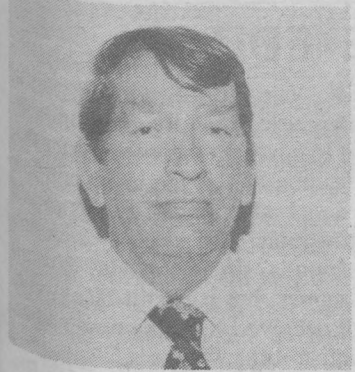


CREEPS

by Ray Hiatt

Ever met a "creep"? Sure you have. This is their habitat. They slink on the low ground among the noxious swamps and moors. They are the people for whom "cloak and dagger" was coined. They cloak their face and their deeds behind a facade of piety while they plunge the dagger to where it harms the most. Their breeding ground is the fogs and damps of a drizzling day in the loathsome slime. Darwin was right in one respect... some creatures do seem to evolve from slime, and "creeps" are chief



RAY HIATT

among them. (Forgive my usage of evolve).

In my youth I read and re-read the whole of Sherlock Holmes and confess that I can still read it with pleasure. The standard setting of a Holmesian tale is amid

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 3)

SIN VII

THE JUDGMENT OF THE UNSAVED

by Marion Lawson

First, let us speak on the need of a place of punishment. I might add that God created hell for the punishment of fallen or rebellious angels. Listen to II Peter 2:4, "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." When God created Hades or hell, He also created a temporary dwelling place for the dead saints of the Old Testament. You will recall the happening about the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man being in torments in hell, and Lazarus being comforted in Abraham's bosom. This place was called paradise. Christ moved the saints from paradise into the presence of the Heavenly Father after His resurrection. We read in Ephesians 4:8, "Wherefore He saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth."

When a child of the Lord dies now, he or she immediately goes into the presence of the Father. Paul relates in II Corinthians 5:8, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." The Lord introduced a new word relating to punishment of Christ-rejecting departed souls, and it is "Gehenna." During the Old Testament times,

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NEVER SAY GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER SIN NEVER

by Fred C. Beard
Text I Cor. 4:7

The more I talk to Christians, the more I am convinced that we, that is all Christians, have much more in common than the fact that we are saved by the precious



FRED BEARD

blood of Christ.

I look back in my own life, and I remember how it was with me, and how it was with you also. Just as Paul says in Ephesians 2:1-2, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

(Continued on Page 7, Col. 3)

by Charles J. Arnett
Philosophers and theologians have wrestled for many years about the problem of the existence of sin. How can sin exist in a universe designed and created by a holy God? Apart from philosophical subtleties the Holy Spirit can reveal truth to the child of God that no amount of philosophical study could reveal. One such truth is God's sovereignty over sin.

This article is written in the hope of leading sinners to receive Christ. You need to know your only hope is in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing the futility of sin should result in your turning from sin to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. The omnipotence of God is comfort to the soul seeking after peace and victory over sin. There are several truths about

God's sovereignty over sin that we wish to set forth in this article. For the sake of space I will not write out every Scripture section I refer to. However, the reader will be edified if he will look up and read the references. We begin with:

GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER THE EXISTENCE OF SIN: This truth is proclaimed in Ephesians 1:11. "...being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Note particularly, "worketh all things." One commentator said, "Not only did God make this plan that includes absolutely all things that ever take place in heaven, or in earth, and in hell - past, present, and future - pertaining both to the saved and unsaved - angels and

(Continued on Page 6, Col. 5)

IS IT HAIR, OR IS IT A HAT?

by Danny Davis

First Corinthians 11:1-16 deals with a head covering for the women. There are two main schools of interpretation on these verses. The first view suggests the head covering is a hat, or some type of veil, which covers the head. The second view says that a woman's hair is the covering intended. We will attempt to

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 5)



DANNY DAVIS

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A GODLY SUCCESSFUL LIFE

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." (II Cor. 10:12).

It seems that we meet more people in these perilous times who are faced with serious problems. Life is said to be of few days and full of trouble according to Job chapter fourteen, verse one. Nevertheless, God's children need not allow our troubles to rob us of the victorious life that we can, and do, enjoy in the abiding grace of God!

There are many ways in which

we measure a successful life. We have noticed the joy that was expressed on the faces of the youngsters in the various vacation Bible schools of the summer vacation period. We, as adults, should strive to renew our pleasures in Spiritual things causing our Spiritual pleasures to become highly elated, as are the youngsters. We should look for some amount of this pleasure throughout our entire lives since becoming children of God. Beloved, this would be a shadow of a Godly successful life. Certainly, there would be tremendous joy in a Godly successful life as God has ordained for His children. These youngsters radiate happiness now, but in a few years, as they grow older, pass other milestones, as they graduate from high school, then responsibility begins to register on their faces. Then, and only then, we see the



WALDO WHIDDON

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

THE WOUNDS IN THE HANDS OF JESUS

"And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6). The wounded Jesus is the most amazing sight in time and eternity. Let us gaze awhile on the Wounded One. Let us learn some lessons from this scene.

Let us look briefly at the problem of interpretation. I was greatly surprised when I first learned that there was any differ-

ence of opinion as to the one spoken of in this verse. I have since learned that this is a very divisive question, and seemingly there may be more who disagree with me than who agree.

The rule of context is a very important principle in Biblical interpretation. This rule tells us that we are to interpret a given verse of verses in the light of the context. The context is that portion of Scripture that precedes or follows after the verse under consideration. This is a very important rule, and is usually of great

help in understanding the meaning of a portion of Scripture. However, in this instance the immediate context is of no decisive help, and may even be confusing. The preceding context (vv. 3-5) speak of a false prophet. The following context speaks most certainly of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the "fellow" of the Lord of hosts, who is the shepherd of the sheep, and who is smitten by His Father. Verse 6 is dropped right in the middle of

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GOD'S PREDESTINATION

Messages 10 through 12

by Charles Half
Message 10

Do you know how the Bible pictures man? Now I know that our philosophers and our educators and many of our brilliant preachers picture man as being very dignified. They picture man as a great, noble and dignified human being. But let me give you the Bible picture of man. In Isaiah 41:14 God calls man a wiggling maggot. Whoever heard of a wiggling maggot living in earth's mire having any dignity? And then in Isaiah 64:6 we are told that God looks upon man as a menstuous rag. In II Peter 2:22 God pictures man as a wallowing sow and a vomiting dog.

Don't tell me that man has dignity. Man by nature is sinful, wicked and depraved. That is why the Scripture says in Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..." Man by nature hates God. He is at enmity against God. He is going in the opposite direction from God, and he wants to be left alone. So God must take the initiative if men are ever to be saved.

Let's take Adam and Eve for example. When Adam and Eve sinned against God, what did they do? They hid from God. Did Adam and Eve call on God? No, beloved, God had to call on them. Look at Adam and Eve. Where were they? They were hiding in the bushes. God said to Adam and Eve, "Where art thou?" Of course, God knew where they

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WOUNDS

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these contrasting contexts. Is it to be interpreted by the preceding context and made to refer to the false prophet, or is it to be interpreted in harmony with the following context and made to refer to the Lord Jesus Christ? The rule of immediate context just will not settle this question for us.

There are those who interpret this verse of the false prophet. It is the false prophet, they say, who has these wounds in his hands. Some say that he was wounded in the barbaric ritual of worshipping his idol god, much as the prophets of Baal in I Kings 18:28. Others say that he was wounded by others because of his worship of a false god. Some say that he was severely wounded as a child at home, and still bore the scars of those wounds.

I am totally convinced that this Scripture refers to our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that He is the One who has wounds in His hands which were received in the house of His friends. Not too far back, in Zech. 12:10, we read, "...and they shall look on me whom they have pierced...." One would think then that the one with wounded hands would be the Lord Jesus Christ. Zechariah 13:7 speaks of the one smitten by the Lord of hosts. We would think this to be the same one who is wounded in His hands in verse 6. I believe the pierced One of 12:10, the wounded One of 13:6, and the smitten One of 13:7 to be one

and the same, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every book I have read, applying this to a false prophet, has left me very dissatisfied. The explanations of such seem cloudy and unclear. I do not accept this interpretation.

I believe that a believer, reading this for the first time, with no previous knowledge of differing interpretations would say, "I know who that is; that's the Lord Jesus Christ. I really doubt that any believer ever adopted the false prophet theory on the first reading of this passage. I believe that the first impression upon reading this verse is that it speaks of Christ. First impressions need to be studied further; but often the last impression, following much and prayerful study, is the same as the first one. One often



Joe Wilson

sees more and deeper than the first impression, but seldom sees totally different therefrom.

I do not mean to at all disparage the spiritual character of those who see a false prophet here. Many commentators whom I deeply respect for spirituality and ability take this position. Please do not misunderstand the following. I do seem to feel for myself that there is a witness of the Holy Spirit to the identity of this Wounded One as the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not believe that scholarship necessitates identifying this one as the false prophet, and I believe that the impression on the heart of the believer, and the witness of the Spirit are much in favor of identifying this One as Jesus Christ. Furthermore, it fits so well. One seems to have to hack, and twist, and turn, and labor to apply this to the false prophet; but applying it to Jesus Christ everything just seems to fall easily into place.

Jesus Christ is the Wounded One. This is a terrible and awful fact. It staggers the thoughtful imagination. He who never sinned is the Wounded One. He who never deserved any pain, sufferings, or wounds is the Wounded One. Who put these wounds upon Him? Is it not the greatest of all proofs of men's depravity that sinful man put these wounds in the hands of Jesus Christ? Those hands were laid upon the sick, and they were healed. Those hands touched the dead, and they lived. Those hands took up little children, and He blessed them. Those hands were hands of gentle love; hands of kind compassion, hands of tender help. Those hands were uplifted hands of blessing. Yet, now they are wounded hands. Why did men take the tender, kind, helping hands of Jesus and wound them so violently? They drove cruel nails through those hands. Whatever weight of His body that was on those hands must have torn them into large, ragged, awful looking, painful wounds. What an awful thing!

This is an amazing and wonderful fact. He is the

Wounded One, but how could men overcome the Almighty God of heaven and earth and wound Him? His hands had parted the Red Sea. His hands had performed many wonderful deeds. His hands made all things that are. He held the sea in the hollow of His hand. What power could overcome Him and place those terrible wounds in His hands? No power could do this. He allowed men to do this to Him. He stretched out His hands and held them still while wicked men pierced them with cruel nails. No man could do this to Him, except He voluntarily submit thereto. He permitted men to do what they otherwise could have never done, and therefore His hands are wounded hands. It is a most wonderful and amazing fact that His hands are wounded.

I must make this a personal matter. He was "Wounded for Me." Yes, there on the cross, He was wounded for me. Oh, what amazing love is this, that the dear Son of God should stretch forth His hands that they might be "wounded for me." Until and unless I see this, those wounds will be nothing more than a subject of idle curiosity for me. But when I see this, oh, those wounded hands will be my salvation, my joy, my delight through all eternity.

Jesus Christ will bear the scars of those wounds for eternity. "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne...stood a Lamb as it had been slain...." (Rev. 5:6). We know that this Lamb is the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that "as it had been slain" means that the scars of His deadly wounds were still upon Him. I believe that He will bear those scars through all eternity.

I do not believe this will be true of any except the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that, if a saved person loses hand, leg, or whatever: he will have them all back in his glorified body. I believe that the thief, crucified by the side of the Saviour, will have all the scars of his wounds removed from his glorified body. I do not believe that any of the saints will bear in their glorified bodies any of the scars of wounds received in time. But I am sure that Jesus will bear the scars of His wounds forever.

When the Jews look to Him in saving faith, they will look on Him whom they pierced. They will see the scars of that piercing. Though it was the Roman soldiers who pierced them, yet it was Israel, for they gave Him over to Rome and instigated His death at the hands of Rome. So, it was Israel that pierced Him. It was in the house of His friends the nation of Israel - that He was wounded in His hands. When they see Him in saving faith, they will see the scars made by their piercing of Him. Jesus appeared to His disciples in His resurrected and glorified body and showed them His hands and His feet (Lk. 24:40), and surely this tells us that the wounds were still there. When Jesus told Thomas, "...Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side...."; He still had those wounds, though He was in His glorified body. Yes, Jesus will bear the scars of those wounds forever.

These wounds identify Jesus as the One who died on Calvary's old rugged cross. The two texts

referred to above show that these wounds identified Him to His disciples. They will eternally identify Him to the redeemed as the One who suffered, bled, and died for their eternal salvation. There will never be any doubt in heaven as to who the Saviour is. He is the one with the wounds in His hands. They will identify Him to believing Israel. They did not know Him when He was here before. But, after the Spirit of grace and supplication is poured out on them, and their eyes are opened, they will know Him by the print of the nails in His hands.

Those wounds will be the eternal wonder of the angels. Surely,

they could hardly believe it when they learned that the Second Person of the Trinity was going to become man and go down to earth to work out eternal salvation for God's chosen ones. Surely, it was a matter for amazement when they saw Him nailed to the tree. Surely, they will gaze in adoring wonderment at the wounds in His hands through all eternity.

Those wounds add power to His intercession. He is at the right hand of God making intercession for us. Oh, we need that! Oh, will He prevail in this? See Him as He holds up those wounded hands, and by those

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FROM THE EDITOR

PRO-CHOICE OR PRO-MURDER. Vile, filthy, wicked, sinful murderers do not like to admit what they are; therefore, they have invented the term "Pro-choice" and use it to cover up the vile murder that is in their hearts. It seems to be the fashion of the age to invent new terms for old sins. The drunk is now a sick alcoholic. The whore is a nymphomaniac. The thief is a kleptomaniac. The vile, wicked, and perverted homosexual is a gay. My friends, sin is still sin. We can cover it up and dress it up with new names, but it is still black, vile, wicked, hell-deserving sin. God is not deceived by these new names. God sees sin as it really is, and will punish it for what it is.

Now, we have the term "Pro-choice" as a cover up for murder. But honest and truthful men will still call it "Pro-murder." God sees it as murder, and will punish it as such. I get sick to my stomach of men and women advocating and defending vile, violent, wicked murder and calling themselves "Pro-choice."

Abortion is murder. No honest person will even attempt to deny this. I make bold to say that all who say they do not believe abortion is murder are liars of the worst sort. They know better, but they deliberately lie to cover up their murderous hearts.

The attempts to picture abortion as not being murder involve attempts to say that, that which is in the womb from conception to birth is not a real human life. Doctors know better than this. Lawyers know better than this. The woman who feels that life moving within her womb knows better than this. Pro-murderers, falsely called Pro-choice, know better than this. The Bible teaches better than this. "...There is a man child conceived" (Job 3:3). It was not just a fetus, or a non-human, non-person, thing that was conceived. It was a man child. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5). Surely, one sanctified and ordained to be a prophet is a real human life and a real person. "And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb...." (Lk. 1:41). Surely, John the Baptist who leaped in his mother's womb was a real person and not just a "thing" whose murder would be no crime. That which is conceived in the womb is a human, a person, therefore to abort that life is to commit the crime and sin of murder. The soul is connected with the life in the womb at the moment of conception. Of course, from conception there is true human life in the womb.

Abortion is murder. It is the violent murder of an innocent human being. I recently read of an unmarried woman who had a baby. Seeking to cover her sin, she put the baby in the toilet and it died. She was tried and convicted of murder. Why? Because she had taken the life of her baby. But had she had a doctor violently murder that baby in her womb, she would have been convicted of no crime. She would have been innocent of any wrong in the eyes of the law. Oh, what unreasoning inconsistency is this!

So, understand that abortion is murder. The woman who has an abortion is a vile and wicked murderess. The white robed doctor who performs the abortion is a "hit man", a murderer for hire. Those who assist the doctor in his murder, are accomplices in the act of murder. The one who pays for the abortion is one who hires a murderer and pays him to commit his foul deed. All who approve of abortion are murderers in their hearts. Understand this. It is not a light thing to favor abortion. It is to be guilty of murder in the heart. All who march and demonstrate in favor of abortion are murderers in their hearts. All politicians who favor abortion are murderers in their hearts. All judges who make decisions favoring abortion thereby make decisions in favor of murder.

Let us call it what it is. Let us not seek to cover up foul, vile, wicked crimes by calling them by another name. A rose, by any other name, would be as beautiful and smell as sweet. A sin, by any other name, is just as wicked, black, and vile. Murder, by any other name, is still the taking of a human life, and will be so judged by God. Let us call them what they are. They are not "Pro-choice"; they are "Pro-murder." Let a woman have the choice over her body. Let her keep her body to herself. Let her abstain from the sex act. If she does not want to have sex, let her not marry. If she does not want to get pregnant, let her abstain from sex. Let her have the freedom of choice as to her body. But when her choice involves the life of another human being, freedom of choice is at an end. We might as well legalize any and all murder as to legalize abortion, for there is no difference. We might as well give men license to murder for hire as allow doctors to perform abortion. No legitimate and proper justification of murder by abortion can be given. Yes, let us call them what they are. They are not "Pro-choice"; they are "Pro-murder."

WOUNDS

(Continued from Page 2)

marks of His atoning death adds irresistible weight to His pleadings on the behalf of His people. "Five bleeding wounds He bears, Received on Calvary. They pour effectual prayers, they strongly speak for me. Forgive him, oh, forgive they cry, Nor let the ransomed sinner die." As the high priest of old interceded on the basis of the offered sacrifice, so Jesus Christ intercedes for those for whom He made atonement, and His atonement secures and guarantees the effectiveness of His intercession. It is because He made a successful propitiation for our sins that He is able to make effective advocacy for us (I John 2:1-2). Yes, those wounds add power to His intercession.

Those wounds endear Him to His Father. I am not saying that the Father loves Him more since and because of those wounds, for He loved His Son infinitely and eternally. But His Father sent Him into the world to work out eternal redemption for those in the covenant of grace. He came to do the work His Father sent Him to do. Those wounds are marks of accomplishment. He did the Father's will. Surely, they endear Him to His Father.

Those wounds are eternal proofs of that great love where-with He loved the elect, those that the Father had given Him. He showed the greatest love one can have when He laid down His life for His friends. He commended (Proved) His love to us when He died for us on the cross. No matter what providence may bring our way, no matter what troubles and trials may come to us; surely, His wounds are eternal proof of His love. No matter what storms we may pass through; while we gaze at those wounds, we can never properly ask Him, "Carest thou not?"

The wounds in His hands will be the eternal wonder, joy, and delight of the redeemed. Oh, what those wounds will mean to us in eternity! We will delight to gaze upon them; we will smother them with kisses of love and appreciation. How often will we go to Him, and say, "Show us your hands"? Oh, beloved friends, do you not agree that those wounded hands will be our joy and delight through eternity? We shall never cease praising Him for His great love that moved Him to be wounded on our behalf. We will offer praises forever because there was One who was willing to be wounded for us.

Those wounds in His hands will be eternal ornaments or adornments of Jesus Christ. As a soldier, wounded in fighting for his country, proudly shows the scars of his wounds; so the wounds of Jesus will be His eternal "battle scars." He had gotten much glory to Himself by His deeds of years gone by, but on Calvary He reaped His greatest glory. The multitude of the redeemed will cast their crowns at His feet. They will sing "Worthy is the Lamb" unto all eternity. As Samson slew more in his death than during his whole life; so Jesus accomplished more by His death than by the thirty-three years of His earthly life. Those wounded hands will be the eternal proof of the victory He won at Calvary: when He accomplished, secured, and guaranteed the eternal salvation of all those for whom He died.

Let us think briefly of some who were wounded for Christ. Paul was one. He said, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17). Paul was branded by scars received in the service of the Master. He gloried in these marks. "...and when they had called the

apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:40-41). Oh, they are a multitude; those who have suffered for Jesus Christ. The martyrs are numbered by the millions. Many of them have had the most horrible wounds because of their faith in Christ.

There are great differences between these wounds and those of Jesus Christ. Though these sufferers did not deserve the wounds they received; yet, because of sin, they were deserving of much suffering, even eternal hell. Jesus, being totally without sin, did not deserve suffering of any kind. All His suffering was vicarious - suffered in behalf of others. The wounds of others have no saving power. Surely, those who received wounds in the service of the Lord will be richly rewarded for such, but those suffering have no saving power. The sufferings of Christ do have saving power; all for whom He suffered will be saved. Those who have wounds received in the service of Christ will not bear the scars thereof beyond this life. There will be no marks of earthly suffering in their glorified bodies.

Well, we are nearly through with our sermon; only the application remains. One auditor of a sermon asked, "Is the sermon done?" "No," replied the other, "The preacher has finished, but the sermon remains to be done." So it is with this message. The sermon remains to be done. It must be done by the reader. Let me remember that He was, "Wounded for me." Shall not this have great ennobling and sanctifying influence upon the rest of my days - or our days? We should, because of this, love Him with great love. He should be our first, foremost, and greatest love. All other loves should pale into insignificant nothingness compared with our love for Him. We should love Him more than all others and all else put together. We should show our love by Spirit-enabled holy living to His glory. Shall we delight in that sin that nailed Him to the cross? No, we put sin from us; we seek to live pure, holy, separated lives to His glory. We should serve Him with unrelenting zeal; ready at anytime, to go any place, and do anything to His glory. We do these things, not to obtain salvation, but out of great love to Him who obtained our salvation at great cost to Himself.

Unsaved one, gaze upon those wounded hands. See there your only salvation. See there your sure, certain and eternal salvation; if you will but "Look and live." "Place your hand in the nail-scarred hand." Oh, repent of your sins, trust in Him and receive Him as your Lord and Saviour; and you are eternally saved. "Wounded for me." Wounded, I hope, for you. At least, wounded for all who will receive Him. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. God bless you all.

ing fog banks. Doyle chose his setting well for there is no finer scene for foul mischief than in the concealing fogs where base creatures creep about to strike a cunning blow.

I was reading Jude today and verse 4 struck me with power. Our brother mentions "certain men" and gives their nomenclature in vast detail but begins by stating that they have "crept in unawares." There is a Holmesian story called "The Creeping Man" which is full of horror, but there is no horror to compare with the creeping man with whom the Christian and Christ's church must contend.

I asked my 14-year old daughter today if the word "creep" was still in the lexicon of teens. She said that it was. I asked her to give the term a contemporary definition and it seems that a "creep" today is of the same breed as their earlier counterparts. To be a "creep" is still to be all things odious and vile.

I have encountered some "creeps" on my journey with the Baptists, and they have impressed me in singular ways. I mention the Baptists because this is where the "creeps" creep in. After all, Jude says that these folks creep in and since they are human it isn't too much to say that where they creep in is into Christ's church, though Jude does not use the very word. Paul met the same species, for he tells the Galatians in 1:4 of "false brethren unawares brought in." "Unawares" seems to forge a connection between Jude's "creeps" and Paul's "false brethren."

What does a creep specialize in? Why, creeping, of course. How many of you know a creep when you meet him/her? You may know them by their trade-craft of creeping.

Biblically, the word is defined as someone who insinuates themselves into a company they are not compatible with, and this is always by stealth. What are the manifestations of creeping? They are cunning, guile, craftiness and stealth. Where do they ply their trade? Where else but in the godly company of Christ's church? Can you imagine Satan sending one of his "creeps" into a Presbyterian church? Nay. His agents are directed, in the main, at the Baptists.

Darwin is deplorable, but I shall borrow his progression as an example of the actual. Darwin says this... he says that first there was the germ of life (in an amoeba or some such thing). In the process of time of perhaps four and a half billion years (my aren't they precise) the amoeba changed itself into a more advanced creature. The amoeba became an animal and began to "creep" about on all fours, where once it had pretty much "slimed" its way along. Our English Cousin Charles then says that the "creeping" animal became so bright that it stood upright, and lo, a man suddenly emerged from generations of sliming and creeping. Poor Cousin Charles. He lost his balance in the 1830's and never recovered it.

I shall borrow his life chain to teach a lesson. Let us say that a lost man is slime (no far reach of the imagination). When this lost man is born again, he is a babe and as we know babes "creep" until they mature and stand erect and cease breaking things in their ineptness. Therefore, when you meet a "creep" you have either met a babe in Christ who is un-

able to stand erect or you have met a "false brother" who has crept in unawares.

The history of espionage from beyond the time of the Pyramids until now is a record of the usage of "double agents" placed in the camp. Satan is adept at this. What is a "false brother creep in unawares" but a double agent set to work mischief?

In my twenty four-years as a Baptist, I have seen and fled from a fair share of "creeps". I know them by their posture. They "creep", and this identifies them for what they are.

Did you know a person who avows he is a Christian who is secretive, sly, stealthy, cunning, underhanded and crafty? Do you know a person who speaks evil of the dignity of Christ's work, His church, and His saints? Do you know a person who plays the spy as Paul described his false brethren in Galatians? Do you know a person who dominates people to bring them into bondage? Do you know a person who incessantly murmurs and complains and speaks evil by his/her tongue? Congratulations. You have become acquainted with a creep by Jude's and Paul's description.

What do creeps do? Read Jude. Their dreams are filthy, they defile the flesh, they despise dominion (are beyond disciplinary control), and they speak evil of dignities or dignified things. They simply have no concept of dignity or decency. How many creeps have I met and fled from? More than 10 let me say, and not a few have been alleged Baptist ministers.

Satan sends his agents into a godly company to rend them. Creeps walk after their own lusts and seek to gain advantage of men. They are sly. Above all they are sly. They creep in the shadows and work harm on the edge of darkness. Know anyone like this? Then you know a creep.

Jude gives attention to the creep's tongue which speaks evil. The "generation of vipers" in our Lord's day were cunning in their words as they attempted to entrap our Lord in His. Do you know someone who plays the spy, who is undignified, who complains while speaking great swelling words? Then file him/her in your mind under creep.

I keep two mother cats and the litters come and go. Cat watching is my hobby, and I never tire of it. I learn from this. A cat is a creeper, for a cat, though tamed, is yet feral. A cat never walks... it creeps. A kitten is cute, cuddly... and creepy, and a grown cat has evil showing through its eyes. I see in the creeping nature of my cats the stealthy nature of Satan, and both are feral.

Seen any creeps lately? The nature of a Christian is to be open and honest, and his mistakes are open and honest. He does not creep, he does not work by craft and guile, and he does nothing in secret. Seen any creeps lately? Sure you have.

"The Lord knoweth them that are his" is as true of prodigals who are feeding the swine as of the children who sit at His table.

BOOK REVIEWS

We have a new book in our book store. It is "Last Words of Saints and Sinners" by Herbert Lockyer. It is a large compilation of what many saved and unsaved have said in their last hours. What a man says in his last words should tell much as to what he then feels about the way of life he had chosen. The last words of saints are a marvellous testimony to the reality and blessing of salvation. What a sinner says in his last words is a testimony to the failure of a life of sin to give happiness and security for the future. This book contains that which could be greatly used as illustrations in sermons. I recommend the book. It is a paperback and sells for \$7.95 which is not a bad price today.

We also have "Joy of Preaching" by Phillips Brooks. This is a reprint, formerly titled "Lectures on Preaching. The section of my library containing books on homiletics is one of the larger sections, and I have read more in that section that almost any other. I greatly enjoy books on homiletics. I read this book many years ago and it was a blessing to me. It is better than some and not as good as others. I do consider this a good book, and feel it would be helpful to any preacher. If a man will study it, appropriate it to himself, learn

from it, and put into practice what he learns, he can not but be helped thereby. This is a paperback of over 200 pages. It sells for \$8.95, and in today's book market is well worth the price.

We also have "Jesus is Coming" By William E. Blackstone. This is an old book, but is still one of the best in the field of prophecy. One of the great Premillennial preachers of recent years, when in seminary, was preparing to write his Doctoral thesis against Premillennialism and for Postmillennialism. In preparing for this, he got hold of this book, and it converted him to the Premillennial position, of which he became one of the more able advocates. I am glad this book is back in print and highly recommend it to students of prophecy. Brethren don't let this opportunity slip by. This book is a paperback and sells for \$7.95. If you don't have it, get it.

Order any of these books from our bookstore. We have a wide selection of books. We continually add new books to our inventory, if they are worthwhile. We can get you any book that is for sale. We have good prices, and we give 20% discount to churches and preachers on most items in our store. Order the above, or any other books from our book store, and remember the profit goes back into our book ministry.

CREEPS

(Continued from Page 1)

the fogs of London with foul play afoot in the swirling, cloak-

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

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

Can a church started with properly excluded members ever be a true church?

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"Let all things be done decently and in order." (I Corinthians 14:40). This scripture speaks of doing all things decently (becomingly), and in order or proper arrangement. I believe that this Scripture not only has application to the confusion concerning oral conduct in the church, but I also believe that everything done by a church is to be done decently and in order which reflects its overall condition as referred to in Colossians 2:5. No church should organize and give authority to a group that is made up of people who have been excluded, and who have not corrected the exclusion with the church from which they were excluded. No matter how proper or improper the exclusion, there is still a responsibility on the part of the excluding church and the excluded member concerning restoration. If a church were to organize a group made up of excluded members, that church would not be recognizing the authority of its sister church. I realize that this answer is my opinion and many churches seem to be in a state of believing this, but not practicing it today. This causes many problems. The excluded members would have to straighten out their exclusion before seeking to start a new church. If they did not, then I believe that they would be walking in a disorderly manner as to church authority.

I am not trying to lay down rules that would make material for a new church have to be perfect, for we could not accomplish that, but in this matter the importance of making right an exclusion on the part of the excluded member cannot be over looked. Substance is important. Probably none outside the Lord's true churches would care, but then they are not true churches to start with. Authority is indeed important to those who know the truth concerning it. The motions of birthing a new church can be gone through, but a still birth can be produced. Could such a church ever be a true church? In my opinion, visibly and mechanically, yes; but in substance and obedience, no. Let us observe to do all things decently and in order, and I believe that includes starting a new assembly. There is no reason not to set ex-

clusion right with the excluding church unless the reason lies in personality conflict, pride, and the like; none of which are true reasons for not setting things right. A new assembly is not to be started without anything that can be set right being set right. This would cause conflict and controversy later on. Our churches have more than enough conflict and accusations without deliberately ignoring something that is Scripturally questionable.

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Matthew 18:17; "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Let me answer this question with a loud and emphatic, No! I am sure that the churches that are associated with the Baptist Examiner will agree with this answer. If you do not, then you are wrong. There are many answers that I am not dogmatic about; this is not one of them. Though most, if not all, of the associated churches would agree with this answer, many of them do not practice the principles of this answer. The Bible says that a person who has been excluded from a true church is to be treated as an heathen and publican. I am sure that God would not recognize a church full of heathen and publicans.

The key word in this question is "properly." This word is the scapegoat for many of the wrong practices of some of our churches. The excluded member or members will tell their side of the story; and the church, which is hungry for members, will swallow that story, hook, line, and sinker. God have mercy on this type of practice. Let us remember that the church is the one with authority from God, not the individual members. Surely, a true church should not be so neglectful as to not talk with the excluding church. Yet I know of cases where some churches have refused to do this. This says nothing good about that church. Have we become so hungry for members that we totally neglect ethics, and even more important, Scriptures? Many have! If a church was to talk with the excluding church and think that church was wrong, shouldn't they seek to help bring about a reconciliation between the two parties. I believe you will find few occasions where the church is wrong. It is high time true churches

started recognizing to the fullest, the authority of sister churches. To take a group of people who were excluded and organize them into a church is to spit in the face of God and church authority.

If we would not recognize a church that was started with properly excluded members, then why is it that many churches in our ranks have received such members without so much as a rebuke from sister churches? Why is it that other churches will take and use such members in their own special services without ever even contacting the excluding church? Beloved, behind all of this is anger, jealousy covetousness and pride. None of these have any business in true churches. God is going to severely judge us if we do not start recognizing church authority. To receive excluded members into your church; to use excluded members in your church services; to continue fellowship with churches where you know this has taken place is to despise church authority.

You know this is true. We need restoration amongst our churches. This will not come until churches take a stand for practice and respect church authority. I have been so disappointed in some former preacher friends whom I thought were sound and strong in church truth. I have found that many of them are eaten away with jealousy and desire to get along with the wrong group. They have blatantly violated church truth. They have turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to the exclusion of certain people. I have always looked for one thing in a man's professed doctrinal beliefs; that one thing is

consistency. It is not consistent to say a church started with properly excluded members cannot be a church, but that it is all right to receive an excluded member, or to use an excluded member, or to fellowship a church that we know has taken an excluded member. If you do not think that member was excluded properly, then are you not under obligation to let the excluding church know that and the Biblical reasons why? Beloved, be consistent in this area, or do not lay claim to the Baptist name. Either believe and practice church authority in relationship to excluded members or just deny this truth. Try and be consistent. Don't let your desire to be included on conference programs cause you to abuse this truth. Don't let your desire to get back at certain preachers negate what you know is right according to Scripture. Don't let your desire for more members tarnish this great truth. Don't jeopardize your own church's existence by violating the Biblical teaching of church authority. No, no, no; A church started with excluded members can never be a church. May God bless you all.

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To some of the readers this may seem like a fairly simple question to deal with, but I am afraid that there are many people who do not understand the question, much less the principle.

I might first try to give a short definition for "properly excluded." When someone has been properly excluded from the fellowship of a church, it means that they have been found guilty of some sin that has brought reproach upon the name of Christ, and His local assembly, and that person has refused to repent, and make a public apology before that assembly. As I believe I stated in another forum sometime back, we must be very careful with our church discipline that we do not abuse it either way.

If a church is started with "properly excluded members" then one of three things has to happen. 1) Another church has taken them in, and given them authority to start a church. Shame on any, and I mean "any" church who will give refuge to a person, or a group of people, who have been properly excluded from another church. It is wrong, wrong, wrong!! I do not claim to know everything there is to know about church discipline and church authority, but I know of no exception to this rule. However, I am willing to be taught if I am in error. 2) The people in question have started their church without authority. Again, I do not know it all, but I know of no way that a church can be started without proper authority from another scriptural Baptist church. 3) The said people returned to their respective churches where their membership is held, and publicly repented, and asked forgiveness for their sin. In this case they then could ask any church to give them authority to start a new church. Therefore, my answer to this question as it is presented is in a word...no. Thank you for your question.

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There is an old saying that states, "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." Churches started by excluded church members would be like the sow's ear. They would be like trying to change buildings made of hay, wood, or stubble, into ones of gold, silver or precious stone. A study of the Scripture shows all missionary work, which includes starting new churches must first be under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they (the

church) sent them away" (Acts 13:2, 3).

In Paul's missionary journeys he established many churches, but it was under the authority of the church at Antioch and the Holy Spirit. From the example set by Paul, we see that any church, to be a true church, must have authority from an existing true church, which was led by the Holy Spirit to establish that work. Members of a church or churches who have had the hand of fellowship withdrawn from them for disciplinary action as commanded by the Lord (I Cor. 5:4-13; Rom. 16:17), could never start a true church even though they receive authority from another church, for that church could not be acting under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. There is no way that church could ever be a true church, now or in the future. The only way that group could ever be a true church is to repent of their sins, confessing them before the church from which they were excluded, and thereby be restored to fellowship in that church (II Cor. 2:1-11). Then they can, the Spirit leading, receive authority to start a true church. One thing is very important for a church to be a true church and that is for the Holy Spirit to lead. Members being disciplined for their sins would never be led by the Spirit to start a church. In fact I Corinthians 5:13 tells us that God will judge those whom the church has judged, "But them that are without God judgeth, Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." What kind of church could the man of I Corinthians 5 who had his father's wife along with those who had caused "divisions and offences contrary to the doctrines" (Rom. 16:17), start? Could that kind of church ever be a true church? No way!

HAIR

(Continued from Page 1)

apply these verses to each theory and see which one makes the most sense. Let us begin by applying these verses to the women's hair.

First Corinthians 11:4, "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head." If the covering for the women under discussion here is the hair, then we must also apply the same here. If the women's covering is the hair, then men cannot preach or pray in public assemblies unless he first shaves his head. Since we do not have any record of the apostles practicing this we must reject our first theory and attempt to apply our other interpretation.

If the head covering is a hat or veil, then men are not to preach or pray with their hats covering their heads. Doesn't this make more sense than the other view? Have you ever noticed it is considered improper etiquette to come to the table with your hat or cap on? Why? Apparently in by gone days, most people offered thanks for their food and believed the head covering to be a hat. Today the tradition still remains, but the truth has almost been forgotten.

First Corinthians 11:5, "But

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The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

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

A preacher takes a church as pastor. He knows what the church believes and believes the same. He changes his belief on some important matter. What should he do? What should the church do?

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When a man assumes the role of undershepherd of a particular flock, it becomes his responsibility to lead, by example, and to teach from the Word, the whole counsel of God. The people who have chosen him as their pastor owe to him their support and obedience to what he teaches and preaches as long as it conforms to the Scriptures. God has given special instructions to the man that would guide His sheep. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Act 20:28). He also has given definite instructions to the followers. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb 13:17).

When agreement turns to disagreement on an important matter, these instructions are violated. In this particular case, there is a change in the position of the pastor regarding an important matter. This answer is based on the assumption that the church is sound in its doctrine. So, the pastor has changed his belief and is no longer in agreement with the church. The first thing that he should do, in my opinion, is to meet with the men of the church and advise them of his position. This should be done as soon as possible so that the meeting is not hostile. Secondly, he should not attempt to introduce this change to the membership. These are, of course, ideal steps and are not usually the norm. If he is not willing to have a meeting to discuss the situation, and indicates that it is not possible to change, then he should resign.

There are two ways that this problem can come before the church. It can be initiated by the pastor as stated above, or the church can see a change in the matter. If the pastor comes to the church and requests a meeting because of this change, the church should meet with him and attempt to restore agreement. If this fails, it is their responsibility to declare the pulpit vacant. If he should attempt to introduce a change from the pulpit, they

should also meet with him with the same objective in mind. If this fails also, their responsibility remains the same.

Most of the problems that exist in our churches today exist because people will not discuss problems until they are out of hand. When things get out of hand, people tend to take sides and the normal way of doing things is not with reason, but with unreasonableness. When there is disagreement, there must be reconciliation before normal activities can be carried out. That reconciliation must be either agreement to come together again, or it must be agreement to separate because of differing beliefs.

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When a church calls a man to pastor the church they should find out what he teaches and what he believes relative to the doctrines of grace. The church should find out what he believes about prophecy and if that agrees with the church on this. If the church and the man that the church is about to call agree in doctrine on salvation and baptism, the Lord's supper, the doctrine of last things, then the church and the pastor should be able to get along fine.

Let us think for a minute. As time goes on the pastor changes his mind on some important matter or doctrine. The first thing the pastor should do is to inform the church as to his view on the doctrine. Maybe the pastor changed his mind as to grape juice in the Lord's supper. The church had been using grape juice. The Lord opens his eyes as to the use of wine, and he is convinced that wine is the proper element in the Lord's supper. The pastor should, by the Scripture, convince the church that wine is the proper element.

Let us notice again, the pastor changes his mind as to the coming of Christ the second time. When he took the church he believed in the pre-trib coming of Christ. He changes his mind and takes the post-trib. position. He should tell the church of his change of view on this. Honesty would demand that he do this.

Let us say again, that the church which calls a man to pastor believes in the visible, literal, personal reign of Christ on this earth for a thousand years. The man they call agrees with this, but later he changes his mind about this and says that he

does not believe in a personal reign of Christ on the earth. He should inform the church of his change on this doctrine. The church seeks to get the pastor to return to his original position, which was the position of the church or forbid him to teach against the doctrines the church has taught through the years, that is, provided that the doctrines taught by the church are Biblically correct and it is the historical position of the Baptists.

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There will always be differences in beliefs among God's people. I believe we should try to respect other people and what they believe, as long as their doctrine doesn't dishonor God.

The church receives a man as their pastor, they have the right to let him go. If his change in belief cannot be accepted; they should let him go, or he should resign. It all depends on what he believes and preaches. Some preachers I know believe certain truths but won't or can't preach them because it would cause a split in the church. If they can be quiet about what they believe and live with it, then what they believe doesn't really matter. Personally I would let the church know what I believe, and let them decide what they want to do. I'm going to preach what I believe with respect to the Lord and His people. The apostle Paul told us to tell the truth in all things, speak the truth, conduct your lives in truth. Present the truth in love.

Seek the leadership of the Spirit. If you preach the truth and the church doesn't run you off, stay with it; there are many that won't receive it.

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This is a good question. A preacher should be honest with the church that calls him to fill their pulpit and pastor the flock. If that church is a sound church that stands for and preaches the whole counsel of God, it should make sure the man it calls believes and will preach the doctrines it stands for. I realize that sometimes a church will call a

pastor that does not believe exactly as they do but promises to not preach against what they believe. This is wrong, he will be compromising his convictions and not being honest with himself. This has led to the preacher winning the people's heart and then preaching his convictions after all and being accepted by the church; therefore, the church is compromising its position. This causes the church to be out of the will of the Lord and missing the blessing it should get. I know of some churches that were deceived in this way and are now out of our fellowship.

Now, if the preacher called by the church really believes the truth that the church does and later on he finds a new doctrine, or has changed what he believed before; he should be honest enough to resign and find a church that will agree with him. Really, what he needs to do is repent and tell the Lord that he is sorry that Satan led him into ignorance. If he insists the church must agree with him, the church should ask for his resignation. Now, if the church is not sound on some doctrine and they call a pastor who agrees to come if they will let him teach them the truth even if it takes some time for them to accept it, this could possibly work out. This is honesty on both sides and the Lord will take over if they are sincere about this and pray for the Lord's leadership in the matter.

HAIR

(Continued from Page 4)

every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head, for that is even all one as if she were shaven." This verse is instructing the women that if she prays (or teaches Sunday School) with her head uncovered it as if her head were shaven. If the head covering were indeed the hair, this verse would be totally unnecessary. Would it not be ridiculous to say, ladies if you will not wear your hair to church, it the same as if your head was shaven. Because if she did not wear her hair to church, she would be shaven or bald. Certainly if we apply this verse to the head covering being the hat it makes much more sense, for the modern rendering would be, ladies wear your hats to church because if you do not it is the same as if your head were shaven.

First Corinthians 11:6, "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered." Once again, if we attempt to say the head covering is the hair, then this verse is senseless. The teaching of the verse would be that the woman, if she will not wear her hair to church is to cut it off. Again, if we take a logical approach to the Word of God, we are forced to admit the head covering must be a hat or something worn upon the head. This verse is instructing the woman that if she will not wear a hat she is to cut all her hair off. First Corinthians 11:7 "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." Do you really believe God wants all of the men to shave their heads before they pray

or preach? Yet if you are consistent and continue to believe the head covering is the hair, then you will be forced to come to this conclusion.

Most of the people who reject the truth that the head covering is a hat or veil which is to be placed upon the head skip over the aforementioned verses and read First Corinthians 11:15. "But if a woman have long hair... it is given her for a covering." When they arrive at this verse, they argue that the Bible interprets the covering as being the hair. The Greek word that is translated "covering" here in verse 15 is "peribolation." The definition of "peribolation" means something cast around. Is it not obvious that a woman's hair is cast around her head? The Greek word that is translated covered in First Corinthians 11:5, 6, is katakalupto. Katakalupto means something that is pressed upon the head. Hair is not pressed upon the head, but rather grown out from the head through hair follicles. You can flatten, iron, or beat your hair down and you still will not have your hair pressed upon your head.

So then, what is the purpose of verse 15? In verse 14, we read, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" Paul, while on the subject of the head covering and hair, moves now in a slightly different direction. The teaching is; it is a shame for a man to have long hair, but it is a woman's glory to have long hair. In that day and time the male prostitutes had long hair and if you wore your hair long you would be taken for a prostitute. However, a woman having long hair is accepted and even a beautiful sight.

I have met a few individuals who say the head covering is a hat or veil, but believe that verse 16 is teaching that it is something less than a commandment. Let us examine First Corinthians 11:16, and see if this be true. "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." The Greek word for man in verse 16, is "aner". The definition of aner is a husband. The same word is used for man in Mark 10:2, "...Is it lawful for man to put away his wife?" When Mary was told she would conceive and have a child, she asked, "...How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). The same word "aner" is used. "Aner" always refers to males. The Greek word "anthropos" is often translated man or men, and it means simply a human being and can be male or female. This being the case, women are to wear a head covering upon their head while praying in church. Woman do not have any more choice regarding this than they do in any other commandment of God's Word.

What First Corinthians 11:16 is really teaching is that if any male member has long hair and does not wish to cut it, even though the general population of people may think he is a prostitute, it is not a requirement for church membership or obedience.

(Continued on Page 6, Col. 4)

STUDIES IN ACTS

by Willard Willis

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). It did not matter that they had hung Jesus on a tree. The fact remained that God, in spite of their efforts, had exalted Jesus to His own right hand. No one, in fact, can stay the hand of God. No one can alter His course or defeat His plans. He will, in all places and at all times, do all of His pleasure. They, in fact, by their efforts, were only causing God's plan to be fulfilled.

They hanged Him on a tree, but God exalted Him to be a prince. This was accomplished even though He had died. Man, in other words, did his worst, but such did not prevent God from fulfilling His own purpose. Death, the strongest and most lasting enemy known to man, did not prove to be an obstacle to God.

The title "Prince" denotes that He was exalted to a place of dominion and power, especially the power to give repentance and pardon for sins to Israel or the Jews. We know, of course, that He also gives repentance and forgiveness to Gentiles, too. The Jews are mentioned here because the Messiah had, for a long period of time, been promised to them.

One may wonder, "In what sense does the exaltation of Jesus relate to His giving repentance and forgiveness?" The answer lies in the fact that He, while on the earth, had built a foundation on which He could give repentance and pardon. A person could be very sorry for their sins; but if there was no basis for pardon, then the person's sorrow would be of no value. Our Lord Jesus, by His death, laid a foundation by which repentance may be accepted. It is proper that He who built the basis for our repentance and pardon should be the one to exercise it. He, therefore, has been exalted to this very high position. We know that Jesus even exercised the right and authority to forgive sins while He was still on the earth.

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). That which they were affirming had not been done behind the barn or in some corner. They, in fact, were witnesses. Witnesses, after all, are all that our laws require today in order to prove a matter. What more could the Sanhedrin require than witnesses? This, after all, was all they required on other such matters. Why was that which was before them different? It was either a matter for the Sanhedrin to accept their witness or call them liars. And what right does a judge have to call the witnesses liars?

It was not only that they were witnesses, but so was the Holy Spirit. He, after all, had healed the lame man and all those who had come to them in the streets of Jerusalem. He had also released them from prison. Any fool, humanly speaking, should have been able to see the hand of God

in all that had occurred.

"When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them" (Acts 5:33). They were cut to the heart because Peter had charged them with murder. He said further that the very one they had murdered had been exalted to the right hand of God. I understand that the word "cut" here indicates a cutting as if by a saw, or as a saw tears at wood while it cuts into it. They, in other words, were violently agitated and torn with rage (compare Acts 7:54).

Man desires to get rid of that with which he cannot cope. Man's feet, as the Scriptures affirm, are swift to shed blood. They, in fact, had shed the blood of the Messiah and now they desired to shed the blood of His witnesses. They, of course, did not know that they were a part of Satan's army -- Satan's army which was determined to destroy every trace of the work done by the Lord Jesus. Satan had not been able to get Him to fall down and worship him. He therefore would now try to destroy the effects of His work on earth.

"Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space" (Acts 5:34).

We read in verse thirty-three how they were making plans to slay the apostles. To slay them, of course, would have also meant the slaying of their message. It would have meant that they could no longer have told the story of Jesus relative to His life, death, and resurrection. God, of course, had already raised up a man to intervene in behalf of the apostles. His name was Gamaliel. This fact shows that God always outwits the devil. The devil kept building barriers, and God kept tearing them down.

God, in the Scripture before us, used one of Satan's agents so that he became what one might call a "double agent". They were all in one accord except Gamaliel. It was very important that Gamaliel be the one who drew back, since he carried a lot of weight with all the people. He, in fact, commanded or ordered the others to "put the apostles forth a little space."

It is easy to see that the action taken by Gamaliel was another miracle. God had sent His angel to open the prison doors and now He influences Gamaliel to speak in behalf of His apostles.

Paul, according to Acts 22:3, had been taught by Gamaliel. We know the kind of life Paul lived before his conversion, which appears to say that Paul's attitude toward Jesus and His followers was instilled in him by Gamaliel. It appears, then, that God used the strongest force the enemy had to intercede for His apostles.

"And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to

nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:35-39).

The key statement in these scriptures, it appears to me, is, "refrain from these men, and let them alone." Keep in mind that this decision was reached even after the apostles had charged them with the murder of Jesus. This decision was reached even though this was the second time the apostles had been brought before the Sanhedrin. Gamaliel partly based his conclusion on the fact that the four hundred who joined Theudas were slain. Perhaps he was not aware that about three thousand men had joined the apostles at one time (Acts 2:41). Gamaliel, however, was on target when he said, "for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought." He was on target when he said, "but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it: lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

That which Gamaliel convinced his cohorts to do was to give the apostles a license or the authority to preach when and where they pleased. This was done even though those who made this decision hated the apostles with a passion. This fact makes it crystal clear that if God is for us, no one can be against us.

The men of the Sanhedrin, no doubt, for a period of time after making their decision, observed God's preachers time and again as they ministered to the people. They, however, probably said under their breath, "Your day of judgment will soon come." Little did they know that they themselves were the ones who were fighting against God.

The Lord Jesus had already said that the gates of death would not prevail against His church. There was no possible way, then, for the mouths of the apostles to be closed. There was no way to stop the march of those who brought the good tidings. All that could be done was to sit back and watch the work grow. Millions, in fact, since that day have embraced Jesus of Nazareth as their Saviour and Lord (See Acts 6:1, 6).

Governments have used fire, the sword, the ax, drowning, etc., against believers; but each one has proven to be a vain effort. Christianity is like green grass. It stays green even though it is walked on. Those who have fought and do fight Christianity are in a battle with God. They think that they are opposing you and me, but we are only soldiers in God's army.

"And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go" (Acts 5:40). Gamaliel had advised his cohorts to let the apostles alone. They agreed to let them alone. The record, however, shows that they gave them a beating before let-

ting them go. This fact shows that all they really agreed to was not putting them to death.

The beating of the apostles, generally speaking, consisted of thirty-nine lashes (II Corinthians 11:24). History records that the act of beating or whipping was a common practice by the Jews. It is likely that the whipping was done for the public to observe. This action was taken, no doubt, out of anger and in order to keep their authority from being despised by the people. The Sanhedrin, after all, had commanded the apostles not to speak in His name. They had threatened them, and they had put them in prison. Perhaps many whom they had healed observed as they were being whipped. One little girl may have said, "Mommy, are they being whipped because they opened my blind eyes?" A little boy may have said, "Daddy, are they being whipped because they healed my crippled leg?"

"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41). The attitude of the apostles was truly "mind over matter". Their love was so great and their purpose so important that even thirty-nine lashes did not deter them. It only caused them to be convinced that they were on the right road; or going in the right direction. The beating was intended to discourage them, but it actually encouraged them. Their backs were cut and bleeding, but their hearts were rejoicing. It was more difficult for them to stand up and walk for Jesus because of the pain, but they were loving every minute of it because they were doing it for the one they loved. They, as our text states, were suffering "shame for his name."

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). Bandages, no doubt, covered the cuts they had received from the beating; but their mouths were not covered. Gamaliel had advised that they be left alone, and this was what was being done. Members of the Sanhedrin, no doubt, observed them every day during their visits to the temple. The words of Gamaliel, however, kept coming back to them -- the words which said that their preaching would come to nought if it was the work of men.

Beatings did not stop the mouths of the apostles. Those who have followed after the apostles have also preached Jesus Christ in spite of beatings, fire, sword, dungeons, drownings, loss of reputation and property, etc. They would not be turned back (see Hebrews 11:36-40).

HAIR

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Probably the reason most people really reject the truth of these passages is not that they cannot understand, but rather that they choose not to understand. They do not like the thought of a divine order of the sexes, nor the thought of what the head covering symbolizes.

First Corinthians 11:10 "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels." Again, would it not be stupid to believe this verse was

telling women they ought to wear their hair on their head? Where else would they wear it? Notice the word "power." The word that is translated power would probably be better understood if we use the word "authority." A woman should wear a hat or veil in public worship to show she is under her husband's authority. The head covering is a token of her obedience.

It is obvious that God does have a divine order for the sexes. Men are to lead, protect, and provide for their wives. Women are to reverence or respect and follow their husbands. Today we have strayed far away from this concept, but it is still Bible; and the head covering is a symbol of this truth.

SOVEREIGNTY

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devils... He also carries out this plan." We have heard it asked, "where is God when the teen turns to alcohol? Where is God when the marriage crumbles? Where is God when a little child is abused?" The answer to those questions is, "He is on the throne working out His eternal purpose." That may be hard for us to understand, but sin is in the eternal plan of God. God never asked anyone if there should be crime and mayhem in the U.S. in 1989. He works all things after the council of His own will.

We need a word of caution at this point. In James 1:13, 14 we learn where human sin comes from. Sin comes from sinful hearts. God hates sin, and will punish sin even though your sin is in the secret will of God. Sin is not in the revealed will of God, but it is in the secret will of God. Theologically we say, "God is not the author of sin." God does not make people sin. Some use the phrase, "God allows sin." That may be true, but He makes the choice which sin, where, and when to allow it.

This truth is illustrated in Luke 3:31, "...Nathan, which was the son of David." Galatians 4:4 tells us, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son..." God planned the exact time of the birth of Christ. Everything was already set forth in His purpose. God didn't look down and say, "Well men are ready..." God not only planned the timing, but He also planned the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. That means He planned the genealogy of Jesus, that is clear. God foretold from what tribe, even down to the family, Jesus had to come from. Jesus must be born of the royal seed. Nathan was the son of Bathsheba. David married her after committing adultery with her and murdering her husband. Was God just lucky David committed those sins? No! That was in the eternal purpose of God. Did God approve of David's sin? God hates bid, of course not, God punished adultery. In fact, God punished David for it. David himself called it sin, and called it sin against God. God's ways and wisdom are far above ours.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN THE DEFEAT OF SIN: This truth is proclaimed in Psalm 76:10. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the

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SOVEREIGNTY

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remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Sin has one purpose; to slander God. Sin arose when Lucifer wanted to steal glory from God. Man's first sin was an attempt to slander God. Eve believed that God was trying to withhold good from her. The sinner is dishonoring God. All sin is against God, not only against His law, but is a defiance against Him. Sin is an attempt to dethrone God. Our passage in Psalm 76 declares that God defeats the purpose of sin, and makes it bring glory to Him. What sin that will not bring glory to Him, He just suppresses and doesn't allow. What a staggering thought; the sinner doesn't sin as much as he wants to. God only permits him to sin as much as will bring glory to God. What a Sovereign we serve! He allows His voluntary creatures, who are His enemies, to devise their worst; and He turns it into praise.

This truth is illustrated by Genesis 50:20. "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good..." Joseph's brethren had sinned by hating their younger brother. They not only plotted to destroy him, they sold him into slavery. What great sin is in man to sell one's own brother into slavery? Then they took his coat and put animal's blood on it to deceive their dad. Joseph was lied about and put in prison. Look what he says at the end of it all. God meant it. And God meant it for good. Was it sin? Yes! They meant evil; it was a terrible thing to do.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN THE JUDGMENT OF SIN: This truth is proclaimed in Hebrews 12:23. "...To God the Judge of all..." He isn't co-judge. He is Judge. He doesn't call into council the great philosophers to work out an agreeable judgment. There is no divine plea-bargaining. He doesn't call into council church leaders to decide what is sin. He alone is judge. When you stand in judgment, He will not ask you how it should be done. Perfection is His standard. James 2:10 tells us that one sin condemns us. One sin deserves hell the same as the most awful sin you can imagine. You must be cleansed from all sin to enter heaven.

This truth is illustrated in Revelations 20:11-15. Here we see this sovereignty illustrated. None escapes this judgment. Man's law on the earth is not sovereign. Some lawbreakers escape judgment on earth. However, everyone not written in the book of life ends up in hell! I must ask you this most serious question. Is your name written there? Notice, no one jumps in, they are cast in. It will be too late to have your name written in the book of life then at the judgment seat.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN THE CLEANSING OF SIN: This truth is proclaimed in Exodus 33:18, 19. The sovereign mercy of God is His glory. God is a God of mercy. But He has mercy on whom He chooses to have mercy. Men think that they can earn the grace or mercy of God. You hear men say, "If I try, or if I do the best I can." God says His mercy will be given according to His will. We read in the Scripture that, "...The

blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." When God has mercy He washes that person from all sin that they may stand before Him with a perfect standing. Has God shown mercy to you? It is of the mercy of God that anyone knows they need to be saved. It is of the mercy of God that anyone can receive Jesus Christ by faith.

This truth is illustrated in John 8:3-11. (Please read this story in your Bible). We might have thought He would have saved the pharisees. They were religious; they had zeal; witnessing - Jesus said they would compass sea and land to make one convert. Boy, would they make good Christians. How prone we are to judge as man. Consider this woman. Whenever we want to find this woman committing adultery we just go to her house. When her husband is gone - she's not alone. Now who is God going to save? She barely had time to get her clothes on. Surely the Lord will tell her to clean up her life before He shows mercy. But look at what is going on. All her accusers left, but she stayed. Why didn't she take this opportunity to skip out? Then she called Him Lord. Jesus did not condemn her. She was forgiven; she had received mercy. God is sovereign in the cleansing of sin. When a person comes to Jesus, God has shown mercy. Can you come? Oh! Believe that without Jesus you'll go straight to hell. He died to save sinners. Believe in Him. If you are ever saved, you must come to the blood-stained hands of King Jesus.

NEVER

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ence." Now, don't you remember? I do! I recall saying so many times; "you will never see me running around with a Bible in my hands, spouting that garbage," and, "I will never be a Bible thumper." Be honest now. Didn't you ever think that way? Sure you did; we all did before God changed us.

So what happened? Praise be to God! That glorious day came when the wonderful light of God's Word filled our hearts, and the Spirit of God spoke to us. All that was past is gone, and now as a new born baby, created in Christ Jesus we walk a new way, the Christian way; the way of which we before had said, "never, not me."

I think of those first days, those first weeks, and those first years as a new child of God. Listen, and see if this does not sound familiar to you. Okay, I am going to go to church, but don't expect me to change. I'll never give up -- now you can fill in the blanks -- Maybe with you it was smoking or drinking or swearing or telling dirty jokes, or what ever. I said that I would never give up my friends, Well, I didn't. You see I didn't have to. My friends were just like they had always been, and just like I had been. They didn't change, just because I had changed; and they didn't like the change that was in me. So they fled from me like mice fleeing from a sinking ship.

I said that I would never get so tied up in church that I would be there every time the doors were open; I mean after all, Sunday was ok but that was it. Little did I know. We joined the church, and we went on Sunday morning.

When the morning service was over, some one said to me, "see you tonight." I asked my wife, "Are they coming to the house tonight?" I didn't know that you went to church on Sunday night too. Then I found out that there was Wednesday night services and Thursday night visitation. The first thing I knew, there I was on Saturday, cleaning the church, and visiting the children on our bus route. Oh yes, I drove the bus, and I even maintained it. Never say never. Beloved, you have no idea what the Lord has in store for you.

Now you listen to me. I pray to God that you are doing all these things in and with your church. If you are; don't get all puffed up about it. You see the work that you do, be it great or be it small, that work is not of yourself. Had the Spirit of God, only worked the work of salvation upon your heart and then left you to yourself, then there would be no works. Paul wrote it to us in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." That work was pre-ordered by God the Father for you to do before the world ever was.

Forget being puffed up, and forget what men have to say to you about any of the good works; for no man knows what work the Lord has pre-ordered for another. Man said to me that I would never be called to preach the Word of God because I had been divorced, and I believed that and said I will never be called to preach. Can you imagine the surprise that I received when the Spirit of God called me out with a broken heart one night, and sent me head first to the floor confessing that I'd been called to do that which the church taught that I could not do? If you think that your world was turned upside down when you were saved, try staying in a church that tells you that you are but a second class Christian, and that you are to forget that which the Lord God Almighty has called you unto. The pain and suffering that goes with rejection takes its toll on the child of God just as it does on the lost world. Our hide is no tougher than their's. But praise be to God, we have the Lord to lean on and to receive our strength from. Thus we know that "...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Yes, even the bad; yes, even the pain and the sorrows are according to His purpose. These are the refining fires that burn away the pride of man. But again I caution you, don't get puffed up because you do one thing or another, and don't take pride in your sufferings.

We read in our text. I Corinthians 4:7 "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" Have you received the wonderful gift of salvation? Hear me now; you didn't deserve it, and you didn't desire it. You were not seeking it. Look at yourself in Romans 3:10-18 (before you were saved), "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that

understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: They have no fear of God before their eyes." You see, that was you and me in our natural state before the grace of God came upon us with the free gift of salvation. Now listen to me, beloved of God, if this be true, and we know it to be so, for it came from the mouth of God through His servant Paul, then how and why were you saved? In deed I ask you why and how were any ever saved?

I wasn't looking for God! You weren't looking for God. And I have some news for you; God wasn't looking for you. That's right! God is not out beating the bushes, looking for souls to save. God knows right where every one of you are at every moment in time. "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps" (Pro. 16:9). God directs every man's steps. He not only knows where you are, He knows where you have been, and He knows where you are going. And what's more; He knew it, every step, every detail before the foundation of the world.

God knows where you are because He put you there. He brought about the words that you heard. He gave the gift of salvation to those that He had chosen. Some would say that God offers the gift of salvation. But the Bible, God's Holy Word, says that God gives the gift of salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Some say you can accept or reject the gift of faith. But again, God's Word says differently. Proverbs 16:1, "The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD." God prepared the heart of His chosen to receive His Word. And God placed the answer of your tongue in your mouth. Therefore you have nothing to boast about; you have nothing to be proud about. Had God left the decision making up to you as some claim, you would have made the wrong one. But even if you had made the right decision, then your salvation would be resting upon your works, for that would have been a work on your part. But not so, you see, that too, goes against the Word of God. Ephesians 2:9, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." We have nothing to boast about. We did nothing to warrant salvation. We do nothing to gain salvation. If you are a child of God; then you were made so by the power and mercy of the Almighty.

Now, I know some one right now is saying to themselves, "What about the lost?" The same Scriptures that tell you why and how you were saved, tell you why and how the lost are lost. God made that choice before the

world was ever formed. "The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD" (Pro. 16:1). If you have a quarrel with the doctrine of limited atonement, or with unconditional election, then you have a quarrel with God, not with me. I have no quarrel with you; I know now that the difference in what we believe, is also of the Lord. Never say never. There was a time when I did not believe the doctrines which I now hold so dear. I, just like most of you, believed the doctrine of easy-believism. But God brought about a change in my thinking just as He brought about a change in my heart. I have nothing to boast about because of it. I can not be puffed up, because I have nothing that I did not receive. Oh no my friends, never say never. You don't know what God has prepared for you, and you don't know what changes God will make in you before He takes you home. Let it be your prayer, as it is mine, that whatever God has prepared, He will also grant us grace to receive it with gladness of heart and joy of life. May God bless.

SIN VII

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Old Testament times, there was established in the valley of Hinnom, a heathen worship of the god, Moloch. This god was fashioned out of iron which was hollow and a fire was built in it. The small children of the worshippers were placed in his (Moloch) arms as a sacrifice. This worship was established by King Ahaz and King Manasseh. A king by the name of Josiah, who feared and worshipped the Lord God, stopped this awful heathenistic worship. Later, this place became the garbage dump for the city of Jerusalem. There was a fire burning continually in this place and the Lord used it as a visible picture of invisible everburning hell. The word "Gehenna" is translated hell nine times and hell fire three times in our English Bible. The Scripture also tells that it is a place of eternal darkness. I have heard say, "I'll have plenty of friends there," but, my sinner friends, there is no such thing as friendship in the eternal garbage dump.

Hell is an eternal place of punishment for Christ-rejectors. The God of the universe will not tolerate rebellion and disrespect and will cast those from His presence. God is longsuffering according to Romans 9:22, "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:"

There are those who teach that after a while the soul is annihilated or burnt up. They try to make a distinction between eternal punishment and eternal punishing. They have put forth this statement in times past: "We believe in eternal punishment, not eternal punishing... the latter a great delusion, the former a great truth."

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SIN VII

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A.J. Pollock was once told by two Adventists that eternal punishment does not mean eternal punishing. He asked: "Does three months punishment mean three months punishing?" They admitted that it does. "Then," he replied, "eternal punishment means eternal punishing."

There are some words in the Scripture dealing with punishment. Destroy, perish, lose, consume, burn up. There are some who contend that the above words mean to annihilate, or to put out of existence. Mark mentions the continual suffering of those cast into hell. Mark 9:48, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Dr. Gill thinks the worm is the conscience which will continually remind them and torment them. Listen to verse 49 of that same chapter: "For everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

The punishment of the wicked in hell is not a pleasant thing to think about, but there are those who joke about it and play it down. Everlasting, or Eternal: Opponents of eternal punishment claim that the primary meaning of "aion", and "aionios", is not endless. The word in our English language that means the same thing, "eon", according to Webster: eternity, an extremely long, indefinite period of time. And "eternity" means: continuance without end. If these words "Aion," and "Aionios" do not mean eternal, then we have no words that denote endlessness. Mosheim, a man of unquestioned learning, says that "aion" properly signifies indefinite or eternal duration, as opposite to that which is finite or temporal.

The same people who deny "eternal" accept and teach "eternal" as to the existence of God, but deny eternal damnation, and the word in the Scripture is the same. Listen to Matthew 25:46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." If the life of the believer is eternal, then the punishment of the wicked is eternal, or else words have no meaning. We might say at this time that everlasting and eternal are adjectives of duration and not of quality or kind. They certainly do not describe the kind of life the believer has, nor the kind of punishment for the lost, but the duration of life and the duration of punishment.

The Bible teaches degrees of punishment as to different ones. The Lord Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:14-15, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." And Jesus said in Luke 10:13-14, "Woe, unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in

you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you."

A person who has continually been exposed to the gospel and does not repent will suffer more than a person who heard it just one time. The Scripture tells us in Revelation 20:13-15, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Is your name written in the Lamb's book of life? Have you been made a new creature in Christ Jesus? Have you been saved by the marvellous grace of God? Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." May the Lord's blessing be on you and yours.

GODLY

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picture of success. The sparkling of their eyes says that life is really worth living. Our Spiritual life should readily be seen to glow even as the children's faces glow.

Finally, courtship and marriage, wedded bliss! When this enters their pathway more responsibility is being felt. It gets even stronger when they are in the good graces of God, as servants. Successful Spiritual living causes them to want to stay active in God's work and enjoy His blessings at the same time.

A home that is following God's order for a successful life is the greatest value in this life. The world has its standards for success, but God's standards are much greater and happier than the very best the world can offer. King Solomon seemingly tried them, all, or most of them, and found them to be vanity of vanities! Let's take a few steps at this point into God's plan for a successful life.

First: keeping a balance of truth. Knowing and understanding the truth about ourselves. God tells us that there is no good in the flesh. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." (Rom. 7:18). Also God told us through His prophet Jeremiah; "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). Brethren, when we know this great truth, it helps us to keep the right attitude concerning ourselves. If we keep this in mind, we will never become haughty and self-conceited in reference to ourselves.

Another thing worth considering, God has, in His wisdom, wonderfully made us. "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." (Ps. 139: 14). Beloved, we have

been made in the very image of God! "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. 1:27). Brethren, to deny this truth is to lower our standards, our values, about our God, and to begin to live like beasts. I recently had the opportunity to preach a message in our home church on the subject of evolution. It is widely taught today in some of our public schools. Shame, shame shame. Brethren, we were made, wonderfully made if you please, in the image of God, and by Him, the Creator Himself!

God not only made us in His own image, but He is still working on us, His children, today. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10). One day we will rejoice in His presence, the finished product of God's wonderful, marvellous grace. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6). There are those who do not believe that He can keep us saved, oh, what a pity! As we behold the children of God, we know that they are the workmanship of God, and are not inferior to the standards of this world, rather, we are superior because of the fact that He did the regeneration work in us which is all sufficient, and no works of ours had anything to do with it. The idea of working out our salvation is utter ridiculous. We work now because we are saved, not to get saved. To claim otherwise is to deny the sovereign grace of God, and His promise.

Second. Don't be guilty of comparing ourselves. If we look at our opening text again, we see that it is not wise to always try to be comparing ourselves with others. Regardless of how others fail, it is our duty to do the work of the Lord as He orders and leads into it, to be a success in life. If you remember, our Lord rebuked Peter for inquiring about others. "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." (John 21:22). We can't just look on the outward appearance of others and know their hearts. I fear that some time, I would not like to pattern after them if I could see their hearts. God judges the heart and we fail to be a good judge, sometimes, by looking at the appearance. Brethren, outward beauty is no match for inward happiness. Even our social status can have much to do with success in life. Our financial status has nothing to do with a Godly successful life.

James stated it very well when he said; "Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5). Jesus gave us God's design of a successful life in His Sermon on the Mount, when He said among other things; "...meek, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, thirst for righteousness," (Matt. 5:3-12). This is the kind of people who are considered to be

the success in life for God.

Third. Our success in life may be measured by our response to defeats. Can you face the difficulties that come in life? Oh, yes they will, and do come. They will come to try our character, our faith, and success may come after, and only after that we have endured many hardships. We can be assured that God's grace is sufficient for every task that we shall face. It is not he or she who starts well, but the one who stays in the battle until victory is won, it is that one that will hear Him say; "...Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of the Lord." (Matt. 25:21).

Fourth. How about our own life? Are we following God's order to a successful happy life? God's way is always right, and the world standards will always lead to shame and sorrow. May I encourage you, my fellow Christian brother, by reminding you first of all that you have trusted Christ as personal Saviour and if we strive to live a Godly successful life our obstacles will be much easier to overcome through faith in Him by leaning on Him. He said bring our problems to Him. He is our guide, our leader, and best of all, He has never misled nor given the wrong advice to anyone. Sometime I think that when we pray and ask Him to remove our burdens we exercise poor faith by getting up and carrying the burdens along with us. What does that mean? Nothing less than pure lack of faith.

In conclusion, let me say this is where the eternal joy and peace begins in your heart to keep you from the many pressures and worries in this world. When you have the Lord in your life, you have victory over every enemy, even death! Heed the advice of the great apostle Paul as he wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12:1-2).

How about it dear brother in Christ! Won't you consider striving for this successful Godly life according to His will today? We may rededicate our lives to Him for His leadership in instructing us as to how to go about living closer to Him for this gain. If there is someone reading this today that does not know Christ as Saviour, won't you trust Him today? You will never live a Godly successful life until you do. Friend, when the Spirit calls, heed that call, trust Christ as your personal Saviour. You will never be sorry that you did. A Godly successful life can be had only by those who know Him as personal Saviour. Trust Him today.

PREDESTINATION

(Continued from Page 1)

were, but they were hiding from God. And if God had not called

Adam and Eve, they would still be hiding in the bushes today.

Let's take the case of the Apostle Paul. Now there is no better example of divine election in the Bible than the case of the Apostle Paul. In Acts the 9th chapter you find a man on the Damascus road--a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus. He certainly wasn't seeking the Lord. He was not going to Damascus on a religious pilgrimage. He was going to Damascus for one purpose--to persecute the church of God. He was responsible for many Christians being put in prison and being put to death. He thought that he was doing God a service. But there on the Damascus road, the Lord knocked him down and knocked him blind. Trembling like a leaf he cried out, "...Lord, what wilt thou have me do?..."

You see, beloved, it took the power of God's Holy Spirit to break down the stubborn, rebellious will of Saul of Tarsus and make him the Apostle Paul. I want you to see that Paul's conversion was entirely of the Lord. Was he seeking the Lord? No, beloved! A thousand times, no! It was the Lord who sought him. There never would have been an Apostle Paul if God had not broken down his stubborn, rebellious will and called him and elected him to salvation.

Sometime ago I heard a minister make the statement that election only has to do with nations and not individuals. And when I heard that preacher make that statement, I thought to myself, "How little that preacher knows about the Word of God." Beloved, I can take you through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and show you one example after another where God chose and elected individuals to both salvation and service. Let me give you just one example. Turn to Romans 16:13. Paul said to the church at Rome, "Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord..." or elected in the Lord. That is what the word elect means--it means to choose. Here was a man, an individual--not a nation. And the Scripture says, "Salute him." So don't let anybody tell you that election only has to do with nations. The Bible is full of individuals whom the Lord chose and elected to serve Him and to do His will.

Now let's come to the question, "When did God choose us? When did God elect us to salvation?" Turn to Revelation 17:8 and you have the answer. Listen: "...and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world..." Now this Scripture speaks about those whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world. Now what does that tell us? It tells us that those who are saved--those who are born again--had their names recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life even before the foundation of the world. You will not find one Scripture in the Word of God which says that our names are written in the Book of Life when we believe. If you find a single passage that says that our names are written in the Book of Life when we believe, will you write and send it to me? Beloved, the Word of God tells us very plainly and very definitely that born again believers had their

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PREDESTINATION

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names recorded in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world.

You know, some people have the idea that God devised the plan of salvation after man became a sinner. They believe that God didn't even know what would happen to the human race, that God never even thought about sending His Son to come from heaven to die for our sins to pay the price of our redemption, that this was all an afterthought on the part of God. Nothing could be further from the truth! Before this world ever came into existence, before God ever laid the rocks and the mountains, our names were already inscribe in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Message 11

Our subject for today is "The Necessity of God's Elective Grace." Let me begin by saying that if God had not elected His people to salvation and eternal life, we would all have to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. The Scripture says in Romans 3:11, "...there is none that seeketh after God." Could anything be plainer? Man by nature is not interested in spiritual things. Man by nature does not want to have anything to do with God. People are interested in their homes and accumulation of wealth. They are interested in their automobiles and their television sets. But no one is really interested in the salvation of his soul until God first convicts him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Do you know why people do not come to Christ? Let me give you the Scripture. Turn to John 3:19-20. Here is a passage of Scripture that gives us the real reason why people do not come to the Lord for salvation. Sometimes people write in to our broadcast and say, "I cannot understand why my husband, or my wife, or my children do not come to Christ. They have been exposed to the gospel." Well, the Scripture gives us the reason. Listen: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." The Scripture says here that the reason people do not come to Christ is that they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." The Scripture says that people love darkness rather than light. Why? Because their deeds are evil. They are afraid of being reproved. The Light, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Do you see now why God must elect people to salvation?

I know some of you are asking the question, "Why didn't God elect everybody to salvation?" Well, the Bible doesn't tell us. That's one thing we have to leave in the hidden counsels of God. Some ask, "Why did Christ choose Judas when He knew that Judas was going to betray Him?" That is another mystery of God's sovereign will. This is something that will have to wait to be revealed until we get to heaven.

But you know, the greatest mystery of all is that God loved us when we were so unlovely and elected us and called us and justified us by His marvelous, matchless grace.

Some people raise the question, "Why preach the gospel if people are going to be saved anyway?" Well, beloved, God uses preaching as the means whereby the elect are to be saved. Let me give you the Scripture on that. Turn to I Corinthians 1:21. Now listen carefully to God's Word. It says, "...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." In other words, God uses human instruments to save people or to get people saved. Now God did not need man to give out His message of salvation. If God had wanted to, He could have used the angels, He could have used the rocks, the mountains--all things were at His command. If God had wanted to, He could have spoken directly to individual hearts. But God chose man, and He chose the preaching of His Word as the means whereby the elect are to be saved.

Our greatest missionaries and our greatest missionary movements have grown out of a right understanding of the truth of election. The individual who has been saved knows that it is by the sheer mercy of God that he has been brought to salvation. He is willing to love and be

spent that others of God's elect may be called out and brought to the same saving knowledge of grace that he was brought to know. Now I don't know who the elect are, and you don't know who the elect are. That is why we are to go out and preach the gospel to all people as though each man were one of God's elect and wait on God to do the saving. "...it pleased God," the Scripture says, "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

In Romans the 10th chapter it says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Now God uses two things to save people. First of all, God uses the preaching of His Word. It is the Word of God that cleans up our lives. That is why Jesus said to the disciples in John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." It is the Word of God that cleans up our lives.

Secondly, the Holy Spirit makes us alive spiritually. The Bible says in I Thessalonians 1:5, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only," (it is not something that comes in word only) "but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost..." And so the Holy Spirit must take the Word (In Ephesians 6 the Word of God is called the Sword of the Spirit.) and use the Word and drive it home to our hearts and make us realize our lost and undone condition. And as we look at Calvary and see the place and the time where Jesus Christ shed His blood for our sins, we come to the realization that it is not of our will, it's not by something that we have done, it's not of our works; but it is His finished work on Calvary that procures our salvation.

Message 12

One of the greatest chapters in the Bible dealing with the sovereignty of God is Romans chapter 9. This chapter answers

many questions. Listen to Romans 9:11-13: "(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil,...)" This is speaking about Jacob and Esau. They had not been born yet, and the Scripture says, "(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

In this Scripture, the Apostle Paul answers the question as to why God chose Israel alone out of all the other nations of the earth. It was not that they were any better or more worthy than other people. There was nothing in them that God foresaw which made them more worthy of His grace. God simply chose them by His sovereign grace because it pleased Him to do so.

God did the same thing in His choosing of Jacob over Esau. God chose Jacob and rejected Esau. God chose Isaac and rejected Ishmael. God chose Abraham and rejected all the rest of the nation of the Chaldees. Why? Because it was according to the sovereign will of God. You see, beloved, the only way that you can explain these things is on the basis of God's sovereignty--because God does as He pleases. Why God chose Abraham and rejected others, why God chose Jacob and rejected Esau, why God chose Israel instead of choosing the Chinese or the Japanese or the Indians or the Egyptians, why God chose one and rejected others is something that we have to leave in the hidden counsels and purposes of God's own sovereign will.

I know some of you are saying, "But that does not seem fair. That does not seem right." Let's remember again that God is

sovereign, and He can do as He pleases. Listen to what the Scripture says in Romans 9:14-16, "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Doesn't that teach that God is sovereign and that He can do as He pleases?

You know a lot of people question God. They say, "Why does God do this? Why does God do that? I can't understand God's dealings in this matter." Listen to Romans 9:20-21: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" There you have God's answer. God says, "Who do you think you are to question what I do? Who are you but just a poor sinful worm of the dust?" He says in Romans 9:20, "...who art thou that repliest against God?..." Who are you, beloved? Who am I? We are just poor sinful worms of the dust. Instead of questioning God, instead of replying against God, let's just thank Him and praise Him that He did choose a certain number of Adam's fallen race to spend eternity with Him.

A VIRTUOUS WOMAN

(Proverbs 31:10)

1. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband (Prov. 12:4).
2. A virtuous woman is a trustworthy woman (Prov. 31:11).

THE BIBLE

There is stands, like a mighty rock
In the midst of a raging sea;
The Bible stands, though men may mock
And attack it vehemently!

Why do men mock and hate it so?
This Book of eternal salvation!
Could it be that wicked men know
It warns of their condemnation?

They have burned it, and spurned it,
And explained it away;
They have denied and spiritualized,
But the Book is here to stay!

And though wicked men like Jehoiakim,
May take their penknives and whittle,
The Bible will not be expired by them,
Not even one jot or tittle!

For should they destroy it from the earth,
This Book which God has given;
'Tis settled forever from the first,
And has been preserved in heaven!

They shall be judged by this Holy Word,
All whose sins have not been atoned,
When they meet a thrice-Holy God
At the great white judgement throne!

by Kathryn Perrish

3. A virtuous woman is a good woman (Prov. 31:12).

4. A virtuous woman is a diligent woman (Prov. 31:13).

5. A virtuous woman is a proficient woman (Prov. 31:14-22).

6. A virtuous woman is a submissive woman (Prov. 31:23).

7. A virtuous woman is a wise woman (Prov. 31:26a).

8. A virtuous woman is a kind woman (Prov. 31:26b).

9. A virtuous woman is a faithful woman (Prov. 31:27).

10. A virtuous woman is an honored woman (Prov. 31:27).

The secret of womanhood and motherhood is not beauty, culture, social prestige, riches, etc., but fear of God! In Proverbs 31:30 it says, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

WHAT AMERICA NEEDS

America needs a leader like Moses, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter but was willing to go with God.

Army generals like Joshua, who knew God and could pray and shout things to pass rather than blow them with nuclear energy.

A food administrator like Joseph, who knew God and had the answer to famines.

Preachers like Peter, who would not be afraid to look people in the eyes and say, "Repent, or perish," and denounce their personal as well as national sins.

Mothers like Hannah, who would pray for a child that she might give him to God, rather than women who are delinquent parents with delinquent children.

Children like Samuel, who would talk to God in the night hours.

Physicians like Luke, who could care for your physical needs and introduce you to Jesus Christ who is a specialist in spiritual trouble.

A God like Israel's instead of the Dollar God, the Movie God and the Auto God.

And a Saviour like Jesus who could and would save from the uttermost to the uttermost.

TEN MINUS ONE

Ten minus one equals me than ten
When the tenth is given to Him
Ten minus one equals more than ten
To withhold it is a sin

Ten minus one equals more than ten
Do you give it every week?
Ten minus one equals more than ten
Tithe if God's blessing you seek

Ten minus one equals more than ten
Into the storehouse it all should go
Ten minus one equals more than ten
Give it and watch it grow

Ten minus one equals more than ten
Would a man rob God of His due?
Ten minus one equals more than ten
The tithe applies to you

For copies and other tracts write:
Pastor Medford Caudill
Rt. 4, Lot 7 Belaire Estates
Starkville, Mississippi 39759

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER
JAN. 20, 1990
PAGE NINE

HOW CAN A JUST GOD JUSTIFY GUILTY MAN?

by C. H. Spurgeon

When I was under conviction of sin I had a clear and sharp sense of the justice of God. Sin, whatever it might be to other people, became to me an intolerable burden. It was not so much that I feared the wrath to come, but that I feared sin. I knew myself to be so horribly guilty that I remember feeling that if God did not punish me for sin, He ought to do so. I felt that the judge of all the earth ought to condemn such sin as mine. I sat on the judgment seat and I condemned myself to perish, for I confessed that, had I been God, I could have done no other than send such a guilty creature as I was down to the lowest hell. All the while, I had upon my mind a deep concern for the honor of God's name and the integrity of His moral government. I felt that it would not satisfy my conscience if it could be forgiven unjustly. The sin that I had committed must be punished. But then there was the question how God could be just and yet justify me who had been so guilty. I asked my heart, "How can He be just and yet the justifier?" (Romans 3:26). I was worried and wearied with this question; neither could I see any answer to it. Certainly I could never have invented any answer which would have satisfied my conscience.

The doctrine of the atonement is to my mind one of the surest proofs of the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture. Who would or could have thought of the just Ruler dying for the unjust rebel? This is no teaching of human mythology or dream of poetical imagination. This method of expiation is only known among men because it is a fact. Fiction could not have devised it. God Himself ordained it. It is not a matter which could have been imagined.

I had heard the plan of salvation by the sacrifice of Jesus from my youth up, but I did not know any more about it in my innermost soul than if I had been born and bred a Hottentot. It came to me as a new revelation, as fresh as if I had never read the Scriptures, that Jesus was declared to be "the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2), that God might be just.

When I was anxious about the possibility of a just God pardoning me, I understood and saw by faith that He who is the Son of God became man and, in His own blessed person, bore my sin in His own body on the tree. I saw the chastisement of my peace was laid upon Him, and with His stripes I was healed (Isa. 53:5)--Have you ever seen that? Have you ever understood how God can be just to the full, not remitting penalty nor blunting the edge of the sword, and yet can be infinitely merciful and can justify the ungodly who turn to Him? It was because the Son of God, supremely glorious in His matchless person, undertook to vindicate the law, by bearing the sentence due me, that therefore God is able to pass by my sin. The law of God was more vindicated by the death of Christ than it would have been had all transgressions been punished forever. For the Son of God to suffer for sin was a more glorious establishment of the government of God than for the whole race to suffer.

Jesus has borne the death penalty on our behalf! Behold the wonder! There He hangs upon the cross! This is the greatest sight you will ever see: Son of God and Son of man! There He hangs, bearing pains unutterable--the Just for the unjust--that He might bring us to God. Oh, the glory of that sight! The innocent suffering! The Holy One condemned! The ever-blessed, made a curse! The infinitely Glorious, put to a shameful death! The more I look at the sufferings of the Son of God, the more sure I am that they must meet my case. Why did He suffer, if not to turn aside the penalty from us? If, then, He turned it aside by His death, it is turned aside, and those who believe in Him need not fear it. It must be so that, since expiation is made, God is able to forgive without shaking the basis of His throne or in the least degree blotting out the statute book. Conscience gets a full answer to her tremendous question. The wrath of God against iniquity, whatever that may be, must be beyond all conception terrible. Well did Moses say, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger!" (Psa. 90:11). Yet, when we hear the Lord of Glory cry, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psa. 22:1), and see Him yielding up the ghost, we feel that the justice of God has received abundant vindication by obedience so perfect and death so terrible, rendered by so divine a person. If God Himself bows before His own law, what more can be done? There is more in the atonement by way of merit than there is in all human sin by way of demerit. The great gulf of Jesus' loving self sacrifice can swallow up mountains of our sin, all of them. For the sake of the infinite good of this one representative Man, the Lord may well look with favor upon other men, however unworthy they may be in and of themselves. It was a miracle of miracles that the Lord Jesus Christ should stand in our stead and "bear, that we might never bear, His Father's righteous ire." But He has done so. "It is finished" (John 19:30). God will save the sinner because He did not spare His Son. God can pass by your transgressions because He laid those transgressions upon His only begotten Son.

What is it to believe in Him? It is not merely to say, "He is God and the Saviour," but to trust Him wholly and entirely, and take Him for all your salvation from this time forth and forever--your Lord, your Master, your All. If you believe on Him, I tell you you cannot go to hell, for that were to make the perfect sacrifice of Christ to none effect. If the Lord Jesus Christ died in my stead, why should I die also? Every believer by faith has laid his hands on the sacrifice, and made it his own, and therefore may rest assured that he can never perish. The Lord would not receive this offering on our behalf and then condemn us to die. The Lord cannot read our pardon written in the blood of His own Son and then smite us. That were impossible. Oh, that you may have grace given you at once to look away to Jesus, Who is the fountainhead of mercy to guilty man! Will you come into this life boat just as you are? Here is safety from the wreck. Accept the sure deliverance. Leap for it just as you are, and leap now!

I will tell you this thing about myself to encourage you. My sole hope for heaven lies in the full atonement made upon Calvary's cross for the ungodly. On that I firmly rely. I have not a shadow of hope anywhere else. You are in the same condition as I am, for we, neither of us, have anything of our own worth thinking of as a ground of trust. Let us join hands and stand together at the foot of the cross and trust our souls once for all to Him who shed His blood for the guilty. We will be saved by the one and the same Saviour. If you perish trusting Him, I must perish too. What can I do more to prove my own confidence in the gospel which I set before you? (copied from the Fall, 1989 issue of Pilgrim Pathway)

common sense in examining the Scriptures would reveal to any honest student of God's Word that, (1) Jesus was not born on December 25th. According to Eastern custom, the sheep were grazing in the fields until the seasonal rains set in which begin about October. Then they were brought into a sheepfold for the winter. It must have been before that that the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds announcing Christ's birth. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8). The Holy Spirit is very careful to tell us that it was in the same country, and that the shepherds were abiding in the field. Somehow people seem to miss the details. Maybe because they seem unimportant. My friend, every jot and tittle of the Word of God is important! Neither were we instructed by Jesus during His earthly ministry, nor by any of the apostles to do so. John wrote five books; Luke two, Peter two, Matthew one, Mark one, James one, Jude one, and Paul 14; ten to churches, and four to individuals, and in all of these writings not once are we commanded, instructed, or even asked to set aside a special day to celebrate the birth of Jesus our Saviour. Furthermore, Jesus never mentioned it in either the last supper before His crucifixion, or in the giving of the great commission.

What about the law? Under the Mosaic law, (the ceremonial law), there were feasts and special days of worship that were required of the children of Israel, but some careful research will reveal that for each of these feasts and ceremonies, was a prescribed day in which to celebrate. It was important to God for His people to obey Him in exact terms. It is my understanding that all of the ceremonial law was designed either to reveal the deity, character, sovereignty, beauty, offices, suffering, or coming of the Messiah. Likewise, under the so-called "grace dispensation," after the ceremonial law was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the church was

given certain ceremonies to carry out in the assembly such as the Lord's Supper, baptism, and the assembling of ourselves on the Lord's day. In these three ceremonies enough detail is provided by the Holy Spirit so that we know exactly when and where to carry them out. Why then, if we are to celebrate Jesus' birthday, were we not provided with enough information in the Word of God so that we could be sure we were carrying it out where and when God wanted us to? I urge you, beloved, to use a little common sense on the issue!

Why does the world love the birthday of Jesus? Another thought I ask you to consider has to do with the world's participation in the birthday of Jesus Christ. I might remind you that our Lord Himself said that the world hated Him, and that the world would hate all those who follow Him. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). But yet each year in December the world goes all out to celebrate the birthday of the very one they hate the most. Now I don't know about you, but I just can't make any sense out of that. You would have to be off your rocker to go year after year, all your lifetime hating someone, and despising those who follow that one, and then at the same time celebrate His birthday every year with joy and gladness. That makes as much sense as the fox telling the rabbit, "One day each year I will love you and not eat you," or the skunk saying, "One day each year I will not stink."

To whom shall we give our gifts? Suppose you had a birthday party and invited everyone to come. It would be a magnificent affair with everyone singing songs in your honor, talking about how wonderful you were, and going on and on about how much they loved you. They would remember all the great things you have done, and how much you have sacrificed, and given of yourself to help others. But when the party got underway,

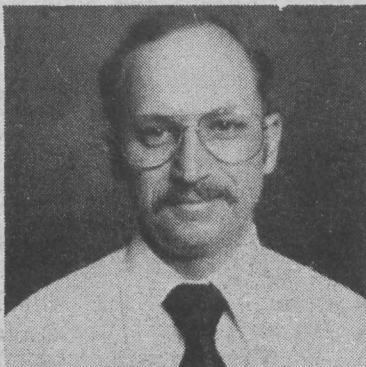
(Continued on Page 11, Col. 3)

THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

by John Pruitt

Text: Matthew 1:18-25

Introduction: I am sure that it would be safe to say that the majority of people who live in a Christian society believe that Jesus Christ was born on December 25th, and that is why we have Christmas at that time. Does it really matter about Christmas? Does it really make any difference if we celebrate Jesus' birthday or not? Sure it matters! Anything that pertains to Bible truth mat-



JOHN PRUITT

ters. If Jesus Christ was born on December 25th, and if the Scriptures instruct God's people to celebrate His birthday on that day, then we are sinning of neglect to not do so. If we neglect to tithe, we sin, and that goes for baptism, the Lord's Supper, preaching the gospel, visiting, and assembling ourselves together on the Lord's Day. Anything that the New Testament commands us to do should be done by all means, and done in the proper manner and motive. On the other hand, it would be just as wrong for the church, and the Lord's people to use the Lord's house and the Lord's name to go beyond Scripture, and do things that are not commanded. That is why we do not practice foot washing, speaking in tongues, allowing women to preach, sprinkling for baptism, use crackers and grape juice for the Lord's Supper, and celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ.

Common Sense: A little

So many these days want a fine looking preacher,
Whose hair is always in place;
Whose shoes are polished, clothes so neat,
I wonder, if he knows of the race.

Too many these days have itching ears,
It's easy to find one who'll scratch;
The preacher who'll preach lying words,
Such cockatrice eggs, they do hatch.

Oh Father! Be gracious, and give us men,
Whose calling comes from You;
Who'll encourage us in the midst of battle,
So scarred and tried and true.

Temper these men with steel from your Spirit,
Harden their faces like flint;
Open our hearts to receive the truth,
"You'll perish in sin or repent."

One way! let these men proclaim,
One faith! one hope! one baptism!
One gospel of our salvation,
Preach Jesus the foundations fame.

Preach Jesus, Son of God,
Preach Jesus, Lord of all;
Preach Jesus Christ the King,
Or don't you dare, preach at all!

---Robert Wooldridge

ADDENDA TO ARTICLE "HOW IS THE ATONEMENT LIMITED"

The above mentioned article appeared in the December 9th issue of this paper. A part of that article deals with ways in which Sovereign Grace men seek to extend the atonement of Jesus Christ beyond its proper and Biblical limits. I realize that men do this with the good intentions of seeking to magnify the person and work of Christ. However, I think that the true result of such is a belittling and perverting of the atonement as to its real nature. In this, I refer to men who are truly believers in the doctrines of sovereign and saving grace. In a sense, and in their own mind and intentions, these men believe in a Limited Atonement. I think, myself, that by their efforts to extend those Biblical limits, they come perilously close to denying the true Limited Atonement.

I believe that the truth about the atonement is the following. God laid on Christ the guilt of all the sins of all the elect - He imputed that guilt to Christ. Christ died for that guilt. He suffered the exact equivalent of what the elect would have suffered in eternal hell had He not died for them - no more, no less. He satisfied the wrath of God against the sins of the elect. He satisfied the claims of God's broken law against the elect. I believe that this is the truth of the atonement. I believe that any efforts to extend the atonement beyond this seriously tampers with the nature of the atonement.

Some sovereign grace men attempt to extend the atonement beyond these strict limits. Some would have Him dying for earth, rocks, trees, etc. They would have Him dying for the redemption of the earth. Some would have Him dying so as to provide by that death a basis for the universal offer of the gospel. No need for this. I believe in the universal offer and preach it, but there is absolutely no need of extending the atonement of Christ beyond the elect in order to give that offer.

Some say that Christ died to remove the legal obstacles to salvation out of the way for all men. This is not true. Those legal obstacles are the reason men are not saved. Remove them, and all for whom they are removed will be saved. If removed out of the way of the salvation of all men, all will be saved. Some extend the death of Christ beyond its proper and Biblical limits by saying that the death of Christ, in and of itself, is sufficient for the salvation of any, even an infinite number of men - that if more were to be saved than actually will be saved, Christ would not have had to suffer any more.

I mentioned all these in my previous article on this subject. However, I left out one effort of men to extend the death of Christ beyond its Biblical limitations; and I wish to deal with it briefly at this time. I speak of the teaching that Christ died for the Adamic sin (whatever the teacher of this theory may mean by this) of all men. Frankly, I do not know exactly what men mean by this. I should be grateful if someone who holds this view would send me a plain and clear statement thereof. However, I do know that I do not agree with this theory, whatever is meant thereby.

I believe that Adam was the federal head of the race. I believe that the guilt of his sin is imputed to all of his posterity. I also believe that when Adam fell his nature became sinful; and that this sinful nature is transmitted to all of his posterity. Now, when men say that Christ died for the Adamic sin of all men, are they speaking of this imputed guilt, or of the sin nature with which men are born, or both? Whatever they might mean by this, I am opposed to this unscriptural and needless extending of the limits of the death of Christ.

As I understand this matter, men have adopted this theory to maintain the salvation of those dying in infancy. They teach that those dying in infancy are only guilty of Adamic sin, and they teach their salvation by teaching that Christ died for the Adamic sin of all men. I do verily believe that those dying in infancy (and I do not know how far to extend that, I leave that with the Lord) are saved. I believe that Christ died for all of their sins. I see no need of teaching that Christ died for the Adamic sin of the reprobate in order to teach this. Do the advocates of this theory say that the only sin of infants and children who are saved in this way is the imputed guilt of Adam's sin and the sin nature they were born with? If so, it would seem that one would have to greatly restrict those who are saved in this way. How soon, after birth, does one begin to sin beyond this imputed guilt of Adam's sin and this possession of the sin nature? I suggest that this theory of the way in which infants are saved leaves us with many more problems than it solves.

I cannot accept, because I do not believe the Bible teaches it, this theory that has Christ dying for some of the sin guilt of multitudes of men, but not dying for all of their guilt, and thus leaving them to eternal hell. What kind of atonement is this? Some of the guilt of a man imputed to Christ, but not all of it, so that the man still dies for some of his guilt and goes to hell - what kind of atonement is this? Why, here we have Christ dying (in some part and to some extent) for a man, and yet that man going to hell. What folly! Christ does not divide the guilt of sinful men, taking some of it on Himself and dying for that; while leaving the rest of it to the individual, and the individual going to hell for that.

Such a doctrine is not needed in order to secure the salvation of those dying in infancy. One can just believe that Christ dies for all of the sin of His elect, for none of the sins of the reprobate, and believe that those who die in infancy belong to the election of grace for whom Christ did die. Nothing at all is gained by this theory that Christ died for the Adamic sin of all men. The salvation of those who die in infancy are as well secured without this. Great problems are created by this doctrine. It has great difficulty as to determining those who will be saved by this atonement that is only for Adamic sin. It creates a problem as to the reprobate not being punished for that part of their total guilt for

which Christ died, while being punished for the rest. Such a doctrine does not actually accomplish anything that cannot be accomplished by simply teaching that Christ died only for the elect, and it creates many problems that the true doctrine does not.

I know of no Scripture that would substantiate this doctrine. I feel that one would really have to stretch and strain, and even pervert the true meaning of any Scripture that would be used to support this doctrine. This is just another attempt to stretch the limits of Christ's death beyond its proper and Biblical limits. And, as I have said of the other such attempts, it accomplishes nothing; but it does create needless problems and difficulties, and it does dilute and belittle somewhat the death of Christ. It has men suffering in hell for whom Christ suffered, in part at least, on the cross. It loses much. It gains nothing. It does not have Scriptural support. Let us be done with it at once.

Brethren, why not let the Arminians have their unlimited atonement. Why not let us stick to a Biblically and properly limited atonement. Christ died for the elect. He died for all of the elect. He died only for the elect. He died for all of the sins of the elect. He did not die for any of the sins of the non-elect. He did not die for earth and rocks and trees. He did not die to remove legal obstacles for all men. He did not die to obtain food, clothes, and shelter for men. He did not die to extend man's time on the earth. He died for the sins of the elect. All for whom He died will be saved. Let us leave it at this. This position honors the Bible and honors Christ and His death. With respect to this addenda to the original article, let us beware of teaching that Christ died for some of the sin guilt of the non elect. The preaching of a Biblical and proper Limited Atonement honors Christ and His death. Beware of weakening and diluting the atonement by seeking to extend it beyond its Biblical limits. May God bless you all.

THE BIRTH

(Continued from Page 10)

no one paid any attention to you. They all laughed and had a wonderful time entertaining themselves and each other. They ate all your birthday cake, they took your name in vain, and misquoted many facts about your life, they did all manner of sinful things that you had taught against, they made a mockery of everything that you stood for. All year long they never came to see you, nor wrote to you, or even thought about you. Then to top all that off, they spent great amounts of money on gifts, only to give them all to each other. Would you be pleased by this kind of birthday party? Neither is our Lord pleased when people use His precious name and His birthday as an excuse to have a big party for themselves.

What if it were a church ordinance? I ask you to consider if it is consistent for God to command a ceremony or an ordinance for all

the world to celebrate. Paul said in Ephesians 3:21, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." I find no form of service or celebration that is to be carried out outside the local assembly. Therefore, any ordinance which is not carried out by the Lord's true churches, whether it be baptism, Lord's Supper, or the birthday of Jesus Christ, (I use the latter only to illustrate my point), would not honor God anyway.

Conclusion: "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. 12:30-32). Please do not misunderstand, my dear reader. Certainly the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is important! Outside His substitutionary work on the cross, His birth is the most important event in the history of the world. It was important enough that the Holy Spirit saw fit to have two of the gospel writers record it in much detail in the Word of God. But beloved, we must not be tempted by old Satan into inventing ways to celebrate it, or even participate with others who have invented celebrations for it. We must follow Scripture in order to please God. Samuel told King Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to harken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22). I am afraid that millions of God's people are offering God a lot of "fat" in the celebration of so-called Christian holidays, and that He is not well pleased. Christian friend, which is more important; the traditions of man or the Word of God? Of course, it is always right to follow the guidelines of Scripture instead of man-made tradition, even if the traditions of men seem good. Think about it.

WHEN SHOULD I DATE?

by Charles H. Shofstahl

Have you ever been on a date? What is dating all about? Why do young people date? Because they are expected to? Because "everyone else does"? Because their parents push them to? These are not very good reasons, really, are they?

Dating "just for fun" can lead to bad experiences. I once read about a girl who was picked up by a boy to go out on a date and she spent the rest of the evening fighting off his advances. Certainly that boy was no Christian gentleman!

Young people still of high school age are not prepared to make mature decisions based on reality in selecting a life partner. They are growing into adulthood and experiencing the pull of newly released forces in their own

bodies that they are not ready to properly control. Many a young girl on a single date with a boy has discovered too late that she let him go "too far" and has lost her chastity and become pregnant. Many become mothers when they should be growing up, and, worse, many compound their shame and guilt by having the baby killed through abortion.

Young people date to get to know one another and to seek out their life's partner. Now we are no longer speaking of "dating"; we are speaking of courtship. High-school-age young people can have good times in group activities, chaperoned, of course, by having picnics, hikes, singing parties with refreshments at someone's home, ice skating parties and other events. Here they can see which boys show respect to their elders, treat girls like ladies, and act like gentlemen; and boys can see which girls maintain their modesty and dignity and are true ladies. It is not likely the person you marry will be much different after you become united in wedlock than now.

A truly wise young person will avoid tempting situations and will wait upon the Lord for the special person He has reserved for him/her. These might be laughed at as "old fashioned" by so-called friends, but they are paving the way for a holy and happy marriage and will find their efforts well rewarded.

(copied from Fall 1989 issue of Pilgrim Pathway)

YOU WON'T DIE LAUGHING

"The state comes into existence that man may live." -- Aristotle.

The first duty of government is to protect your life. If the state can "legalize" the murder of some, it can "legalize" the murder of many.

If an innocent baby's life is not protected -- neither is yours. Abortion today "justifies" euthanasia tomorrow. Killing innocent babies who reside in the womb could "justify" the killing of elderly, or the handicapped or you!

Nazi "government approved" gas chambers killed innocent Jews.

American "government approved" abortion chambers are now killing innocent babies. Your tax dollar helps pay for the killing.

Write your newspaper, state legislator and congressman. Talk to your doctor.

They will allow Him to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the lamps of heaven, or rule the waves of the ever-moving ocean; but when God ascends His throne, His creatures gnash their teeth. And we proclaim an enthroned God and His right to do as He wills with His own, to dispose of His creatures as HE thinks well, without consulting them in the matter; then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on His throne is not the God they love, But it is God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is God upon His throne whom we trust.

--C.H. Spurgeon

CAN YOU IMAGINE THIS ?

Paul losing his salvation?
"...for I know whom I have believed, and am Persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim.1:12).

BOOK AND BIBLE FUND

I have mentioned this before, but desire to do so again. I want to make a real and persistent effort to establish such a fund.

I get so many requests, mostly from foreign countries, for books and Bibles. We send as many of these from our book store as we feel we can afford (and some people think we have a book store for profit to the church; nothing could be further from the truth). The requests for such far exceed our ability to give. I received a request from a prison chaplain for "Five Points of Calvinism" by Frank Beck to be given to prisoners. We sent him fifty as that was all we felt we could afford. We received a check today from an interested person to pay for sending fifty more.

I have tried before to set up a fund for this. We have received some offerings for this, and have used them in this way, but did not feel that we received enough to really set up such a fund. I am asking our readers to help us to establish such a fund. We will, if we can get such established, report on money received for such and how it is used. It would greatly help to get started on this if some individual or church (or more than one) would send us a

substantial offering for such a fund to get it started.

We would use this fund to send Bibles and books, mostly to the foreign fields though we would use it also for requests such as those from the prison chaplain mentioned above. We would use this fund to supply such for the requests we receive. Unless otherwise instructed by the giver, we will use our discretion as to what to send and to whom we send. However, you will be free to specify either of these two things. We will send these at our cost plus postage. We will not make any profit therefrom. We will not charge for our labor in this. We will charge for packaging material if we have to purchase such.

I hope that our readers will consider having a part in such a fund. I feel that, in this way, we can meet a real need, and be of great help to others in these things. This could become a way of doing a great mission work. You might consider supporting such a fund as a part of your church's mission work. All money given for this fund will be used only for this purpose. Comments, criticisms, questions, and suggestions welcomed.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Elder Dan Phillips is available for a few revival meetings each year. He is a very fine, sound, and able preacher. I urge the churches to use Dan as much as he feels he can be away from his church. When I ran this before I gave the wrong area code for his phone. You may write him at 273 Old Bethel Rd., Bluff City, Tenn. 37618, or call him at 615 764 3771.

BOOK REVIEW

We have "Studies in John's Epistles" by George Findlay. It is subtitled "Fellowship in the Life Eternal." I read much. In my readings, I have often run into quotes from and commendations of this book. I am so glad that it is now available, and that I can have a copy to read and study. I look forward to this. Just looking through it whets my appetite for a thorough reading thereof. The

author was a well known and highly respected Bible scholar. It seems that this book will furnish a full and clear exposition and strong practical applications. I would urge you to buy and study this important book on an important portion of the Word of God. It is a paper back nearly 450 pages and sells for \$12.95. Order from our book store. It is available in hard back for \$18.95.

THE FACTS OF DEATH

The #1 killer is not war.
The #1 killer is abortion!

In the nine wars and 211 years since 1775, there have been 667,286 American battle deaths.

In 1985 alone, over 1,500,000 American babies were killed by abortion. Almost three murders per minute for each of the 525,600 minutes in the years.

In 1985 alone, more babies were killed by "legal" abortion in California than were American

servicemen killed in Vietnam, Korea, Spanish, Mexican, 1812 and Revolutionary wars put together.

In war, the medical corps saves lives. In abortion, the medical profession kills lives. Aborted babies get no Purple Hearts, no Taps, no Memorial Day.

Abortion techniques pull the living baby apart, cut him in pieces, or pickle him alive in a salt solution. But no anesthesia is given the baby. A horrible painful death!

If you are concerned about war -- be more concerned about abortion.

IMPRESSIONS

I have enjoyed the conference very much. My spirit has been revived. I am already looking forward to next year. May God bless you at Calvary Baptist Church.

Julie Wilson, Gladwin, Mi.

I thought it was fun. It was very good. I learned a lot and met a lot of people.

Becky Parrish, Courtland, Va.

Good preaching, good fellowship. It was a spiritual uplift to see so many come together for fellowship and to hear the Word.

Clyde Everman,
Ft. Mitchell, Ky.

We are fortunate people to hear the precious truths proclaimed here at the conference. For the past few years I've enjoyed the messages, the music, the praise and the fellowship of God's saints. As the world continues to grow darker, and the Lord's returning more evident, it's important for the Lord's church to be ready. The preaching covered many areas of the believer's walk preparing us for that time. It's been refreshing and uplifting. Should the Lord tarry, I hope to be here again next year.

Ty Schafrath, Burton, Ohio

There were some very good messages and good fellowship. We enjoyed talking to some old and new friends.

Don Valencourt, Russell, Ky.

It was no surprise that Calvary Baptist Church has hosted another great conference. This was one of the best. The preaching was superb, the singing was great. It was good to see Brother Joslin work in leading the singing and playing the trumpet. I might add that he did a good job preaching, also. The fellowship and food were tremendous. It was good to see old friends again. May the Lord continue to bless Calvary.

Elder Dan Phillips,
Bristol, Tn.

As usual, we really enjoyed the Bible Conference and the good preaching. Even though we couldn't stay for all of it, we did hear a lot of fine sermons and hope to be back again next year.

Hart & Jean Litchfield,
Huntsville, Ala.

Start making your plans now to attend our 1990 Bible Conference, May 25-28. Then you will have blessings such as these to write about, and can write them up for The Baptist Examiner.

When questions arise concerning preachers -- their conduct, conversation, attitude, attire, and message -- one scripture comes to my mind. "Now then we are ambassadors of Christ" (II Cor. 5:20). We are the "highest ranking representative appointed by our king to represent him to others." That is an ambassador! This grave responsibility and high office, when realized, will spell out for any man the answers to the above questions.



Some folk from Temple Baptist Church of Appalachia, Va.



John Pruitt preaches to us.



Women getting desserts ready for our guests.



At the feeding trough.



Judy Rule at the tapes.