

THE UNCHANGEABLE CHRIST

BY C.H. SPURGEON

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." -- Hebrews xiii. 8.

Let me read to you the verse that comes before our text. It is a good habit always to look at texts in their connection. It is wrong, I think, to lay hold of small portions of God's Word, and take them out of their connection as you might pluck feathers from a bird; it is an injury to the Word; and, sometimes, a passage of Scripture loses much of its beauty, its true

teaching, and its real meaning, by being taken from the context. Nobody would think of mutilating Milton's poems so, taking a few lines out of Paradise Lost, and then imagining that he could really get at the heart of the poet's power. So, always look at texts in the connection in which they stand. The verse before our text is this, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

Observe, then, that God's people are a thoughtful people. If they are what they ought to be, they do a great deal of remembering and considering; that is the gist of this verse. If they are to remember and to consider their earthly leaders, much more are they to recollect that great Leader, the Lord Jesus, and all those matchless truths which fell from his blessed lips. I wish, in these days, that professing Christians did remember and did consider a

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C.H. SPURGEON
(NOW IN GLORY)

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

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THINGS THAT WE OUGHT TO BE GRATEFUL FOR

by John M. Alber
Introduction.

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Cor. 9:15). There are a number of things that we ought to be thankful for as Christians. Indeed, the child of God should take the time every once in a while and count his many blessings and see what the Lord has done for him.

The songwriter has put it this way in our hymn book. "When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed, when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, Count your many blessings -

name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

"Are you ever hurdened with a



JOHN M. ALBER

load of care? Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear? Count your many blessings - ev'ry doubt will fly. And you will be singing as the days go by. When you look at others with their lands and gold, Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold; Count your many blessings - money cannot buy Your reward in heaven nor your home on high.

"So amid the conflict, whether great or small, Do not be discouraged - God is over all; Count your many blessings - angels

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SOLOMON'S FOLLY - TODAY

by Fred C. Beard

We read about the reign of Solomon in I Kings, Chapters 1-11; and in I Chronicles 28-II Chronicles 9. Most of what we read about Solomon is very good. Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks of Solomon in Matthew 6:29, when he said of the lilies of the fields, "And yet I say unto you,



FRED BEARD

that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Yes, Solomon was one of the

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WHAT IS REALLY WRONG WITH THE CHARISMATICS?

by Don Howard

Perhaps the most significant thing to come on the religious scene in this century is the Charismatic Movement. It has penetrated both liberal Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. In some cases, fundamental churches have had to contend with it. Literally multiplied millions of dollars are raised to support its "shows" and "clubs." One Carolina-based group was collecting approximately one million dollars a week to maintain its empire.

Many sincere, untaught Christians are taken in by this thing. The question is often asked, "What is wrong with the Charismatics?" In answer to the question, the following observations are made:

1. It is Ecumenical In Its Concept

In the end time there shall be the amalgamation of apostate re-

ligions into one super church. The Charismatics are doing for the ecumenical movement what nothing else has been able to do - that is, bringing all sects and denominations together.

2. It Accommodates The World

It takes the music of the world and the world's philosophy and incorporates them into its religion. Its aim is to Christianize the world rather than convert it. It advocates fitting Christ into one's lifestyle rather than changing one's lifestyle to fit the mind of God. It's programs are referred to as "clubs" and its religious performances as "shows," which is exactly what they are! Rock stars are featured with their devilish rock music. Worldly "professors" who perform in night clubs are promoted as model Christians. James tells us that "...friendship of the world is enmity with God..."

(James 4:4).

3. It Disregards Doctrine

It matters little to the Charismatic what one believes as long as he identifies with its movement. One Charismatic leader has said, "The doctrinal walls are crumbling." But to have no regard for doctrine is to have no regard for the teaching of the Scriptures. Paul told Timothy to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (II Tim. 4:2). "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine..." (II Tim. 3:16) In I Tim. 3:13 and 16, Paul exhorts his readers to give attendance to "doctrine" and to take heed unto "doctrine."

4. It is Experience-Oriented

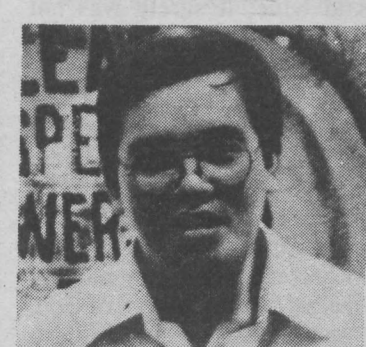
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O WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM

by Velmer B. Paler
Toril Davao City
Philippines

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Rom. 7:24).

In the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul sets out the place of the law in the clearest fashion as



VELMER PALER

follows: 1. The law can never justify men (7:1-6). 2. The law served to bring Paul under conviction of sin (7:7-13). 3. The role of the law in the believer's experience (7:14-23).

The fourteenth verse of the chapter is the turning point "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal,

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen." (John 21:25).

Do you know this miracle worker? Has He wrought within you the miracle of salvation? There have been many pretenders gone forth into the world, there are many such today; but this One was truly a worker of many miracles. He was not a fake or

fraud. His miracles stood every test of their genuineness. His greatest enemies, the Pharisees, did not deny His miracles. In order to get around the testimony His miracles gave to Him, they attributed them to the power of Satan; but they never thought of denying their reality.

Jesus Christ performed thirty-five specific and detailed miracles. Seventeen of these were miracles of physical cures. He healed men of many and varied sicknesses. He healed several of leprosy, that terrible disease, a type of the sinfulness of man. He healed Peter's

mother in law of a great fever. He healed the palsy. He made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to talk. He healed a woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years. He healed a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together and could not lift herself up. Oh, what a physician was He. He healed great multitudes. He never attempted to heal one whom He did not heal. He healed, not by ordinary means of doctor and medicine, but by His

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MIRACLES

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own mighty power.

He performed nine specific miracles in the realm of nature. He turned water into wine. Yes, I said wine; it surely was not grape juice. The governor of the feast recognized it as the best wine of all - we knew that. I was most amazed to read by one scholar, and I mean that sincerely - that it could not have been wine, for it did not have time to ferment. Oh, how foolish wise men become when they attempt to explain away the Word of God. On two occasions He caused a great number of fishes to be caught when fishermen had labored long with no results. He took five loaves and two fishes and fed five thousand men besides the women and children. He took seven loaves and a few little fishes and fed four thousand men besides the women and children - and He did not need the bread and fishes that He had. Twice He stilled the stormy sea. Yes, the winds and the waves did obey His will and sank down into perfect and peaceful calm. He walked on the water as easily and confidently as on solid ground. He thus manifested His total control over the elements of nature.

He performed six specified and detailed miracles of casting out demons. The devil and his demons have great power, but their power was as total weakness when confronted by the almighty power of Jesus Christ. They obeyed His commands to the letter, even though inwardly they

may have raged against Him. Their rage and power were helpless before Him.

Jesus Christ raised three people from the dead during His earthly ministry. He raised the twelve year old daughter Of Jairus who had died only a few minutes or so before. He raised the son of the widow of Nain who had likely died the previous day. He raised Lazarus who had been dead four days. He raised one as easily as another, for His power is equal to any occasion - and more than equal. His power has never been strained to the utmost of what it is and could do.

Jesus Christ showed forth His mighty, miracle-working power



Joe Wilson

in the realm of men and sickness. He showed His power in the realm of nature. He showed His power as the Lord of life even in the realm of death. He showed His power over the world of spirit beings. Oh, He is the mighty miracle worker.

Besides the thirty-five specific and detailed miracles, there are many statements in the New Testament telling of miracles in the mass, leaving us to only wonder as to how many were actually performed. "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them" (Matt.4:23-24). "And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel" (Matt.15:30-31). "And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils...." (Mk.1:32-34). Many such verse could be given, for there are a multitude of them.

Any attempt to total the number of miracles performed by Jesus Christ would be futile, but the evidence is clear that they total an exceedingly large number.

Remember that all these miracles were performed in a period of just barely over three years, and in a very small area. One can note, as he reads the gospels, the intense excitement generated by these many miracles. They caused great multitudes to follow Christ for awhile. One can only wonder how much sickness was left in the land, (especially Galilee where most of these miracles were performed), after these miracles were performed. At one point, Jesus perceived that the people were determined to make Him a king, by force if necessary; and He withdrew from their presence. Oh, how sad that most of those in the great crowds that followed Him were only interested in His power to perform physical miracles, not at all in His ability to meet spiritual needs.

Jesus' miracles were performed in different ways. Sometimes they were performed from a distance, and sometimes right at hand. At times they were performed by a touch, at other times there was no physical contact. Three times, saliva was used in performing these miracles. Once He spit upon a man's eyes, and the man was healed. Once He spit and touched a man's tongue, and he could speak. Once Jesus spit upon the ground, made clay, put this on a man's blind eyes, and told the man to go and wash in the pool, Siloam. When the man did this, he was healed. Sometimes Jesus just spoke the word and the miracle took place. On one, and only one, occasion a miracle was performed in two stages. Jesus spit upon a man's eyes, and asked him if he saw. The man replied that he saw men as trees walking. Jesus then touched his eyes, and the man saw clearly.

It would seem to me that in reality the miracles were performed simply by Jesus putting forth power by the exercise of His will. The means used were incidental, and did not of themselves contribute to the working of the miracle. Our Lord demonstrates His sovereignty in the performance of His miracles in two ways. He chose of His own will those upon whom He would work a miracle, as well as his other miracles. At the pool of Bethesda in John 5, there were a multitude of people with various sicknesses, waiting for the moving of the water, hoping to be the first one in the water after this moving, and thus to be healed. Yes, I believe that the angel went down into the water and caused a moving of the water. I know that the N.I.V. and many other versions omit or cast doubt on this. I know that the Scofield Bible casts doubt on this. But I think we had best stick with the KJV in our study and cast these other versions from us when they differ from the KJV. At the pool of Bethesda, Jesus of His sovereign will, healed one man and left the others as they were. He is sovereign in all that He does. He also showed His sovereignty in the various means and ways with which and in which He performed His miracles. I really have great difficulty in seeing how men manage to get around the sovereignty of God in the Bible; it is apparent in so many ways.

There are different words used to refer to these miracles of Jesus. One is "works." This refers to a work of power designed to attract attention. Another is

"mighty works." This refers to a putting forth of divine power. Another is "signs." This refers to the putting forth of physical power that is symbolic of spiritual truth.

There are some adjectives used with the word "things" to describe these miracles. They are called "great things," and this they surely were. They are called (Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

FROM THE EDITOR

"He that is not with me is against me...." (Matt.12:30). I do not know how many times I have heard men say, or heard that they said, "I don't want to take sides." I know several preachers who have quite a reputation for not taking sides and not getting involved. Many are proud of this not taking sides. Many consider it a virtue of great excellence to not take sides.

When something is right, and something is wrong; it is a sin, not a virtue, to not take sides. One church sins against another church - say, takes in or uses an excluded member of that church. Other churches know that this has been done. If it were done to them they would be very indignant, and would want other churches to side with them against the church that had wronged them. Many of these churches just will not take sides, will not get involved in the matter - and they think this shows superior virtue and superior wisdom. What it does show is the cowardly and compromising attitude of said churches and pastors. They, many times, do know which was right and which was wrong. If they do not know, they could easily find out. If they were the injured party, they would have no difficulty as to who is right and who is wrong.

One preacher wrongs another, or one Christian wrongs another. People do not want to take sides; they do not want to become involved. Frankly, I have heard this, "I don't want to take sides, I want to stay neutral, I don't want to be involved"; until I am nauseated with it - that means, "It makes me want to puke." Right is right and wrong is wrong; and to refuse to take sides, to refuse to get involved, is not great wisdom or great virtue; it is the coward's cop-out.

Right is right and wrong is wrong; and to take sides and get involved is the bold, proper, righteous, and godly thing to do. (Who can deny this?) The godly men and women of the Bible took sides and got involved. They did not try to be neutral (as one brother told me); they did not compromise. Many times it cost them to take sides and get involved. Sometimes it cost them their lives; but they would not stand by and let wrong triumph without a battle. Moses got involved when the Egyptian slew a Hebrew. David got involved when Goliath challenged the armies of Israel. Samuel got involved when Saul disobeyed the Lord. Elijah got involved. Daniel got involved. John the Baptist got involved when Herod took his brother's wife.

Sometimes I think I have suffered more because of those who would not take sides and get involved than I have from those who have done me wrong. They have said they were not against me, but just did not want to get involved - and their compromise may have saved them some criticism and trouble; but it has all but broken my heart. I have suffered much in my soul over dear friends (I thought and hoped) who did not want to take sides.

Right is right and wrong is wrong, and to refuse to take sides is a sin. It is a sin against the Lord who makes so very much of right and wrong, and expects that every saved person should take the side of the right against the wrong. Oh, our Lord has always taken sides with the right and against the wrong, and every true follower of His is to do the same thing.

Right is right and wrong is wrong, and it is a sin to refuse to take sides. It is the sin of not being for the right and the sin of not being against the wrong. He who is not for right is against it. He who is not against wrong is for it. It is a sin against the one who is right. The one who is in the right needs the support of all who love and want to do right. He has enough of a battle with those who hate right and love wrong. It adds much to his suffering when those who ostensibly are for the right will not side with him. When a brother or church is right, and one does not side with them, that one or group automatically are siding with the wrong.

Right is right and wrong is wrong, and it is a sin to refuse to take sides. It is a sin against the one who is wrong. When a church takes in or uses properly excluded members, they may think they are doing them a favor; in reality, they are doing them great harm. What excluded church member is ever going to get right with the church that excluded him or her as long as some other church will take them in, coddle them in their sin, and use them; thus totally disregarding the authority of the excluding church? Why, some churches have taken in excluded church members and organized them into a church. Of course, sound believers in church authority will not recognize such as a true church: but will those people ever bother getting right with the church that excluded them. You see, it is a sin against one in the wrong when others will not take sides against them, for it encourages them to go on in their wrong.

Right is right and wrong is wrong, and it is a sin to not take sides. Jesus taught that those who are not for Him, are against Him. Does not this establish a principle that tells us that to not take sides for the right and with the right, is to be against the right? Of course, it does.

Well, we are in a day of cowardly compromise. We are in a day when many will not take sides; will not get involved. I would urge all such to consider what they are doing. Let me say that it really is impossible to not take sides. When you refuse to take sides with the right, you automatically are taking sides with the wrong. This is what Jesus taught in the Scripture that heads this editorial. A preacher talked with another preacher as to his attitude and action relative to a certain division. The preacher said, "I don't want to take sides." This preacher replied, "You have already taken sides." True, so true. The man and the church in the right need your encouragement, sympathy, prayers, and support. When you do not give this, you are aiding and abetting the wrong.

Let us be done with this compromising, cowardly attitude of "not taking sides, not getting involved." Let us find out the right, and take sides therewith. God will one day hold us accountable as to the side we do take - or if we take no side at all.

There is not a humble heart where there is seen a stubborn knee.

MIRACLES

(Continued from Page 2)

"glorious things." Jesus covered Himself all over with glory by His doing of these miracles. They are called "strange things." Oh, they were truly strange. They were such as had never been seen by mortal man before. Though there had been a few miracles before this; there had not been any for many centuries of time, and there had never been so many performed by one person as were performed by Jesus. They are called "wonderful things." Yes, they were wonderful. They were wonderful to those who were the objects thereof, wonderful to the beholders thereof, and certainly performed by Him whose name is Wonderful.

There were two great values to these miracles. They showed man and his need. Oh, the need of man, needs that he cannot meet himself, and no other man can meet for him. What a helpless being is man in and of himself. Man is the most proud of beings, yet with the least to be proud of. He has nothing that he did not receive. He does nothing in and of himself. He is totally and eternally dependent upon another. These miracles also show God and His power. God has the power to meet the needs of man. If we fail to learn these two lessons from these miracles, they might as well have never been performed so far as we are concerned. If we fail to learn these two lessons, we have wasted our time in reading of them and studying them.

Let us notice the two-fold nature of these miracles. They are physical and literal. They happened exactly as the Bible records them. Oh, my friend, I have no confidence at all in the profession of salvation of a man who denies the miracles of the Bible. When Randall Lolley was pastor of the

First Baptist Church in Winston Salem, N.C., I talked with him concerning the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. He said that he believed this, but he knew many people who truly worshipped Jesus Christ, but had intellectual difficulties with the Virgin Birth. Not so, beloved, not so. How can a man who has been made the subject of the miracle of the new birth have any doubts concerning the miracles of the Bible. These miracles all happened exactly as set forth in the Bible. Then, these miracles have a spiritual value. After we have received them as the literal miracles they truly are, we can apply them to spiritual things and learn spiritual applications therefrom.

Let us think a moment of Jesus and miracles. He came into this world by way of a miracle. He left it by way of a miracle. Between these two miracles, He performed a multitude of miracles. He, Himself, is the greatest miracle of all. My friend, you cannot believe in Jesus Christ without believing in miracles. That glorious gospel message, by which men are saved, is the message of miracles. One who does not believe in miracles does not believe the gospel, and most assuredly is not a saved person.

Now, think on this matter. Did Jesus ever charge for a miracle? Oh, He was a poor man. He, the greatest miracle worker of all, lived in poverty; while those who falsely pretend to be followers of Him and pretend to be working miracles today, live in the greatest of wealth. There could be no greater contrast than the contrast of the life style of Jesus and that of the false, fake healers of today. Surely, Jesus could have amassed great wealth by His miracle working power; but He was born in a borrowed stall, laid in a borrowed manger, had not where to lay His head, and was buried in a borrowed grave. Men today who profess to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, and profess to perform multitudes of miracles are living in disgraceful life styles on the money they steal (yes, I said "steal," for taking money under false pretences is stealing) from their duped followers. Jesus never made a dime from the multitude of miracles He performed. Well, He did pay the temple tax for Peter and Himself in the miracle of the money in the mouth of the fish Peter caught; but the fish was glad to be rid of the indigestible coin anyway.

Let us examine some of His miracles and learn some precious lessons therefrom. He exercised, power over the devil and his demons showing that He could defeat the devil in the lives of His chosen people. Oh, we were held in the grip of the "strong man armed." We could not free ourselves therefrom, and worse than that, we did not desire this freedom. But Jesus is "stronger than the strong man armed," and He delivered us from the power of the devil. Jesus exercised His power over the fearful disease of leprosy, and showed His power to deliver us from the defiling effects of sin. Oh, we were covered over and over with the filth of sin; but Jesus' precious blood has washed us from every stain and made us whiter than the snow.

Jesus exercised His power over the stormy sea, and showed His power to still the storms of life for us. Oh, the storms, the storms! How many there are, and how terrible! But Jesus is able to

still the storms for us and give us satisfaction, contentment, and peace as we journey towards our eternal destination of glory forevermore. Jesus healed withered hands and useless feet, and showed us His power to enable us to work for Him and to walk in the pathway of obedience to His Word. Oh, we are so helpless, but He is the helper of the helpless. Through His sufficient grace we are strong even when we are weak. Our sufficiency is of Him. His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

Jesus, on two occasions, fed the multitudes; and demonstrated His power to supply all the needs of our lives. The Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want. He will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory. Jesus walked on the sea, and showed His power to enable us to walk the miracle life of a true Christian. Yes, the Christian life is a miracle life. It takes the miracle working power of God to enable us to be what we ought to be as God's children. We cannot live the Christian life in the energy of the flesh. With the eye of faith upon the Lord Jesus, He can enable us to live the Christian life as it should be lived.

Jesus raised three people from the dead and thus manifested His power in the realm of death as the Lord of life. Death is the word that best describes our lost and undone condition. Jesus raising the dead is the act that best describes the greatest work that He does for His elect people. Oh, He raises them from the grave of their spiritual death, gives them eternal life, and all this to their good and His glory.

Jesus is still performing miracles. How many millions of miracles He has performed since the days of His earthly ministry! For every instance of salvation is an instance of the miracle working power of Jesus Christ. Yes, it took a miracle of love, grace, and power when He saved my soul, and your soul, and yours; and the millions He has saved and will save. Salvation is a miracle - the greatest miracle so far as man is concerned. Salvation is not a work that man performs; it is a work of the almighty, supernatural, miraculous power of God.

Jesus will yet perform miracles. He will continue the miracle of salvation until the last one of the chosen sheep is found and saved. He will perform the miracle of the resurrection of the saved dead, the changing of the living saved, and the rapturing of them all to the Father's house above. He will perform the miracles of the Tribulation, Armageddon, and the Millennium. He will perform the miracle of the raising of the unsaved after His millennial reign. Who knows what miracles He might perform during the Millennium, and during the eternal state? Yes, He who has performed a multitude of miracles, is even now performing them, will yet perform more miracles than we can imagine. He is the Miracle Worker.

Do you know this Miracle Worker? Has He performed the miracle of salvation in your behalf? Oh, I hope so; and if not, I hope that He will. May I urge you to give this matter much thought. May I urge you to repent of your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. God bless you all.

UNCHANGABLE

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great deal more; but we live in such a flurry, and hurry, and worry, that we do not get time for thought. Our noble forefathers of the Puritanic sort were men with backbone, men of solid tread, independent and self-contained men, who could hold their own in the day of conflict; and the reason was because they took time to meditate, time to keep a diary of their daily experiences, time to commune with God in secret. Take the hint, and try and do a little more thinking; in this busy London, and in these trying days, remember and consider.

My next remark is, that God's people are an imitative people, for we are told here that they are to remember them who are their leaders, those who have spoken to them the Word of God, "whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." There is an itching, nowadays, after originality, striking out a path for yourself. When sheep do that, they are bad sheep. Sheep follow the shepherd; and, in a measure, they follow one another when they are all together following the shepherd. Our Great Master never aimed at originality; he said that he did not even speak his own words, but the words that he had heard of his Father. He was docile and teachable; as the Son of God, and the servant of God, his ear was open to hear the instructions of the Father, and he could say, "I do always those things that please him." Now, that is the true path for a Christian to take, to follow Jesus, and, in consequence, to follow all such true saints as may be worthy of being followed, imitating the godly so far as they imitate Christ. The apostle puts it, "whose faith follow." Many young Christians, if they were to pretend to strike out a path for themselves, must infallibly fall into many sorrows, whereas by taking some note of the way in which more experienced and more instructed Christians have gone, they will keep by the way of the footsteps of the flock, and they will also follow the footprints of the Shepherd. God's people are a thoughtful people, and they are an imitative and humble people, willing to be instructed and willing to follow holy and godly examples.

One good reason, however, for imitating saints is given in our text; it is because our Lord and his faith are always the same: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." You see, if the old foundation shifted, if our faith was always changing, then we could not follow any of the saints who have gone before us. If we have a religion specially for the nineteenth century, it is ridiculous for us to imitate the men of the first century, and Paul and the apostles are just old fogies who are left behind in the far-distant ages. If we are to go on improving from century to century, I cannot point you to any of the reformers, or the confessors, or the saints in the brave days of old, and say to you, "Learn from their example," because, if religion has altogether changed and improved, it is a curious thing to say, but we ought to set an example to our ancestors. Of course, they cannot follow it because they have gone from the earth; but as we know so much better than our fathers,

we cannot think of learning anything from them. As we have left the apostles all behind, and gone in for something quite new, it is a pity that we should not forget what they did, and what they suffered, and think that they were just a set of simpletons who acted up to their own light, but then they had not the light we have in this wonderful nineteenth century! O beloved, it almost makes my lips blister to talk after the present evil fashion, for grosser falsehood never could be uttered than the insinuation that we have shifted the everlasting foundations of our faith. Verily, if these foundations were removed, we might ask in many senses, "What shall the righteous do? Whom shall they copy? Whom shall they follow? The landmarks having gone, what remains to use of the holy treasury of example with which the Lord enriches those who follow Christ?"

I. Coming to our text, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," my first observation is, that Jesus Christ Himself is Always The Same. He is, was, and will be always the same.

Changes of position and of circumstances there have been in our Lord, but he is always the same in his great love to his people, whom he loved or ever the earth was. Before the first star was kindled, before the first living creature began to sing the praise of its Creator, he loved his Church with an everlasting love. He spied her in the glass of predestination, pictured her by his divine foreknowledge, and loved her with all his heart; and it was for this cause that he left his Father, and became one with her, that he might redeem her. It was for this cause that he went with her through all this vale of tears, discharged her debts, and bore her sins in his own body on the tree. For her sake he slept in the tomb, and with the same love that brought him down he has gone up again, and with the same heart beating true to the same blessed bethronment he has gone into the glory, waiting for the marriage-day when he shall come again, to receive his perfected spouse, who shall have made herself ready by his grace. Never for a moment, whether as God over all, blessed for ever, or as God and man in one divine person, or as dead and buried, or as risen and ascended, never has he changed in the love he bears to his chosen. He is "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

Therefore, beloved brethren, he has never changed in his divine purpose towards his beloved church. He resolved in eternity to become one with her, that she might become one with him; and, having determined upon this, when the fulness of time had come, he was born of a woman, made under the law, he took upon him the likeness of sinful flesh, "and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Yet he never abandoned his purpose, he set his face like a flint to go up to Jerusalem; even when the bitter cup was put to his lips, and

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BUILDING A PASTOR

We have heard of building a church, but what about building a pastor? It is true. You can build a pastor, or you can tear him down. A great pastor will build his church, and a great church will build her pastor. A church is as responsible for what she does for her pastor as is the pastor for what he does for his church. How can we, as members, help make our pastor's ministry more effective?

1.--Build his spiritual power by praying for him. When you pray for your pastor, you pray for your church, your community, your family.

2.--Build his reputation by speaking well of him. He will have weak and strong points. His influence will depend on which of them you stress.

3.--Build his leadership by co-operating with him. For every great leader there must be some great followers. Read Hebrews 13:7,17.

4.--Build his pulpit power by hearing him. Full pews challenge a man to prepare and deliver great sermons. Empty pews discourage him.

5.--But the greatest thing you can do for your pastor is to follow the Christ he preaches and obey God's Word!

--copied from The Baptist Challenge

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

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

What is your understanding of Hosea's marriage to Gomer in Hosea chapter 1? Was she a harlot when Hosea married her? Did she already have children by harlotry? What would marrying such a woman do to Hosea's ministry? Did they really marry?

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Hosea 1:2: "The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD."

There are many different ideas concerning this marriage. I will mention them and let you draw your own opinion, as well as express my opinion.

First, there is the opinion that Hosea is to do this in a vision. The purpose of this is that he might better understand the whoredoms of Israel spiritually against God. Hosea is to imagine what this would be like that he might better be able to convey God's message to Israel.

Secondly, Some say that this is a parable used by God to help explain to Hosea the whoredoms of Israel. This was simply a story to illustrate the wickedness of Israel against God.

Thirdly, there is the opinion that Hosea took his own wife and gave her the character of a whore. He did the same with his children to show Israel their wickedness.

Fourthly, there is the view that this really happened in the life of Hosea, that God actually told Hosea to take a wife of whoredoms, and that he did, that Hosea actually had children of whoredom. Some believe he married a pure wife who turned to whoredom. Some believe he married a wife engaged in whoredom who reformed for a while but later returned to her wickedness. In doing this Hosea was able to have a great effect on the Israelites for their spiritual adultery against God.

Let me make a few comments on these theories. I feel that the first theory lacks warrant based on chapter three. If all we had written about it was in Chapter one, then I might could accept a vision. Chapter three makes all this sound somewhat real. John Gill is a proponent of the parable theory. He also states that this is the view held by Jewish tradition. He believes that Hosea is to present this parable to Israel to help them in understanding their whoredoms. I do not give any

serious thought at all to the theory that Hosea took his wife and gave her the character of a whore. Lastly, there is the thought that this really took place. Did God tell Hosea to do these things in literal sense, and did Hosea do them? One problem I have with this interpretation is time. The events described would have taken at least three years. Did Hosea wait that long to give Israel God's message. If he did not, then the purpose of this marriage would have no effect. This seems like too much of a delay to me. However, I must admit that this theory has much merit to it.

Which theory do I believe? I lean towards the parable theory, though my leaning is not very strong. My second choice would probably be the literal interpretation. I do have difficulty accepting God telling Hosea to do this. You draw your own conclusion. I certainly would not be upset at anyone for accepting any of the afore mentioned theories.

The question of whether or not this would hurt Hosea's ministry is important perhaps in understanding the other questions. Yes, this type of marriage would hurt Hosea's ministry. This is one, reason that I have trouble believing this is to be interpreted as actually happening. I believe Hosea would lose influence with Israel were this to be a literal marriage. May God bless you all.

Editor's note: Sam just informed me that he has changed his opinion as to this. He now accepts the literal theory as to Hosea's marriage. I am glad that he has seen the light as to this.

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"And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son."

My understanding of Hosea's marriage to Gomer is that it took place exactly as recorded in Hoses 1. Yes, she was a harlot when Hosea married her, "Go take unto thee a wife of whoredoms... so he went and took Gomer." Whether or not she had children by harlotry before Hosea married her is uncertain. As the Lord told him, "Take unto thee a wife of

whoredoms and children of whoredoms", it would seem that she already had children, and he was to include them. It would seem that the three children born after the marriage were by Hosea. At least we know the oldest one was for it is said she, "conceived, and she bare him a son." (1:3). Of the other two births it in only said, "And she conceived again and bare a daughter" and "she conceived, and bare a son" (1:6 & 8).

What did this marriage do to Hosea's ministry? It showed a man who obeyed God without question although the command was to do that which may have been exactly opposite to that which he would have done. Even though men may have looked down upon Hosea for this marriage, God must have been well pleased with Hosea for obeying His command without question. What did this marriage do to Hosea's ministry? In the sight of men it may have spelled disaster, but in the sight of God it was of great price. Where had He found such obedience? Not in Moses (EX. 4:10); Not in Jeremiah (Jer. 1:6); Not even in Peter (Acts 10:4). They all gave excuses not to do what God had commanded them to do. Not so with Hosea, "So he went and took Gomer..."

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I will first of all give you my understanding of the marriage between Hosea and Gomer, then I will attempt to briefly explain my position. 1. Yes I believe that Gomer was a harlot who had never been legally married to any one. 2. Yes, I believe that she most likely had bastard children before Hosea married her. 3. Hosea's ministry was in the hands of the One who called him into the ministry. Therefore, it was certainly better for Hosea to do what God had commanded than to end up like Jonah. 4. Though opinions differ from one commentary to another, I feel that they did really marry.

Although the whole episode of the first three chapters are symbolic of the Northern ten tribes having committed spiritual fornication with the strange gods of the world; and their refusal to repent and return to serving the God who had chosen them, I must take the literal view. God actually used Hosea as a living metaphor. In other words, God was literally using the life of the great prophet to illustrate to Is-

rael just how far they had gone into sin, and what He would do to fulfill His promise to restore them.

The fact that Gomer was a harlot before Hosea married her, and that she had children who were produced of that sin, shows the sinful condition of this people while even before called to be God's people. This can be applied to all of God's elect people.

Hosea's name means "salvation," or "saviour," while Gomer means "to finish, to end, or failure." God was testifying through this unusual illustration that Israel had failed to be faithful to Him, though they belonged to Him. It also shows His longsuffering and mercy with a sinful and rebellious people. Their end as a nation was inevitable. From their captivity by Assyria, approximately 2725 years ago, they have yet to regain their identity.

The three children born after their marriage, (whether all three were Hosea's children I know not) were a testimony of God's coming judgement upon them. Jezreel means "to be scattered," Hosea 1:4. Certainly they remain scattered to this day. The name Loruhamah means "no more mercy," Hosea 1:6. God had stretched forth His hand, and Israel had mocked, Isaiah 65:2. Loammi means, "not my people," Hosea 1:9. The day of God's mercy was ended. The wheels of His wrath had begun to turn, and would not stop until He was satisfied.

Notwithstanding, in Hosea 1:10,11 He promises them that one day He will restore them and bring a remnant to a saving knowledge of Christ. "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sands of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the Land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel." Thank you for your question.

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Please read Hosea 1:1-11.

Rather than pointing out and explaining some of the various interpretations and beliefs about Hosea's marriage, I will simply present what I believe to be the case and why. I believe that Hosea's marriage, wife, and children are all real rather than imaginary; and that they illustrate Israel's unfaithfulness to God. The prophet's domestic situation is lived out in reality and presents a parallel with the Lord's relationship to Israel. I believe that Gomer may have been an idolator before Hosea married her, but not a harlot. To marry a harlot would be totally against the prophet's pure principles and contrary to a respectable ministry, as well as incompatible

with the parallel symbolism to be portrayed by Hosea's marriage and Israel's spiritual course.

Since Gomer represents Israel corporately, and since the prophets always speak of Israel as pure at the time of her union with the Lord, Gomer must not be a harlot when Hosea marries her for the parallelism would not be there. I believe that the expression, "a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms" intimated for Hosea what his wife to be would become. Like Israel toward God, Gomer would prove unfaithful to her husband and go a whoring; but because of his great love for her, he would seek her out and bring her from her depths of depravity again to himself. In spite of the shame, pain, and grief, Hosea would seek to return Gomer to their relationship. (Hosea 3:2,3)

Likewise, God did the same to Israel, His unfaithful wife, even as He is now doing. The time will come when Israel shall be unblinded, restored, and saved. Likewise, the children of whoredoms spoken of here in verse 2 are yet future when this is spoken. They will be children of whoredom because their mother will be unfaithful in marriage. The very names of the three children born to Hosea and Gomer speak, show, and warn of Israel's straying path. The first "Jezreel", whose name means "God scatters or sows", points to coming dispersion. The immediate fulfillment of that prophecy came in the destruction of the house of Jehu, but later all of Israel was scattered. The second child, "Loruhamah", whose name means "uncompassioned", or "unpitied" speaks of Israel's moving further out of God's pleasure, mercy, and pardon. The third child, "Loammi", whose name means "not my people" speaks of the ultimate rejection of Israel and withdrawal of mercy. Hosea's marriage is real, its parallel example and message is real, and God is faithful to bring again that which has spiritually wandered away into sin.

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he seemed to stagger for a moment, he returned to it with a strong resolve, saying to his Father, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." That purpose is strong upon him now; for Zion's sake he will not hold his peace, and for Jerusalem's sake he will not rest, until her righteousness goeth forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth. Jesus is still pressing on with his great work, and he will not fail nor be discouraged in it. He will never be content till all whom he has bought with blood shall become also glorified by his power. He will gather all his sheep in the heavenly fold, and they shall pass again under the hand of him that telleth them, every one of them being brought there by the great Shepherd who laid down his life for them. Beloved, he cannot turn from his purpose; it is not according to his nature that he should, for he is "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

(Editor's Note: Spurgeon was not sound on church truth. He believed in some form of a uni-

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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

Should a church have an organized visitation program? Should women participate in it? Should children? Give suggestions.

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I am not against members of a church visiting around in the community where the church is located. In fact this ought to be done. But I think that the visiting can be done better if it is done in an organized way. In this way every one will know where each other has visited. There will not be a repeat in the same day to the same house or houses.

I think that organized visitation would be better than not. The Lord does not do things in a haphazard way. All His work is based upon a perfect plan and purpose. God did not set out to do certain things without first having decreed what He was doing. Therefore I believe that an organized plan of visitation would be much better for the church and those visiting will be rewarded as their labor shall be.

We read in the gospel according to Luke where Jesus sent the seventy out and He sent them out two and two. "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come" (Luke 10:1).

This visiting was done upon a well planned program. It was done (1) under the direction of the Lord. (2) They were sent out two and two. Which is the proper way to visit. (3) they went to specified places, every city where the Lord was to come. (4) They went in the name of the Lord, that is by His authority and instructions.

Visiting should be done in the name of the church, and the church is working in the name of and under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Organized work is better, would be better for our churches. God never did anything without a plan and purpose. Everything that God is doing or has done was decreed in eternity past. So I see nothing wrong with organized visitation work.

Visiting is hard work. It is hard work in more than one way. It tries one's patience. Every one should visit to see what this work is so that they may learn of the joys and the trials of it, and also the rewards of it.

But then, as you think of it, visiting is not set up to be easy. It is a work of labor. In the second verse of Luke ten, Christ said the Labourers are few. He also said, "pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that

he would send forth labourers into his harvest." Since visiting is a work of laboring, so few will enter into it. We need to therefore pray for more laborers. If our churches are to be built up we must get out and labor in this all-important work.

In visitation work if a man and his wife go visiting, then this would be obeying the Scriptures in this, for Christ sent them two and two. If the man and his wife cannot go together then two men should visit together. I think that it would be very proper and Scriptural for the wife to go with the husband. In this way women can participate in the visiting. If children go they should accompany adults.

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The matter of a visitation program varies with each church. At this present time, some use an organized program, some do not. Whether or not to have such a program depends on the members of each church. Where a church is located is also a determining factor. If a church is located in an area of large population, visitation can be used to contact lost people and invite them to church. In smaller areas visitation is usually limited to calling on those that are known and do not attend any church. In some cases, churches will only visit people that request some one to call on them after they have attended a service.

What ever the idea, or reason, it is important that every church have some form of visitation program. It can be organized, or it can be used by each member to visit as they see fit. I have seen both organized and unorganized programs work successfully. The fact that members are the only contact that some people have with church makes them very useful in any program. Visitation is not a responsibility of just the pastor.

Who should participate in visitation programs? All the members of the church should be involved and should have a desire to see visitors come to church. One of the major complaints against churches is that they are not friendly when visitors attend. Members should want to have people visit their church. Most visitation programs establish a night for the men to visit, while the ladies of the church will visit during the day. In any case, visitation should always be done in twos. Two men, a couple, hus-

band and wife, or two women. If children go on visitation, it should be on a limited basis and only in the company of one or more adults.

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Yes, anyone knows that a visiting church is a growing church. Most churches have gotten so hardshell and lazy that the members will not go across the street to visit some one and invite them to church. These are dying churches. Should a church have an organized visitation program? The best way to have a sure and workable visitation is to organize. This way each one will know that he is responsible and will not take it for granted that some one else will do it.

In the last chapter and last few verses of Matthew Jesus commanded the church to go; also in the last chapter of Mark. In the Book of Acts they went from house to house, the church grew. The Lord blessed their efforts. We, The New Testament Baptist Church of Bristol, Tennessee have visited one side of town and not had a single person from the area that we visited; but the following Sunday there would be visitors from the other side of town. This beloved, proves to me that our Lord will bless our efforts. For some time now our members have been lazy in visitation, and we have had very few visitors. This is to our shame. I try to tell our people, that we must get busy this year and visit people for our Sovereign will not bless us unless we do.

I have heard preachers say that our Lord is sovereign and He will send people if He wants them here. This is a Hardshell view and a cop-out as to one's responsibility in the Lord's work.

I believe if we folks who believe the truth will get off our back side and get a good visitation program going, we can grow and be of better service to our blessed redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Elder Bill Jackson once said, while a member of our church, if we will band together and start a good visitation program we will have to build more to our church. We did, and we did have to build more Sunday school rooms.

Should women participate in visitation? Yes. Why not? The Lord can bless their efforts as well as the mens. Jesus in John four speaks of a woman who had five husbands and had been living with one who was not her husband. He saved her, and she

went out and visited a number of people and told them what Jesus had done for her, and verse 39 tells us, "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." And verse 41 says, "And many more believed because of his own word" and Verse 42 is the conclusion of her visitation.

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"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"

The work of the church includes going. To go in the power and authority of God. A church needs to seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit in all its visitation. Christ said "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The churches are also admonished to do all things decently and in order. No church would consider having an unorganized mission work to some foreign country, neither should you have an unorganized mission work in the community. Visitation into the community and round about should be a deliberate and well organized work considering the fact that it is just as much a mission work as foreign missions. I have discovered that prayer helps to prepare for such work, and that the Lord provides opportunity when we seek it.

I have gone door to door with my wife, but I must admit this type of visitation became more of a survey work than an opportunity to witness. The most effective visitation that I have conducted is to people that have visited the church, or to friends or family members that someone in the church has recommended. I always try to call ahead to let people know that we would like to visit them. They always seem to be more receptive when such consideration is taken. I have asked our people to do this type of visitation on their own, or to go with me. It is good to appoint one evening a week to visit, but don't limit yourself to just one night; go when the opportunity arises. I know of some churches that visit on Saturdays or Sunday afternoon.

I don't think a woman should go alone on visitation. Neither do I consider it wise for men to go alone to visit a single woman, or a married woman if her husband is not home. Of course children should never go alone on visitation. If you should go visit someone with your children (depending on their age) make sure they are well behaved, and respect the fact they are in someone else's home.

Always keep in mind that the reason you are visiting is to witness concerning Christ and His salvation, or your visitation may become no more than a social

event. There is nothing wrong with being sociable, but don't think you have visited for the Lord and the work of the church if you leave without mentioning His name.

These are just some things I've learned from experience in visiting. I hope they may be of some help to you.

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versal church: that all the saved are members of one universal church. This is not true. The Baptist Examiner does not believe this false doctrine. Just substitute "His people" for his use of "church" in this portion, and what he says will then be true.

I consider Spurgeon to be such a great preacher in so many areas that I do not mind using him. But I do feel a need to point out his errors on some points, especially as to church truth.)

He is also "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," in the holding of his offices for the carrying out of his purpose, and giving effect to his love. He is Prophet still. Men try to set him on one side. Science, falsely so-called, comes forward, and bids him hold his tongue; but "the sheep follow him, for they know his voice; and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." The teachings of the New Testament are as sound and true today as they were eighteen hundred years ago; they have lost none of their value, none of their absolute certainty; they stand fast like the everlasting hills. Jesus Christ was a Prophet, and he is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

He is the same, too, as a Priest. Some now sneer at his precious blood; alas, that it should be so! But, to his elect, his blood is still their purchase-price, by this they overcome, through the blood of the Lamb they win the victory; and they know that they shall praise it in heaven, when they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They never turn away from this great Priest of theirs, and his wondrous sacrifice, once offered for the sins of men, and perpetually efficacious for all the blood-bought race; they glory in his everlasting priesthood before the Father's throne. In this we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, that Jesus Christ is our Priest, "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

And as King he is ever the same. He is supreme in the Church. Before thee, O Jesus, all thy loyal subjects bow! All the sheaves make obeisance to thy sheaf; the sun and moon and all the stars obey and serve thee, thou King of kings, and Lord of lords. Thou art Head over all things to thy church, which is thy body. Beloved, if there be any other office which our Lord has assumed for the accomplishment of his divine purposes, we may say of him, concerning every position, that he is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

So also, once more, he is the same in his relationship to all his people. I like to think that, as

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Jesus was the Husband of his Church ages ago, he is her Husband still, for he hateth putting away. As he was the Brother born for adversity to his first disciples, he is our faithful Brother still. As he was a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother to those who were sorely tried in the medieval times, he is equally a Friend to us upon whom the ends of the earth have come. There is no difference whatever in the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to his people at any time. He is just as ready to comfort us to night as he was to comfort those with whom he dwelt when here below. Sister Mary, he is as willing to come down to your Bethany and help you in your sorrow about Lazarus, as he was when he came to Martha and Mary whom he loved. Jesus Christ is just as ready to wash your feet my brother, after another day's weary travel through the foul ways of this world; he is as willing to take the basin, and the ewer, and the towel, and to give us a loving cleansing, as he was when he washed his disciples' feet. Just what he was to them he is to us. Happy is it if you and I can truly say, "What he was to Peter, what he was to John, what he was to the Magdalene that is Jesus Christ to me, 'the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.'"

Beloved, I have seen men change; oh, how they change! A little frost turns the green forest to bronze, and every leaf forsakes its hold, and yields to the winter's blast. So fade our friends, and the most attached adherents drop away from us in the time of trial; but Jesus is to us what he always was. When we get old and grey-headed, and others shut the door on men who have lost their former strength and can serve their turn no longer, then will he say, "...even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you," for He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Thus much, beloved, with regard to Jesus himself; He is ever the same.

II. Now let us go a step farther. JESUS CHRIST IS ALWAYS THE SAME IN HIS DOCTRINE.

This text must refer to the doctrine of Christ, since it is connected with imitating the saints' faith: "Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." From the connection it is evident that our text refers to the teaching of Christ, who is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." This is not according to the "development" folly. Theology, like every other science, is to grow, watered by the splendid wisdom of this enlightened age, fostered by the superlative ability of the gentlemen of light and leading of the present time, so much superior to all who came before them!

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We think not so, brethren; for the Lord Jesus Christ was the perfect revelation of God. He was the express image of the Father's person, and the brightness of his glory. In previous ages, God had spoken to us by his prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son. Now as to that which was a complete revelation, it is blasphemous to suppose that there can be any more revealed than has been made known in the person and work of Jesus Christ the Son of God. He is God's ultimatum; last of all, he sends his Son. If you can conceive a brighter display of God than is to be seen in the Only-begotten, I thank God that I am unable to follow you in any such imagination. To me, he is the last, the highest, the grandest revelation of God; and as he shuts up the Book that contains the written revelation, he bids you never dare to take from it, lest he should take your name out of the Book of life, and never dare to add to it, lest he should add unto you the plagues that are written in this Book.

At this time, the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ is the same as it was in all ages. Jesus Christ still saves sinners from the guilt, the power, the punishment, and the defilement of sin. Still, "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Jesus Christ still makes all things new; he creates new hearts and right spirits in the sons of men, and engraves his law upon the tablets which once were stone, but which he has turned into flesh. There is no new salvation; some may talk as if there were, but there is not. Salvation means to you to-day as if there were, but there is not. Salvation means to you to-day just what it meant to Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus; if you think it has another meaning, you have missed it altogether.

And, again, salvation - by Jesus Christ comes to mean the same way as ever it did. They have to receive it now by faith; in Paul's day, men were saved by faith, and they are not now saved by works. They began in the Spirit in the apostolic age, and we are not now to begin in the flesh. There is no indication in the Book, and there is no indication in the experience of God's children, that there is ever to be any alteration as to the way in which we receive Christ, and live by him. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God," the gift of God to-day as much as ever it was, for Jesus Christ "is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

Once more, this salvation is just the same as to the persons to whom it is sent. It is to be preached now, as ever, to every creature under heaven; but it appeals with a peculiar power to those who are guilty, and who confess their guilt, to hearts that are broken, to men who are weary and heavy laden. It is to these that the gospel comes with great sweetness. I have quoted to you before those strange words of Joseph Hart, -- "A sinner is a sacred thing, The Holy Ghost hath made him so."

He is; the Saviour is only for sinners. He did not come to save the righteous, he came to seek and to save the lost, and still "to you is the word of this salvation sent;" and this dec-

laration still stands true, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." There is no change in this statement, "the poor have the gospel preached to them," and it comes to those who are farthest off from God and hope, and inspires them with divine power and energy.

Beloved, I can bear witness that the gospel is the same in its effects upon the hearts of men. Still it breaks, and still it makes whole; still it wounds, and still it heals; still it kills, and still it quickens; still it seems to hurl men down to hell in their terrible experience of the evil of sin, but still it lifts them up into an ecstatic joy, till they are exalted almost to heaven when they lay hold upon it, and feel its power in their souls. The gospel that was a gospel of births and deaths, of killing and making alive, in the days of John Bunyan, has just the same effect upon our hearts to this day, when it comes with the power that God has put into it by his Spirit. It produces the same results, and has the same sanctifying influence as it ever had.

Looking beyond the narrow stream of death, we can say that the eternal results produced by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ are the same as they ever were. The promise is this day fulfilled to those who receive him as much as to any who went before; life eternal is their inheritance, they shall sit with him upon his throne; and, on the other hand, the threatening is equally sure of fulfillment: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." "He that believeth not shall be damned." Christ has made no change in his words of promise or of threatening, nor will his followers dare to do so, for his doctrine is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

If you were to try to think over this matter, and imagine for a minute that the gospel really did shift and change with the times, it would be very extraordinary. See, here is the gospel for the first century; make a mark, and note how far it goes. Then there is a gospel for the second century; make another mark, but then remember that you must change the color to another shade. Either these people must have altered, or else a very different effect must have been produced in the same kind of minds. In eternity, when they all get to heaven by these nineteen gospels, in the nineteen centuries, there will be nineteen sets of people, and they will sing nineteen different songs, depend upon it, and their music will not blend. Some will sing of "free grace and dying love", while others will sing of "evolution." What a discord it would be, and what a heaven it would be, too! I should decline to be a candidate for such a place. No, let me go where they praise Jesus Christ and him alone, singing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." That is what the first-century saints sing; aye, and it is what the saints of every century will sing, without any exception; and there will be no change in this song for ever. The same results will flow from the same gospel till heaven and earth shall pass away, for Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

III. We may sound the same note again for a moment, because Jesus Christ is the same as to his modes of working: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

How did Jesus Christ save souls in the olden time? "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe;" and if you will look down through church history, you will find that, wherever there has been a great revival of religion, it has been linked with the preaching of the gospel. When the Methodists began to do so much good, what did they call the men who made such a stir? "Methodist preachers", did they not say? That was always the name, "Here comes a Methodist preacher." Ah, my dear friends, the world will never be saved by Methodist doctors, or by Baptist doctors, or anything of the sort; but multitudes will be saved, by God's grace, through preachers. It is the preacher to whom God has entrusted this great work. Jesus said, "Preach the gospel to every creature." But men are getting tired of the divine plan; they are going to be saved by the priest, going to be saved by the music, going to be saved by theatricals, and nobody knows what! Well, they may try these things as long as ever they like; but nothing can ever come of the whole thing but utter disappointment and confusion, God dishonoured, the gospel travestied, hypocrites manufactured by thousands, and the church dragged down to the level of the world. Stand to your guns, brethren, and go on preaching and teaching

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WRETCHED

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gins at that point to describe what the law did to him as a believer. As he concludes his description he cries out, "O wretched man that I am!"

Every Christian falls far, far short of God's standard. It does not mean that every Christian breaks the laws of men, or that he is an overt transgressor of the laws of God. What I mean is that Christian life is far, far below the level of the life of Jesus Christ while He was here on earth for three years. It is the experience of every believer that there is much of the flesh still evident in every Christian, not the least in those who make loud boastings of their spiritual attainment.

"O wretched man that I am!" I felt led to preach this message to every believer who has experience of the spiritual battle of the flesh and the spirit. This is a cry to every born-again Christian, the mourning of the wretchedness within that will lead him to an urgent call to the God of grace. It is the confession of the honest and spiritual and faithful men of the Lord of the need of daily prayer for the forgiveness of his daily sins, the weakness of the flesh, and the depravity of his heart.

"O wretched man that I am!" Let us consider three things in relation to this text and I pray the Lord will use this article to be a blessing to the readers of The Baptist Examiner.

First of all we will find in this text the believer's corruption. The grace of God in the life of the believer is surrounded with the mass of nature's corruption. Yes, the justified believer is in a great and glorious position. He is born again, "not of blood, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." He is a

child of God, and forever he belongs to the kingdom of heaven. His very body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and a habitation of God. The believer is created anew in Jesus Christ; he is washed and is sanctified.

But the genuine believer still experiences the corruption of the flesh. The Bible calls it "our old man" that is the corrupt nature with which we were born. It is the sinful part of us we inherited from the first Adam. The Bible leaves us no doubt regarding the corrupt composition of the nature we inherited. Our natural birth possesses an irrepressible disposition, or a bias toward sin. A Christian who lives a godly life, who is striving to live a holy life, who is living in accordance with God's Word still feels the corruption within himself which is the corruption of the flesh. By sin we understand the inward sin; any sinful temper, passion or affection such as pride, hypocrisy, self-will, love of the world in any kind or degree, lust, anger, peevishness, any disposition contrary to the mind of Christ.

"O wretched man that I am!" This is the language of a regenerate soul. The unregenerate man is wretched indeed; but he is a stranger to the "wretchedness" here expressed, for he knows nothing of the experience which evokes this wail. The experience of the believer in Christ is that the closer he walks with the Lord, the deeper he feels the corruption within himself. The more he lives a separated life for God, the worse he will experience the pollutions of sin in the flesh.

Conversion does not mean that the flesh has been left behind. Man, as a Christian, is still part of this world. He still belongs in some sense to this world. Man, as a believer, still lives in some sense at least in the flesh. It is true that He has begun to experience the life-giving Spirit, but he is still in the unchangeable fallen nature of 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). It is true that the believer belongs to Christ which is the last Adam, but he is still of the stock of the first Adam. His life in the flesh will not cease and cannot cease until he becomes a spiritual body at the rapture or in the resurrection at the coming of the Lord.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This body is still at this stage a mortal body, a body of flesh. Only then will the flesh be left behind. Only then this body will be finally be broken when the Lord will come to this planet earth again. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:53).

Secondly, our text proves the experience of the believer's conflict. We see that the Christian has the experience of the wretchedness of the flesh and the power of the Spirit concurrently. These are not separated into watertight compartments, but felt and experienced together. To proceed directly, who but a mature believer of advanced experience holds together at one and the same time very clear views of the various elements which constitute the spiritual warfare of the Christian. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Continued on Page 8, Col. 4)

STUDIES IN II PETER 2:9-17

by C.T. Everman

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:" (v. 9).

In verses 4-9 of this chapter three examples of God's judgment for sin were given. One was of the rebellious angels, one of the sinful world of Noah's day, and the other wicked Sodom and Gomorrah. The two main lessons to be learned from these illustrations are (1), that God can and will deliver the godly from temptation as shown by His deliverance of Noah and his family and that of Lot, (2), that God will and does punish the ungodly. Punishment for the men of Noah's day was by water, while that of Sodom and Gomorrah was by fire. These examples given of God's judgment point out the fact that God's judgment will also be executed upon these false teachers. We can be assured that although they seem to be free to "do their own thing" yet they are under God's control, and He has reserved them "unto the day of judgment to be punished."

(V. 10) "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities."

Beginning with verse 10 we have a description given of these false teachers that were entering into the Lord's churches in Peter's day, and in our day they have taken over many of the churches. They "walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness." The thought here is that their one desire, their one goal in life, is to fulfill the desires of the flesh. The apostle John wrote that, "...the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:16). Not only are these false teachers caught up in lusts of the flesh, but they also "despise government." That is they disregard all government; state government, government in the home, government in the church. The depraved nature of these men does not want to submit to any kind of authority. They teach and practice, "do your own thing." Many today are following their teaching.

God has established authority in the world, therefore to resist authority is to resist God (Rom. 13:1). In the home children are to be under the authority of the parents. In the church God has set leaders, and as members of one of the Lord's churches we should honor and respect those who have the spiritual leadership and seek to aid them in the ministry to which they were appointed by God.

These false teachers are also described as being "presumptuous" which means "very daring and bold." They are pictured as having an attitude that defies God and man. They are "shameless and irreverent." Also they are "self-willed" which means their only concern is self-interest with no concern for others. It means that a person is so "hard-headed", so determined to please himself regardless of the cost. They have only one interest and that is self. Another description of these is "they are not afraid to speak evil of dig-

nities." There is some question as to what dignities are referred to. The word "dignities" means "exalted ones" or "glorious ones." Whether the reference is to those in places of authority or to the angels is not clear, but the thought is these men think nothing of scoffing or making light of those whom God has exalted, be they men or angels. They are so secure in their own conceit that they are not afraid to defy God. They even dare God to judge them.

(V. 11) "Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord."

The verse seems to indicate that while these false teachers speak evil of the angels, the angels do not bring accusation against them. The angels are greater in might and power, yet it is not their place to speak against those who sin, the false teachers. Jude gives an example of what is meant. He wrote that when Michael, the archangel, was contending with the devil over the body of Moses, he did not rail against the devil, but said "the Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9). He left what was to be said against Satan to the Lord. There is a very important lesson for us to learn. It is a very grievous sin to speak evil of others. Great harm is often done by speaking evil of others, especially of our fellow Christians.

(V. 12) "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;"

"But these--", these false teachers are compared to the brute beasts, the wild animals that are made to be taken and destroyed. They are compared to the fierce and savage beasts that have no control over their appetites. The word "natural" means "as they are by nature." That is, they have no more control over their lust and passions than the wild animals have over their natural instincts. The word "brute" means without reason, irrational. Like the brute beasts these false teachers do what they do without reason. They have sunk to the level of the savage animals that are considered dangerous and are to be taken and destroyed. These men, by their fierce and uncontrolled passions, "shall utterly perish in their own corruption." Also it is said of the false teachers that they, "speak evil of the things that they understand not." This reminds one of the old saying, "Men speak freely of things they know nothing about, for they are not hampered by the facts." These folk speak evil; they scoff and make light of things of the Bible because they know nothing about them. What is the end for these men? They shall "utterly perish in their own corruption." What they say and do brings about their own destruction.

(V. 13) "And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you."

This verse tells us that these men will receive a reward for their

labor, but it will be a reward of unrighteousness. One example of their unrighteousness is "they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time." The word for "riot" carries the meaning of "sensual reveling." The thought is they live in luxury and ease and riotous living even in the day time. Most of this kind of living is done in the night, but these are so wicked and shameless they revel even in the day time. They are also described as "Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you;" That is they are dark or dirty spots on a pure clean garment, or like a deformity on an otherwise healthy person. They not only deceive others, but they also deceive themselves. The sad thing is they become members of the churches. As Jude states in his letter, they have "crept unawares" into the churches. Once in the church they become "spots and blemishes" in the fellowship of the church. Instead of being a blessing to the church of which they are members they bring shame and disgrace upon it. In Ephesians 5:27 it is said that Christ would present the church, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." These false teachers will have to be removed from the church before this can be done. It is the duty of the church to remove those who believe and teach false doctrine. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

(V. 14) "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:"

These false teachers are in the churches in order to satisfy their own lusts, "eyes full of adultery," that is, gazing with desire. The word "full" denotes that this corrupt passion completely occupies their minds.

(V. 15, 16), "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet."

These knew the right way, the way of the Scripture, yet they had abandoned that way and had "gone astray." Here we have the reason why they are under the curse of God. They had forsaken the right way, they had departed from the way of truth. The word "forsaken" means to "leave behind", to abandon. The apostle Paul used the same word when he said, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica" (II Tim. 4:10). The thought is that these false teachers had come into the churches (Jude said they had "crept in unawares") pretending to believe in the true and living way, the way of the cross, but now they have turned from that way to a false way. They were now "following the way of Balaam."

Who was Balaam? He is men-

tioned three times in the New Testament. Here in II Peter, the false teachers have followed the way of Balaam, in Jude 11 they "ran greedily after the error of Balaam," and in Revelation 2:14 the false teachers in the church in Pergamos were holding to "the doctrine of Balaam." The account of Balaam and what he did is recorded in Numbers 22-24. He was a strange character, a Gentile prophet who knew the right way yet would not walk in it. Balak, the king of Moab, knew the only way he could overcome the children of Israel was to get the Lord to forsake them, therefore he sent messengers to Balaam offering him money if he would curse Israel. Balaam knew that Israel was God's chosen people, and he knew that it was wrong to do that which he had been asked to do. But being covetous, desiring the money and honor which Balak offered, he inquired of the Lord if he could go. The Lord told him No! So Balaam sent the men back to Balak with the message that he could not help him. Balak would not take no for an answer, he sent more princes and promises of great honor if he would only curse Israel. This time Balaam told the messengers to wait while he inquired of the Lord as to what he could do. In his lust for riches and honor he would "pray about it again." Maybe God would change His mind and let him curse Israel. This time God put Balaam to the test. He told him he could go but he could say only what He told him to say. Letting Balaam go was not God's directive will, but His permissive will.

This was all Balaam needed, he started out riding the "dumb ass" on his way to curse Israel, looking thereby to receive great wealth and honor from Balak. On the way, God caused the "dumb ass" to speak, condemning the prophet for what he was doing. He "was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet." The word "madness" means "aside from a right mind." It means that Balaam was acting against all reason. He was controlled by his lust for riches and honor. He was blind as to what he was doing. God did not permit Balaam to curse Israel. In fact his curse was actually turned into a blessing (Deut. 23:4, 5). While Balaam was not permitted to curse Israel he did tell Balak how he could defeat Israel. He told him to be a "good neighbor" to Israel and invite them to their pagan feasts. We find that this advice was followed by Balak, and as a result Israel was led astray from the right way. "AND Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods" (Num. 25:1, 2).

Balaam's departure from the right way was in two aspects. First, his sensual lust and covetousness caused him to leave all reason and go astray from the right way. Secondly, he caused Israel to depart into grievous sins of whoredom and of idolatry. He knew the right way, yet he caused the people to go astray from God. Peter said these false teachers were following the way of Balaam. They were doing the same thing as Balaam, the one, "who loved the wages of unrighteousness."

(V. 17) "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever."

Here is another picture of these false teachers. They have great promise of having that which will quench the thirst for that which is spiritual, but they are like a dry well, a well with out water. Picture a man out in the desert, dying without water, he sees a well in the distance, but upon arriving at the wall he finds it dry, no water in it. These false teachers are dry wells; they have nothing that will sustain the soul. Again they are like clouds that would seem to carry rain for the dry parched land, yet they are carried away by the wind. They show great promise yet they have nothing for the child of God. Peter is telling us this that we might be on guard against such. The last part of the verse tells us they have a place reserved for them, "the midst of darkness is reserved for ever." The word "midst" means thick gloom, thick darkness. The phrase "midst darkness" indicates "intense darkness, or thickest darkness." No doubt it refers to their final place of punishment in the lake of fire. "Reserved for them" means the place is already prepared and is ready to receive them. The word "forever" shows their punishment will never end, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:46).

To be continued.

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nothing but the Word of God, for it pleases God still, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe; and this text still stands true, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

But remember that there must always be the prayers of the saints with the preaching of the gospel. You must have often noticed that passage in the Acts concerning the new converts on the day of Pentecost, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine": they thought a great deal about doctrine in those days. "And fellowship": they thought a good deal of being in church-fellowship in those days. "And in breaking of bread": they did not neglect the blessed ordinance of the Lord's supper in those days: "In breaking of bread." And then what follows? "And in prayers." Some say, nowadays, that prayer-meetings are religious expedients pretty well worn out. Ah, dear me! What a religious expedient that was that brought about Pentecost, when they were all assembled with one accord in one place, and when the whole church prayed, and suddenly the place was shaken, and they heard the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, that betokened the presence of the Holy Ghost! Well, you may try to do without prayer-meetings if you like; but my solemn conviction is that, as these decline, the Spirit of God will depart from you, and the preaching of the gospel will be of small account. The Lord will have the prayers of his people to go with the proclamation of his gospel if it is to be the power of God unto salvation, and there is no change in this matter since Paul's day, Jesus Christ is "the

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same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." God is still to be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them, and he still grants blessings in answer to believing prayer.

Remember, too, that the Lord Jesus Christ has always been inclined to work by the spiritual power of his servants. Nothing comes out of a man that is not first in him. You will not find God's servants doing great things for him, unless God works mightily in them, as well as by them. You must first yourself be endowed with power from on high, or else the power will not manifest to be better men and better women; we want baby-Christians to become men-Christians; and we want the men-Christians among us to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." God will work by his servants when they are adapted to his service; and he will make his instruments fit for his work. It is not in themselves that they have any strength; their weakness becomes the reason why his strength is seen in them. Still, there is an adaptation, there is a fitness for his service, there is a cleanness that God puts upon his instruments before he works mighty things by them; and Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," in this matter, too.

All the good that is ever done in the world is wrought by the Holy Ghost; and as the Holy Spirit honours Jesus Christ, so he puts great honour upon the Holy Spirit. If you and I try, either as a church or as individuals, to do without the Holy Spirit, God will soon do without us. Unless we reverently worship him, and believingly trust in him, we shall find that we shall be like Samson when his locks were shorn. He shook himself as he had done aforetime; but when the Philistines were upon him, he could do nothing against them. Our prayer must ever be, "Holy Spirit, dwell with me! Holy Spirit, dwell with thy servants!" We know that we are utterly dependent upon him. Such is the teaching of our Master, and Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

IV. I do not want to weary you, my dear brethren; but may I be helped, just for a few moments, to speak on a fourth point! Jesus Christ has ever the same resources, for he is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

I will repeat what I said, Jesus Christ has ever the same resources. We sit down, sometimes, very sorrowful, and we say, "The times are very dark." I do not think that we can very well exaggerate their darkness; and they are full of threatening omens, and I do not think that any of us can really exaggerate those omens, they are so terrible. But still is it true, "The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock."

Does the church feel her need of faithful men? The Lord can send us as many as ever. When the Pope ruled everywhere, nobody thought, I should imagine, that the first man to speak out for

the old faith would be a monk; they thought they had taken stock of all the men that God had at his command, and they certainly did not think that he had one of the leaders of the Reformation in a monastery; but there was Martin Luther, "the monk that shook the world," and though men dreamed not what he would do, God knew all about him. There was Calvin, also, writing that famous book of his Institutes. He was a man full of disease, I think he had sixty diseases at once in his body, and he suffered greatly. Look at his portrait, pale and wan; and as a young man he was very timid. He went to Geneva, and he thought he was called to write books; but Farel said to him, "You are called to lead us in preaching the gospel here in Geneva." "No," said Calvin, for he shrank from the task; but Farel said, "The blast of the Almighty God will rest upon you unless you come out, and take your proper place." Beneath the threat of that brave old man, John Calvin took his place, prompt and sincere in the work of God, in life and in death never faltering. Then there was Swingle over there at Zurich, he had come out, too, and Ecolampadius, and Melancthon, and their fellows, - who ever expected them to do what they did? Nobody. "The Lord gave the word, great was the company of them that published it." And so, to-day, he has only to give the word, and you shall see starting up all over the world earnest preachers of the everlasting gospel, for he has the same resources as ever. He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

He has also the same resources of grace. The Holy Spirit is quite as able to convert men, to quicken, enlighten, sanctify, and instruct. There is nothing which he has done which he cannot do again; the treasures of God are as full and as running over now as they were in the beginning of the Christian age. If we do not see such great things, where lies the restraining force? It is in our unbelief. "If thou believest, all things are possible to him that believeth." Ere this year has gone, God can make a wave of revival break over England, Scotland, and Ireland, from one end to the other, ay, and he can deluge the whole world with the gospel if we will but cry to him for it, and he wills to do it, for he is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," in the resources of his grace.

V. So I close my sermon with this fifth head, on which I will be very short indeed, Jesus Christ is ever the same to me: "yesterday, and to day, and for ever." I will not talk about myself except to help you to think about yourselves. How long have you known the Lord Jesus Christ? Perhaps, only a short time; possibly, many years. Do you remember when you first knew him? Can you point out the spot of ground where Jesus met you? Now, what was he to you at first? I will tell you what he was to me.

Jesus was to me at first my only trust. I leaned on him very hard then, for I had such a load to carry. I laid myself and my load down at his feet; he was all in all to me. I had not a shred of hope outside of him, nor any trust beyond himself, crucified and risen for me. Now, dear brothers and sisters, have you got any further

than that? I hope not; I know that I have not. I have not a shadow of a shade of confidence anywhere but in Christ's blood and righteousness. I leaned on him very hard at the first; but I lean harder now. Sometimes, I faint away into his arms; I have died into his life; I am lost in his fulness, he is all my salvation and all my desire. I am speaking for myself; but I think that I am speaking for many of you, too, when I say that Jesus Christ is to me "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." His cross, before my failing eyes, shall be my dying comfort as it is my living strength.

What was Jesus Christ to me at the first? He was the object of my warmest love; was it not so with you also? Was he not chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely? What charms, what beauties, were there in that dear face of his! And what a freshness what a novelty, what a delight, which set all our passions on a flame! It was so in those early days when we went after him into the wilderness. Though all the world around was barren, he was all in all to us. Very well, what is he to-day? He is fairer to us now than ever he was. He is the one gem that we possess; our other jewels have all turned out to be but glass, and we have flung them from the casket, but he is the Koh-i-noor that our soul delights in; all perfections joined together too make one absolute perfection; all the graces adorning him, and overflowing to us. Is not that what we say of him? "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

What was Jesus Christ to me at the first? Well, he was my highest joy. In my young days, how my heart did dance at the sound of his name! Was it not so with many of you? We may be huskier in voice, and heavier in body, and slower in moving our limbs, but his name has as much charm for us as ever it had. There was a trumpet that nobody could blow but one who was the true heir, and there is nobody who can ever fetch the true music out of us but our Lord to whom we belong. When he sets me to his lips, you would think that I was one of the trumpets of the seven angels; but there is no one else who can make me sound like that I cannot produce such music as that by myself; and there is no theme that can ravish my heart, there is no subject that can stir my soul, until I get to him. I think it is with me as it was with Rutherford, when the Duke of Argyle called out, as he began to preach about Christ, "Now, man you are on the right string, keep to that." The Lord Jesus Christ knows every key in our souls, and he can wake up our whole being to harmonies of music which shall set the world ringing with his praises. Yes, he is our joy, our everything, "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

Let us go forward, then, to the unchanging Saviour, through the changing things of time and sense; and we shall meet him soon in the glory, and he will be unchanged even there, as compassionate and loving to us when we shall get home to him, and see him in his splendour, as he was to his poor disciples when he himself had not where to lay his head, and was a sufferer amongst them.

Oh, do you know him? Do you

know him? Do you know him? If not, may he this night reveal himself to you, for his sweet mercy's sake! Amen.

WRETCHED

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flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

When Paul said that the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, he admonished us that we shall feel the concupiscence of the flesh, that is to say; not only carnal lust, but also pride, wrath, heaviness, impatience, and such like. The flesh and the spirit are the two natures of the believer which are one against another in your body so that ye cannot do what ye would. Paul confessed that he is sold under sin, that he is led captive to sin, that he hath a law in his members rebelling against him, and that in the flesh he serves the law of sin. Paul did not say this as the experience of the ungodly. The ungodly do not complain of the rebellion of their flesh, of any battle or conflict, or of the captivity and bondage of sin: for sin mightily reigns in them.

This is therefore the very complaint of Paul and of all the believers. The believer should not despair if he feels the flesh often times to stir up new battles against the spirit. Let no man marvel nor be dismayed when he feels in his body this battle of the flesh against the spirit, but let him pluck up his heart and comfort himself with these words: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit." This verse gives the believers comfort when he is tempted. When the believer feels this battle of the flesh, let him not be discouraged, but let him resist in the Spirit and say: "I am a sinner saved by grace and feel sin dwell with me so long as I live; but I will obey the Spirit and not the flesh."

All believers feel this battle of the flesh against the spirit. When a Christian searches his own heart, if he is not a hypocrite shall feel and confess that their flesh resists against the spirit. The believer need not be depressed if he is defeated nor conclude that grace has lost the struggle. On the contrary, the spiritual conflict is the sign that the Holy Spirit is having His say in the shaping of character.

Then thirdly, our text, "O wretched man that I am," shows the believer's confession. We find sin has such power over us. "O thou hideous monster sin, what a curse hast thou brought in. I love it, I hate it, I want to be delivered from the power of it, and yet am not satisfied without drinking down its poisoned sweets." This poem is very true to every born again believer. Yes, sin is my companion always and my daily curse. It is the breath of my mouth and the cause of my groans. "O wretched man that I am!" It is the incentive to my daily prayer and the hinderer of it. Sin and grace seems continually uppermost, striving and lusting against one another. What a battle field in the heart, and there the fight is lost or won.

"O wretched man that I am!" The wretchedness inside of us confesses our need of realities, our own helplessness and inability, and yet finds a movement of divine life Godward reaching forth after the Lord Jesus Christ. His person and work, His atoning blood and righteousness, and His dying love.

"O wretched man that I am!" This is a cry brought about by a deep realization of the indwelling sin. It is the confession of one who knows that in his natural man there dwelleth no good thing. It is the mournful cry of one who has discovered something of the horrible sink of iniquity in his own heart. It is the groaning of a divinely enlightened man who now hates himself and longs for deliverance.

"O wretched man that I am!" What an expression of the normal experience of the healthy Christian. The man who does not utter this cry daily is either so out of communion with Christ or so ignorant of the teaching of the Scripture or so deceived about his actual condition, that he knows not the corruption of his own heart and the object of his own life.

"O wretched man that I am!" is the language of a regenerate soul. It is the confession of the normal (undeceived and undeluded) Christian. It is the confession of godly and faithful men of God in the Bible. When Abraham of old walked with the Lord he exclaimed, "...Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (Gen. 18:27). When Job came face to face with God, he said, "Behold I am vile" (Job 40:4) and again, "I abhor myself" (Job 42:6). When Isaiah entered the divine presence, he cried, "...Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips..." (Isa. 6:5). When Daniel saw the wondrous vision of Christ he declared, "...There remained no strength in me: for comeliness was turned in me into corruption..." (Dan. 10:8). When Jeremiah, the crying prophet, heard the Word of the Lord he lamented, "...and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth" (Jer. 31:19).

"O wretched man that I am!" Where there is no sense of our utter unworthiness, where there is no mourning over the total depravity of our nature, where there is no sorrowing over our lack of conformity to Christ, where there is no groaning over being brought into captivity to sin, where there is no crying, "O wretched man that I am!"; it is greatly to be feared that there is no fellowship with Christ at all.

Do you, my reader, know anything of such experience? Does the Word produce a broken heart and lead to humbling your self before God? Does it convict your sin in such a way that you are brought to daily repentance before the Lord? May God in His mercy so deliver us from the spirit of pride and hypocrisy which now defiles the modern Christian, and grant us such a humbling spirit of our own uncleanness that we will cry with Paul, "O wretched man that I am!" May God bless you. Amen.

THINGS

(Continued from Page 1)

will attend, Help and comfort give you to your journey's end".

The Chorus:

"Count your blessings name them one by one; Count your blessings - see what God hath done; Count your blessings name them one by one; Count your many blessings - see what

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STUDIES IN ACTS

by Willard Willis

"And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?" -- Acts 7:26. The story has been told of two men who were fighting on a ship while they were engaged with the enemy. The commander separated the men and then pointed to an enemy ship and said, "There is your enemy." Moses, since he had been informed that he was to liberate his brethren, thought they knew about God's plan too. He obviously felt that they would all work together as a team -- all pulling in the same direction. He, however, soon learned that he would not be able to rely on human resources. They, in fact, were not carrying their end of the load.

"But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and judge over us?" -- Acts 7:27. Here is another disappointment for Moses. It was not only that those he was to liberate fought among themselves, but they also rejected any efforts on his part to liberate them. This is similar to trying to save a drowning man who fights one's every effort, or it's like trying to help an old lady across the busy street when she doesn't want to go.

More and more, then, Moses is shut up to God. He, in a sense of speaking, had to say, "God, you will have to do it all, for I can find no help down here." This, of course, was God's plan so that no flesh could glory in His presence. God, in fact, would keep His promise to the circumcised; and He would do so without the help of the circumcised.

"Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?" -- Acts 7:28. The commitment of Moses had now gotten him into very serious trouble. He swam out to help his brethren, but they didn't want him. Now he can't go back to Egypt because he was in very serious trouble with them. We are to see how God had closed all human doors to Moses. He had placed him in a situation where the only way to look was up.

There is no way that any of us can outwit or outrun God. He will always out-think us and out-manuever us. Some people are prone to say, "Let Him have His way with you," but Moses knew very well that the word "let" is not a word that can be applied to God. He knew from experience that God always does as He pleases and that none could stay in His hand. Jonah is another excellent example of the same thing.

"Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons." -- Acts 7:29. Moses fled away from all human resources to Midian which was on the back side of the desert. He, of course, in fleeing, escaped the wrath of the Pharaoh, since we are informed in Exodus 2:15 that the Pharaoh sought to take his life.

The Pharaoh, no doubt, had his secret police search throughout Egypt for Moses, but he was not to be found. The fact that the Pharaoh wanted him dead meant that if such were today, a wanted

picture of Moses would be posted in every post office throughout the land. Moses, then, as far as the Pharaoh was concerned, was an outlaw who was on the run. He, however, in running, would circle back around to Egypt after forty years. His life, in other words, was planned by the Almighty.

The place to which Moses escaped is called "Midian." This was a place in Arabia. The people in Midian were nomadic in their habits, which means that they moved from place to place at fre-



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quent intervals. It was therefore an excellent place to escape from the Pharaoh. The land there was a desert land and an unknown land.

"And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush." -- Acts 7:30. The wilderness of Sinai, which adjoined Mount Sinai, was a part of the land of Midian. God then, had sent Moses to Mount Sinai forty years before He planned to meet with him there. This was a long time to wait. Who, however, would not be willing to wait forty years in order to have an audience with God himself; yea, to meet the one who made us and our environment and sustains the same?

It was after forty years in Midian that God met with Moses, or when Moses was eighty years old. We read from Exodus 3:1 that all this happened in Mount Horeb. There, however, is no contradiction since Horeb and Sinai are different peaks of the same mountain.

Stephen refers to the fact that an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush. The word "angel," as used here, refers to a messenger from God. This messenger, I'm told, could refer to any messenger from heaven. It appears from Exodus 3:4 that Jehovah himself was the messenger. This angel, according to Exodus 23:20-21, was to be heard and obeyed, since He was to conduct them to the land of promise.

Moses, when observing this strangest sight in his eighty years on earth, drew nigh to take a closer look at it. The sight was different from anything he had ever seen, since the fire did not consume the bush. The fire burned and burned, but the bush was not affected. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight; and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him. -- Acts 7:31.

Moses had spent forty years in Egypt and forty years on the back side of the desert. His life of eighty years had taken him from the palace to the sheepfold. He had the nation of Egypt behind him. Their resources had been at

his disposal. Now, at the age of eighty, he has few resources except for the knowledge and wisdom which he had obtained while in Egypt. He, of course, had God on his side; and if God was for him, then no one could be against him.

Moses, while in Egypt, had, no doubt, had the Pharaoh speak to him. Moses, however, has now been elevated to a much higher level in that God spoke to him. He spoke to him from a burning bush.

The burning bush relates, first of all, to Israel, who were like the burning bush in that they had not been consumed even though they had been under the heavy hand of the Egyptians. Israel, in fact, throughout their history, have been like a burning bush that has not been consumed. The same truth is taught by the three Hebrew children while they were in the fiery furnace. Israel, as a nation, has been in the fiery furnace, but they have survived because God has been in the furnace with them. They, as was true of Daniel, have been in the lion's den, but they are still survivors. Moses, then, by way of the burning bush, was taught a great lesson. He was taught that, because of God's promise to the circumcised, nothing would prevent them from inheriting the promised land. Moses, in fact, was to be used as a means in the hand of God to accomplish God's purpose.

Moses had been forsaken by his own people and by Egypt. The hope, then, for Israel's deliverance depended entirely on God. God, when the promise had been fully realized, would be the only one to be honored. He alone would be glorified. "Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold." -- Acts 7:32.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would have been no different than those around them had it not been for the fact that God used them as His instruments. There may have been other men at that time with the same names, but they amounted to very little or nothing. The men of our text were different because God made a difference in their lives. Arthur Pink has written a great message on "The God of Jacob." Mr. Pink shows how God was Jacob's God by way of election, etc.

God, of course, made a difference in Abraham's life by giving him and Sarah a son when they were about 100 years old. The lives of Isaac and Jacob were also lives that demonstrated the power of God.

One can see why Moses trembled when he realized that he was communicating with the God of these great men, yea, the God of his fathers. "Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground." -- Acts 7:33. The ancients were not permitted to enter a temple or holy place with their shoes on. This action showed how they revered such places. The same is true in our text. Moses, by removing his shoes, was reverencing God.

The Arabs and Turks, to this day, never enter the Mosques without first taking off their shoes. No foreigners, in fact, who visit the Mosques, are allowed to enter with their shoes

on.

The land of Israel is called "The Holy Land." The land there, however, is no more holy than our land is holy. There, however, were holy events which occurred there. The definition of the word "holy," according to Webster, is "perfectly pure."

"I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt." -- Acts 7:34. Twice God said that He had seen the affliction of His people. This fact shows how concerned God was and how determined He was to do something about it. "I have seen," twice said, also indicates the duration to which He had seen. Enough, in other words, was enough. God would put a screeching halt to the entire ordeal, and He would use Moses to bring such to pass.

God had not only seen their affliction, but He had heard their groaning. He, in other words, saw the whip lash the back of His own; and He heard them cry out in pain. He would now send Moses back down there to put a stop to the afflictions and thus the groanings.

God, of course, could have sent His angel down to Egypt as a deliverer, or He could have delivered them in many other ways; but His plan for deliverance was constructed around Moses. Moses, in fact, was born for this very purpose. "This Moses, whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush." -- Acts 7:35.

Stephen, no doubt, by referring to Israel's refusal of Moses, was setting the then present Israel up for what he was about to say regarding their refusal of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Jesus, in fact, as was true of Moses, that God had sent Him. This fact meant that the then present Israel was rejecting Jesus even as their forefathers had rejected God.

We have, in the Scripture before us, another reference to the bush. We also read in Deuteronomy regarding this bush. The fire in the bush spoke of God's sustaining power while the bush itself speaks of the insignificance of Israel without the aid of God. They were and are nothing without Him. The same truth applies to ourselves. It is as the songwriter said, "Without Him I would be nothing," or as our Lord said, "without me ye can do nothing."

"He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years." -- Acts 7:36. The record shows that God, through Moses, sent ten plagues upon Egypt. He also, through Moses, divided the Red Sea. God also supplied them with manna during their forty-year journey to the promised land. He also provided water from a solid rock.

The overriding factor above all these events was God's promise to the circumcised. That promise is still in effect today. Israel, in fact, during the millennium, will inherit all the land. All of the plagues and other "wonders" and

"signs" of that day were simply means God was using so as to make sure His promise to the circumcised did not fail. The poet said, "My Father's way may twist and turn, my heart may throb and ache, but in my soul, I'm glad I know, He maketh no mistake."

"This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear." Acts 7:37. The Sanhedrin had been hearing and agreeing with Stephen, but Stephen was setting them up for the punch line. Stephen was about to arrive at his destination, that is, that they had rejected Jesus Christ the Messiah, even as Israel of old had rejected Moses. Moses, in fact, the one they revered so highly, had prophesied that the Lord their God would raise up Jesus from among them; that is, He would be one of them, or of the tribe of Judah.

Stephen emphasized that Moses had said unto them regarding Jesus of Nazareth, "Him shall ye hear." They, however, had stopped up their ears. They had placed their hands over their ears when Jesus had spoken. They, therefore, had disobeyed God, and they had disobeyed Moses, the very one they claimed to venerate. They, therefore, were the blasphemers, and not he.

The prophet which God was to raise up would be like unto Moses. He would be like him in that He would seek His own, but they would reject Him. They would not hear and heed His Word. He would be like Moses in that Moses left the splendors of Egypt for his people while Jesus left the splendors of heaven for His people. "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us." -- Acts 7:38. The "church in the wilderness" means the called out by the Lord who were in the wilderness. The word "church" here related to those who had been singled out to inherit the promise. They, in fact, were made up of the circumcised -- God's church or assembly of people.

Stephen, as he did in verse thirty, refers to the angel again. First, the angel spoke from the bush, and now he speaks to Moses from Mount Sinai. It becomes obvious that the angel, or messenger, is none other than Jehovah since He gave the law, or "lively oracles" to Israel by way of Moses.

The "lively oracles" relates to commands or laws from God (Romans 3:2). The word "lively," in fact, stands in contrast to that which is dead or useless. The oracles were such that they demanded attention and produced results or obedience.

"To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt." -- Acts 7:39. I'm sure that Stephen, as he spoke these words, had his audience in mind as well as their rebel fathers who came out of Egypt. Those before him had committed (Continued on Page 12, Col. 1)

THINGS

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God hath done."

I. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF THINGS THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE THANKFUL FOR.

Our text, II Corinthians 9:15, tells us that the child of God should be thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ. Two-thousand years ago Almighty God sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into this world to die for our sins. He was obedient to that call! Because of that obedience, the elect of God have been made nigh unto God by His precious blood that was shed in our behalf. If anyone should be thankful, it is the ones that have been made alive by the work of the Holy Spirit of God. Indeed, the Christian has so much to be thankful for in the person of Jesus Christ.

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;" I Cor. 1:4. As we take the time and thank God for His unspeakable gift towards us, we also ought to thank God for the grace of God that has been imparted towards others. There are many of our friends and relatives that have come to know the Lord. The Bible tells us that we ought to rejoice in the salvation of others. That is one of the reasons why in our church services that we give the right hand of fellowship to those that have received the Lord and are willing to follow the Lord in Scriptural believer's baptism.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world," Rom. 1:8. Now, the apostle is here speaking about the works of his fellow Christians in Rome. He was rejoicing in the Lord, and that because, their works had been made manifest unto the known world. The question that runs across my mind is this: what does the world think about our church? Your church? Some of us are so concerned about everything else but what counts, that we miss the most important thing in life; our testimony. If our works are made manifest among the world, what kind of works do they see? Are they good works? Bad works? Indifference? Somehow or another, our works become either a reproach or a blessing to others as we are observed. The apostle is indicating here that the works of the church at Rome had been noted world over, and that, what he heard about them, gave him reason to rejoice in the Lord.

II. THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS THANKFUL FOR.

Not only was Paul thankful for the gift of salvation, but for the fact that God had placed him into the gospel ministry. "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief, I Tim. 1:12-13. In the thinking of the Apostle Paul, to be called by God and placed

into the Family of God was a wonderful thing; and then, to be set aside and placed into the gospel ministry was very special in his sight. In the process of calling him, God gave to Paul certain gifts which qualified him for Christian service. There is a lot said today about gifts that just is not Scriptural. We are somewhat overtaken in this area today and have let our emotions and feelings govern us and that is never acceptable in God's sight. It is true that everyone has a particular talent as such: some play the piano, the organ, others can sing and do a marvelous job, while some of us can not carry a tune in a barrel. Then, God has given to some of us the ability to understand and proclaim His Word, while others enjoy the spoken and written Word, but are not able to articulate it themselves. In any case, whatever our talent is, it must be developed by hard work. But that is not enough in itself, for the one that works hard to develop a particular talent, whatever that might be must also be willing to be used of God in whatever way He sees fit.

One can also see from the writing of Paul, the apostle, that he was very thankful for the guidance of God in his work. That can be noted from First Corinthians 1:14, 15 when he thanked God for the direction of the Spirit of God with regards to the baptism of Crispus and Gaius. Even as then, men are trying to make baptism a part of salvation; but then, we know from the Word of God that can not be the case. The apostle realized the importance of the direction of God in our lives. If that was the case in Paul's day, how much more so is it today. Beloved, we need to be and to know that God is the one that places us into the ministry.

Then, Paul, was also thankful for the success in which he had in his work for the Lord. Everyone wants to be successful in their work. But that takes hard work and for many, long hours. Nothing comes easy in this world. If you are going to get somewhere in this world, you are going to be forced to work. Work in itself will not get the job done; but with God's direction and hard work, the Christian can have success. Success may not be what the world calls success. We ought to be seeking God's success!

III. THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT THIS PREACHER IS VERY THANKFUL FOR. Many of the things that Paul was thankful for, this preacher is also very thankful as well. My salvation is personal, so should you be! We should never get tired of sharing it with others. Please, do not misunderstand me, this preacher believes in the doctrine of election, but what does not stop me from sharing with others that God has done and will do for those that believe on His name. Then, I am very thankful to my God for the family that He has seen fit to give me. A Christian family is a wonderful thing! My ministry has been enhanced by and encouraged by my family. A Christian wife and family that is in subjection to God and the head of the home, is a very wonderful thing.

But that is not all, for God has been good and given to us a church to serve Him while we sojourn in this world. It is not a perfect church and at times we get

discouraged, looking at man instead of God, but we know that it was God that directed us here, and here we stay until God directs otherwise. There are many who do not have a good church to attend. We are blessed of God and should be thankful for that privilege. Furthermore, because of our church, we have Christian friends that we can fellowship with from time to time. That is one of the reasons why we need to get together in our Bible conferences. It is enjoyable to fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those that are in agreement with our position. The past two years or so, I have missed the great Bible Conference at Calvary Baptist Church of Ashland, Kentucky. They are a great spiritual uplift!

This pastor is also grateful and thankful for others who want to live for God and make their life count for Him. There seems to be so few who are willing to do what is right in our day and age. Some have right doctrine but their life just does not stack up the way that it should. Then there are those who live a good life, but their doctrine is so far fetched that one can hardly believe that they call themselves Bible folk. Thank God for the men who write for this paper and see the need of helping out a fellow pastor and church. This paper has stood the test for many years; yes, it has been the lighthouse for many for over sixty years. To some, it has become their only source of good Bible preaching. While to others, it has been a theological institution that has helped many to understand the doctrines of grace. It has been the voice of independent Baptists giving to many a hope that God meant what He said when He promised that His church would continue throughout this present age. The devil hates this paper! He would do anything to keep it from being printed. I am thankful for it for so many good reasons; and yet, time and space does not permit us to consider that right now. It has not been easy to stand for the truth when most in the world today are very much opposed to what The Baptist Examiner represents. But that is why I am grateful for this paper.

SOLOMON'S

(Continued from Page 1)

great kings of the nation of Israel. It is written of him that he was the wisest of the kings, for he asked for wisdom above all else. God gave him wisdom and said to him, "Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like" (II Chron. 1:12). So Solomon was very wise, very rich; and he was honoured above all the kings. With all that Solomon had going for him, his forty year reign as king was marred by one thing. That, was his love for many different women of many different nations.

Let us think of our own country for a moment. Where and what would we have, in this great nation of ours if we had barred certain people from our shores, say two hundred years ago? Our nation is great because we are a

people that are not opposed to taking in the poor and down trodden of the world. Much of the peace we have today is because we have a country made up of all nations and all people. Now had Solomon taken those of other nations and left it at that, the Lord would not have been angry with Solomon. But Solomon did not leave it alone. No, Solomon's heart was turned from the one and only true God to the gods of his wives. And "His heart was not longer perfect with the Lord his God" (I Kings 11:4).

He went after the gods of the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Zidonians, and the Hittites. He built temples unto these gods;

and his wives, if not he himself, (yet it was with his approval), that incense was burnt, and sacrifice was made unto their gods. Let us take a look at some of these gods; and as we do so, let us look about us, even within our own cities, to see if this folly has not come upon us also.

God's Word says, "For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites" (I Kings 11:5). These Gods are believed to be the moon, the stars, Venus, and Juno. In other words, the worship of astrology. Astrologers

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"Creation"

by Kathryn Parrish

In the beginning, God had a plan,
That in His own image He would make man:
And woman, also, that man be not alone,
And He would make them a beautiful home.

So in the beginning, God made, first,
The beautiful heaven and the earth:
But the earth had no life, not even a trace,
Swirling waters and darkness covered it's face.

Then God said, Let there be light, and there was light,
God called the light day and the darkness night:
Whatever God commands is done right away,
So evening and morning were creation's first day.

God said, "Let there be a firmament", and it was so,
"To divide the waters above from those below":
God called it heaven -- 'Tis the sky, blue or gray,
And the evening and the morning were the second day.

God gathered together the waters, so drear, And said,
"Now let the dry land appear",
God called the dry land "earth" and the waters He called "seas,"
He saw that it was good and I'm sure that He was pleased.

The earth, so beautiful and so vast,
Brought forth seed-bearing trees, herbs, and grass:
And so creation was well on it's way,
The evening and the morning were the third day.

Far up in the firmament, God placed two great lights,
The sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night:
They were for signs and seasons, and for days and years:
Also in the firmament the twinkling stars appeared.

The heavens declare God's glory and silently speak His Word,
There is no part of earth where their voice is not heard:
God is watching o'er us, the stars seem to say,
He hung them in the firmament on creation's fourth day.

God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly,
Whales and fish and living creatures of the sea:
And God made winged fowls and the birds that fly
On graceful winds in the blue sky.

With beautiful colors they were arrayed,
God saw that it was good and blessed all He made:
"Be fruitful and multiply, God then did say,
When He created them on the fifth day.

On the sixth day of creation, God made these, we find:
Animals and creeping things after their kind:
With all things created according to plan,
God was then ready to create the man.

In His own image, God then made him.
Male and female, created He them:
Be fruitful, multiply, and the earth replenish,
God told them when the work was finished.

And to the man and woman, God then gave
Dominion o'er all the creatures He had made:
God's works were very good, all of them He blessed,
And set aside the seventh day for a day of rest.

Let us always remember God's account of creation,
Let us not believe man's lie of evolution:
When we meet God's Holy Word deniers,
Remember "Let God be true and every man a liar".

'Tis awful to be deceived by Satan,
I'm sure you will agree,
So learn the truth and hold it firm,
The truth will make you free.

SOLOMON'S

(Continued from Page 10)

and the worship of such runs rampant through out our country from the highest office of the country to the living rooms of many homes. Every newspaper that comes into your home has a horoscope list within it. And I know that many of us (guilty as charged) look to see what is written for us for the coming day. These are claiming to know the future. What is it that God says about this? Deuteronomy 18:9-14, "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. For

these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do." Divination, sorcery, witchcraft, and necromancy are all an abomination unto the Lord. Astronomy according to Webster is the study of the stars. Study of the stars is one thing; foretelling the future, by the same is yet another. According to God's word it is witchcraft, and as such is an abomination unto God.

Solomon built high places for Chemosh, (the subduer) the god of Moab, and for Moloch, the fire god of the Ammonites. This was the god that was worshipped by human sacrifices of their own children that went on in Jerusalem, 600 years B.C. Ezekiel 16:21 "That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them?" For this and more, God rejected Jerusalem for a time. Oh yes, I know that we would like to think that such as this is not taking place in our country today; but, not so. One need but read the paper or listen to the news to know that Satan worship is every where in our country. And the subduer is gathering together his disciples by leaps and bounds. Oh where have we gone wrong?

What is the way of hope for our country that we may not go the way of Solomon?

Beloved, the question comes a lot easier than the answer. I could give you my opinion in the matter. Some of you would be offended. Others would take up stones to stone me, as those of old took up stones to stone Stephen when the truth was to hard for them to take. But I am not here to proclaim my opinion. Rather, I am here to proclaim the Word of God. God said "Thou shalt have no other god's before me" (Ex. 20:3). God said, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Ex. 20:4). God said, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Ex. 20:5).

Solomon's folly was that his heart was swayed from the love, of the one and only true God, to worshipping and serving other gods; the gods of his many strange wives. Today, we see the same thing happening all about us. This nation, that was founded and moulded to the Christian values is slowly, but surely being turned from those values, and form the trust and hope in God Almighty. The gods of the rising sun, the stars, and the moon, of Satan, and the gods of pleasure and pride are eating away at the very core of our nation.

Any of you that have been compelled to be shut-in on the Lord's day know what I am talking about. Your TV and radio might have a couple of hours on Sunday for the Christian, and most of that time is spent begging for money. The rest of the day is for the pleasure of man's imagination. There was a time when everything stopped on Saturday night and did not start again until Monday morning. Sunday was a day of worship; a time when the family went together to the house of worship and prayer. Not so today; nothing stops. Business goes on as usual seven days a week, and all the gods of men's imagination are served and sacrificed to daily. Men that would not give one dollar to the task of the proclamation of the Word of God, will gladly give fifty, sixty, or a hundred dollars to sit on a hard bench in all kinds of weather to watch another group of men running about a field chasing a ball that's so lopsided it won't even roll straight; just like the lopsided thinking of man's pleasure. Pleasure, that is there for but a short season, about two hours at the most, then it is gone. But praise be to God, the pleasure of God's salvation is with us for ever.

Well, I ask you as the children of God, can we change what is happening to the country we live in? And I say to you, we cannot. I am reminded of the night that my Lord Jesus went to the garden, knowing that this was the time when He was to be taken, beaten, spat upon, cursed, and hung upon a tree to die for His people. And He prayed to the Father; "if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless

not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42). God would not remove that cup. As Jesus was being taken, one of his disciples would have fought with the sword, but Jesus said no, Matthew 26:54 "But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" I say to you that this cup must also be poured out upon his people. No we can not change a thing, but God can. Praise be to God, God can. In the days of Solomon God's anger was stirred up, and God took the kingdom and it was divided. Is this what we are looking forward to? I pray not. But as I read the Word of God! I find that every time the heart of God's people was turned from God, that they were brought back with the strong and mighty hand of Almighty God. And it was always, not without much sorrow, much turmoil, much pain, and with much suffering.

If this country, continues to follow in the ways of Solomon, continues to take unto itself strange Gods, and to build altars to the same; we have much trouble to look forward to. Jesus spake of these times in Matthew 24:11-14, "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." False prophets and false gods surely have risen and the love of many has waxed cold. The gospel is being preached throughout the world. Could it be that these are the signs of the coming of the end? Could it not also mean that this abomination will bring back our Lord Jesus Christ, to receive His own out of this wicked world, to rise with Him in the clouds of the sky, to ever be with Him, Oh, never to feel pain or sorrow, never to be tempted with sin, and yes to ever see the glory of God. Could this be?

Luke 21:28, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." I say to you my friends that Solomon's folly is upon us today, but take heart, all ye that are of the elect of God. This is but the beginning of the signs of his coming. Are you ready? "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

WHAT IS

(Continued from Page 1)

To the Charismatic, experience takes precedence over the Word of God. The Bible speaks to this issue of "experience" by declaring, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:22-23). The Bible must be the final authority in matters of faith and practice.

5. It Claims Extra-Biblical Revelations

With the Charismatic emphasis on experience, adherents claim to have had new revelations from

God. But the Scripture maintains that nothing may be added or deleted from God's Word without the wrath and displeasure of a holy God. (Rev. 22:18-19).

6. It Lays Claim To A Superior Spirituality

Charismatics advocate that speaking in tongues as a language (foreign to the person) was one of the sign gifts in the early church. These sign gifts were for the purpose of authenticating the message of God's servants. They were actually credentials. The early church did not have the complete written Word as we have today.

But these sign gifts are not now operative. With the completion of the Bible (I Cor. 13:8), there is no need for signs. It was because of the lack of spiritual maturity that they were employed in the first place. Tongues-speaking is a sign of carnality and spiritual immaturity -- not of superior spirituality. Tongues-speaking is worked up -- emotional, psychological, fleshly, and sometimes Satanic.

Generally, those who seek the "gift of tongues" are seeking a short-cut to spirituality. However, there are no short cuts to growth in grace.

7. It Appeals To The Flesh

That which appeals to the flesh appeals to the multitudes. People are looking for a magic cure-all that will enable them to escape the realities and responsibilities of life. Crossbearing, separation from the world, and reproach are avoided. One religious entertainer is noted for his cliché, "Something good is going to happen to you!" In actuality, when one follows Christ it is going to be costly. There will be valleys. There is a price to be paid -- some may be called on to be faithful "unto death."

8. It is Divisive

Charismatics are old mainline Pentecostals with a different veneer. The movement is Neo-Pentecostalism. It could best be described by the term "Neo-Penetrationism." It has moved from the store fronts, "across-the-tracks" communities, and "hills and hollows" into the liberal, liturgical, ritualistic, formal churches. Cells have been established, many times dividing the flock.

Because there are virtually no standards, no doctrine, and no discipline, the Charismatic Movement appeals to a broad base. It never gets a foot-hold nor survives in a church where the pastor militantly stands for truth and righteousness. Biblical preaching with the proper emphasis on ecclesiastical and personal separation is the one thing it can not and will not acknowledge.

9. It Disregards The Local Church

The Charismatics are inclusive and interdenominational. No distinction is made as to whether one is or is not a member of a local church nor between churches as to whether they are or are not New Testament in doctrine and practice.

The Bible teaches and advocates Christians joining, supporting, and working through Biblical New Testament churches. There is no such thing as a "churchless"

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QUESTIONS RAISED ABOUT RIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN STUDENTS

An Atlanta, Georgia high school has become the latest focus of an ongoing nationwide controversy related to protecting the civil rights of students while maintaining separation of church and state in public schools.

A seventeen year old senior at DeKalb County's Henderson High School was suspended just before the Thanksgiving holidays on charges of disobeying orders from school officials. He had been caught passing a handwritten note to a fellow student in the school hallway informing sophomore Matt Hinton of the time and place for their next Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting.

School officials later said a mistake had been made and agreed to rescind the suspension of the senior. He and his family have requested that his name be kept out of the press at this time.

But the issue is not settled, since Henderson High Principal Bobby Jordan reportedly told a parent that students could not bring Bibles to school or wear religious T-shirts, buttons or other symbols of their faith.

The conflict at Henderson High has been developing. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes has been barred from meeting after school on the campus and was told it must drop the word "Christian" from its name to participate in any school activities.

In October, FCA members, including the student who later was suspended, distributed flyers at school advertising an FCA meeting. They were told that was in violation of school rules and warned not to do it again.

Bill Hinton, Matt's father, reported that Jordan had disallowed possession of religious materials. But Andy Olson, a spokesperson for DeKalb County schools, said

that was not the policy of the DeKalb County School Board.

"There is absolutely no basis for preventing any student from possessing and reading religious literature on his own time," Olson said. The apparent discrepancy between board policy and the principal's directive demonstrates the confusion of the case.

A lawyer for the DeKalb County School Board stated in writing that when the note addressed to Hinton was intercepted by the school's assistant principal, he thought it "was an attempt to repeat activity which (the student) had already been told was inappropriate during school hours."

Hinton received a written reprimand that said, "Any further occurrence of possession of Christian material could lead to a suspension of some type."

Hinton's father reported he had been to see Jordan and asked for clarification of what was meant by "possession of Christian material." "Would he get in trouble for bringing his Bible to school?" the father asked. "That's right," the principal responded.

The DeKalb County School Board has no written policy regarding the possession of religious materials or student religious groups meeting on school campuses. Individual principals have the authority to set policies within their own schools and some may be under pressure from parents opposed to any form of religious expression within the schools.

Several families in Briarlake Baptist Church, where both students involved in the incident are members, are working through attorney Jay Sekulow to pressure the DeKalb County School Board to draft a fair policy that spells out the rights of students regarding their religious faith. --copied from the Baptist Trumpet.

CAN YOU IMAGINE THIS?

Jesus getting rich on His healing ministry?
"...freely ye have received, freely give"
(Matt.10:8).

WHAT IS

(Continued from Page 11)

Christianity in the Bible. Paul refers to the New Testament church in I Tim. 3:15 as "...the pillar and ground of the truth." Every Christian should be an active member of some good fundamental, Bible-believing and Bible-practicing church. Such a church is worthy of one's presence, prayers, and purse.

Without a doubt we are living in the most religious confusion the world has ever known. Modernism, liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, neo-evangelicalism, and all the rest of the "sisms" have never caused the deception the

Charismatic Movement is causing. There is a bright side, however. The formation of the apostate, worldly, ecumenical church is an indication of the soon return of our Lord. "...look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28).

In the meantime, we need to be faithful to our fundamental, Bible-believing churches and heed the admonition of John regarding apostate Christendom, "...Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4).

--Plains Baptist Challenger

STUDIES

(Continued from Page 9)

a much worse crime than their fathers. They, in fact, had rejected the very Son of God. They refused to obey Him. Their hearts, in fact, also turned back into Egypt, or back to the world that was against God. They had chosen Barabbas over God's Son, Jesus Christ. They had chosen darkness rather than light.

The same is going on in the world today in that people are rejecting the Lord's New Testament Baptist churches and have con-

cocted many of their own -- many that conform to their worldly mind. All false churches, in fact, are a form of Egypt.

Stephen says that they turned back into Egypt in their hearts. They did not physically go back into Egypt, but they wanted to. God, of course, looked on the heart and judged them as if they had committed the act. We must be sure that our hearts are right with God. The action of our hands and feet mean nothing if our hearts do not agree. This applies to church attendance, giving, etc.

CONVERSION OF TOM BISHOP

by Pastor T.B. Freeman

Near Elizabethton, Tennessee, on Stoney Creek at Dunagan Chapel Baptist Church, a great meeting was on. Some very wicked sinners were being delivered from bondage such as Zac White and Kerm Bishop, who had been whiskey and beer sellers. On the way to church one night, I stopped the car, and invited Tom to church. He answered with some foolish talk. His dear old mother said, "Preacher, there is no use to talk to an infidel." I said, "Maybe God will take those words he used and convict him."

Some three months later, I was called to his home at night. I found him on his knees beside his wife praying to God for mercy. It would be too much for me to tell you what he had started to do, as his gun was nearby. He was doing some tall praying, as the old saying goes. He looked up and said, "Preacher, can't you help me?" "I can't do but one thing, Tom," I answered, "and that is point you to Jesus Christ. He can save you." "Oh, preacher, you don't know what I started to do tonight. I have gone too far, what can I do. Will God ever forgive me?"

I tried to show him from the Scriptures the way of salvation, but he seemed to get no light. His wife had been saved, but she had gotten out of fellowship with the Lord, so she was praying, too.

I left him there praying, and

went to the church nearby, and conducted Prayer Meeting. Upon returning, the light had come into his soul. He was a saved and happy man.

I baptized him some two weeks after. He has made a great Christian. I understand he made the statement before his conversion to Christ that no preacher would ever get anything he ever had. Not long after he was saved, he gave me a large box of canned goods. When the Lord gets the man, he gets his service and gifts.

IT'S TIME TO PLANT YOUR GARDEN

First, plant four rows of P's:

Presence, Promptness, Preparation, and Perseverance.

Next to these plant three rows of Squash:

Squash gossip, Squash indifference, Squash criticism.

Then plant five rows of Lettuce:

Let us obey rules and regulations

Let us be true to our obligations

Let us be faithful to our task

Let us be loyal and unselfish

Let us love one another.

And no garden is complete without TURNIPS:

Turn up for ALL meetings

Turn up with a smile

Turn up with new ideas

Turn up with determination to make everything you do count for Christ.

BAD NEWS BEFORE GOOD NEWS

The average religious worshiper goes to church and comes away feeling good, but if the preacher had preached truth about the condition of man, he would come away crying, "Oh, God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Today's preachers say "Try Jesus. -- Try being born again." They plead with helpless, guilty men to start serving the Lord. (Men of old pleaded with God, not for men to serve the Lord, but for God to show mercy.) Today they say, God put forth an effort. He sent his son, and that's all He can do. You must do something for God.

Preachers try to convince men of God's love and mercy, without a word about His righteousness and justice. Preachers try to convince men of God's willingness to receive them, while nothing is said about their unwillingness to come. Preachers go forth to

comfort and encourage men in their rebellion. They dare not rebuke, reprove, exhort or offend. They cry "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." Jeremiah 6:14 and 8:11. These preachers are spoken of in Ezekiel 34:3, "Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock."

Men are built up who have never been broken. (God kills before making alive.)

Men are filled who have never been emptied.

Men are given hope who have never been without hope. (Poverty must come to a soul before riches.)

Men are saved who have never been lost.

Men are healed who have never been wounded.

Men are exalted who have never been humbled.

Men are given life who have never been slain.

Men are given grace who have never been guilty.

This is not the way of the Holy Spirit who never takes a man to Calvary until he has been slain by the law at Sinai. The Holy Spirit never speaks peace until a man has been convinced of sin, righteousness and judgment. We must see guilt so great that only the blood of the Son of God can put it away!

Our faith, our knowledge of sin and God, and our attitude toward the Redeemer are direct results of the preaching we have heard. Today's preaching builds a house without a foundation, a hope for heaven without a vital union with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. If one misses Holy Spirit conviction, he will miss repentance, faith and Christ.

RULES TO HELP THE DEVIL KILL A TRUE CHURCH

1. Don't attend the services, except on Easter Sunday.

2. If you do attend weekly, be a "oncer." Twicers are bad. Ask the jailor.

3. When you do go, go late and enter in state!

4. Attend other churches at least half the time. Don't be narrow.

5. Play "Safety First!" Once in a while the preacher hits. Use the seats in the rear.

6. Hunt a draft -- sit in it -- and growl about the ventilation.

7. Watch your watch. The preacher might have nothing but a calendar.

8. Go to sleep when the sermon begins -- or, better yet, before. If you sleep where the preacher can't see you -- snore! He may hear you!

9. Don't joyously sing! You'd look unnatural. Owls never sing!

10. Don't carry your Bible with you. You might appear religious.

11. Don't praise the sermon -- it might bust the preacher's head.

12. Criticize the preacher -- the organist -- the choristers -- the sexton -- the ushers -- everybody.

13. Never give to the heathen. Such a gift might be used against you.

14. Don't speak to a stranger -- he might drop dead.

15. Tell all the preacher's failings to your neighbors. It may be a stale tale, but they'll enjoy it.

16. Don't give too much -- you might have to spend your old age in the poorhouse.

17. "Let the pastor earn his money." Why hire an associate or even a sexton?

18. Never accept an office -- "Let George do it."

19. Should you see someone wake up, get off the roost to give the parson a boost, howl about the church being run by a clique!

20. Above all, don't attend the prayer meeting. If you do, don't

ever break the stillness with your voice.

21. Stir up a fuss of some kind. You just can't be happy without a fuss.

22. Don't die. What could the devil ever do in the church without you?

(editor's note. JRG) And even then, you and the devil will both fail, for the church which Jesus built can never be destroyed, since Jesus Himself said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

(copied from May 27, 1939 issue TBE).

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Editor will be preaching in special services at Faith Baptist Church at 27314 Barrington, Madison Hgts., Michigan. March 21-23 at 7 p.m. For further information call the pastor Eddie Roberts at (313) 548-3656. Pray for this meeting and attend if possible.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The New Hope Baptist Church of Oblong, Illinois is looking for a pastor. Anyone interested in this should call James Dunlap at 618 557 3339.

The Beverly Manor Baptist Church of Washington, Illinois will have a Bible Conference April 2-4. Services will begin Monday evening at 7:00. For further information contact Michael McCoskey at 745 8927.

The Morris Street Baptist Church of Hobbs, New Mexico has authorized Elder Ray Hiatt as an Evangelist/Missionary in Eastern Kentucky. Elder Hiatt's address is PO Box 1597, Hazard, Ky. 41701.

Elder Marion G. Lawson announces his availability for the pastorate. His address is 1633 Cloverdale Ave., S., Tucson, AZ. 85711. His phone is (602) 750-0053.

When we say that we are saved by faith, we mean, accurately, through faith. It is God that saves. It is Christ's life, Christ's blood, Christ's sacrifice, Christ's intercession that saves. Faith is simply the channel through which there flows over into my emptiness the Divine fulness. It is not faith that saves us; it is Christ that saves us and saves us through faith.

--Alexander MacLaren