts 5:17, 18).

We read from verse twelve how by the "hands of the apostles" were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. Now, we read of another set of hands. Here it is the hands of the "high priest and all that were with him." The apostles' hands were being used by God, while these latter hands were being used by Satan. Those who were being used by Satan were filled with "indignation," while those who were being used by the Lord were filled with acts of mercy. We see that God always builds up while Satan's purpose is to destroy. The apostles were put in the common prison. Outside those prison walls were all of those people God had enabled the apostles to heal. Perhaps they observed from their prison window a man carrying his bed on his shoulder. Perhaps they observed others who had been blind, rejoicing because of their new-found sight. Their stay in prison, then, was a small price to pay for such a great harvest.

"But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" (Acts 5:19, 20). This Scripture shows forth the great importance of the work of the Lord. It was so important back then that God dispatched an angel all the way from heaven to remove the obstacle that was placed before His preachers. The devil was trying to dam up the creek, but God removed the dam and caused the water of love to flow freely again. The devil went before the apostles and put up road blocks, but God kept tearing them down. The prison doors were a dam or a road block, but the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors.

We believers today are in the same work -- the work which God considers as important today as He did back then. The difference is that we must live entirely by faith. They lived entirely by faith too, but they were given such things as healing, opening prison doors, etc., to bolster their faith. God the Spirit bolsters our faith by informing us of the great things which were done to and by those back then. God sent His angel all the way from heaven to earth for a much greater purpose than to simply remove the apostles from prison. The purpose was that they might go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. God was seeing to it that the work done by His Son on earth had not been done in vain. The Son had been humiliated by His venture to earth. He had suffered and even died, and there was no possible way that the devil could stop preachers from telling the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. It would have been easier for the devil to have turned off the sun or the moon. That which the apostles were to preach was "all the words of this life," that is, the words of eter-

nal life as stated in John 6:68. "This life", as set forth in our text, is not the physical life -- the physical life which is but for a moment-- the physical life which daily passes away, but it is that eternal and abundant life which the Lord Jesus gives. It is that life that has conquered death itself. It is that life, then, that can see beyond the grave.

"And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within" (Acts 5:21-23). These passages remind me of an incident which happened to me in about 1946. Our car had been stolen and taken to a town in West Virginia. I think it was Stolings, West Virginia. My dad, Jim Turner, and I went to get our car; but we couldn't get it running. My dad proceeded to use a rope to pull me back to Ohio. The rope broke when we were about fifteen to twenty miles from Ironton, Ohio, but my dad did not know I wasn't behind him until he reached Ironton. I might add that it was during a rainy night that this incident occurred.

The high priest and his cohorts were making big plans regarding how they were going to stop the apostles from preaching. They, in a sense of speaking, thought they had them secured in the car behind them, but they had lost them a long way back up the road. This fact also reminds me of a man who catches a turkey. He builds a fire and gets the water hot; but when he goes to bring his turkey, he finds that it has escaped.

The fact that the prison was "shut with all safety" shows that every effort was put forth to make sure the apostles did not escape. This was not a jail made of tin, as the song states, but it was a maximum security complex. God, however, has no problem picking the locks on man's best plans and schemes. Let men do their best, and God will turn it to dust.

Let me add that the devil via the high priest was doing his best. The high priest and even the "senate of the children of Israel" were allied together in the common purpose of stopping God's preachers. "Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow" (Acts 5:24). The snare they had prepared for the apostles had snared them. I knew a man who threw a stone. The stone struck a clothesline and rebounded against his head. They, in like manner, had dug a pit for their prey; but they had fallen into the pit. "Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the

temple, and teaching the people" (Acts 5:25). Those who break out of prison usually run for their lives. They hide from their captors. These men, on the other hand, were found in the most conspicuous place in town -- the temple. It was here that they were calmly teaching the people, even though the high priest and the senate of the children of Israel were allied together to close their mouths. This fact shows how big their God was to them. It shows that they were fully convinced that God was with them. They knew that no one could be against them if God was for them. They had observed the healing of the lame man, the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the healing of all who came to them in the streets of Jerusalem, and the opening of the prison doors. They, through the power of God the Spirit, would not be deterred or turned back now.

"Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council; and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us" (Acts 5:26-28).

It would appear that the apostles had been caught and were now at the mercy of their captors. The very reverse, however, is true. The words, "and when they had brought them, they set them before the council," say it all. God the Spirit, in fact, had arranged this meeting so that Peter could preach to the high priest and the entire senate. They were to go into all the world and preach the gospel, and this was a part of that world. You will observe, from the many Scriptures which have been before us, that the apostles, in all that was before them, did not take one step backwards. They found that they were more than conquerors through Him that loved them.

The question presented by the high priest set the stage for another great message from Peter and the others. They thought that they had captured Peter and the others, but in reality they had been captured. They were a captive audience.

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). There has never been a time in history in which Peter's statement has not been applicable. I would love to see this statement by Peter pulled behind a plane across America and around the world. To obey God, of course, is simply to hear and to heed His Word. One of the charges against Peter and the others was that they had filled Jerusalem with their doctrine. We learn from I Peter 4:16 how Peter felt about the charges which were made against him. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." Peter also said the following in I Peter 4:13, "But

rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree" (Acts 5:30). "The God of our fathers," of course, is none other than the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Daniel, etc. He is the one who built the heavens and the earth. Peter boldly states that God is the one who "raised up Jesus." God raised up that precious one that they had hanged on a tree. They, in other words, went squarely against God. They, therefore, would surely be judged by the Almighty. This fact brings us back to Peter's previous words when he said, "We ought to obey God rather than men," or we ought to obey God rather than the Sanhedrin. We who live about two thousand years this side of Peter and the other apostles know that they, through God the Spirit, were very wise. An inscription on their gravestone could rightly say, "We obeyed God rather than men."

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hell and suffer eternally. Let me tell you some other things they want you to know.

Marty and Judy want you to know that man is born into this world dead in trespasses and sins. Man is "born in sin and conceived in iniquity." He comes forth from his mother's womb speaking lies. He only gets worse and worse, never better. They want you to know that, because of that sin, all people born, deserve to spend eternity in hell. You have transgressed God's law and deserve hell for your failure to repent of your sins. Hell does not belong to the devil but to God, and He will punish those who die without Christ in hell eternally. They want you to know that death, judgment and eternity await you. This may all come about sooner than you think. You must not delay for you have no promise of tomorrow. Death may invade your ranks at any time. You will face God in judgment, and if you die without Christ, will be sentenced to an eternity in hell. They want you to know that there are only two places to spend eternity; either in heaven or in hell. Heaven is a place of great joy, beauty, and comfort. Hell is a place of unimaginable torment, a place of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, a place of outer darkness. Marty and Judy do not want you to go to this awful place. They want you to know that the difference is Jesus Christ. There is no other way to heaven, or escape from hell than Jesus and His precious blood. They urge you to repent of your sins. Their desire is that the Holy Spirit will grant you repentance and faith. They hope you will trust in Jesus' shed blood on Calvary's cross as your only deliverance from sin. They hope the Spirit will give you the same love for Christ that they have. They hope to see you in heaven with them throughout all eternity.

In closing I ask that all of you who read this article consider the things written there-in. To the saved; may our marriages be

Christian and Unique. To the lost, oh may you consider your soul and its eternal destiny. May God indeed grant you repentance. Join me in praying for God's blessings on this marriage. May God bless you all.

PRIORITY

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work on the temple: (1). there was open opposition and hostility by Israel's neighbors; and, (2). the national indifference on the part of the nation of Israel. If one did not know better he would conclude that Haggai was writing to the Lord's church; and in turn, the application may be there to apply when and if needed.

Both Haggai and Zechariah, God's prophets, are found to be exhorting the people of God to rebuild the Temple of God. Those who know their Bible will remember that it was Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, who had previously destroyed Solomon's Temple in about 586 B.C. God had told Israel that because of their sin He would destroy the temple and scatter the people among the nations. When the book of Haggai opens up, the reality of that judgment is past history. Now the time had come for the nation of Israel to press forward, not to continue to look backwards to yesteryear's blessings and promises. These two minor prophets do not stop with the task at hand, the rebuilding of the Temple of God, rather, they speak concerning: (1). the shaking of all nations sometime in the future; (2). the coming of the Lord of glory; and, (3). the glory of His millennial reign.

For a brief moment, let's look at Haggai, the man. As already indicated, this prophet of God lived at the same general time as did Zechariah. Furthermore, Haggai preached his four prophetic messages in the second year of Darius 520 B.C. As with many in the past and in the present, Haggai had only one central goal; that is, one purpose of mind, to see that the Temple of God was rebuilt. Why? Because he knew and understood that God's blessings and favor could only come if the people would obey and do as the Lord had previously commanded. Beloved, that is still true in our day. Almighty God has ordained His church, and if we are to have His full and complete blessings upon our life, then we must do our work through His ordained means; the local church. Everyone wants a piece of the pie, but few there are that are willing to do it God's way. God did not then or now make room for those that would work apart from His ordained means and methods. If you want God's stamp of approval and blessings upon your life, the one sure way to find it is to follow His divine directions as set forth in Holy Writ. This is a doctrine that many do not like, and yet, the reality of it is found throughout the Scriptures.

I. Priorities: "No Time, Lord!"

"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that

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the LORD'S house should be built" (Haggai 1:2). In verse two the people seem to be saying, at least in their own mind, the time is not come that we should build the house of the Lord. These people, the children of Israel, had forgotten what they were suppose to be doing, for one reason or another. However, they were no different from men and women are today. Oh beloved, where are your priorities? Because the nation of Israel had lost sight of the most important task of the day, the temple of God was not built! Listen, in our day, many Christians have lost or are losing their priorities. You may call this a hobby horse of mine, but just as God ordained and instructed His chosen people, Israel, to rebuild the temple, so today God has ordained the work of the local church to be done by His chosen people. The unsaved have no business working within the church any more than the saved have working outside of the local church. It should not have to be said, and yet, for the clarification of fact, the church of God is not the building that we meet in, rather the church is God's people who have been called out from their homes and have gathered in one place to be instructed in the things of God. Much more could be said about this, but that is not our subject today. But so that no one misunderstands, the church is a called out group of people who have been Scripturally baptized, and as the Lord's church, they practice the teachings of the Lord; administer the two ordinances; believer's baptism and the Lord's supper. It is neither universal nor invisible!

One more thing, just as it was not the primary job of the prophet to build the temple, so the Holy Scriptures inform us concerning His church. These people, Israel, had failed! They had not obeyed the voice of the Lord, and because of that a number of things were evident: (1). Haggai 1:6 tells us that their sustenance was affected. Oh beloved, learn from this to put God first in everything you do; then understand He has promised to take care of our needs. (2). Haggai 1:10, 11 tells us that a drought had relieved them of their earthly goods. Many a child of God today finds a spiritual drought because they would not put their own spiritual life in order. (3). Haggai 2:16 tells us that their supplies were somewhat, diminished. Not only had the God of heaven removed their crops, but that which they had stored up for such occasion. These people were, if you please, bankrupted on every hand. (4). To add insult upon injury, Haggai 2:17 tells us that plagues were abundant.

You know, preaching is of no value unless there is a challenge that goes forth with it, and Haggai does just that. In fact, Haggai gave five-fold advice to Israel that the church of God should heed today. (1). Consider Your Priorities -- "Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways," Haggai 1:5. Oh beloved, just as Joshua of old pleaded with the nation of Israel to put their house in order, so should the

elect of God put their house in order. They are the only ones that can! The unsaved could care less about this. Furthermore, they do not have the capability to put their houses in order, but the elect of God do! (2). Anticipate the blessing of God -- "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD," Haggai, 1:8. Just as God promised Israel that He would take pleasure in what they would do, so God will take pleasure in the work of the Lord when it is done through His church. We need to anticipate the blessing of God as we work! Two things need to be understood; it is God that will take pleasure in the work, and that work must be done His way. (3). Obey the Lord in all things -- "Then Zerubabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD" (Haggai 1:12). So many today think lightly concerning the commands of God. You and I do not have to ask God what we should do when the Bible has already told us what to do! Read the Bible, obey, and you have God's promise; He will bless you. (4). Reverence the God of Heaven -- Haggai 1:12. Oh please, do not call the preacher "Reverend," for there is but one that is such. "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name" (Psa. 111:9). God alone deserves your reverence! (5). Do it - Action "...and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God" (Haggai 1:14). We need to work while we still can and before the night comes when no man can work.

II. Persistence.

Beloved, if there is one thing that God wants from His own dear people, that is simple persistence; two words: "don't quit"! Though everyone else seems to, don't you give up. What an insignificant sight this temple was in comparison to Solomon's Temple. So what! Okay, this temple was not Solomon's, but that is gone, removed, no longer with them. You see, yesterday's blessings are not good enough for today! Our churches may be smaller today than the first one in Jerusalem, but success is never determined by numbers so far as God is concerned. So, Haggai 2:2, 3 gives to us an insignificant sight in comparison to Solomon's grand masterpiece. But to these people who had obeyed the Lord, verse 4 and 5 of chapter two, this temple must have been an inspiring sight. You see, we build on the very foundation of God's strength and truth. God had told them, "I am with you," and what else did they really need? The Apostle Paul wrote, "Finally, my brethren, be strong, in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10). You see, the very presence of God among them was a blessing and a surety to Israel. Just as the Spirit of God was among them and His presence felt; so today, the Holy Spirit of God has taken up His

abiding residence within the heart of every believer. As the Lord encouraged them in their work, so the Spirit of God encourages us today. Much is taught today about the Holy Spirit that is dead wrong; and yet, we must realize that He has a very important role not only in our salvation, but in our Christian walk.

Some day, down the road, Israel will see prosperity as they learn to trust and obey the Lord. To a small degree they experienced that then, but in a fuller sense of the word, they will see and understand that truth when Jesus reigns and rules on the throne of His father, David.

You may not always see the prosperity that some speak about today on the radio, TV and in the pulpits across this great land of ours. The rewards that the child of God should be seeking are spiritual and eternal. The so-called "Prosperity Theology" that seems to be so abundant today is not found in the Word of God. Jesus indicated that He did not come to bring peace, but a sword. The peace that the Bible refers to is spiritual peace of mind that every child of God should have when he realizes that Jesus has redeemed and set him free. But as to peace within this world, the Bible knows absolutely nothing about that kind of peace until Jesus comes and establishes His kingdom.

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takes in those small matters which men set down as unconsidered trifles. He knows what you and I hardly wish to know: he knows that which we may be content to leave unknown: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered."

He knows us better than our friends know us. Many a man has a kind friend who knows his affairs most accurately, but even such a familiar acquaintance has never counted the hairs of your head. No man's wife has done that, nor even the doctor who has, by his long attendance upon us, become aware of the condition and health of every part of our body. God knows us better than we know ourselves. Nobody knows how many hairs he has upon his own head; but the very hairs of your head are all numbered by One who knows us better than we know ourselves. God knows matters about us that we could not of ourselves discover. There are secrets of the heart which are unknown even to ourselves, but they are not secrets to him. His penetrating knowledge reaches to the most hidden things of life and spirit.

Do you not think that a charmingly tender knowledge is intended when we are told that the Lord counts the very hairs of our heads? Does it not intimate how much he thinks of them? There are some who love us very much, and they are always aiming at our good, but God goes beyond them all in a more than motherly care of us, strikingly minute in its thoughtfulness. We see that his love passeth the love of women, for the very hairs of our head are numbered; and that at every period of our lives. Does it not imply a very sympathetic care? When one has a sick child, and watches over it night and day,

every little fact about it is known and noted. The darling looks a little pale today, or he fails a little in his appetite; the symptom is anxiously noted. You know how easily love can degenerate into foolishness in that direction; but, without any folly, God is infinitely careful and kind towards us, for he knows when we have lost a hair from our head. We cannot make one hair white or black, but he knows when they turn white with grief or age. He understands all about our fading and our growing grey, the little details concerning our body as well as the minute circumstances that try our souls. It seems to me -- I do not know how it strikes you -- as meaning a very, very, very intimate, tender, and affectionate knowledge of us; and the fact that the Lord thus graciously looks upon us should fill us with joy.

This careful, tender knowledge on God's part is constant. He knows the number of the hairs of our head today, tomorrow, and all the days: he without ceasing watches all the processes which even in the least manner affect our lives. So intimate is his knowledge of us, that our lying down and our rising up, our thoughts and our ways, are all continually before him. And what are we to learn from this? Does it not make life a solemn business? Who will dare to trifle with the Lord God so near? Do you keep bees? Have you ever taken out one of the frames from their hive, and held it up to observe what they are doing on both sides of the comb? Or have you looked at them through one of those interesting hives, furnished with a glass, through which the whole business is visible? The bees scarcely notice that you watch them, certainly they are not eye-servers, for they are so industrious that they could not do more even if all eyes in the universe were fixed on them. What manner of persons ought we to be when we know that God is observing us, and noting every movement of our being! What care there should be as to our feeling, our thinking, our resolving, our desiring, our doing, and our speaking, when everything is minutely known to God, even to the counting of the very hairs of our head! What perfect consecration we ought to maintain! If God so values me, so knows me, that he counts the very hairs of my head, ought I not give to God my whole self even to the minutest detail? Should I not give him, nor merely my head, but my hair, as that penitent woman did, who unbound her tresses that she might make a towel of them, wherewith to wipe the feet that she had washed with her tears? Ought we not to consecrate to God the very least things as well as the greater things? Is it not written, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God?" "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price:" and when the inventory was taken, the Lord did not leave a hair of your head out of the catalogue. Certainly he

has not left your hair to any of you Christian women wherewith to indulge your vanity and pride; it is every tress of it your Lord's. He does not leave to you men even a part of your talent, of your mind, or of your body; your whole self is altogether his, and he takes stock of it, and expects you to include it in your practical consecration. He observes what

you do with little things: He notes even those minor matters which seem too inconsiderable to come under rule at all. We are under law to Christ, and that law covers the whole man.

Should not our belief in this knowledge of us by the Lord, help us in prayer? Do not some brethren pray as if they were informing God about themselves? I think I have heard remarks in prayer which seemed to imply that God was not acquainted with the Shorter Catechism; friends have even gone over the doctrines of grace as if the Lord was not aware of them. I have heard others pray as if God did not know the experience of Christians: as if they have had to explain to him some of their doubts and fears. When we pray we do not need to explain anything, for the Lord knows all about us, even to the hairs of our head. Dear friends, we have no need to explain our difficulties and perplexities to our God. "Your heavenly Father knoweth" -- let this be your comfort. He knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him; this is a great help in prayer. It may shorten your prayer a good deal if you go to God with the expression of your desire, and plead his promise, and submit your spirit to his divine discretion. Such a shortening of its length will be an addition to the strength of prayer. You need not be afraid, as if God did not know, but come sweetly to him who knoweth all about you, and will not act upon your faulty information, but upon his own certain knowledge.

This persuasion will help us to feel that the Lord will deliver us out of all difficulties, for he knows the way out of every labyrinth, he perceives the answer of every enigma. If he counts the very hairs of your head, depend upon it he has a high discretion for greater things, and a matchless pilotage whereby, through waves, and rocks, and quicksands, he will gently steer your way, and bring you to the desired haven.

There is so much of comfort in this doctrine of the infinite knowledge of God that I wish every poor sinner here would remember that God knows all about him, and consequently can deal with all his sins and fears. If you want mercy, come to the Lord at once; he knows your way, he knows your position, he knows your broken heart, he knows your weary struggles, he knows what you cannot express. The whole of the wrong you have wrought, and the whole of the right you desire, he perceives; for "the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

III. Now, thirdly, and very briefly: Does not this text express VALUATION? "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." It seems, then, that lowly saints are exceedingly precious to their Lord. The whole of Christ's flock on earth were very poor people; if they had a boat and a few nets, it was all they were worth. If anybody had seen Christ in his little church on earth, he would have said, "There is not a respectable person among them." That is how we talk nowadays; as if it were respectable to have money; as if respect did not belong to character, but only to possessions. Yet those twelve poor men he picked out, and he thought so much of them that he

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numbered the hairs of their heads. Yonder is a poor old man in the aisle, and he has a fustian jacket on; never mind his fustian jacket, the very hairs of his head are all numbered. Yonder is a poor old woman just come out of the workhouse, and she loves to hear the gospel; she is such a very poor old woman that nobody likes to invite her into a pew. I speak to the shame of such pride. She is one of Christ's saints, and saintship is a patent of nobility. If you sold a farm you might count the trees, but not the boughs and the leaves; but if you sold a jeweller's shop, you would count all the pins, and all the diamond rings, because everything is precious there; now God reckons everything about his people to be so precious that he even takes stock of the hairs of their

heads. How precious in the sight of the Master his saints are! I have been trying to work out a calculation: if the hairs of their heads are worth so much that God registers them, what are their heads worth? Who shall tell me that? If their heads are worth so much that the Lord Jesus Christ died to redeem them, who can tell what their souls are worth, or rather what they are not worth? They are worth more than all the worlds put together. Ask a mother what her child is worth. "What will you take for your boy, mistress?" My friends, if she sold him at the price she would consider a fair compensation, we could not all of us make up the money if we put all that we have into one common fund. The Lord set such a value on his children that he gave his Son Jesus Christ to die sooner than he would lose one of them; and Jesus himself chose to die on the

cross that none of his little ones should perish. Oh, the value and the preciousness of a child of God! Worlds would not serve for pence to be the basis of the valuation.

Let us prize the people of God very highly, feeling as the Psalmist did when he said, "O God, thou art my God: my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight." You please Jesus when you do good unto one of the least of these his children. He reckons that you have done it unto him. If they are so dear to him, let them be dear to you; and as some of those whom Christ has purchased with his blood are still lost --

"O come, let us go and find them!

In the paths of death they roam."

If the hairs of their head are

counted, what must their souls be worth? Let us feel that all we can do to save a soul from death is but cheap work compared with the priceless gem we seek. O come, ye divers, plunge into the sea: the pearls ye bring up shall well repay your utmost risk and toil! come, ye hunters after souls, there is no such chase as this! Hunt after souls as the brave Switzer chases the chamois upon the mountains, and let no difficulties daunt you, for "he that winneth souls is wise." There is no more profitable purchase than this, though you should lay down your lives to bring men to Christ. How much doth God value the souls of his people!

IV. Lastly, here is PRESERVATION. See how carefully God intends to preserve his own people, since he begins by counting the hairs of their heads. I say it, for there is Scripture at the back of my assertion, that none of the

people of God shall suffer in the long run the smallest loss. "There shall not a hair of your head perish," said Christ to his believing people. If I were to lose a hair from my head, I should not know it -- should you? But God would know if his servants lost a hair of their heads, and he makes the promise to them of such complete protection that there shall not a hair of their head perish. Remember that other text, "The Lord keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken." Now, a Christian man may break the bones of his body, but in a real and spiritual sense he is free from such danger, God will keep him -- ay, keep him to all eternity! "There shall not a hoof be left behind," said Moses to Pharaoh, and there shall not a bone, nor a piece of a bone of the ransomed be left in the dominion

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THE LOVE OF GOD

by A. W. Pink

There are three things told us in Scripture concerning the nature of God. First, "God is a Spirit..." (John 4:24). In the Greek there is no indefinite article, and to say, "God is a Spirit..." is most objectionable, for it places Him in a class with others. God is "spirit" in the highest sense. Because He is "spirit" He is incorporeal, having no visible substance. Had God a tangible body, He would not be omnipresent, He would be limited to one place; because He is "spirit," He fills heaven and earth. Second, "...God is light..." (I John 1:5), which is the opposite of darkness. In Scripture "darkness" stands for sin, evil, death and "light" for holiness, goodness, life. "...God is light..." means that He is the sum of all excellency. Third, "...God is love" (I John 4:8). It is not simply that God "loves," but that He is love itself. Love is not merely one of His attributes, but His very nature.

There are many today who talk about the love of God, who are total strangers to the God of love. The Divine love is commonly regarded as a species of amiable weakness, a sort of good-natured indulgence; it is reduced to a mere sickly sentiment, patterned after human emotion. Now the truth is that on this, as on everything else, our thoughts need to be formed and regulated by what is revealed thereon in Holy Scripture. That there is urgent need for this is apparent not only from the ignorance which so generally, but also from the low state of spirituality which is now so sadly evident everywhere among professing Christians. How little real love there is for God. One chief reason for this is because our hearts are so little occupied with His wondrous love for His people. The better we are acquainted with His love--its character, fulness, blessedness--the more will our hearts be drawn out in love to Him.

1. The love of God is uninfluenced. By which we mean, there was nothing whatever in the objects of His love to call it into exercise, nothing in the creature to attract or prompt it. The love which one creature has for another is because of something in them; but the love of God is free, spontaneous, uncaused. The only reason why God loves any is found in His own sovereign will: "The LORD did not set his love

upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you..." (Deut. 7:7, 8). God has loved His people from everlasting, and therefore nothing of the creature can be the cause of what is in God from eternity. He loves from Himself: "...according to his own purpose..." (II Tim. 1:9). "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). God did not love us because we loved Him, but He loved us before we had a particle of love for Him. Had God loved us in return for ours, then it would not be spontaneous on His part; but because He loved us when we were loveless, it is clear that His love was uninfluenced. It is highly important if God is to be honored and the heart of His child established, that we should be quite clear upon this precious truth. God's love for me, and for each of "His own," was entirely unmoved by anything in them. What was there in me to attract the heart of God? Absolutely nothing. But, to the contrary, everything calculated to make Him loathe--sinful, depraved, a mass of corruption, with "no good thing" in me.

2. It is eternal. This of necessity. God Himself is eternal, and God is love; therefore, as God Himself had no beginning, His love had none. Granted that such a concept far transcends the grasp of our feeble minds, nevertheless, where we cannot comprehend, we can bow in adoring worship. How clear is the testimony of Jeremiah 31:3, "...I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." How blessed to know that the great and holy God loved His people before heaven and earth were called into existence, that He had set His heart upon them from all eternity. Clear proof is this that His love is spontaneous, for He loved them endless ages before they had any being.

The same precious truth is set forth in Ephesians 1:4, 5: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us..." What praise should

this evoke from each of His children! How tranquilizing for the heart: since God's love toward me had no beginning, it can have no ending! Since it be true that "...from everlasting to everlasting..." He is God, and since God is "love," then it is equally true that "from everlasting to everlasting" He loves His people.

3. It is sovereign. This also is self-evident. God Himself is sovereign, under obligations to none, a law unto Himself, acting always according to His own imperial pleasure. Since God is sovereign, and since He is love, it necessarily follows that His love is sovereign. Because God is God, He pleases; because God is love, He loves whom He pleases. Such is His own express affirmation: "...Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13). There was no more reason in Jacob why he should be the object of Divine love, than there was in Esau. They both had the same parents, and were born at the same time, being twins; yet God loved the one and hated the other! Why? Because it pleased Him so to do.

The sovereignty of God's love necessarily follows from the fact that it is uninfluenced by anything in the creature. Thus, to affirm that the cause of His love lies in God Himself, is only another way of saying, He loves whom he pleases. For a moment, assume the opposite. Suppose God's love were regulated by anything else than His own will, in such a case He would love by rule, and loving by rule He would be under a law of love, and then so far from being free, God would Himself be ruled by law. "...in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to"--What? Some excellency which He foresaw in them? No; what then: "according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:4, 5).

4. It is infinite. Everything about God is infinite. His essence fills heaven and earth. His wisdom is illimitable, for He knows everything of the past, present and future. His power is unbounded, for there is nothing too hard for Him. So His love is without any limit. There is a depth to it which none can fathom; there is a height

to it which none can scale; there is a length and breadth to it which defies measurement, by any creature standard. Beautifully is this intimated in Ephesians 2:4: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us," the word "great" there is parallel with the "...God so loved" of John 3:16. It tells us that the love of God is so transcendent it cannot be estimated.

"No tongue can fully express the infinitude of God's love, or any mind comprehend it: it 'passeth knowledge' (Eph. 3:19). The most extensive ideas that a finite understanding can frame about Divine love, are infinitely below its true nature. The heaven is not so far above the earth as the goodness of God is beyond the most raised conceptions which we are able to form of it. It is an ocean which swells higher than all the mountains of opposition in such as are the objects of it. It is a fountain from which flows all necessary good to all those who are interested in it" (John Brine, 1743).

5. It is immutable. As with God Himself there is "...no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17), so His love knows neither change nor diminution. The worm Jacob supplies a forceful example of this: "...Jacob have I loved..." declared Jehovah, and despite all his unbelief and waywardness, He never ceased to love Him. John 13:1 furnishes another beautiful illustration. That very night one of the apostles would say, "...shew us the Father..."; another would deny Him with cursings; all of them would be scandalized and forsake Him. Nevertheless, "...having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." The Divine love is to no vicissitudes. Divine love is "...strong as death...Many waters cannot quench love..." (Song of Sol. 8:6, 7). Nothing can separate from it: "His love no end nor measure knows, No change can turn its course, Eternally the same it flows, From one eternal source."

6. It is holy. God's love is not regulated by caprice, passion, or sentiment, but by principle. Just as His grace reigns not at the expense of, but "but righteousness" (Rom. 5:21), so His love

never conflicts with His holiness, "...God is light..." (I John 1:5) is mentioned before "...God is love" (I John 4:8). God's love is no mere amiable weakness, or effeminate softness. Scripture declares "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). God will not wink at sin, even in His own people. His love is pure, unmixed with any maudlin sentimentality.

7. It is gracious. The love and favour of God are inseparable. This is clearly brought out in Romans 8:32-39. What that "love" is from which there can be no "separation," is easily perceived from the design and scope of the immediate context: it is that good will and grace of God which determined Him to give His Son for sinners. That love was the impulsive power of Christ's incarnation: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). Christ died not in order to make God love us, but because He did love His people. Calvary is the supreme demonstration of Divine love. Whenever you are tempted to doubt the love of God, Christian reader, go back to Calvary.

Here then is abundant cause for trust and patience under Divine affliction. Christ was beloved of the Father, yet He was not exempted from poverty, disgrace and persecution. He hungered and thirsted. Thus, it was not incompatible with God's love for Christ when He permitted men to spit upon and smite Him. Then let no Christian call into question God's love when he is brought under painful afflictions and trials. God did not enrich Christ on earth with temporal prosperity for "...he had not where to lay his head..." But He did give Him the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). Learn then that Spiritual blessings are the principal gifts of Divine love. How blessed to know that when the world hates us, God loves us!

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of death and the grave. When the trumpet shall sound, the whole of redeemed manhood shall start into life. When Peter came out of prison, the angel smote him, and his chains fell off, and he came out of prison, but he did not quit till he had put on his sandals. He did not leave even a pair of old shoes for Herod and his jailors. So shall it be with the children of God at last: "from beds of dust and silent clay," when the angel's trumpet shall ring out, they shall ring out, they shall arise, and they shall leave nothing behind; they shall not leave an essential particle in the tomb. They shall rise, body, soul, and spirit completely redeemed of the Lord. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Christ knows what he has bought, and he will have it; even to the last atom he will have that which he has purchased. He shall not enter into life halt, or maimed, or having one eye. He will preserve his people in their entirety, and present them "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Observe that, in the close neighborhood of the text, we read of persecution. Beloved, if persecution should come it cannot really harm you. The three Hebrew children, when they came out of the fire, were not scorched or singed; there was not the smell of fire upon their hats, their hosen, or their hair. When God's people pass through the fires of persecution, they shall not be losers; they shall go through the fires altogether unharmed; nay, they shall win the martyr's palm and crown, which shall make them glorious for ever, even if they die in the flames. Therefore, fear nothing. Nothing shall by any means harm you; in the end your sufferings shall be your enrichment. Though you count not your lives dear unto you, precious shall your blood be in his sight.

Besides persecution, there may come to you accident or sudden calamity. Never be afraid. It is half the battle in an accident, to exhibit presence of mind, therefore let the child of God be calm and self-possessed; for although you should suffer in body, your true self will be safe. Though in the tornado, or in the shipwreck, or in cholera, or in fire, you should be placed in outward peril even as others are, yet your real life is insured by the covenant of grace from all injury. Therefore, rest in the Lord, for you shall be safe though a thousand should fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand. If you lose, your loss shall be transmuted into a real gain. Sickness, if sickness comes, shall work your health. God's children have often been ripened by sickness. They are like the sycamore fig, which never gets sweet until it is bruised. Amos was a bruiser of sycamore figs, and affliction is God's Amos to bruise us into sweetness. Maturity comes by affliction. Alas! you say, "I have lost a dear friend." Trust in God, and by divine friendship the void in your heart shall be more than filled. Have you lost a child? The Lord will be better to you than

ten sons. Should your father and your mother be taken from you, you shall find them both in Christ, and be no orphan. Thus doth the promise stand: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Trust, then, in the Lord at all hazards. Trust in him in deep waters as well as on the shore. When the waves are raging, trust your God as well as when the sea is as glass. When the sea roars, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, trust in Jehovah without the shade of a doubt, for "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Wherefore should you fear? Your vessel carries Jesus and all his fortune. If you are drowned he cannot swim, he sinks or swims with you; for thus has he put it, "Because I live, ye shall live also." If your Lord lives, you must live. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words, and go quietly, patiently, happily, joyfully through the world, under divine preservation, since "the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

As for you who are not in Christ, I feel for you a great sorrow, because you cannot partake in the joy of this preservation. As for the righteous, the stars in their courses fight for them, and the beasts of the field are in league with them. But as for you, earth groans to bear the weight of such a sinner, and the elements are impatient to avenge the quarrel of God's covenant by destroying you. All things work together to bring upon you the justice which you provoke. Flee! Flee! Flee! You have but one friend left: flee to him! That friend, "the Friend of Sinners," entreats you to come to him. Hear him as he cries in tenderest accent, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Come to Jesus; come at once, for his dear love's sake! Amen.

BREAD

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drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum" (John 6:48-59).

In this chapter Jesus Christ has spoken of Himself as the bread of life and also of faith as the work of God. He stated that He was the bread of life and He was that to them that believe by faith, the work of God. Now He begins to show what of Himself is this bread, namely His flesh. To eat of that bread we must think about two things. The preparation of this food. Jesus Christ said that His flesh was meat indeed and His blood was drink indeed. He said He was the bread of life. He wants to show the Jews here the preparation of this food. When someone calls you to supper, then there has been a preparation made for that meal. There has been some

things that have taken place before you can sit down at the table and enjoy a great meal that has been prepared for you.

Jesus said He, through faith, the work of God, was the bread of life. He said now He wants to present Himself as the preparation of this food. In verse 51 of our text He said I am the living bread. He said the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world. In verse 53 of our text He says again, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. And also in verse 55 of our text He said for my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed. So Jesus wanted to tell the Sadducees and Pharisees here in the presence of the disciples concerning Himself as the bread of life. The preparation of this food, not only the preparation of the food, but the anticipation of this food. We must eat this food. Notice verse 54 of our text. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

If we are going to enjoy a great meal we have to come to the table. We have to sit down at the table and we have to consume that meal as nourishment for our body. So then its not so much preparation of this wonderful food as it is the participation of it. To participate in this food. Jesus tells them in verse 54 of our text. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." We can't say it was a beautiful meal, it was well prepared and it had great appeal to it; but yet I wasn't hungry and I did not participate in the food. You must partake of the benefit in which I am about to bestow upon those that believe, by going to the cross. It is not only the preparation of this food but also the partaking of it. Verse 56 and 57 of our text has the same bearing and the same meaning. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." So we must participate in this food. Jesus Christ here is using the term figuratively not literally. Those that are saved and have had a divine revelation concerning what Jesus Christ has already said in verse 35 and verse 36 could participate is what He is saying in verse 51 through 58 of our text. And Jesus said in verse 35. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." In other words He said if you partake of my flesh it is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed through the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you perceive and believe my words and believe on me and believe on Him that sent me then you will never hunger or thirst anymore.

If you sit down and you eat a great big meal you don't have room for anything else. So it is the active participation of the soul upon things spiritual and divine. They are represented by and through the gospel of Jesus Christ; acts of faith. Coming by

faith, receiving by faith, acknowledging by faith; and to participate is what Jesus Christ is saying. The action of the soul and the wakening of the soul from death is through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Verse 36 already tells us this, "But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not." You see me and acknowledge me, but you believe me not. You can't hear my sayings because you are not of my sheep, Jesus said in John chapter 10.

The second thing we want to notice is how this discourse of Christ was liable to be mistaken and be misconstrued by many people today. There might be men that see and do not perceive or understand. That is what Jesus Christ was meaning that they might see and not perceive, understand; or be spiritually blind. It was not perceived by the Jews to whom it was first declared. "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John 6:52).

Many went back and followed Him no more after that. People today cannot conceive and can not perceive or understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. But the Jews didn't believe it and strove among themselves. They whispered in each other's ears their dissatisfaction. How can this man give us His flesh to eat? So they strove among themselves. To suffer and to die for us is what He is talking about here.

It had been misunderstood by the church at Rome as a sacrament; literally eating the flesh of the Son of God and drinking His blood. That is a continual sacrifice and a continual crucifixion of Jesus Christ every second and every minute of every day around this universe. They say the high priest can bless the bread, the little wafer, or whatever they use, and he can bless the wine. They believe he turns it literally into the flesh of Jesus Christ and the blood of Jesus Christ. So it means a continual sacrifice. So Christ is being crucified every minute of every day around the world.

It is misunderstood by many religious people, believing that if they take the sacrament before they die they will surely go to heaven. If they eat the bread and drink the wine before they die surely they must go to heaven because they are partaking of the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ and drinking his blood. So many people take what they call the Lord's Supper. They take it to people who are sick at home and people who are in the hospital when they are dying. They say, brother you need to eat this and drink this and be partakers of this, and then they refer to John chapter 6.

Many people today, even in the ranks of Baptists, take this literally when speaking of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a wonderful and marvelous thing but it was not instituted here. This was before the Lord's Supper was instituted. This doesn't have anything to do with the Lord Supper. He is talking about his flesh being crucified, and his blood being shed on the cross of Calvary.

What is meant by the flesh and blood of Christ? In verse 53 of our text it says, "Then Jesus said unto them Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of

the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." The flesh and blood which He assumed in His incarnation when He took upon Him the seed of Abraham, that is what He is talking about. When He took upon Him the seed of Abraham, body for body is what He is talking about. As His body was given that He might suffer and bleed on the cross that our bodies might be delivered from the condemnation and judgment of God. When Jesus Christ died He not only saved my soul, but my body as well. He died for the whole individual believer in Christ, because He is going to bring that body out of death one day. He is going to change that body.

My flesh which I will give to be crucified is what Jesus is saying. Notice in verse 51 of our text: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Not the whole world, but the life of the believer, the life of those that will come and acknowledge Him and receive Him as Lord and Saviour. Jesus Christ has already covered that in John 6:37-40. We see the charge and commission Christ received from the Father. That is what He is talking about. "The charge and commission I received from my Father," He says. I will give my flesh for the life of the world. For the commission and charge of those in which the Father had given Him in the everlasting covenant in Eternity.

When Jesus made this profound statement, what He is saying is to purchase redemption by ransom. The ransom has to be the price of it. Body for body. His life must go for ours that ours might be spared. Jesus is talking about the purchase of redemption.

The promise of the covenant and eternal life. These are called the flesh and blood of Christ. You talk about the promises of God, the everlasting covenant of God, and what God has promised us in the Word of God. What are they called? They are called the flesh and blood of Christ. In other words, outside of that we would not go to God and have eternal life.

Why are they called flesh and blood of Christ? Why did Jesus say "the bread I will give is my flesh?" Because they are purchased by His flesh and blood, by the breaking of His body and the shedding of His blood on the cross of Calvary. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Cor. 6:20). In the book of redemption of the everlasting covenant, it is written in the price of blood. He has given His flesh and blood on the cross of Calvary. The Greek word for it means the price of blood. I Peter 1:19 says: "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"

Why is it called flesh and blood, this everlasting covenant? Because they are meat and drink to our souls. Sinners out there are longing for something. They are wanting some kind of satisfaction. (Continued on Page 11, Col. 4)

1989 MEETING IN TULSA

I do this day remember my faults. Oh, one hates to remember his faults. One hates to apologize therefore. One hates to try and straighten out and make up for his faults. But it is the right thing to do, and it is helpful to one to make the attempt. I refer to my failure to write about my meeting in Tulsa in 1989. I have no excuse to offer. I have no explanation to give. I just forgot to do what I have done each time I have visited and preached in Tulsa. I ask the forgiveness of those involved and who have watched and waited for this article and have been disappointed by its absence.

I am sixty two years old; I know you don't believe that; I am so full of vim and vigor, and look so young; but I am. And with that, comes a forgetfulness which is troubling and embarrassing. Of course, with my failing memory, and my forgetting to write this shortly after my return home, I will not be able to remember many of the details and to write as I would, had I done it when I should.

Katie went with me this time, and this certainly added much to the trip and the meeting. We have some valued members in Tulsa, and I have been going out each year to preach for them a week, or almost a week. This has always been a very enjoyable part of my year's activities in the service of the Lord. Katie and I left home after church on Sunday, June 25th. We travelled past Louisville, and then spent the night in a motel. We travelled the next day to Tulsa. We arrived there earlier than announced. We have a daughter and her husband and three grandchildren in Tulsa. I will not say that this influenced Katie to go with me, though likely it played a part in her decision.

It was surely good to see these loved ones. We had a fine time visiting with them. I guess that my favorite part of this part of my time in Tulsa was in giving our granddaughter, Heather, some driving instructions, and taking her to get her driver's license. I really enjoyed this. It is always a joy to see loved ones and spend a little time with them.

But the main reason for my trip to Tulsa was to serve the Lord in the preaching of His Word. When I pastored in Tulsa some years ago, I made some Christian friends who mean very much to me. Some of these are now members of our church here, and I have been going out to visit them and preach for them each year. Time is catching up with me, but I hope I can continue this for some years to come.

These people constitute a mission work of our church. A dear preacher brother, Murray Tyler oversees this work for us. He is a fine man, and a sound and able preacher of God's Word. He is very strong in the truths we believe. He is growing older and weaker. He has many health problems. Please pray for him that God will bless him and give him strength to continue this work. It is difficult to labor with so few people and to remain faithful, but God will reward for faithfulness even when we do not have the success we would like.

These people meet in the home of Sister Jeannie Maddux, one of the finest Christian women I have ever known. She is a very

dedicated Christian - to the service of the Lord, and the truths of His Word. Our daughter, Roland and Pat Caves are members of our church in Tulsa along with the ones mentioned. Please pray for these people. Some of them are very very faithful; some need to be more faithful. It would be simply wonderful if some preacher would be led of the Lord to go to Tulsa and take over this work. We would be glad to organize them into a church. Brother Tyler does what he can, but he is not able to take the work of pastoring a church, and does not feel led that way. He is a great servant of the Lord, and would be willing to help a preacher who would come there and really preach the truth. I would give this warning: a man would have to be a sound and strong preacher to satisfy these people's hunger for the Word. I do think that, God willing and blessing, some preacher could eventually have a good church there. If anyone is interested in this, contact me about it.

I have already written about the Charles Hopkins family relative to this week of meetings. It was a great joy to have them in two of the services, and to have a time of fellowship with them. Three of them joined our church at this time, and we praise the Lord for them. They live in Guthrie, Okla. about a hundred miles from Tulsa. They have a meeting in their home each Sunday. They dress for church, Brother Hopkins teaches a lesson, and they listen to a tape of one of my sermons. They invite others to visit with them. Pray for them that God will bless them in these things. I will say no more in this article about them, as I have already done so in a previous article.

We had the best meeting this year of any year I have done this. This is one reason I just cannot understand why I forgot to write about it. We had more people in the services than we have had before. We had twenty or more one night, and good attendance each service. These people delight in the Word. It was a great joy to me to preach this meeting. Of course, I preached the same truths we have in this paper; I would not have dared do otherwise.

Jeannie had refreshments for us each night after the services, and others brought in some food to help in this. We had a blessed time of fellowship each night in this way as well as in the services. Katie's presence in the services added to our blessings. Linda and the grandchildren were present at all of the services. It was a joy to see Mike Caves in one or more of the services. He is Roland' and Pat's son, and I had not seen him for some time. It was a blessing to see him again. We had several visitors during the meeting. I am almost afraid to mention any as I know I will forget some - forgive me if I do and remember my age and the length of time involved. Judy Chiles was present at several services. She has been here to visit a few times, and we have learned to think highly of her. We went out and ate a fine country meal with her one day. Jeannie's piano teacher graciously came to some of the services and played for us. This added much to those services. Some ladies from Judy Chiles' church came and added to those services by singing for us.

Sandy Dilley, a school teacher friend of Jeannie, was with us some. I am sure I have forgotten some, but please know that I value the presence of each person in each service. As usual, I had a fine visit and meal with Brother Tyler and his good wife. This is always a remembered part of my Tulsa trips. As I said, it has been some months since this trip, and I am not able to write in detail as I ordinarily would. It was a time of blessing. I enjoyed it greatly. I enjoyed the visit with Linda and her family, the other visits I made, including one meal at the Caves, and the services. I do hope I will be forgiven for anything I have left out.

Jeannie came home with us and stayed a short time. We always enjoy her visits with us. Katie, Jeannie, and I left Tulsa early on July 3rd. We travelled to Pacific, Missouri where the Archers, members of our church here, live. This has become a regular part of my Tulsa trip. The Archers mean much to us, and it is always a joy to visit them. We had some fine fellowship with them, I then preached to those in the home, and we then had a fine meal, before continuing our journey. It was sad that Dorothy Archer was in the hospital and unable to be with us for this service. She spent much time in 1989 in the hospital. Please remember the Archers in your prayers. Four of the family are members of our church including a daughter, Mary Witherspoon. Tim Witherspoon is also a member here. These people are a blessing to us. One of the many highlights of my years of serving the Lord (and the highlights are many) is the first visit I made with the Archers and a later visit and baptismal service in the river behind their home. Katie was happy to get to meet the ones she had not already met, and she really missed getting to meet Sister Dorothy. I look forward to my next visit with these fine people.

After lunch, we traveled on to Owensboro, Ky. for a brief visit with Joe, Karen, and three wonderful grandchildren. They have now purchased a home and live in the country a short distance from Owensboro. It is always a blessing to visit this home. Joe says that Sam is my pet. Sam says that Joe is. But neither is right. I love Joe, Sam, and Marvin all very much; and love the dear grandchildren they have provided for me. Joe and Karen are fine Christians, and it is always a joy to fellowship with them. I was able to see John star in a baseball game. I saw Joe play (not star) in a softball game. Deborah just starred in everything, especially in being a very sweet granddaughter. I guess one of the major joys of this whole trip was getting to see two granddaughters, Heather (the new driver) and Deborah; and four grandsons, Daniel (a live wire, who caught his first fish during this time); Brian, the youngest and a very sweet child; Steve and John, Joe's boys who made some Tulsa trips with me in the past. Again, it was good to visit Joe and family on our way home.

We arrived home on July the fourth, rather late. It had been a great trip with many memorable experiences. It was very good to have Katie with me on this trip - we usually go at separate times so she can have a longer visit

with Linda and family; but I was glad it worked out this way this time. May the Lord bless those who added to my comfort and blessings on this trip. May God especially bless the mission in Tulsa, the Hopkins in Guthrie, and our loved ones we visited at this time.

BREAD

(Continued from Page 10)

faction. They are wanting something to take place and transpire in their life, and that is what Calvary is. That is what Jesus Christ was when He gave His flesh and His blood for the remission of our sins. The privileges of the gospel are as His flesh and blood to us, prepared for the nourishment of our souls. He has already compared Himself to bread which is necessary food; to flesh which is delicious. It is a feast of fat things, Isaiah 25:6 says. The soul is satisfied with the fatness whereof it talks about in the Word of God. In Job 23:12, it says "I esteemed his words more than my necessary food." It's nourishment for our body that we may grow thereby, grow in the grace and knowledge of our wonderful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So the Word was made flesh the Bible says in John 1:14. In Psalms 63:5 it says my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. His Word in Christ and His glorious gospel. There is a real solid satisfaction in this meat and drink indeed to the heart of the sinner and unto the troubled soul.

What is meant by eating this flesh and drinking this blood which is so necessary and beneficial to it? This means neither more nor less than believing in Jesus Christ. As we partake of meat and drink by eating so we partake of Christ and His benefits by faith. This means believing in Christ. Believing in Christ includes four things as it is compared to eating the flesh of the Son of man and drinking His blood.

First of all, it applies to an appetite for Christ. Jesus said to them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have not life in you." The Sadducees and Pharisees didn't have an appetite for Christ. They didn't want the bread of life. They didn't want meat indeed and drink indeed. Only those that have a divine revelation by God through the gospel of Jesus Christ have this appetite. This spiritual eating and drinking begins with a hunger and thirst after God. It seeks after Christ, not willing to take up with anything short of Christ.

Secondly, there is an application of Christ to one's self. Jesus is telling them not only will you have an appetite for meat. Meat looked upon will not nourish, but meat fed upon is made our own. We must receive Jesus Christ so as to appropriate Him to ourselves. The food becomes part of us after we consume it. It becomes nourishment for us and becomes part of us.

It also means eating the flesh of the Son of man and drinking His blood. It means the delight in Christ and His salvation. Christ

and Him crucified must be meat and drink to us. We must feast upon the dainties of the New Testament in the blood of Christ. All the dainties and all the fat things that God has for us and promised us in the New Testament. We feast upon them through the blood of Christ.

The fourth thing is the derivation of nourishment from Him. It means a dependency upon Him for support and comfort of our spiritual life. The strength and growth and vigor of the new man to feast upon Christ is to feast upon Him. We receive strength and fidelity from Christ. Our feeding upon Christ first is a certain sign that we have spiritual life. Many say that they are a child of God but have no desire toward Christ or have no hunger or desire toward His Word. If the body does not hunger and thirst, certainly it does not live. Our body cannot live without food, neither can our souls live without Jesus Christ. We shall be one with Christ. As our bodies are one with our food when it is digested, we live by faith in Christ crucified. We live by faith in Him. We shall live eternally by Him.

APPRECIATED LETTERS

Dear Brother Wilson:

I am sending a donation to be used as you see fit. How I wish it could be more. We need your prayers for our grand-daughter. I am so thankful for the Examiner. It is comforting to read the messages at this time. God bless and keep each one there.

Mrs. Merle K. Hall,
Knob Noster, Mo.

Dear Baptist Examiner,

After receiving our first couple of issues of TBE, we are so impressed and excited about the articles in the paper that we want more of our family to receive your publication! Please include the following families in your mailing list... Thank you so very much! Love,

Roger & Melissa Carter
Naples, Fla.

Dear Brethren:

I was at a fellowship meeting in Oakland, Ca., and I picked up a copy of your paper and thoroughly enjoyed it. I would count it a privilege to be put on your mailing list. It is very hard to find good Missionary Baptist papers. May the Lord richly bless your endeavors in this paper.

Larry R. Tilton, Salinas, Ca.

Dear Brother Wilson,

It is a pleasure to be of some help with the work there. With the Lord's help I will continue to help. Our mother is 86 and in poor health. I stay home most of the time to care for her. The Examiner is a great blessing to me. I do pray God's blessings on you, your family and the work you are doing. Thank you for prayers and all that all of you do there. Enclosed is a small amount. Use wherever you wish. Many thanks.

Betty Sanders, Hartsville, Tn.

CAN YOU IMAGINE THIS?

Paul approving of homosexuality and lesbianism as alternate life styles?

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Rom. 1:26-27).

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY

The attempt by the Government of our land at this present time to legalize Sabbath trading and allow shops to open on the Lord's Day throughout the land is a matter of the deepest concern to Christians throughout the nation and one which fills their mind with great foreboding should the attempt succeed. It is not relaxation of these laws which is required at the present time but their more rigid enforcement and their application to Scotland as well as to the rest of the country.

In Scotland, many shops, especially the large stores, open on the Sabbath day though with some notable exceptions. The shops that refrain from following this general and increasing trend are to be commended for their action in face of the increasing secularization of the Sabbath day by their competitors and these shops and stores are worthy of the support of all right thinking people. The trend we see of shops trading on the Sabbath day is not confined to this country but is appearing also in other countries which have been noted hitherto for their respect in this regard to the law of the Sabbath. Satan's attack on the Sabbath, at this time is more extensive than may at first be realized.

The law of the Sabbath is one of the great benefits and blessings which the God of heaven bestowed upon mankind from the beginning of time. It is a creation ordinance and, as such, is wrongly represented as merely a Jewish ordinance which passed away with the coming of Christ. On the contrary, Christ revealed Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath showing that it was intended not only for the Old Testament Church but for the New Testament Church as well. The destruction of the Sabbath would effectively remove from the minds of men their relationship to, and their duty towards the great God of eternity. The worship of God, for which the Sabbath was intended would soon cease and men would lapse into infidelity or heathenism.

It was the act of a gracious God to give to men the inalienable right to freedom from unnecessary secular activities on His holy day. The example which sanctioned this practice was His own resting on the seventh day from the work of creation, while the duty of resting on the Christian Sabbath is additionally enforced by the example of Christ who rested from His great work of redemption when He rose from the dead on the first day of the

week. The commemoration of that great event -- the rising again of the Son of Man from the dead is deeply embedded in the law of the Sabbath, so that men cannot now neglect or trample underfoot the law of the Sabbath without doing the greatest dishonor to Christ and incurring the wrath of the God of heaven.

No legislation of man can destroy the law of the Sabbath. Though rulers and legislators in nations may pass laws to dispense with the law of the Sabbath, the law of the Sabbath remains embraced forever in the law of God and that law or any of its commandments can never be disannulled.

By this law nations and their rulers shall be judged at the last day. The very law that they trampled underfoot, and which they thought they had buried for ever, shall rise against them at that day and they will discover its binding obligation upon them in that day.

Even now, while "the kings of the earth and rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us", we are told that "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." His message to them in His own Word is: "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." What fearful blindness has taken hold of the minds of the rulers of the nation, when they are prepared to embark on their present course. Let them give good heed to God's Word and the solemn warnings contained in it to them that defy the Most High. Should they legislate to remove the claims of the Sabbath from the Statute book of our land, it will only be to their own undoing and to the detriment of the people of our nation whom they profess to serve. May God, in His mercy, prevent such an outcome, and may the law of the Sabbath be enshrined, not only in the legislation of our nation, but also, by the blessing of God, in the hearts of the people of the land. Only in this way may the nation be raised up from the depths to which it has fallen.

May the same be true also of other once Protestant nations who are following a similar course to Britain in seeking to legislate for the opening of shops on God's holy day.

Anxiety is the rust of life, destroying its brightness and weakening its power. A childlike and abiding trust in God's providence is its best preventative and remedy.

--Copied

THE CONVERSION OF A GRATEFUL SINNER

By T. B. Freeman

At this season of the year, right much to do and say about Thanksgiving is manifested. Would God it might all be sincere. One of the greatest sins of all times is the sin of ingratitude. It was the sin of the heathen idolaters mentioned in Romans 1:21 which says, "neither were thankful." This great sin is also listed among the great sins of apostasy in II Timothy 3:1-9, relating to the last days of this dispensation. We read about the ten lepers in Luke 17. While Jesus healed all ten, yet, there was only one that returned to give Him the glory for the wonderful miracle.

Now, the woman who was a sinner, I wish to write a word about, is spoken of in Luke 7:37-50. This woman must have been of a very low character, and one who had led a profligate life. She anoints our Lord while He was in the house of Simon the Pharisee. She "stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and

anointed them with ointment." This love and gratitude for Christ excited the Pharisee with indignation, and "he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."

Our blessed Lord defends this kind deed of the woman by setting forth a parable, addressing it primarily to Simon, which reminds us somewhat of the parable the prophet Nathan proposed to David to call his mind to his great sin recorded in II Samuel 12:1-7. So Jesus says, "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most." Jesus tells him that he has rightly judged. Then He pushes in the sword, like

Nathan did to David when he said, "Thou art the man." He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, so to speak, you see this woman? I came into your house, and you gave Me no water for My feet. But she has washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but she hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil you did not anoint, but this woman has anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto you, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

The love and gratitude expressed by this forgiven sinner were the evidences of her being saved by Christ through His sovereign grace. She was saved like all sinners who have ever been saved, by grace through faith, as we see in verse 50.

May God give us all who are saved more grace of gratitude to be thankful to Him for so great salvation, that we may humble ourselves under His mighty hand.

THE UNBAPTIZED BELIEVER

by A.A. Davis

Much is said today in religious circles about baptism. One school of thought says baptism is of no importance, it makes no difference whether you are baptized, how you are baptized, or why you are baptized. This school plays down the divine command. Another school of thought takes the opposite position, that baptism is everything, that you cannot be saved until you are baptized, that you are not born again, cannot have peace with God, cannot be reconciled with God, cannot have your name in the Lamb's Book of Life, cannot have your sins forgiven, cannot be justified, cannot be redeemed, cannot pass from death to life, none of these until you are baptized.

Many born-again believers in Christ have not been baptized, being victims of the former school of thought. Many who have been baptized (humanly speaking, not scripturally) have never been born again as believers in Christ. These are victims of the latter school of thought. To the former, we say positively, no fear of the successful contradiction; there is no verse of Scripture which says "He that is baptized not shall be damned." To the latter we say with the same force; there is no Scripture which says "He that is baptized shall be saved."

The people called Baptists reject both these positions as absurd and unscriptural. If the former school of thought be correct, then Christ and the Apostles were in error. If the latter school of

thought be correct, then "He that lives closest to the creek, lives closest to the Lord." The following facts we submit:

1. The unbaptized were not added to the church (Acts 2:41) therefore, were not members of the New Testament church.
2. The unbaptized were not present at the Lord's table (I Cor. 11:18), the church observed the supper, and they were not members.
3. The unbaptized were not commissioned by Christ to preach the gospel or to baptize anyone (Matt. 28:18-19; Acts 1:22).
4. The unbaptized were not commissioned to teach the baptized disciples (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:22).
5. The unbaptized have not been planted in the likeness of His death (Rom. 6:5).
6. They have not been raised in the likeness of His resurrection (Rom. 6:5).
7. They have not given answer to a good conscience (I Pet. 3:21).
8. They have deprived themselves of great joys (Acts 8:39).
9. They have no visible divinely appointed evidence that they have gladly received His word (Acts 2:41).
10. They have not been raised in symbolic faith in the resurrection of Jesus (Col. 2:12).
11. They have not identified themselves with the blessed Trinity of the New Testament faith (Eph. 4:5).
12. They find themselves in embarrassing company (John 14:21; 15:14; Matt. 5:19).
13. Unregenerate world walks in disobedience to God (Eph. 2:1-4).
14. They are not in symbolic union with Christ (Gal. 3:27).
15. They declare as useless and meaningless the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:15-17).
16. In hypocrisy they call Jesus, "Lord" (Luke 6:46).
17. They are little in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:19).
18. In their disobedience they live under divine chastisement (Psa. 89:29-34; Heb. 12:5-10).
19. They reject the symbols of the great salvation (I Pet. 3:20-21).
20. Since they are not members of the New Testament church (Acts 2:41), they are not continuing steadfast in the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42).
21. They are not contending for all of the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3; Eph. 4:5).
22. They are faced with the same puzzling questions Jesus asked the chief priests and Pharisees (Matt. 21:25).
23. They encounter difficulty in convincing others that "they have gladly received His word" (Acts 2:41).
24. They are not in full harmony and obedience to the divinely revealed will and practice of Jesus Christ (John 4:1).

Excerpted from *The Baptist Story, Sermons on the Trail of Blood*, by A.A. Davis, from our Book Store.

When Paul the apostle, prayed three times for God to remove the thorn in his flesh, the answer which God gave him was satisfactory to him. "...My grace is sufficient for thee;..." The Lord has a purpose for these earthly trials and will fulfill that purpose for His glory and our good! One thing I know, the Lord's Himself, and His grace and strength are more manifest, more glorified, and more appreciated in our weaknesses. When I have nothing to say, nothing to contribute, and nothing in which to find comfort and joy, I will look to the Lord Jesus and find in Him all that I need. If infirmities and trials serve to make me look more fully to Christ, have less confidence in the flesh, and wait upon Him, then I rejoice in infirmities.

SPECIAL TAPE ANNOUNCEMENT

I have a tape of two sermons preached on Dec. 10th that our readers might be interested in. The two sermons on the tape are: "The Marriage Covenant" and "Divorce and Remarriage." These are subjects of great importance, and there is very much mis-understanding about them. If you want the tape, you may have it for \$1.50. Those who are on our tape mailing list will get it anyway, and can do as they desire about purchasing it.