

SHOULD CHRISTIANS EVER JUDGE?

by Pastor Alfred Smith,
Flora, Indiana

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard



Alfred Smith

to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:15,16).

Peter gives to us in this Scripture an exhortation. It reminds us of the fact that some things are hard to understand. He warns us not to approach Scripture with an unlearned mind. An unlearned mind is always unstable. Thus,

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A POSITIVE WORD FOR PERILOUS TIMES

by Ray Waugh

This was the witness of Adam and Abel, though some have so little Scriptural insight that they suppose Adam went to hell. This was the witness of Abraham! This was the witness of the prophets! This was the witness of the shepherds and the angels on the night of His birth! This was the witness of the aged one who was able to cry, "Blessed be the



Lord God of Israel...for He has raised up for us an Horn of Salvation for us in the house of His servant David!" This was the cry of the guard, "Surely this was the Son of God!" And this was the cry of those who heard Him say, "Go into all of the world, preach the Gospel..." Because of the witness of these, you and I can similarly testify, "He who believes on Jesus has everlasting life..." or with Paul and Silas on a very special night, "Believe

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Holiness is as Holiness does.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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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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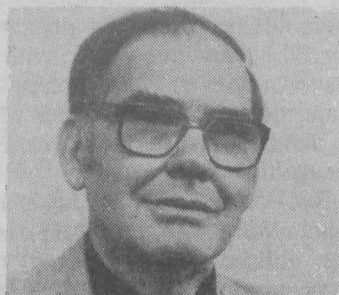
WHOLE NUMBER 2624

STUDIES IN JOSHUA

by C.T. Everman

"And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over" (Joshua 3:1)

The time for action had come.



Joshua had waited a long, long time for this event. Forty years before, he and Caleb had urged

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THE HOLINESS OF GOD

by A.W. Pink

"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify



A.W. Pink

Thy name? for thou only art holy" (Rev. 15:4). He only is independently, infinitely, im-

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STUDIES IN ACTS

by Willard Willis

"And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the multitude was divided" (Acts 23:7).

The Lord promised Paul that



He would always be with him and enable him to say the right things at the right time. The text

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THE MIGHTY SAVIOUR

by Roy Mason

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the

Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:13-18).

I lost my wife a few months ago and this Scripture has been increasingly precious to me. I

have read this message many times during the past 50 years at funerals. Sometimes my words were almost drowned out by the sobs and cries of the bereaved. Other times when I read this passage of Scripture I noticed that some of the sobs and cries ceased. If there is any word in all this world that will stop the cries of sorrow and bereavement it is that I just read to you.

Paul says, "I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep." He is speaking about the dead but he uses the word

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WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR LORD AFTER HIS ASCENSION?

by Waldo Whiddon

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." (Acts 1:9). The ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ is something



Waldo Whiddon

wonderful in itself to say the least. It is the triumphant finale of His work and ministry here on earth. There will also be another remarkable sight to see at His return. He will return in power and great glory. He is King of kings, and the everlasting Lord of glory. Amen.

Through His ascension He prepared the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit, our ever abiding Comforter that indwells us, warns us, and leads us in the

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TEACHING WITH AUTHORITY

by Fred C. Beard

Mark 1:19-22. "And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him. And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on



the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."

As we look to verse 19, we see two more disciples, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. These were also fishermen just like Simon and Andrew. In fact, most of the disciples of Christ were common men, men who worked with their hands. They were not as Paul says in I Corinthians 1:26 wise men after the flesh, not

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

AN EXPOSITION OF I JOHN 3:9

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9).

What in the world can this verse mean? Usually we can just take the most obvious meaning of Scripture. Usually Scripture means just exactly what it seems to mean. But there are times

when this is not true, when we must dig carefully into the Scripture, when we must compare Scripture with Scripture, when we must interpret a verse in the light of the totality of the Bible. This is such a Scripture.

Peter said in II Peter 3:15 that Paul wrote some "things hard to be understood." Yes, Paul did this, and upon reading I John 3:9, I believe that John also wrote some things hard to be understood. Again I ask, what in the world can this verse of Scripture mean?

It cannot mean that Christians

do not sin. John has already told us in 1:8 that, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" and in 1:10 that, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." John, of course, wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He would not tell us in one place that any who claimed to be without sin did not have the truth in them, and tell us in another place that Christians do

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EXPOSITION

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not and cannot sin. In interpreting 3:9, we must compare it with 1:8,10; and in doing this we see that it cannot mean that a Christian does not and cannot sin.

There is much in the Bible which tells us that every man does sin. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecc.7:20). No man can believe this Scripture and believe in sinless perfection. "For in many things we offend all..." (Jms.3:2). Some people accuse Baptists of believing that every man sins a little every day. Not so, Baptists believe the Bible, and therefore believe that every man sins in many things every day. The Bible witnesses frequently against the absurd heresy of sinless perfection.

Bible characters, great men of God that they were, did not claim to live above sin. Job said, "Behold, I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" (40:4). Oh, it would be good if all sinless perfectionists would lay their hands upon their mouth. It would be much better for them to do this than to open their mouths with their lying claims to sinlessness. Job also said, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (42:6). The holy prophet, Isaiah, said, "...Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips..." (6:5). The great and godly Apostle Paul said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh),

dwellleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom.7:18-19). Surely, if the men and women of the Bible did not claim sinless perfection, no one today has the right to make that claim.



Joe Wilson

Our observation of others proves my point. Who among us has met a sinless person? I know many good, godly Christians. I have the utmost respect for them. But I do not know a sinless person. I do not look for it, but it is apparent that the best of my acquaintances do sin.

Our personal experience proves the truth that all men do sin. We can and should know if we are saved. We can and should know a good bit about our own spiritual character. We all do know that we do sin. We are conscious of our sinfulness and of our sins. We are often made to weep over our sins. We often have the experience of repentance and confession of our sins. Praise God that we also know the sweet forgiveness of our loving heavenly Father.

Therefore, our verse cannot and does not mean that the Christian does not sin. What in the world can I John 3:9 mean? There are many theories as to the meaning of this verse. I will give several of them.

Some teach that this Scripture refers to very, very terrible and extremely wicked sins. They say that every Christian does sin, but that no Christian can commit some of the most wicked of sins. This is not what the verse says. The believer cannot commit the unpardonable sin, whatever that is; but I know of no other sin that a Christian absolutely cannot commit. Noah got drunk. David committed adultery and murder. Peter denied the Lord. Lot moved into Sodom. Yet all these were truly saved people - even when (and, of course, after) they committed these terrible sins. Now, I do not mean to make light of these terrible sins; I certainly do not want to encourage such, but facts are facts. I have often said as to whether or not one is a true Christian; it is not the depth of sin into which one can go, but it is how long that one stays there. Noah did not keep on getting drunk. David did not continue in adultery and murder. Peter did not, so far as we know, again deny the Lord. So, this cannot be the meaning of this verse.

There are those who teach - and it is truly a horrible doctrine - that the sins Christians commit are not really sins. They say that no matter what a Christian does, it is not looked upon by God as a sin. I have had some experience with some who held this awful heresy. My friend, sin is sin; and being a Christian does not keep sin from being sin. If I was to

say anything about this, I would say that sin is worse for the Christian than for the unsaved. Surely, being a Christian is not to be used as an excuse for or cover of sin. When I heard this teaching, I thought to myself: how far will men go to satisfy their desire for sin; how far will they go to excuse and justify their sins? Surely, this is not the meaning of I John 3:9.

There are some who say that John is here speaking of an ideal, but that no one can actually reach that ideal. They say that John is setting a standard here, but that no man is required or expected to reach that standard. Well, God's Word does set before every man God's requirement of absolute sinless perfection. God does know that no man can reach that standard. Jesus Christ did and does reach that standard, and His righteousness is imputed to every believer. But that is not what I John 3:9 is talking about. He is saying that whatever he is talking about is something that a Christian does not and cannot do. Therefore, he is not talking about an unattainable ideal.

Some try to explain this verse by saying that one who is born of God is sinless; but that when he does sin, he ceases to be a child of God. Thus one is a child of God, sins and ceases to be a child of God; is a child of God again, sins and ceases to be a child of God - and this goes on in frequent cycles throughout life. Whether or not one goes to heaven will depend upon his dying while he is a child of God, and not while he is sinning and thus not a child of God. How foolish and absurd is such an interpretation! What an "on again, off again" experience is this! If this be true, one could never have any real assurance of eternal heaven. Praise God, we know that the Bible teaches that once one is a born again child of God, he is saved forever.

Some interpret this verse of willful, premeditated, and deliberate sin. But my friend, this cannot be true, for we all are guilty of such sins. You know that you often deliberately and willfully do things that you know you should not do. You know that you often fail to do things that you know you should. The man who could hold such an interpretation as this must surely be filled with pride.

Some interpret this as referring to the sin of apostasy. They compare it with Hebrews 6:1-4. They say that a born-again child of God cannot so sin as to be lost again. Well, of course this is true; but it is not said in this Scripture. This Scripture does not say that the child of God cannot commit certain sins; but that he does not sin and cannot sin. This means that he does not sin at all in whatever this verse is talking about.

The next two views are the most popular ones. Likely, the most popular view of this verse is the interpretation that it refers to continual sinning. Scofield takes this position in his reference Bible. Many Bible teachers take this view. They say that a Christian can sin now, sin again, and sin again; but that he cannot continually practise sin. But my friend, are we not all conscious that we continue daily, hourly, every minute, every second, in sin? Many believers know they should tithe, but they never have, and probably never will. Every Christian should be a faithful

member of a Baptist church, but many are in false churches and will likely continue in such until they die. And it is a sin to be in a false church supporting false doctrines. Many Christians believe that it is wrong for them to smoke cigarettes, but they still do it, and will likely continue doing this until death. One could go on and on giving examples of Christians continually practicing sin, so this cannot be the meaning of this verse of Scripture. So, I ask again; what in the world can this verse of Scripture mean?

Before setting forth the true meaning of I John 3:9, let me call your attention to a very important matter in properly understanding this Scripture. It does not, I repeat, does not state what a believer should not do. It tells us what a believer does not do and can not do. It is most important that you see this in this verse. It does not say that the believer should not sin. It says that

he does not sin and cannot sin.

There is another doctrine in the Bible which furnishes the key to understanding I John 3:9. It is the doctrine of the two natures of the believer. The most complete, clear, and detailed setting forth of this doctrine is in Romans 7:15-25. Paul sets this forth as his personal experience; and, of course, this is the experience of every child of God. Paul most certainly is not setting forth his experience before salvation in this Scripture, as some foolishly teach. In v.22 he says, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." No unsaved person can truthfully say this. Paul speaks in this Scripture of, "sin that dwellleth in me" (v.17). He says that in his flesh dwellleth no good thing, not that the new life does not dwell in him, but that there is no good in his fleshly nature (v.18). He

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FROM THE EDITOR

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Oh, I do most sincerely and prayerfully wish each one of our reading family a HAPPY NEW YEAR. I did not wish any of you a merry Christmas - I did not wish anyone that. I do not believe in Christmas. It is a heathen and Catholic holiday, and Baptists should have nothing to do with it. I do not observe Christmas in any way whatsoever. We do not, in any way, observe Christmas at Calvary Baptist church. I do not know what some of the members might do, but as a church and in our services, we have no Christmas observance or recognition of any kind.

But HAPPY NEW YEAR is a different thing altogether. It is the beginning of a new year. I do desire and wish for each of you that this year will be a good and happy one for you. In wishing this for you I have in mind mostly spiritual things. Of course, I wish you the best that God might see fit to give you as to physical blessings and financial blessings. But spiritual things are so much more important - I hope you realize this. So, I wish you many spiritual blessings during the coming year.

May this be a year of great and multiplied spiritual blessings for you. May you draw very near to the Lord this year. May you feel His sweet and precious presence closer to you than ever before. It is good to feel His presence. Oh, I believe in a religion that can be felt in the soul. May you grow greatly in grace and knowledge during this year. None of us have yet arrived, we have not yet attained. There is much room for growth in each one of us.

May this be a year of multiplied Christian service for you. Oh, there is joy in serving God. It is a blessing to the soul to know that one is truly serving the Lord. There is so much to be done. Every Christian has some talents that need to be used, that can be a blessing to others when they are used, that can bring great blessings upon the user, and that can lay up many rewards in heaven. Get busy for the Lord this year. Let this be the greatest year of Christian service of your entire life thus far.

May this be a year of answered prayer for you. There are so many things to pray about. Prayer is so needed and so important that each child of God should be greatly increasing the time spent in and sincerity and intensity of prayer. The Bible tells us that we have not because we ask not. Let us see if we can have much more this year, because we ask more. The blessings of God upon our lives and upon our churches will be in direct proportion to our prayer lives - is it not so? Well, what will we do about this?

Would it not be great if some of our loved ones would be saved this year? Why don't we really work at that this year? Let us do more earnest, sincere, loving witnessing to our unsaved loved ones this year. Let us do much more praying for our lost loved ones this year. Surely, if we would do that, we would see some saved this very year.

I do not know what this year might bring forth. 1990 brought forth a serious surgery in my life. I spent 39 days in the hospital and had two surgeries. Many thought that I was close to death. 1991 has brought a major surgery for Katie. On November 5th she had Total Knee Replacement surgery on both knees - surely a major surgery. As I write this on November 15th, I am at home taking care of her. She is just now sleeping. I feel sure that ere you read this, she will be fully recovered. But we just do not know what a year (or a day) may bring forth. Let us walk with God each day. Let us trust Him with the future and for the future. He knows what is best, he will go with us through each trial, and He will surely take care of all of His people. It does not greatly matter what this year brings forth since it will be what He has designed for our good, and He will go through it with us.

This can be a good year for you and me. God's love, grace, and power can make it so. Let us draw close to Him. Let us live for His glory. Let us serve Him as best He will enable us to do - and this will truly be a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Please pray much this year for Calvary Baptist church and for The Baptist Examiner. Also pray much for me. Surely, if any one of God's children needs prayer, it is Joe Wilson. I need God's wisdom, grace, strength, and blessings. These things come in answer to prayer. So, please pray much for me. May God bless you and yours always and in all ways, and use you to His glory. One more time: HAPPY NEW YEAR.

MY EXPERIENCE

by Gene Darwin Abbott

I do not claim to have had any special natural desire to be moral, but I may have some natural inclination to be frightened of judgment. For some reason I did have the desire to search out the truth, but I most assuredly had the basic desire to take care of my own interests. Proverbs 1:7 comes to my mind, because I believe this is a key to the identity of the cause of almost every (and maybe every) Christian commitment.

I recall that, as a pre-teen age boy, I sat behind my grandparent's farm house one night and considered a matter without even realizing how serious a theological issue this matter was, for I was rating Calvinism against Arminianism without having a good definition of either term, and without any real understanding of their respective precepts. I considered the basic sovereignty of God, although I had no knowledge of that term, either. I wondered if God did exist, for I was truly an agnostic, but I also wondered how much independent will man could truly have if there were (indeed) an "almighty" God.

I concluded that if this totally Almighty Being did exist, this God must somehow actually determine even the very will of mankind, for if not, mankind would have some share in the control of world activity. This, somehow, didn't appear possible if this Almighty Being were able to predict the future with absolute certainty. Indeed, it seemed the Bible declared He was even capable of identifying (even in advance) who would be His disciples. Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

This is the verse I alluded to earlier and I believe the last phrase is as true as the first. I believe it is the nature of all of us to prefer to ignore Divine guidance, and do according to our own wishes; however, death must be acknowledged and we must wonder what (if anything) will lie beyond this. If we do not, we are foolish indeed, yet it would seem that a dread of death is a type of fear in itself. Can one help but dread a fate he cannot understand? How can a person feel he understands death when he doubts existence of any deity, whatsoever? Does not everyone (or nearly everyone) have some knowledge thrust upon him, then? If this can be accepted, it then takes us full-face against the last phrase of our passage. It follows, logically, that it is foolish to resist wisdom or instruction. If this is made available to us (all), we may all tend to naturally despise it, but it is genuinely ridiculous to do so willfully; although the natural man does just that.

A type of fear, then, was certainly an influence upon me; but perhaps a stronger influence was the very thing that so many would have us believe is a deterrent: Logic! I simply was unable to find another explanation that would "wash." Evolution was considered but was far less reasonable, because it did not explain a beginning and appeared contrary to the natural deterioration that seemed common in the world. We could look at technical progress and delude ourselves into

thinking this did indicate an evolutionary process; but it is man's calculated advance based on progressive knowledge and not typical of the natural process. In the natural world, species do not advance or move forward to a better (or super) species; but do attempt to cope. A species unable to do so becomes extinct. We have extinction and not evolution.

My experience is so inter-related with logic that the logic transcends the experience. I do not report any event comparable to Paul's Damascus Road experience. I most recall the contemplation of my grandparent's farm. I recall a considering of the vast expanse of the clear night sky. I was incapable of conceiving of any outer edges to the universe. I could not imagine that the stars ceased to be, at some point, and that only emptiness continued, yet endlessly, at that. On the contrary side, I could not conceive that these stars (with solar systems) were infinite in number and that there was no edge; or limit; and that they simply kept going, in infinite fashion. My mind was totally bogged, and I was sometimes looked upon as a minor-type intellectual prodigy. When I considered a beginning or an end of time, I encountered a comparable enigma. I asked myself: "What preceded the beginning and what will come after the end?" Time and space simply have common characteristics, both are infinite and without parameters. Man, however, occupies time and space. What will be beyond his life-span? Evolutionary science, then, appeared to have no better answers than did I, and appeared to actually contemplate even less. It appeared to simply ignore things which were difficult to comprehend. I, at least, knew I was baffled.

Consideration of all this was a start, but only a start; because man is a willful creature, and God must alter that will. This is the sovereignty of God. Even with this logic, I was not (yet) fully convinced to recognize the Biblical God. There was an interchange, involving logic, learning, and Divine intervention; with all this working to overcome the greedy will. If God is infinite, omnipotence follows with no reasonable basis for dispute. If God predates and controls, He must pre-control; and if He is omnipotent, He pre-controls omnipotently: He will (thus) control the elements which govern the will of men. I can see it no other way. If God exists, and is omnipotent, God predestines! It takes no dramatic Damascus Road experience (although God may sometimes use such a device) to cause a person to perceive the omnipotence (with sovereignty) of God in order to effect that person's conversion. It is as recorded in John 6:45 and Isaiah 54:13, we are taught of God. A profession, then, is merely the manifestation (evidence and testimony) of God's faith-giving act of saving us.

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says, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." This experience of two natures is the continuing experience of every true believer. Paul

does not look for any deliverance from this condition in this life. He does look forward to a full and complete victory through Jesus Christ at his going to be with Christ, or Christ coming for him; but he clearly states that for this life, "...So then with my mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (v.25).

Some people foolishly speak of getting out of Romans 7 into Romans 8. Why, there was not such chapter division in the original. Romans 7 and 8 describe what is always true of every child of God. There is no such thing as getting out of Romans 7 and away from the battle described there. Beware of any sort of "Christian life" teaching that speaks of complete and continuing victory over the old nature in this life. Such teaching will only cause the child of God the heart-break of disappointment and frustration.

Now, let us come closer to the key to understanding I John 3:9. Every believer has two natures. He has the old nature of sin. This nature is unchanged from what it was before salvation. The nature is the same nature that is in every unsaved person. This nature is capable of every sin of which it was capable before salvation (do not refer to the unpardonable sin, whatever that is). This nature cannot do anything good and acceptable in the sight of God. This nature cannot do anything except sin. But, praise God, the believer also has a new nature. This nature was given him in the new birth. This nature is of divine origin and character. This nature does not sin and cannot sin. I give my text again, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9). The "seed" that remaineth in the believer is this new nature, and because of this, or with regards to this new nature, the believer cannot sin - that is, this new nature does not and cannot sin. So, the interpretation of I John 3:9 is that every believer has a new nature that does not and cannot sin. That is what this verse of Scripture means. Now, isn't that clear, plain, and understandable. Again we see the importance of interpreting Scripture with Scripture.

Let me now give some Biblical examples of the two natures of the believer. Noah had an old nature. After his marvellous deliverance from and through the great flood he got drunk, surely a manifestation of his old nature. Noah also had a new nature. He believed God concerning the flood, he obeyed God in building the ark, and the world was saved from total destruction in the flood and the line of the promised Seed: the Saviour, was preserved.

Abraham had an old nature. He acted in unbelief and sin in his relationship with Hagar. He lied twice about Sarah, because of fear for his life. Abraham also had a new nature. He believed and obeyed God in leaving his home country and going forth to the land of Canaan. He performed the greatest single act of obedient faith recorded in the Old Testament (my opinion) when he offered his son, Isaac, on the altar (at least, he was going to do this).

Moses had an old nature. He smote the rock in anger and pride

rather than speaking to it as God commanded. He thus broke the type of the once-smitten Saviour - the Lord does not have to be crucified again and again; His one sacrifice saves forever all for whom it was made. Moses also had a new nature. Oh, I consider him the greatest man of the Old Testament. He led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. What faith in God and obedience to God did he manifest! Who among men has ever done greater deeds for God than did Moses?

David had an old nature. He committed adultery. He committed murder in an unsuccessful effort to cover his adultery. David also had a new nature. He bravely went forth to face the giant; Goliath, when all others in Israel were afraid. He won many victories for God and Israel. He wrote many precious Psalms which have blessed God's people down through the ages. He prepared the material for the building of the temple.

Peter had an old nature. He denied the Lord three times. Peter also had a new nature. He was a mighty man of God. He preached on the Day of Pentecost, and three thousand souls were saved. He loved Jesus Christ, served Him, and then died for Jesus. Bible characters teach and illustrate the truth of the two natures of the believer.

All truly saved people know about these two natures by personal experience. Oh, sometimes we do things we never thought we would again. We sin so often and so badly. We are conscious of this old nature that moves us to do things that we do not really whole-heartedly desire to do. We often weep over our sins as Peter did. We, every day, need to pray, "...forgive us our sins..." (Lk.11:4). We often are made to cry out as Paul did, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Rom.7:24). A man is not saved who does not have this conflict between the two natures. Frankly, I have difficulty believing one is saved who claims for himself that he lives without sin. I think some saved people argue sinless perfection as a doctrine. But when one claims for himself that he is without sin and does not sin, I have serious doubts as to his salvation. In my experiences I have known some who argued for sinless perfection as a doctrine, but I have never had a man look me in the eye and say, "I do not sin." There may be such, but I have not met them. If I ever meet one, I will likely tell him that I doubt his salvation. The saved just do have this experience and conflict of two natures.

This doctrine of the two natures explains I John 3:9. Every believer has a new nature that does not and cannot sin. Frankly, I see no other acceptable or even possible interpretation of this Scripture.

Let us learn some lessons from the truth of this Scripture. This truth proves that a person who is saved is saved forever. Oh, it proves that precious doctrine of, "Once Saved, Always Saved," praise the Lord. If the believer does not sin and cannot sin, how could he ever be lost. Remember that I John 3:9 does not tell us what a believer should not do, but tells us what a believer does not and cannot do.

My friend, your having the old nature teaches us that you could

be a worse Christian than you are. Oh, let us learn, for our own safeguard, this fact. We fail more than we want to. We sin more than we truly want to. We do many things that we did not think we would do. But it could be worse, much worse. You could get drunk like Noah, get proud and angry like Moses, lie like Abraham, commit adultery and murder like David, and deny your Lord like Peter did. In your having an old nature lies the possibility of any sin that men, even unsaved men might commit. (Of course, the new nature battles this old nature, so that there are things that you will not do). But understand this: your old nature presents the distinct possibility that you could be worse than you are.

Dear friend, your having a new nature presents the potential for being a far better Christian than you are. Oh, you can be more like you truly want to be. You can have more victory over sin. You can grow amazingly in grace and knowledge. You can become an exceedingly strong Christian. You can do mighty things for God. You can be clean, pure, and holy. You can learn more of God's Word. You can pray more, and have wonderful answers to prayer. There is great potential for good in the fact that you have a new nature.

I have said all that I have this far so as to come to this point. What is the practical point of all this? What can I tell you to do relative to all this that will be of practical and spiritual help to you? I am going to tell you two things.

Starve the old nature. You know, or can and should know, the things that feed the old nature. Many TV programs feed the old nature. Much reading material feeds the old nature. Many places one might go feed the old nature. There are people you might associate with that feed the old nature and influence you to do the things of the old nature. Study yourself. Consider, when you act according to the old nature, the things that promote this. Put your old nature on a starvation diet.

Feed the new nature. The Bible is food for the new nature, make much of it. Read and study it daily. Prayer feeds the new nature. Be more in prayer. Nothing will feed the new nature like Bible study and prayer. These two things are very, very important. Fellowship with Christian friends about the things of God feeds the nature. We need more of this. My brother, my sister, there are those we keep company with that injure our Christian lives. There are those who would help our Christian life. Let us be wise in choosing those friends that we are going to spend much time with. The church services (in a true church preaching the truths of the Word of God) feed the new nature. Many Christians (I hope they are) are very poor ones, and very weak spiritually because they are so seldom at the house of God - a true Baptist church. Serving God in any way one can feeds the new nature. The new nature thrives and grows strong on a steady diet of Christian service. Witnessing to the unsaved,

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The Baptist Examiner Forum I

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

Is it all right for a Baptist pastor to have a public and formal debate with a preacher of another so-called church? Should part of the debate be allowed in the Baptist church building?

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"Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures," (Acts 17: 1,2)

While I believe that a Baptist pastor should preach the word, teach the Word, reason the Word, and contend for the Word, I have always had a problem with a Baptist pastor debating the Word publicly and formally with any of opposite belief. "To argue, or discuss a question, or a proposition by statement of opposed ideas, or positions," would be my definition of "debate." More often than not, a discussion by statement turns into an argument. Emotions can run very high and common sense and courtesy often suffer, while no real benefit, other than the superficial is served. Please do not misunderstand me; to contend for the faith and to reason by presenting God's truth is not wrong. I do believe that there are better ways to do that than by debate. The results of a debate are usually measured by how well a debater did in presenting himself and his contention. I don't want the results to depend on me, or how well I did, but upon the Holy Spirit only and His sovereign purpose.

The Scripture that I quoted at the beginning of this question points to Paul going into opposing territory and reasoning by presenting the Scriptures at Thessalonica. He did the same at Corinth and at Ephesus. Please read Acts 18:4, Acts 18:19, and Acts 19:8,9. When some were nardened in Acts 19:9, Paul moved away from them. I believe a Baptist preacher can present the truth in reasoning what the Scriptures say, but when blinded opposition is evident, it is time to leave. It is not man's job to make results with what he argues, or presents. We are to state the truth, and the Holy Spirit then will do as God desires done. Our cleverness, semantics, and individual ability are not the determining factors in defense, or presentation of truth, but God's sovereign will of purpose in a

given situation.

I do not believe that we should permit a formal debate as such in a Baptist church building. We surely would not allow a preacher of heretical views to preach and teach to our people and that is ultimately what would be happening. While I have always enjoyed the art of debate since high school days, I feel in this context we are better off without it. Satan can easily use a situation like this to do more harm than good. As Jesus told His disciples, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." (Matthew 10:16).

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I have been unable to find a Scriptural answer to this question. Is it true that the records show that the Christians of New Testament times confronted and contended with those who taught that which was contrary to the Word of God. In Acts 6 we find Stephen, one of the seven deacons, standing up against certain of the synagogue, And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:10). But I doubt that this was a formal debate. It is also true that the apostles urged all Christians to stand up and be counted for the truth of God's Word. Jude wrote, urging us to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The apostle Paul wrote Timothy, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). The apostle Peter told us to, "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that in you with meekness and fear: (I Pet. 3:15).

I doubt that any of these, or other passages of Scripture which could be quoted, would indicate that Christians should enter into formal debates. On the other hand, I know of no passage that would forbid it. Paul did tell young Timothy to avoid those who would not accept the Word, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, know-

ing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words...from such withdraw thyself" (I Tim. 6:3-5).

As to it being all right for a Baptist pastor to have such a debate, I believe it would be up to him. I see nothing wrong with doing so, although I believe little or no good is ever accomplished by a debate. As to it being allowed to be conducted in a Baptist church building, the answer is no. Although it is only a building, yet that building has been dedicated to be used for the Lord's service, and no false teaching should come from behind its pulpit.

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Acts 17:17: "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him."

Let me answer these questions in order as they are asked. First, I see nothing wrong with a public and formal debate. It has been a part of religious and Baptist history. We know that the early disciples debated or disputed with others the Scriptures. I think we should follow their example in this. The Bible and the truths that are taught therein are worth debating. I wonder if those who oppose this kind of debate also oppose political debates. Surely the Bible is more important than politics. A debate is a way to get the truth presented in light of the error. I am not afraid of heresy. I think if we believe the Bible teaches something we should be willing and able to defend that truth. I do not worry about one person winning a debate. I am more concerned with the truth being presented. Sometimes a formal debate can be better and more peaceful than a private dispute. I wonder why those who oppose such debates do so. Is it because they do not love the truth as they should? Is it because they think they are too dignified for this? Is it because they have adopted a wrong feeling of what the Bible teaches about loving others? I can love someone and still debate them. Is it because they are ashamed of what they believe? Is it because they do not want to make waves? Beloved friends, none of these reasons are acceptable in my opinion. I am in favor of debates if two parties desire it.

Now, let me deal with the second question. I would have no

problem holding this debate in our church building. I know some say this would allow heresy to be presented in a true church. Do we not often times present heresy in our sermons, for the purpose of denouncing them? I am not afraid of what the other side believes. I think this gives an opportunity to show that we believe the truth and are willing to stand for it.

In closing let me say that we who believe the truth need to do more disputing with others. We need to be willing to fight for the truth of God's Word. May God give us the courage and the desire, and the knowledge to do so. May God bless you all.

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I believe that we have examples in the Word of God where the Lord Jesus disputed with the Jews and the Pharisees on several occasions. Evidently Paul was a great debater. Even some of his writings present the various doctrines of the Bible as an argument or debate.

By these examples we should understand that one must not face an opposer of the truth unless he is well prepared, otherwise the devil will seize the opportunity to discredit God's servant.

There is no doubt that some have the ability to debate while others do not. Personally, I would not consider myself a debater, though I am willing to discuss the Word of God with anyone who is willing to learn the truth. At the same time I am willing to learn truth. I do not find any examples where the early disciples debated the Jews or the heathen in the assembly. We find that the Lord Jesus and Paul did their disputing either on the street, in someone's home, or in the Synagogue. Therefore, it would be my opinion that the assembly would not be the proper place for such activity.

As far as it taking place in a "Baptist church building," it seems to me that the building would not matter. A building is not the church, it is only a place for the church to meet. However, if it were a called meeting of the members of the church it would then become improper. I realize that in the Lord's case, many of His disciples were present with Him when He disputed the Jews, but it was not a called assembly. You may take my comments for what you feel they are worth. Thank you.

EXPOSITION

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Let us study ourselves. Let us learn the things that feed the new nature and make us strong. Let us feed the new nature with a steady diet of these things.

A believer said to his pastor, "I feel like there are two dogs in me, a black one and a white one, and they are battling each other." "Which one of them is the winner?" the pastor asked. "The one I feed the most" was the reply. Dear friend, this is the way it will be with you in your Christian life.

I have much enjoyed my study

of I John 3:9. It has been a blessing to me. I do feel that I have learned the truth thereof. I have enjoyed preaching on it a few times recently. I have been blessed in writing this. I do sincerely hope it will be a blessing and a spiritual help to you. Comments welcome.

SHOULD

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poorly equipped we are in danger of wresting Holy Scripture.

The Greek word for wrest is "strebloo" which means to twist, to torture (from streble, a winch or instrument of torture, and akin to strepho, to turn) is used metaphorically in II Peter 3:16, of wresting the Scriptures on the part of the ignorant and unsteady. None of us wish to twist Scripture to make it say something that it does not. A lot of us are guilty of doing this for various reasons.

We sometimes are so bound by our prejudices that we cannot accept what the Scriptures teach as a whole. We isolate Holy Scripture into segments and parts to make them conform, either to our prejudices or preconceived notions.

Someone has said, "A text without a context is a pretext." With this I would agree. We must understand Scripture first upon a spiritual basis or confusion can only be the result, for the Word of God tells us, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). In other words, we are not in a position to understand Scripture unless we have been born of God's Holy Spirit. Even then, we must not attempt to completely understand without personal growth and spiritual maturity. You do not give a T-bone steak to an infant. An infant must tackle milk before he can chew on meat (I Peter 2:2).

Also, we sometimes confuse the truth with our human emotions. Emotion cannot be a safe rule of interpretation of Scripture. Our emotions often cloud the real meaning because we feel that Scriptures must absolutely agree with whatever emotion prevails at the time. Sincerity is a wonderful thing as long as it is in absolute conformity to the truth of Scripture, otherwise it can be very dangerous. It can even kill.

Also, there are dispensational principles of interpretation that definitely apply in the correct understanding of Holy Scripture. That which is spoken in and of the Old Testament dispensation is not always the same in the New Testament. For example we read, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

We must at all times "...rightly divide the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). This one principle of interpretation alone has been greatly ignored, and untold damage has resulted. Peter also warns us of the same thing. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20). (Its own interpretation; i.e. not

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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

Is it all right to sing patriotic songs such as "The Star Spangled Banner," "My Country 'Tis of Thee," or "America, The Beautiful" in a church service? How would you answer or deal with those who object?

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country today is the fact that God has been alienated from so many of our ways, including our songs.

I do not know why any American would not want to sing a song that is honoring to God in church, even though it be patriotic in nature. A short review of the words of these songs should quickly indicate that they not only show pride in our country, but they bring praise and honor unto our God. This country was founded with a strong belief in God, and as men have penned songs about this great land, they also included references to God. God blesses those nations that follow Him. These songs reflect our nation's dependence on God.

"America, the Beautiful" mentions God in all four of its verses. It states: America, America! God shed His grace on thee, God men thine every flaw, May God thy gold refine, and again, God shed His grace on thee. In "America" the writer makes reference to God in the concluding fourth verse by stating that God is the author of our liberty and that our freedom will be bright with the protection of God. The writer shows that we must look above for protection as he concludes with "Protect us by Thy might, Great God, our King!"

It is my belief that most people do not object to singing these songs on some special occasion, however, if there are those who do, they must refute the reasons given above and disassociate our country from God.

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I don't know whether it may be right or wrong to sing patriotic songs in a church service. I cannot remember ever doing it. I personally feel it would be inappropriate. We are to pray for our land and our leaders, but I feel we are to sing to the praise and glory of God. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Eph. 5:19, 20)

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isolated from all that the Word has given elsewhere).

Another principle of interpretation is set down in Holy

judged" (Matt. 7:1).

If we fail to exercise true Biblical hermeneutics, and take this verse of Scripture apart from the whole of revelation, we can come up with some rather strange conclusions. This verse of Scripture is the most often quoted as a reason for making no judgment in any wise. Is this what our Lord meant? Are we really to make no judgments at all? Of any kind? Of any situation? If we do so we must ignore many other Scriptures which tell us to do exactly what the verse under consideration tells us not to do. For example: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

Here we have a contradiction between two separate Scriptures and they are both spoken by our blessed Lord. One principle of Biblical interpretation never changes, and that is that Holy Scriptures never contradict each other. If there is an apparent contradiction it has to be in our understanding and not in the Word of God. This realization brings to surface the necessity of harmonizing them. We must therefore ask, what kind of judgment are the two verses of Scripture speaking about? In one Scripture the Lord tells us not to judge, and then in the latter He tells us to judge righteous judgment.

First we must recognize that there is only one Judge. "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23). No man can judge another as to his eternal destination. Only God is the one to do this. In this sense, we are never to judge anybody at any time, nor would it do any good; for the judgment of man does not so determine another man's destiny which is heaven or hell. In this sense Paul says: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (I Cor. 4:5).

In verse three of the same reference, Paul speaks of man's judgment which is distinct from God's judgment in verse five. Thus, by investigation we have distinguished that there are kinds of judgment; and that there is only one Judge, which is God. We see that Paul distinguishes between man's judgment and God's.

In another Scripture we discover that there is to be a judgment by man upon man. "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man" (I Cor. 2:15). The word here in the Greek is "an-ak-ree-no" which means to scrutinize, interrogate, ask questions, discern, examine, investigate, judge and to search out. I think our current president, the honorable Mr. George Bush, is correct when he recognizes the current problem with homosexuality as being a behavioral problem that can be stopped by behavioral change. I quote a recent article in The Journal and Courier, Tuesday, September 3, 1991.

"Bush Miffed At AIDS Group Says Behavioral Change Is An-

swer - by the Associated Press. Kennebunkport, Maine - President Bush defended his administration's approach to the AIDS crisis Monday and urged behavioral change to halt the spread of the disease. 'Here's a disease where you can control its spread by your own personal behavior. You can't do that in cancer,' Bush said on the morning after 1,500 AIDS activists staged a 'die-in' on the road near his vacation home. ...Denis Lyons, an activist with ACT UP's Maine branch said of Bush's behavior remarks: 'I think he's implying a value judgment against people who happen to be gay.'"

Let me ask, "What is wrong with a value judgment against sin?" That is what homosexuality is. It is sin!

Perhaps some will say, "He that is without sin let him cast the first stone." Another verse of Holy Scripture spoken by our precious Lord Jesus Christ. Others perhaps will say, "You are judging", and with that we are to simply look the other way when it comes to making value judgments about variant life-styles. Is this so?

What did Jesus do with the adulterous woman? Though no one could cast a stone because of their own sin, yet Jesus could. He took the stones of others upon Himself at the cross. There He died for that woman's sin. "...Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee..." That is where they stop quoting Scripture but that is not where it ended. Jesus also said, "go, and sin no more."

Jesus threw no stones at the woman because He forgave her. He alone has the right and prerogative to forgive sin. He did not throw one stone but neither did He give her a ton of bricks by suggesting no change in her life-style.

Most so-called (gay) sin-lovers of deviate life-styles, want the American people, and in some instances they want the Christian segment of society, to pay for the rehabilitation of those caught in that sin but we must never make a judgment and call it what it is, which is sin! I repeat Scripture: "but he that is spiritual (born again of God's Holy Spirit) judgeth all things..." (I Cor. 2:15). We are required to make judgments, discernments as to what is sinful; but we are not to judge as to the eternal destiny of those caught in the satanic trap of sin.

Most of the sin-lovers of deviate life-styles (gay activists) will not even read what the Scriptures say about this sin. They have rejected the authority of Scripture, and will not even allow it in individual or group therapy analysis. They are as God speaks about in Romans chapter one, which every honest person must accept as God's final decision on this horrendous sin. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Rom. 1:28).

What we are dealing with in America and around the world to- (Continued on Page 6, Col. 1)

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER
JANUARY 4, 1992
PAGE FIVE



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Of the three songs mentioned in the question, two make direct and personal reference to God. The one that does not is our national anthem. My personal opinion is that it is perfectly all right to sing patriotic songs in church. There is also, in my opinion, a very close correlation between the foundations of our country and relationship to God. One of the major problems in our

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day is reprobation. These are reprobate people. What does the Scriptural term reprobate mean? "Reprobate: (adokimos) which means (b) of persons, Romans 1:28, of a reprobate mind, a mind of which God cannot approve, and which must be rejected by Him, the effect of refusing to have God in their knowledge" (Vines p. 283). Talk shows and TV shows, radio, television and newspapers are committed to the principle that we will talk about safe-sex (so-called), about federal aid, about a scientific medical cure, but we will not talk about Biblical insights or God-given directives concerning the issue. There is a strange silence about this that I am sure Satan is well pleased with.

You cannot help a sinner until you make him face his sin. You cannot help a sinner until he knows that what he is doing is sin against God which, if it is not forsaken, will bring the judgment of God. "Be sure, your sin will find you out" says the Word of God.

Can this sin be forgiven? One person (a Christian) said to me that they cannot be forgiven and quoted Romans 1:32 to prove it. "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death..."

Again, let us be careful and cautious. If we compare Scripture with Scripture (an absolute Biblical principle of interpretation) we will find that this sin can be forgiven when true repentance and faith in Christ has resulted from a reception of the truth. Paul says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are

justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Do I hear you say, where is your compassion? Compassion is essentially a Christian characteristic. True compassion, after a godly sort does not allow anything and everything just for the sake of compassion. An infant may want very desperately to play with rattlesnakes, but true compassion will snatch him away from them even if he cries his head off! Jesus, when He saw the multitudes, was moved with compassion upon them because they were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.

He became their Shepherd. He provided what they needed when and where they needed it. To yield to the so-called homophobia movement and disregard Christian responsibility is perhaps a sin worse than any other. Jude says; "And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (22-23). Read also verse 21 with this. Neither do I believe that we must now take the club of so-called homophobia and start beating Christians over the head with it because they have an intense dislike for homosexuality (sin). God says, "...Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 13:9). That verse also says, "Let love be without dissimulation..." or hypocrisy. Let us now ask our question again. Should Christians ever judge? If we understand that which I have attempted to expound, the answer is both yes and no.

Yes, if by judging we understand that we are to scrutinize, interrogate, ask questions, discern, examine, investigate, judge and search out a thing as to its relationship to the Word of God, to the question of sin, salvation and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

No, if by judging we understand that we have the right to condemn a man to hell or eternal judgment, for One alone is judge, who always judges righteously and that is God.

CHRIST INTERPRETED THE LAW, HE DID NOT CHANGE IT

by ERNEST KEVAN

The perfection of the Law has been many times challenged, and the view is held by some that Christ delivered better precepts than those of Moses, therefore He is to be recognized not so much as an interpreter but as a reformer. It is, of course, quite understandable how some may be led into this erroneous opinion, because Christ's interpretations are so high and glorious; but it is nevertheless incorrect to say that He brought commandments of another kind than those contained in the Law of Moses. The instance brought forward in favor of the view that Christ introduced

new commandments is, among others, that concerning the law of swearing. It is a mistake to think that Christ made swearing absolutely unlawful, for here, too, is a clear case of that removal by Christ of those corrupt glosses with which the Law had been overlaid by the Pharisees. The same is true about the difficult problems of capital punishment, of war, of litigation and of revenge.

The difference between the Law and the Gospel, therefore, does not lie, as is sometimes affirmed, in that one is the instrument of grace and the other is not; but in this, that a sinner is not justified on the grounds of any holiness brought about in himself (by the preaching of either Law or Gospel), but in an entirely evangelical imputation of the righteousness of Christ.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in "Studies In The Sermon On The Mount" (a book I highly recommend to every concerned person on this particular theme) says, "We are living in an age when definitions are at a discount, an age which dislikes thought and hates theology and doctrine and dogma. It is an age which is characterized by a love of ease and compromise--anything for a quiet life," as the expression goes. It is an age of appeasement. That term is no longer popular in a political and international sense, but the mentality that delights in it persists. It is an age that dislikes strong men because, it says, they always cause disturbance. It dislikes a man who knows what he believes and really believes it. It dismisses him as a difficult person who is 'impossible to get on with'."

We know that Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." We want the full force of those words and we do not shy away from them. The verb judge here is in the Greek, called "krino" which is (A) to assume the office of a judge,...to condemn... to execute judgment (as a judge) with full authority as such. This is different than "anakrino" or diakrino" and must not be squeezed into the same structure or misinterpretation will most surely result (see Vine's Dictionary page 279-281).

In his excellent book, Dr. Jones gives some very able and enlightening remarks on this very command of Jesus, "Judge not." Let us consider them before we bring to a close this matter of judging. I quote Dr. Jones: "At a time like this, then, it is of the utmost importance that we should be able to interpret correctly this statement concerning judging, because there are many who say that 'judge not' must be taken simply and literally as it is, and as meaning that the truly Christian man should never express any opinion about others. They say that there must be no judging whatsoever, that we must be easy, indulgent, and tolerant, and allow almost anything for peace and quiet, and especially unity. This is not a time for these particular judgments, they say; what is needed today is unity and fellowship. We must all be one together. This is often argued in terms of the danger of Communism. Some people are so alarmed at Communism that they say that, at all costs, all who in any sense use the name Christian should be accepted. We should all agree because of that common danger and common enemy."

"The question arises therefore as to whether that is a possible interpretation. I suggest, in the first instance, that it cannot be; and it cannot be, quite clearly, because of Scripture teaching itself. Take the very context of this statement and you will surely see at once that that interpretation of 'judge not' is quite impossible. Look at verse 6, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." How can I put that into practice if I do not exercise judgment? How do I know which kind of person can be described as a 'dog' in this way? In other words, the injunction that immediately follows this statement about judging at once calls upon me to ex-

ercise judgment and discrimination. Then again, take the more remote connection in verse 15: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." How is that to be taken? I cannot beware of false prophets if I am not to think, and if I am so afraid of judging that I never make any assessment at all of their teaching. These people come in sheep's clothing; they are very ingratiating and they use Christian terminology. They appear to be very harmless and honest and are invariably very nice. But we are not to be taken in by that kind of thing--beware of such people. Our Lord also says, 'Ye shall know them by their fruits;' but if I am not to have any standard or exercise discrimination, how can I test the fruit and discriminate between the true and the false? So, without going any further, that cannot be the true interpretation which suggests that this just means being free and easy, and having a flabby and indulgent attitude towards anybody who vaguely uses the designation Christian. That is quite impossible". Let us not forget that discernment is the mother of discretion and true spiritual determinism.

WORD

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on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!"

What is the message, really? Since men walk in absolute darkness, and since men are "dead in trespasses and in sins," no man apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit can believe that Jesus is God. Is this not the message, also, of John where he says so wonderfully, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." And so, when any mortal man can believe that Jesus Christ is God in any one of His presences, then that person has the Holy Spirit of God and is saved. The Holy Spirit of God "draws of men to Jesus," and the Holy Spirit of God saves those whom He draws. And our Lord Himself explains that "those who come to me, I will in no wise cast out."

And as the Holy Spirit of God was in Paul and made him to be the witness that he was concerning the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so He is in each one of us who is here and who is saved. And if we have the Holy Spirit of God indwelling in us or dwelling in us, then we need to realize that. We have God dwelling in us! In very simple terms, the Holy Spirit who was in Jesus in fullness and the Holy Spirit who was in Paul in a measure was God in them who enabled them to testify. And Paul explains here in this passage that we are not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.

The testimony of our Lord in ancient times when He dealt with Adam and Enoch and others in that antediluvian era of the world's history was wonderful, and we are not to be ashamed of it. Later, the testimony of our Lord was prophetic concerning His coming, and we are not to be ashamed of that. The testimony of our Lord when He came

as a baby in Bethlehem was a message which is clear and plain, and we are not to be ashamed of that. The testimony of our Lord when He was in discussion at the age of 12 with the Wise Men was that He had a job to do, and that He would be pursuing it, and we are not to be ashamed of it. The testimony that He gave us His baptism was that He was the one in whom God was well pleased, and we are not to be ashamed of it. His testimony, as He walked the roads of Palestine was likewise clear, and we are not to be ashamed of it. His concluding testimony in this world was that ultimate testimony which He gave on Calvary's Cross, and we are not to be ashamed of it.

What, then, is Paul telling Timothy and us? He is telling us that we are not to be ashamed of the Testimony of our Lord, and that we are not to be ashamed of the testimony of those who have served Him faithfully and sacrificially. We are to realize that we are not saved by our works, but that we have been saved by God's Grace. There is much confusion in our world right at this point. Anyone who is here this morning and you have not yet believed that Jesus is God, then you have not yet believed that Jesus died and arose. Consequently, though you may be religious, and though you may even be a member of some organization that is called a Church, but if you have not believed that Jesus is God, you have not believed that He died and arose bodily, and you are still on the road to Hell. Paul, right at this point, shows us most dramatically that immortality is ours only by the gospel, yea by the power of the gospel!

PAUL SHARES BEAUTIFUL TRUTH

What has Jesus done for us? He has saved us! And He has called us, and He has called us with an holy calling. He has done this, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose, by His grace. This grace was manifested in the mind of God before the world was. And then in verse 10, He explains that this calling "is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ who has abolished death, and who has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." What do you have as a result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? You have light! And when you have this light, you have access to the wisdom of God! When you read the Bible or when you look at our world around us, you have an insight into things, you have an insight into concepts, and insight into thought that the world does not have.

Just recently, I was reading after Isaac Asimov--[probably the most prolific writer in this 20th Century, but he is a lost man who claims that there is no God, and our God sees him as a fool]--and he was attempting to rationalize some of the contradictions which he finds in this world. In the process, he was concluding that nothing is something and something is nothing, as he was striving to speak to the reality of infinity. Out to the side, I penned, "remember the tortoise and the hare." Many centuries ago, a Greek Philosopher concluded logically that if the tortoise got into a race with a hare and got a head start the hare could

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never catch him. The Philosopher who threw this monkey wrench into the Logical thinking of men concluded that the hare would have to cover half the distance infinitely, and that he never would accomplish the feat. So, I went on to note that Isaac Asimov's words may sound profound or even professional as does "the wheel of Karma" and "the Nothingness of Nirvana," but really what it means is that in his mind there has been no progress among humanity since the Greek Philosophers of ancient times.

So, it may seem at times that the people of the world are really a whole lot more intelligent or a whole lot smarter than Christians, when, in reality, the people in the world are walking in a great darkness. The people in the world do not have "The Light" that every saved person has. The foolishness of the world, perhaps, is dramatized most wonderfully by Jesus in His words, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" What matters is if Isaac Asimov has written more than any mortal, and then spends eternity in the fires of an eternal Hell? With all of his learning and his worldly wisdom, Isaac Asimov cannot say about anything which he studies and writes, "I know!"

Sometimes we may wonder why our world is troubled by educational problems that have no apparent solution. We read the reports that our children today are being exposed to more learning than any group of children in all of the world since the days of the Flood. Yet, at the same time, the test scores and the SAT scores which are needful to get one into higher education continue to decline on a regular basis. Politicians, we are told, are concerned about the Test Scores, and the professional Educators claim to be concerned about intellectual practices. Then, they all get together and convince the parents and the people that all we need to do is throw a little more money on the fires of education, and that by the year 2000 America will have the smartest people in the world. Yet, according to the statistics, children today do not know as much as the children of yesterday.

What really is the problem? Paul explains it very simply! In that hour when he was writing to Timothy, he said, "...I know whom I have believed..." This, dear friends, is something which our Educators cannot say! It really does not matter what the subject matter may be, and it really does not matter what area of intellectual expertise may be the point of discussion, our educators cannot say, "I know!" The Apostle Paul, however, could be sure, he could be certain, he could be positive, and he could be absolute when I said, "I know."

Just as Isaac Asimov, the

whole world of education--in America as in Russia and a hundred other countries and more--may be kicking a lot of words around, but add them all together and what do we have? Nothing! Men cannot say, "I know" in Science! Men cannot say, "I know" in Philosophy! Men cannot say, "I know" in Sociology! Men cannot say, "I know" in Technology! In an era when men are supposedly getting the most schooling, crime rages in all of our cities and in the countryside. In an era when men supposedly are making their greatest progress, satellites fail, shuttles fall, and planes explode. And in an hour when it would seem that men could be looking forward with confidence to a great tomorrow, suicide and death attempts by many, many thousands each and every year seemingly indicate that life has no meaning whatever. And much of this loss of life is among the professionals, the schooled, and the successful.

Why is this? If I may be permitted an assumption or a conclusion, the problem arises because men are walking in their sin and in their trespasses without any hope for tomorrow; that is, men are walking in darkness. Men may suppose that they are seeing in the darkness, when in reality they are seeing nothing. Without The Spirit of the Living God, there can be no light. Without The Holy Spirit of God, men cannot be sure about or of anything. Without the Holy Spirit of God, men cannot say, "I know!" And anyone who cannot say "I know" is walking in the darkness of his own ignorance. In fact, it perhaps may be said that the whole world really is caught up in a system of darkness. That perhaps is why a man such as Carl Sagan who has deceived the millions into supposing that he is a very wise man has only one positive word, and that is that "there is no God." God, needless to say, saw him coming, and long before his arrival in this 20th Century, our God declared, **"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God."**

What, then, are our educators doing for the children of America? If my judgement is at all accurate, and if the evidences of the hopeless breakdown in our cities and in our countryside has any bearing whatever, we can know that our children are getting nothing positive. In fact, it may be that we can say rather positively, then, that the children of America and the young people of America are being educated in the realm of endless confusion. There is no other explanation. People who walk in darkness, needless to say, are not going to see very much.

When I was a child, we used to have to use coal oil lamps, and there were no street lights. Sometimes there were not streets, just ruts in the mud for wagons or for old Model T Fords. So, in those days, when the lamps went out, we really were in darkness. That, it seems to me, is what has

happened in our educational systems here in America in this 20th Century. God has been outlawed from our educational institution and our educational systems, and the lamps have gone out! There is no light! And people are walking about in a great darkness. When will America experience a revival of learning? We may be assured that it will not be until some light is shed on the subject of education and some light is shed on the subjects in education. That light cannot be experienced as long as men outlaw God from the classrooms and from the study halls and from our educational institutions of all sorts.

The Apostle Paul when he was known as Saul was well educated young man. He had been schooled in perhaps one of the foremost educational institutions of the time, but he really was walking in darkness. We know from some of his conversations that he was schooled in the wisdom of the Greeks. He probably had studied Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, and others, and he knew a lot about our world, but it was all a jumbled mess or a jumble of confusion just as is education here in America. He had a bit of knowledge, but he did not have the light, so he walked in darkness. Though he may have had the legal right to put Stephen to death, he really was a murdering criminal at heart as he "hailed people and put them in prison and had them killed." What is wrong in America this morning? Americans may have a few bits of information, but it is all confused and most confusing, and life has no meaning.

CONCLUSION

What made the difference in Paul's life? He tells us, "I know Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." On that Damascus Road, "he saw a great Light!" Now, in his letter to Timothy, he is saying, "I know!" This is positive knowledge! This is certain knowledge! This is absolute knowledge! Not only that, but he goes on to say, "I am persuaded [I am convinced, I am absolutely positive] that what I have committed unto Him, He is able to keep..." What had Paul committed to Christ? Go back for a moment to the Damascus Road experience! After our Lord had said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting," Paul's response was quick, "Lord, what would you have me to do?"

Did you ever stop to think that this question of Paul's should be our question, also? In that hour when our Lord saved you from your sins and gave you eternal life, did you say, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" I am rather certain that in a church such as this, there are many who have been saved who at one time said, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" And then you got busy with your old routines and you forgot the promises that you made to your Savior. Does God call us just once or twice and then leave us alone? No! Ten thousand times, No! Every day God comes to each of us again and again to renew our faithfulness as a witness to His saving grace. Just as Paul writes to Timothy, the experienced preacher, the experienced missionary, the faithful servant of our God to renew his commitment and to refurbish his zeal, so He comes to you and He comes

to me.

God calls us to exercise our gift! God calls us to utilize our ability! God continues to call us to commit ourselves anew to Jesus Christ! We commit ourselves anew to our God! And when we do this, we are no longer ashamed of our Lord's Testimony, or the work that He did for us on Calvary's Cross. And we are not ashamed of the testimony of those who have gone before us in the faith. We are no longer ashamed, but we are ready to turn and to commit ourselves anew to our responsibility as those who are faithful with our testimony as to what Jesus has done for us. Since God in the person of the Holy Spirit is dwelling within us, we no longer need to fear, we can go forth in confidence assured of victory. We are ready and willing to turn and testify and witness to others as to what God has done to bring us to a saving knowledge of Himself.

Each one of us who is saved needs to ask that question one more time, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" Don't ask me what you should do? Don't ask Barry or Jerry, or Brother Ray, your Pastor, what you should do, but ask God, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" Don't ask Sister Mary or Sister Susan what you should do! Ask God, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" God has something for every saved person on this earth to do. Some years ago in a church where I was privileged to preach, we had a little lady who suffered from Cerebral Palsy. This little lady could not do very much, but she could laugh and she could smile. Just thinking about her makes my old heart to rejoice all over again. She talked some with great difficulty, but there was one of our God's finest witnesses.

God calls each one of us today!

Some of us may do a little planting of the seeds of the gospel, and somebody else comes along and does a little watering. Sometimes those who have done some planting become those we do the watering, and sometimes those who have watered do the planting. But as God tells us, He "gives the increase." We are not in this business of serving God as "Lone Eagles" or as "Ego Maniacs." This is why our Savior has churches, but He has churches so that He can have faithful and well instructed witnesses to His wonderful grace. We are not to get involved in doing our own thing or doing everything in our own way. God calls us to work together in the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to testify that He is God, and that He has saved us from our sins and given to us eternal life? We are in this together! It is, a wonderful message! We go faithfully for Jesus! Let's go very fully assured!

TEACHING

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mighty men who the world would look up to, not of noble stature. For of these kind not many are called.

No; James and John were simple men, workers of the sea of Galilee, fishermen.

Verse 20 says straightway He called them. Oh beloved, how I like that. Don't you see unconditional election at work here?

God; the God man looked upon James and John, Simon and Andrew, He calls them forth. Having predestinated them to this cause, and for this purpose, before they were even born. He didn't have to water them for a season, to see if they were what He wanted. He did not put them of a trial basis. He didn't have to stop and think about it, and He didn't have to confer with the first two, whom He had just called. You see, that's man's way of doing things. Man would say, "let's think about it, we have to vote upon it, we have to agree about this one and then that one." I want to tell you, if the Lord's disciples were chosen by the manner of men, Christ would have been crucified before there would have been time for the committee to have made a decision what they were going to do. Just look about you, yes, even in our ranks. The ranks of Sovereign Grace Baptists. Church after church has gone years without a pastor because the people could not agree upon whom they should call. Why? Because theirs is a conditional election, don't you see? Man has to put conditions upon his thought, his discussions; but God, praise God, has no conditions, no restrictions upon Himself. He chose whom He would. He calls whom He chose, when He wills.

That's why Christ walked by the sea of Galilee that day. He had a purpose, He had directions, by the power and the authority of God to call forth Simon and Andrew, James and John. He called them from an unconditional election, before the foundation of the world. Not only to salvation, but to service. Verse 20 says that upon His calling them, they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the servants and went after him.

I want you to look at these men, think of them as yourself, put yourself in their position. What would you do? What have you done?

They left their father's ship, they left the security of a job, of family, home, and income and went after Jesus to do service unto the Lord.

Most of us today, if we are honest with ourselves would say, "Well, I have to think about that." Now, that's a natural thing to do, and I find it really the better, than the worse. Now let me explain what I am saying.

Too often we jump into things that we should first think about, count the cost. Jesus, teaching in the parable of the great supper (Luke 14), wound up that parable with these words to His listeners, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Faith Baptist Church of Lawtey, Florida would like to invite all readers in our area to listen to our weekly radio broadcast "Faith of Our Fathers". This is a thirty minute weekly broadcast aired on Sunday Mornings at 8:30 a.m. It can be heard on 1490 AM & 106.3FM broadcast out of Starke, Florida. Those in the Starke and Gainesville area should pick it up clearly. The broadcast features Sovereign Grace Baptist preachers from around our nation. Invite those you know in our area to listen, and may God use this broadcast to His glory.

TEACHING

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behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

Let me tell you something beloved, and I realize I am off the subject a little. But if our country and our politicians were to take this rule of thought to heart, we wouldn't have a financial deficit so astronomical that it boggles the mind. Our president is right when he says the Bible has the teaching and answer for all things. I only wish he himself would follow it closer. Now back to our subject.

The natural thing for man is to question things to count the cost. But in this case, we are not dealing with the natural but the supernatural, the spiritual side of man.

And the Word of God says (verse 18, 20 of our text), that these men forsook their nets and followed Jesus. Why? Because of the irresistible grace of God. They couldn't do anything else. God had chosen them not only to salvation, but to service, and a specific service, at a special time, to be His disciples.

Verse 21 and 22 of our text, He goes to Capernaum, He enters into the synagogue and there He teaches. The Bible tells us that those listening were astonished at His doctrine, and that He taught as one that had authority.

Listen to His teaching. Matthew 7:21-29. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Yes, He taught with authority; authority from God! Nothing turns my mind off from a sermon or a speaker more than to hear

them quote some other man as if that man was an authority. Preachers today are so prone to teach without authority; you can tell those that do. Our forefathers said this or that, John Gill says this, Pinks says that, Spurgeon says, Billy Sunday says, Billy Graham says, the Pope says. Don't tell me what others say. Tell me what God says. Tell me what the Word of God says by the Spirit that worketh and dwelleth in your heart.

WHAT

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path's of righteousness for His name's sake. "...for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). He did not intend to leave us without any evidence that He had dwelt upon the earth as the God-man that He was and is. Immediately before His ascension, He said to them; "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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This teaches us that we can never be proper witnesses for Christ without the leadership of Him, the blessed Holy Spirit indwelling us, and He is received also by having first received Christ as Saviour, by faith in His finished work on Calvary. Oh, what a price to pay for our sin debt. Sin has to be covered by atoning blood. My blood would not do, it is sinful. My earthly father's blood would not atone for my sins because it was also sinful. The only blood that would satisfy God in His judgment hall of mercy must simply be pure divine blood. The sinless Son of God is the one who satisfies the Father in His hall of mercy. He came to earth solely for that purpose, and that purpose only. What happened to the Lord Jesus when He arrived back in heaven? The Father Himself invited Him as Conqueror to sit at the right hand of the throne of God.

"...but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool" (Acts 2:34-35). Jesus is our Saviour, King, and Lord, and He is now sitting at the right hand of His majesty on high.

However, Jesus, while sitting at the right hand of the Father is not an expression of inactivity. I assure you that He is very busy constantly and not idling away His time. He is making intercession for His own before God the Father. I was asked once by a man why I believed that I would never be lost again since the Lord so wonderfully saved me. The answer that I gave him was, "The same Lord that saved me is also my keeper. "THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1). Then again we, read; "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, Yea rather, that is risen again,

who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:33-35). There are many Scriptures even much more to the point than these for the unbeliever to see that He is ever active for His chosen as they are viewed by the Father on a daily basis. He stands before the Father at all times in our behalf bringing our requests before Him. That is why Jesus often emphasized to His blood bought children that they should pray to the Father in His name. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14). Prayer and intercession to God alone cannot be answered because answer to prayer is only guaranteed when made on the grounds of the shed blood of Jesus. Jesus is our advocate, and presents us before God the Father.

Jesus is also sitting at the Father's right hand as our unlimited victor. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion. and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:19-23). We should notice in this passage of Scripture, Jesus' unsurpassed victorious position at the right hand of the Father is mentioned together with His church. Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ is the victor over all. It is clear that the church is the body of Jesus Christ. Christ is the head of the church, but she is His body. If we do not lead a daily life unlimited, it is because we are hampered by sin, and we are inwardly divided, this should not be. We should ask the Lord such questions as; "Do I have victory over my tongue, over my eyes, over my thoughts, in my daily life?" "Am I like Jesus in my pattern of life? Am I walking with Him?"

Jesus is at God's right hand as the goal of our sanctification. This is shown clearly, so very clearly to us by Paul. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Colo. 3:1-3). As a child of God, we should make sure that our one and only goal in life is Jesus and Jesus alone. Jesus is our only goal and the motive of our hearts.

Next, we should notice that Jesus is above as our goal in glory. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast

given me: be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

We have been blessed with an insight into this glory by faith in the promise and declaration of He, the Holy Spirit, as He wrote to the Hebrews. "GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb. 1:1-4). That, my beloved, we believe is a portrayal of the glory of the exalted person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The main purpose of our life now as Christians here on earth, is, that we become more like Jesus in our daily walk. Paul, as led by the Holy Spirit, gave us a great lift of confidence as he wrote these helpful words. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18). We all should pursue that image of glory daily for the glory of our redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is our High Priest in heaven. "NOW of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8:1). The word "priest" really means "to bring near." The High Priest is the only one who can take people, and even a whole nation, near to God. This is clearly seen in Leviticus chapter sixteen where the high priest entered into the holy of holies with the blood of the sacrifice, thus bringing the people near to God again after they had been separated from Him through their sin. Oh, beloved, we have an ever abiding High Priest who is the propitiation for our sins, our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus above is the haven of our peace. "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:11-14). Oh, what a Saviour, and Keeper! "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called: them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). The Old

Testament priests had to offer sacrifices daily under the Old Covenant. There was no end. The blood of the daily sacrifices could only cover the sins, but not remove them altogether. But by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, beloved, we are perfected forever! Jesus is now sitting at the right hand of God, the Father. That means His one, and only one, sacrifice is finished and complete.

Jesus is sitting at God's right hand as our ultimate goal of faith. He is there as our Comforter. He is there as our everlasting source of comfort while we are still in this old mound of clay. "WHEREFORE seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1-2). Our unlimited joy today is in the fact that the One on the right hand of God the Father wrote FINISH to His work while here on earth, and there is nothing else for us to do except look forward to the Author and Finisher of our salvation soon coming to take His loved ones home to ever be with the Lord. He is our advocate. God raised Him up and He ascended up to heaven where He is now sitting at the right hand of the Father. Beloved when my faith becomes weak, and it does, I look up to Jesus with renewed faith and I begin to believe anew. Oh, what A Saviour and Keeper we have! Amen.

MIGHTY

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"sleep." Sleep brings a picture of a state from which there is to be an awakening. He does not mean that body, soul, and spirit all to sleep in the grave, we know that isn't true. We know that the spiritual part of us goes immediately into the presence of God. Paul makes that clear when he says, "...and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8). He makes it still plainer when he says in Philippians 1:23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." It is the body and the body only that sleeps.

I stood sometime ago by the body of a person who had suffered a long, painful illness. I thought to myself, what a wonderful thing it is that this body is now asleep, feeling no more pain or sickness. It is of the body and the body only that we sing: "Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep, From which none ever wakes to weep,

A calm and undisturbed repose, Unbroken by the last of foes."

Paul says in I Thessalonians, Chapter 4 that he is writing to inform these people that they may not sorrow as those that have no hope. You will notice he doesn't tell these people that they are not to sorrow over the

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loss of loved ones. I don't recall reading anywhere in the Bible where we are told not to sorrow over the loss of our dear ones. It is natural to sorrow. Sometimes when you tell some person goodbye for a long period of time it occasions sorrow, even to bid them goodbye.

As I grew older and my parents increased in years, everytime I went home it was a hard thing to tell them goodbye, and then came that time when I looked into the casket of each. I knew that I was seeing them for the last time in this life and world. The point that Paul makes here is that we are not to sorrow as those who have no hope. Christians are to take death differently to other people. I have seen some instances in which people who claimed to be Christians acted like heathen when a loved one died.

During my first pastorate there was a woman who lived in the same little town that was a leading light in the Methodist church. She taught a Sunday School class and was active in the organizations of the church. She was probably the most prominent member of the church. She had a daughter die suddenly and she railed on God and almost blasphemed the very name of God. What did God mean, taking away her daughter, the daughter of a faithful Sunday School teacher. Her friends who had great belief in her, looked at her with astonishment and amazement. Evidently, her religion was not sufficient in that hour.

Not long ago I was visiting down in western Kentucky and passed through a town where I had been on the program of a Bible conference years ago and I recalled that the people of that church had told me about a couple that had been members there. They were in attendance almost every time the church doors were open. They were faithful and regular and then suddenly the husband died and the wife became angry at God and railed upon

Him. What did He mean taking her husband away when she was such a faithful church member.

When I was a missionary in Brazil they didn't allow the women folk (the Catholic people of that country) to come inside the cemetery during a funeral. Sometimes they would faint, scream, cry and go into such a state that they just wouldn't allow them to go in. Certainly that gives good indication that their religion is not sufficient in time of sorrow and suffering. Any religion that does not sustain us in our times of sorrow and grief isn't worth having.

You will note the expression in this Scripture, "no hope." Let's face the bald, unlovely, awful truth that when an unsaved person dies, he dies without hope. When unsaved loved ones die we have no hope of seeing them again.

Sometimes people try to get the pastor to do some camouflaging. They seem to think that if you say some nice things about the person that lived a Christless life, trying to cover up and talk about his virtues...that somehow or other he can pry the door of heaven slightly open, and he can get in, but that isn't true. I am sorry to say that there are many preachers that are not averse to telling a lie at a funeral.

I knew a prominent businessman who lived in Tampa, Florida that was addicted to the use of alcohol and in an intoxicated state he ran off the highway and into a telephone pole and was killed. He had some close relatives that were members of my church so I went to the funeral. I wondered what the preacher would say and this is what he said: "God has come down into His garden and plucked one of His choicest flowers." What a lie! But I must confess to you that it is hard sometimes to preach certain funerals. It is hard to say to the unsaved, "When you bid this Christian goodbye at the cemetery this afternoon you are telling this one goodbye forever, unless you turn to the Christ in whom this one had belief." I have to say sometimes of an unsaved person

that is being buried, "When you tell this one goodbye this afternoon that is the last time you will ever see this one again. They are gone forever, they have died without hope."

Is the Bible the Word of God, does it mean what it says? If so, it says to die without Christ is to die without hope. But, oh, I have seen so many people sustained and strengthened in a time of great bereavement. I have seen people lose those that were dearer than life itself and bear up under the strain. The one thing that upheld them was their faith and belief in Christ.

I read of a man that had traveled across the continent and back and was evidently antagonistic toward Christianity. He said he had talked with many professing Christians and had never found one single person that ever said his Christianity was a real help in time of need. Either that man had talked with the wrong people, or he was a bare-faced liar, one or the other. If I didn't have anything else to make me believe in the genuineness of Christianity, the way I have seen some people stand up under trial, tribulation and bereavement would induce me to believe in it.

One night a group met at the church where I was pastor. They had come from the meeting to their cars, as I had done, when we heard a commotion across the street. A very old retired minister lived there and I walked over and went into the house to see what had happened. There an old grey headed woman, the wife of the minister, stood by the bedside and as I came into the building she reached over and with tender hands she closed the eyes of the dead man and then looked up to me and said, "This man was a great man of God. He preached the gospel faithfully for a lifetime. I thank God that it was my privilege to be his wife and to share with him in the joys and sorrows of his ministry." "I thank God," she said, "that I was allowed to live longer than he so that I could care for him in his weakness and his illness, but oh, I'll see him again." You know I went away from that house feeling better than if I had been at a revival meeting. Ah, there was a case where a woman believed what she claimed to believe.

I was in the city of Rome some years ago and went down in the old catacombs which are underground passages in which the Christians of the early centuries buried their dead. There are about a thousand miles of them in Italy and many miles of them under the city of Rome. A passage is tunneled out and then three inches on each side just big enough to hold a human body. They would take a marble slab and inscribe the name of the dead person and also other inscriptions. When I was in high school I was afflicted with Latin, which was a hard subject for me, but I was able to decipher the inscriptions and there where those Christians had been placed, was mention made of Christ, salvation, eternal life and immortality. There was evidence that those Christians that were back there hundreds of years ago, died with a real faith in Christ. It did me good to see those inscriptions written there.

What is it that Paul writes here? It is a design to keep these people from sorrowing as others that have no hope. He said, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again..."

Everything he says here is positive upon the belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I tell you that this is a passage that doesn't belong to the modernists or religious liberals. Any modernist that will read this Scripture at a funeral is a blatant hypocrite.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

That passage knocks double sleeping a winding. How could He bring with Him that which some say lies asleep in the ground? The body lies there but it is the spiritual part that He brings back and there will be a reunion there and we will enter into our perfect state. Physicians tell us of a time when medical science will have conquered the great diseases of the human race. I am for medical research, let them go forth. They may be able to knock out things like cancer and tuberculosis eventually, but there will be plenty of other things to kill people and take them away just the same. My hope is not in medical science but in the return of the Lord. When the trumpet sounds, if I have gone down to the grave in death, I don't care if that old coffin did cost eight or nine hundred dollars, I am going to knock the top of that thing all to splinters and when I come out of the ground I am going to say, "Oh death, where is thy sting, oh grave, where is thy victory?" We are not going to come out of the grave saying "Thanks be unto medical science which giveth us the victory" but "...thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

According to the Scripture there is to be a generation of people who are never going to die, who will be here when the Lord comes. I have always wished that I might be in that group.

We have some beautiful sunsets in Florida and this is especially true in the little town where I live. I live on a tidewater creek and just a block up the way from me is the Gulf of Mexico and sometimes late in the afternoon there are the most gorgeous sunsets. Somehow I have never been able to picture Jesus returning on dull, drab, dark clouds. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if one of these days the heavens should suddenly flame in splendor, and we would hear that trumpet blast. Here is a cancer victim who has been in bed for a year and is wasted away--ugly, just skin and bones--suffering day and night. Suddenly there is that peal of the trumpet and I can see the flesh--I can see his face and body fill out and he will come to his feet and up and away he goes.

Paul knew questions would arise in the minds of these people when he told them about the Lord's return and the transformation. He knew some of them would say, "But what about our folk who have already died, will they miss out on all this?" He makes it clear that the Christian dead will come out of the grave before the Christians who are living are transformed.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which

are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16,17).

He makes it plain that there is to be a difference of time and the time will be in favor of the ones who are already dead. I don't think that there will be much difference of time but there will be some and the dead in Christ shall come out before the living have been transformed. I remember reading something that illustrates this. In northern Georgia in the year 1833 there was a meteor display. A meteor fell and it looked like the stars were falling out of the sky. There was a very devout old colored man that woke up and looked out and thought he saw the star falling. He shook the children and his wife and said, "Wake up, old woman, wake up, the day of the Lawd is here." Then he got them out in the street and said, "You all go up yonder to de square and wait. I's guine down here to the garden where old mas'ers buried and when he comes out of the ground then we'll both of us come up there and meet you all, and we'll go up to meet the Lawd." Now that old colored fellow couldn't read or write but he had heard the Scripture read and he had gotten it pretty straight. That is going to be a twofold meeting, first we are going to meet one another. The Bible calls that the rapture. Can you think of a better name for it?

I was with a travel party one summer in Switzerland and I can't think of anything that more resembles a fairyland than this country does. As the people looked at the beautiful waterfalls, the snowcapped mountain peaks, the green valleys, some of them would almost go into rapture and they would say: "Oh, isn't that beautiful?"

Sometimes when people have not been together for a long time they will almost have a rapture when they meet. I saw a plane come in from a foreign land one day and a little old woman got off and she was certainly a character. She had a whole group of friends and loved ones waiting for her and she let out a scream and ran towards them. I think she grabbed and hugged and kissed everyone of them. She'd cry a little and then she'd laugh a little. She went into a veritable rapture. Let me tell you, there is going to be the real rapture one of these days. Talk about taking a trip to Europe or going on a vacation; we're going to go somewhere.

Not only shall we see each other and be together but we will meet the Lord, whom having not seen we love, the One who gave His precious life for us on Calvary's Cross.

Charles H. Gabriel, the song writer, had a boy that went off to Europe to war and he was all upset about it. The boy was also, and as he got on the train he said, "Goodbye Father. If I never see you in this life anymore I will see you up yonder where the gates swing outward never." Charles Gabriel thought about

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BOOK REVIEWS

We have some new books in our book store. We have "Does God Still Guide?" by J. Sidlow Baxter. One of my favorite books on Bible Survey is "Explore The Book" by this same author (We have this in our book store). Surely, the believer is in great need of guidance from God. What decision shall we make? Which fork of the road shall we take? Multitudes of decisions face the child of God, and much of what one will be as a Christian will develop from the decisions one makes. We are not sufficiently wise in ourselves. We need guidance from the Lord. Mr. Baxter does an excellent and most helpful job of telling us that God does still guide, and how we can have that guidance for our own lives. I would urge you to purchase and study this book. It is a paper back of over 180 pages and sells for \$8.95. Order from our book store.

We have "The Vanishing Ministry" by Woodrow Kroll. Mr. Kroll is general director of the Back to the Bible ministry. This should gain him the ears of many. This book is a starkly realistic book about the condition we are in today. He faces this condition frankly and realistically. He gives many statistics that are shocking and sobering to those interested in the work of the Lord and the spiritual needs of men. Mr. Kroll shows us how far we have gone, why we have gone that far, and the way back to what we ought to be in serving God. I suggest the purchase and reading of this book. It is a paper back of over 160 pages and sells for \$9.95. Order from our book store.

We have "The Epistle to the Ephesians" by Lewis Sperry Chafer. Knowing the author's hyper dispensational and universal church positions, I cannot highly recommend this book. Furthermore, the book is too small to be a good commentary on Ephesians. One might find a little help here, even as one can do with most books that are not totally heretical. It is a paper back of 150 pages and sells for \$8.95. Order from our book store, if you want it, where the profit goes into our book ministry.

MIGHTY

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that and he mulled over those words, pondered them, and finally wrote a song based upon those words. You will find it in most of our song books.

"Just a few more years with their toil and tears,

And the journey will be ended:

Then I'll be with Him, where the tide of time

With eternity is blended.

I'll exchange my cross for a starry crown,

Where the gates swing outward never:

At His feet I'll lay every burden down,

And with Jesus reign forever."

Yes, we will see Him and we will know Him. At His blessed feet we'll lay every burden down.

"... and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Oh, this is best of all. Jesus walked with the disciples for something like three and a half years. He walked the hills of Judea and trod the paths of old Galilee. He rode with them many times, no doubt, across the Lake of Galilee. And then one day they saw Him dead; they saw Him on the cross. What black, stark, awful, horrifying despair must have swept over them. Then came that blessed Lord's day when Jesus revealed Himself in the evening, alive from the dead. After that they had forty wonderful, glorious days with Him as they accompanied Him; and He talked to them about the things of the kingdom of God. Then one day out there on the Mount of Olives, a strange thing happened as He talked with them. He began to leave the earth, and He mounted up and up and up until a cloud received Him out of sight; and they stood there gazing after Him. They had been with Him again after His resurrection for forty glorious days, and now He had gone away, this time forever. But had He? They became conscious of someone else being present and they looked around. There were two angelic beings, sent from the very throne room of heaven, I believe, to talk to them and they said. "...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

No, He was not to be lost or gone forever. They would see Him again and be with Him, this time forever. You know that fits in exactly with Paul's words here: "...and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Separation will be over then as regards one another and the Lord. War, strife and sickness will be over. Whatever Christ owns we will own, for we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. I tell you, we Christians have got something to look forward to. We've got something to think about and rejoice over. I could turn Holy Roller and jump up and down and holler "Glory to God." "Hallelujah. There is only one thing that holds me back, and that is the realization that so few people around me share this

hope.

If I am speaking to any unsaved tonight, you don't have anything to look forward to. You don't have anything but just your breath between you and an eternity without hope. Oh, let us Christian people share this blessed, blessed thing with you tonight. We can't force it on you, but it is available for you; and I would say with the Apostle Paul, as I think of the unsaved that may be here, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20).

JOSHUA

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the people to take possession of the land which God had given them. "The land which we passed through to search it, it is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into the land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not" (Num. 14:7-9). The congregation of Israel refused to listen to them and were ready to stone them. As a result of their unbelief all that generation died in the wilderness.

So for forty years, Joshua and Caleb waited in the wilderness until the last of that generation had died. Now the time had come to enter Canaan and to take possession of the land which God had given Abraham hundreds of years before. After the death of Moses, God told Joshua that he was to lead the people and they were to cross Jordan and take possession of the land. Joshua, taking God at His Word, immediately began to make preparations to march. The returned spies' report did not cause him to see that he could take the land, for God had already told him this. The report only confirmed what he already knew.

"AND Joshua rose early in the morning." I doubt that Joshua slept any that night, knowing that the time had come for which he had waited for so long. So, early in the morning he got the whole congregation moving from Shittim to the banks of the Jordan. Joshua was not walking by "blind faith." When God told him to cross Jordan, although there were no bridges, no ferries, no means of crossing, Joshua's faith was based not only on God's command; but he knew from past experience that God was able and would provide a way before him. Joshua was in Egypt when the first-born in the families were spared from death by the blood of the passover lamb on the door posts. In fact, he was one of the first-born that was spared that night. He was there to see the Red Sea open for the Israelites to pass over on dry ground. He was in the wilderness for forty years and saw the mighty way God led the people and provided for them each step of the way. No, Joshua's faith was not a "blind faith"; he knew that God could and would open up a way to cross Jordan.

He may have wondered by what means God would open up the river, but he knew He would. The way was not his concern, he left that up to God. His duty was to believe and obey the command which God had given him. Our duty is the same as that of Joshua's; believe God and obey Him. "-and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over."

As we saw in the life of Rahab, her faith produced works, the same is true of Joshua's faith. The same is true of all whose faith is in the shed blood of the Son of God.

"And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore" (Josh. 3:2-4).

The entire congregation of Israel, two million or more people, with all their cattle and possessions moved from Shittim to the banks of the Jordan, where they camped for three days. Why did God have them wait for three days on the bank of this raging river that was overflowing its banks being of flood stage? We are not told the reason, but it can be assumed that it would take that long for the entire company to get in place. Remember, when Israel was on the march, each tribe had a particular position to take. Another reason may have been to let the people look at the swollen river and see that there was no way for them to cross Jordan unless God opened up the way. "-for ye have not passed this way heretofore" carried the meaning that they are now on new ground, where they had not been before, but I believe it also means that they, this new generation, were to behold a miracle of such magnitude that they had never seen before. They had not seen the Red Sea open up for the host to cross. Of all who were over twenty years old, who left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb remained. All the others, because of unbelief, died in the wilderness. This new generation had only heard of how God had delivered their fathers. This question, no doubt was in their minds, "Would God act for them as He did for their fathers?"

It would seem at this point, that even Joshua did not know exactly what God's method of opening up the way across Jordan would be, but he believed God and no doubt, as he marched toward the river he even kept in his mind the command of God, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this the Jordan" (Josh. 1:2). Not only did Joshua's faith produce works on his own part, but his faith inspired the priests to action. They were to lead the way bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD. The ark was a small box about four feet long, two and one-half feet wide, and two and one-half feet high. It was overlaid with gold inside and out. In it were the two tablets of

stone containing the law, which God Himself had written. This ark represented the presence of God. As the priests carried it ahead of Israel it represented God Himself leading His people right up to the edge of Jordan. This reminds us of what Christ said in John 10, of the Good Shepherd. "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." Are you, dear friend, one of His sheep? Do you follow Him?

Note the order in which Israel was to march. The priests bearing the ark more than one-half mile ahead of the people. No one was to come any closer than that, for the ark, as we have said, represented the presence of God and as such it was to be regarded as sacred and with great respect. Back when God was about to enter into a covenant with Israel, He warned all the people, "And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount or touch the border of it. Whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death" (Ex. 19:12). We see why this warning was given, for in Psalm 89:7 we are told, God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." Also in the New Testament we find these words, "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28,29).

Another reason why the ark of the covenant was to be carried so far ahead of the people may have been in order that it could be seen by more of the people. In type, the ark represents Christ and remember, as sinners, we are to look upon Christ as our Saviour. Again, as His sheep, we need to ever keep our eyes fixed upon Him, "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

"And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you" (Josh. 3:5).

The word "sanctify" means to separate or set apart. When God blessed and sanctified the seventh day He set it apart from the other six days for His own particular use. Under the law given unto Moses, the Lord said, "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn;--it is mine" (Ex. 13:2). This means that all the firstborn were to be set aside for the Lord's use, "it is mine." When the Lord tell the people to sanctify themselves it means that they are to do this by a personal cleansing. This is shown in Exodus 19:10,11: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash--their clothes. And be ready again the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai."

The command that Joshua gave to the people carries the same meaning as that which was given to Moses. The Lord was about to make His presence known, and

the people were to be ready for this great wonderful event to take place. How were they to do this?

Back when God told Jacob to go back to Bethel and make an altar unto Him, Jacob told his household, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments." (Gen. 35:1,2). To sanctify one's self, to set apart one's self for the Master's use, one must cleanse one's self of all known sin in his life. In Hebrews 12:1,2 we are told "--let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.--".

"And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." Just as the Israelites themselves apart unto the Lord, Christians today have been given the same command. If we expect to witness the manifestation of the power of our God we must be in a suitable condition in order to witness such an event. We do this by laying aside the known sins in our lives.

Note the confidence Joshua had in God, "Tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." There was no doubt in Joshua's mind that God would do exactly what He said. Joshua had the assurance that when the priests carried the ark into the river Jordan, the water would open up to let the people pass over. Do we have the same confidence in God's promises?

"And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people" (Josh. 3:6).

The three days were up. The big event was about to take place. All was ready for the crossing over Jordan. Joshua now gives the order to the priests bearing the ark to move forward into the Jordan. Here is another example of faith being shown by works. At this time the way was closed as far as eye could see, as the water was still flowing, but Joshua believed God and told the priests to cross over and the priests believing that God would open up the way, "went before the people." The people were commanded to follow the priests as far as they carried the ark. We, today, are commanded to follow the leaders whom God has set over us as they carry the Word of God, "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" (Heb. 13:7).

"And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan" (Josh. 3:7,8).

God now speaks to Joshua and

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JOSHUA

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explains how He is about to exercise His power to permit the people cross Jordan. It is important to see that the faith that caused Joshua to act was a faith based upon God's promise. God had spoken unto him. He heard God tell him, "I am going to take you over Jordan." Just as God had revealed His presence on many occasions when Moses was leading the people, He would now reveal His presence to show Israel that He had chosen Joshua to lead Israel into the promise land. Yes, Joshua was moving by faith, faith based upon God's Word, "This day, I will begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel." This was a specific promise for a specific purpose. It was, "that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." Back when Israel was fleeing from Egypt, pursued by the Egyptian army, they came to the Red Sea with no way to cross. It was then that God told Moses to stretch out his rod over the sea. When Moses did so the water parted and Israel crossed over on dry ground. On the other side God told Moses to wave his rod over the sea again. The waters came back together, drowning all of the Egyptian army. This act by God magnified Moses in the eyes of the people. By this miracle God showed that He had appointed Moses as the leader of His people.

The great demonstration of God's mighty power that was about to now take place would prove to the people that, "as I was with Moses so I will be with you." There was to be no doubt as to whom God had placed in charge of the taking possession of the land that He had given to Abraham hundreds of years before.

"And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan." (Joshua 3:8).

Joshua was to command the priest to bear the ark of the covenant up to the edge and into the water of Jordan and there stand still. Remember, the river at this time was at flood stage, the water no doubt was at its highest stage. Can we picture this great swollen river with trees and all kinds of trash swiftly moving down the river? I was this river that God told Joshua to command the priests to step into and "stand still." They were to witness that great power in action. As none of the people, who were twenty years old or older, who witnessed the opening up of the Red Sea were now alive (except Joshua and Caleb), many of them had not witnessed that great miracle. Now they were to see a greater miracle. God was to stop a great river from flowing while His people crossed over on dry ground.

To be continued

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which is before us shows that God kept His Word. There, in fact, as a result of Paul's words, was a "dissension" which arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees." It was a dissension

which divided the multitude.

The men who confronted Paul were wise in many respects, but their emotions smothered their wisdom. They, in fact, by way of God's directions, turned on each other and away from their intended prey. We are to see that our God can make fools out of the wisest of men. He, according to the scriptures, turns the heart of a king in which ever direction he desires it to go.

"For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both" (Acts 23:8).

Many believe that there is nothing but matter in the universe. They believe the soul to be material and that it dies with the body. This is also that which the Sadducees believed. Josephus has made the following statement regarding the doctrine of the Sadducees: They believe "That souls die with the bodies" (Antiq., b. xviii. ch. 1-4). The Pharisees, on the other hand, did not believe the soul or angels to be material. The Sadducees considered humans, at death, to receive the same fate as animals. The Pharisees, on the other hand, believed in an immortal soul and the resurrection of the dead. They also believed in the spirit world.

"And there arose a great cry; and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God" (Acts 23:9).

The word "cry," according to Webster, can also mean "appeal." It appears therefore that the Pharisees made a great appeal for the acquittal of Paul. There had been a great appeal for Paul's condemnation, but due to the words which God gave Paul, there was a complete reversal of thinking of the part of the Pharisees. The Scribes, or the learned men, decided that there was no evil which could be attributed to Paul, that is, nothing which was contrary to the law of Moses. We can be sure that the Scribes did not agree that Jesus had come forth from the dead, but they were willing to forget this charge, since, at that moment in time, they were only concerned with the resurrection of the dead and the existence of angels. They, after all, at that moment, had turned their attention away from Paul to the Sadducees.

Paul, by his speech, had resurrected an issue, or opened a sore which had been festering for many years. The issue, as we have previously said, turned the Pharisees completely away from Paul to the extent that they completely ignored that which he had said regarding Jesus Christ (Acts 22:17,18). They attributed Paul's convictions to "a spirit or an angel." It is truly marvellous how our God works things out so that His will is accomplished.

"And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle" (Acts 23:10).

The minds of the Sadducees had not been changed regarding Paul. Their feelings were still the same as that which the mob had expressed on the previous day: that

is, that Paul was not fit to live. The Pharisees, on the other hand, had taken a much more tolerant attitude. This was because Paul and his dad were Pharisees. The result was one of "great dissension," because the emotions on both sides were at a very high pitch. The one group said, "We find no evil in this man," while the other group could see no good in him. The one group wanted to set him free because of their agreement with him on the doctrines of angels and the resurrection. The others, however, were more determined than ever to execute him.

The chief captain, who received his orders from the Roman government, was under obligation to protect Paul. This was because Paul was a Roman citizen. The chief captain, therefore, removed Paul from a very dangerous situation. We may say that Paul was in the fiery furnace, but his Lord was there with him. The result was that not one hair of his head was singed.

"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou also bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11).

Paul obviously was in great need of an appearance of his Lord and of words of encouragement from Him. We can be sure that Paul's immediate past had required great faith in his Lord. His future would also require a like faith, since there was nothing, as far as the physical senses are concerned, which could not be seen by physical sight. His life's work was like planting a seed many feet deep and then covering it with dirt-the seed being his work for his Lord and the dirt being the many obstacles which he would encounter.

The Lord Jesus appeared to Paul at a moment when Paul needed Him the most. The Lord's words, "Be of good cheer," said, in essence, Don't let all of these apparent setbacks cloud your spiritual vision, or cause loss of faith in me. I have been using you as my witness here in Jerusalem, and my plan is to send you to Rome for the same purpose. Jesus, in essence, also said, "Be of good cheer," for I have assigned the chief captain and his soldiers to make sure that no harm comes to you. I have made plans for them to see you safely to Rome. It may appear that I have not been standing by your side, but if you will consider the matter more carefully, you will find that I have been with you by way of the chief captain and his soldiers.

"And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul" (Acts 23:12).

Eating and drinking are top priorities in the lives of each one of us. A matter, therefore, which takes priority over eating and drinking is a very weighty matter. Our God, however, has no problem dealing with determined men. Our God doesn't get excited when faced with a group of determined hot heads-hot heads who had "banded together" as one unit to destroy Paul. They were no more of a challenge to God than a month old baby would have been.

"And they were more than forty which had made

this conspiracy" (Acts 23:13).

I might say, in essence, if I were confronted with over forty hot-headed men, that it is a poor set of legs which will not take care of the body. God's purpose however cannot be altered by forty hot-headed men, or even all the men upon the face of the earth.

"And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul" (Acts 23:14).

It is one thing to make plans to do something, but it is quite another thing to publicize those plans. One, in other words, can back out of a plan if it is not publicized, but the plan, when publicized, is sealed.

We know from Ephesians 6:12 that we "war not against flesh and blood." The above forty determined and committed men, then, were instruments of Satan. Satan, in the person of above forty men, was determined to stop Paul from doing any more witnessing in the name of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus, on the other hand, had said to Paul, "be of good cheer." Paul, the one who wrote Ephesians 6:12, knew that he was up against far more than just flesh and blood.

The more than forty men who were determined and committed to kill Paul, were probably Sadducees, since the Pharisees were willing to release him.

The men, when stating that they had bound "themselves under a great curse," were saying that they had made a vow as solemn as it was possible to make.

"Now therefore ye with the council, signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you tomorrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him; and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him" (Acts 23:15).

We are informed by John 8:44 that unbelievers are of their father the devil and that they will perform the lusts of their father. We have, then, the devil's children involved in a conspiracy to kill the Apostle Paul. The soldiers had rescued Paul from what appeared to have been certain death by the members of the Sanhedrin. Those therefore who hated Paul fell upon a plan to get their filthy hands on him again. They knew that they could not have taken Paul from the soldiers, so they sought to have the soldiers deliver the apostle to them. Their plan appeared to be a legitimate one in that they, by further inquiry, desired to have the case resolved to the satisfaction of all those who were concerned.

The above forty men, when saying, "or ever he come near, are ready to kill him," were saying that they would be sure that no finger would ever be pointed at the council relative to the death of Paul. They, in fact, planned to kill the apostle before he arrived before the council. Their plan, then, appeared to be water tight and leak proof. All tracks were to have been covered and all finger prints removed. They, however, had not heard Jesus say to Paul, "Be of good cheer, Paul! for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness

also at Rome", (Acts 23:11).

"And when Paul's Sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul" (Acts 23:16).

The F.B.I. have a lot of sophisticated equipment whereby they can bug various meetings if they desire to do so. God, on the other hand, has been in the bugging business long before the F.B.I. was thought of. God chose Paul's sister's son, not only for the purpose of being a listening ear, but to also communicate the same to Paul. The soldiers, in fact, due to the hatred of the masses against Paul, may not have allowed others into Paul's presence. God also chose Paul's sister's son because of his concern for his Uncle Paul. Others may have kept quiet.

"Then Paul called one of the centurians unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath a certain thing to tell him" (Acts 23:17).

The Lord Jesus had informed Paul that he would be His witness in Rome. The Lord Jesus, by way of Paul's sister's son, removed all obstacles that would have prevented Paul from going to Rome. God also has a plan for our lives and we can be sure that God has also removed many obstacles from before us too. He, in fact, may have worked through a young boy or girl so that His plan for you has not been altered.

One wonders if Paul's nephew, after hearing of the plan to kill his Uncle Paul, ran home to inform his mother, or did he set out immediately for the castle where the soldiers were stationed. It is likely that he went immediately to the castle. He, of course, for the rest of his days upon the earth, should have been very pleased because of the action which he took. He had not only saved a life, but it was the life of one of the greatest men who ever lived. It was the life of his Uncle Paul.

"So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring his young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee" (Acts 23:18).

It is recorded in Acts 23:11 that the "Lord stood by" Paul. He, in fact, in the text which is before us, stood by Paul in the person of a young man. He also stood by him in the persons of the chief captain and the centurion. We miss much if we do not see our Lord standing by us in various ways. It is as stated in the following passage of scripture:

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things" (Romans 8:32).

Our Lord did not stop thinking of us at Calvary, but He is still very much involved in each of our lives. He, in fact, has sent God the Spirit to us to teach us the "all things."

The devil had motivated more than forty men to kill the

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Apostle Paul. These men were planning their strategy. Each man was being given his assignment. The plan, no doubt, was being rehearsed so that it would be executed with all precision. The other side of the story is that a young man-Paul's nephew, was telling all to the chief captain. It was one young man against more than forty men. God, of course, works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

HOLINESS

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mutably holy. In Scripture He is frequently styled "The Holy One." He is so because the sum of all moral excellency is found in Him. He is absolute Purity, unsullied even by the shadow of sin. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). Holiness is the very excellency of the Divine nature: the great God is "glorious in holiness" (Ex. 15:11). Therefore do we read, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13). As God's power is the opposite of the native weakness of the creature, as His wisdom is in complete contrast from the least defect of understanding or folly, so His holiness is the very antithesis of all moral blemish or defilement. Of old God appointed singers in Israel "that they should praise the beauty of holiness" (II Chron. 20:21). "Power is God's hand or arm, omniscience His eye, mercy His bowels, eternity His duration, but holiness is His beauty" (S. Charnock). It is this, supremely, which renders Him lovely to those who are delivered from sin's dominion.

A chief emphasis is placed upon this perfection of God. "God is oftener styled Holy than Almighty, and set forth by this part of His dignity more than by any other. This is more fixed on as an epithet to His name than any other. You never find it expressed 'His mighty name' or 'His wise name,' but His great name, and most of all His holy name. This is the greatest title of honour; in this latter doth the majesty and venerableness of His name appear" (S. Charnock). This perfection, as none other, is solemnly celebrated before the Throne of Heaven, the seraphim crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:3). God Himself singles out this perfection, "Once have I sworn by My holiness" (Psa. 89:35). "This may be said to be a transcendental attribute, that, as it were, runs through the rest, and casts lustre upon them. It is an attribute of attributes" (J. Howe, 1670). Thus we read of "the beauty of the Lord" (Psa. 27:4), which is none other than "the beauties of holiness" (Psa. 110:3).

"As it seems to challenge an excellency above all His other perfections, so it is the glory of all the rest: as it is the glory of

the Godhead, so it is the glory of every perfection in the Godhead; as His power is the strength of them, so His holiness is the beauty of them; as all would be weak without almightiness to back them, so all would be uncomely without holiness to adorn them. Should this be sullied, all the rest would lose their honour; as at the same instant the sun should lose its light, it would lose its heat, its strength, its generative and quickening virtue. As sincerity is the lustre of every grace in a Christian, so is purity the splendour of every attribute in the Godhead. His justice is a holy justice, His wisdom a holy wisdom, His power a 'holy arm' (Psa. 98:1). His truth or promise a 'holy promise' (Psa. 105:42). His name, which signifies all His attributes in conjunction, 'is holy,' Psa. 103:1" (S. Charnock).

God's holiness is manifested in His works. "The Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works" (Psa. 145:17). Nothing but that which is excellent can proceed from Him. Holiness is the rule of all His actions. At the beginning He pronounced all that He made "very good" (Gen. 1:31), which He could not have done had there been anything imperfect or unholy in them. Man was made "upright" (Eccl. 7:29), in the image and likeness of his Creator. The angels that fell were created holy, for we are told that they "kept not their first habitation" (Jude 6). Of Satan it is written, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezek. 28:15).

God's holiness is manifested in His law. That law forbids sin in all of its modifications; in its most refined as well as its grossest forms, the intent of the mind as well as the pollution of the body, the secret desire as well as the overt act. Therefore do we read, "Thy law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). Yes, "the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Psa. 19:8,9).

God's holiness is manifested at the Cross. Wondrously and yet most solemnly does the Atonement display God's infinite holiness and abhorrence of sin. How hateful must sin be to God for Him to punish it to its utmost deserts when it was imputed to His Son! "Not all the vials of judgment that have or shall be poured out upon the wicked world, nor the flaming furnace of a sinner's conscience, nor the irreversible sentence pronounced against the rebellious demons, nor the groans of the damned creatures, give such a demonstration of God's hatred of sin, as the wrath of God let loose upon His Son. Never did Divine holiness appear more beautiful and lovely than at the time our Saviour's countenance was most marred in the midst of His dying groans. This He Himself acknowledges in Psa. 22. When God had turned His smiling face from Him, and thrust His sharp knife into His heart, which forced that terrible cry from Him, "My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?" He adores this perfection--"Thou art holy," v. 3" (S. Charnock).

Because God is holy He hates all sin. He loves everything

which is in conformity to His laws, and loathes everything which is contrary to it. His Word plainly declares, "The froward is an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 3:32). It follows, therefore, that He must necessarily punish sin. Sin can no more exist without demanding His punishment than without requiring His hatred of it. God has often forgiven sinners, but He never forgives sin; and the sinner is only forgiven on the ground of Another having borne his punishment; for "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Therefore we are told "The Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies" (Nahum 1:2). For one sin God banished our first parents from Eden. For one sin all the posterity of Ham fell under a curse which remains over them to this day. For one sin Moses was excluded from Canaan, Elisha's servant smitten with leprosy, Ananias and Sapphira cut off out of the land of the living.

Herein we find proof for the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures. The unregenerate do not really believe in the holiness of God. Their conception of His character is altogether one-sided. They fondly hope that His mercy will override everything else. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether as thyself" (Psa. 50:21) is God's charge against them. They think only of a "god" patterned after their own evil hearts. Hence their continuance in a course of mad folly. Such is the holiness ascribed to the Divine nature and character in Scripture that it clearly demonstrates their superhuman origin. The character attributed to the "gods" of the ancients and of modern heathendom are the very reverse of that immaculate purity which pertains to the true God An ineffably holy God, who has the utmost abhorrence of all sin, was never invented by any of Adam's fallen descendants! The fact is that nothing makes more manifest the terrible depravity of man's heart and his enmity against the living God than to have set before him One who is infinitely and immutably holy. His own idea of sin is practically limited to what the world calls "crime." Anything short of that, man palliates as "defects," "mistakes," "infirmities," etc. And even where sin is owned at all, excuses and extenuations are made for it.

The "god" which the vast majority of professing Christians "love," is looked upon very much like an indulgent old man, who himself has no relish for folly, but leniently winks at the "indiscretions" of youth. But the Word says, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (Psa. 5:5). And again, "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psa. 7:11). But men refuse to believe in this God, and gnash their teeth when His hatred of sin is faithfully pressed upon their attention. No, sinful man was no more likely to devise a holy God than to create the Lake of fire in which he will be tormented for ever and ever.

Because God is holy, acceptance with Him on the ground of creature doings is utterly impossible. A fallen creature could sooner create a world than produce that which would meet the approval of infinite Purity. Can darkness dwell with light? Can the Immaculate One take pleasure

in "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6)? The best that sinful man brings forth is defiled. A corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit. God would deny Himself, vilify His perfections, were He to account as righteous and holy that which is not so in itself; and nothing is so which has the least stain upon it contrary to the nature of God. But blessed be His name, that which His holiness demanded His grace has provided in Christ Jesus our Lord. Every poor sinner who has fled to him for refuge stands "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). Hallelujah!

Because God is holy the utmost reverence becomes our approaches unto Him. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all about him" (Psa. 89:7). Then "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; his is holy" (Psa. 99:5). Yes, "at his footstool," in the lowest posture of humility, prostrate before Him. When Moses would approach unto the burning bush, God said, "put off thy shoes from off thy feet" (Ex. 3:5). He is to be served "with fear"

(Psa. 2:11) Of Israel His demand was, "I will be sanctified among them that come nigh Me and before all the people will be glorified" (Lev. 10:3). The more our hearts are awed by His ineffable holiness the more acceptable will be our approaches unto Him.

Because God is holy we should desire to be conformed to Him. His command is, "Be ye holy for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). We are not bidden to be omnipotent or omniscient as God is, but we are to be holy, and "in all manner of deportment" (I Peter 1:15). "This is the prime way of honouring God. We do not so glorify God by elevated admirations, or eloquent expressions, or pompous services for Him, as when we aspire to conversing with Him with unstained spirits, and live to Him in living like Him" (S. Charnock). Then as God alone is the Source and Fount of holiness let us earnestly seek holiness from Him; let our daily prayer be that He may "sanctify you wholly; and our whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23).

Lord, I pray that You will come soon and take me to my home,
The wickedness of earth is so great it makes a Christian feel alone.

But I know that since You saved me You have never left my heart,
You are my strength, my hope, my joy, and I am so glad
You gave me a part,
In Your marvelous love and salvations plan,
To save me, a mere lump of clay called man.

So I will be watching for You, Lord, until You take me on
And gratefully bow my head in thanks for my place in Your heavenly home.

--Cindy Crawford

ADOPTED

The Fatherhood of God
Cannot be claimed by all;
We are children of His
Only by Christ's call.

The Holy Writ declares
There is now no condemnation
To them who are in Christ;
And there is no separation.

It is not of him who willeth,
But of God who showeth mercy;
In the flesh no good thing dwelleth
And no flesh has cause for glory.

The children of the promise
Are counted for the seed;
If you've become Christ's servant
Then you are free indeed!

The brotherhood of man
Is Satan's greatest lie,
Sheep and goats are different
Let Matthew verify.

God created all
But has adopted some;
Who cries, "Abba, Father"
Has now become a son.

--Charlene M. Redding

CAN YOU IMAGINE THIS?

Paul Being a Campbellite?
"I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel..." (I Cor. 1:14,17).