

A man of prayer is a man of power

## CURSE OF THE CHURCH PRIESTHOOD

Oscar B. Mink

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (I Peter 1:1-2).

I Peter 2:9 says: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy

nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who

hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

In the salutation of I Peter (vv. 1-2) we find the words of the text are addressed to the "elect" of God. They are particularly, but not exclusively, addressed to the elect of God in the five provinces of Asia Minor, mentioned in verse one. In that habitual or extended carnality which is incongruous to the nature of a child of God, he will not be long this side of Holy Spirit regeneration before he finds himself to be a "stranger" in the world. All a

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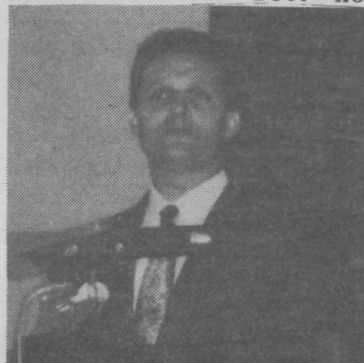


Oscar B. Mink

## IS CRITICISM CHRISTIAN?

By James Crace

The type of criticism I'm referring to is fault finding, for the sake of disapproval, not intended in any way to build up another person. This is an evil that is too common among God's people. Solomon said... "Fret not



James Crace

thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;" (Prov 24:19) I feel almost everyone takes this verse to mean wicked worldly people, and perhaps this is true. Just stop and think, can a

(Continued on Page 13, Col. 3)

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## WHICH ARE YOU! A VESSEL OF WRATH OR MERCY?

Romans 9:21-23

by E.E. Cummings

God tags men for good or evil according to His good pleasure. God deals with this world in two ways.

DIVISION I

He will make known, one day, His fury, anger, vengeance and wrath on such great offenders and lawless ones as the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and the Philistine nations. These are just some that God has wiped out from the face of the earth that were totally destroyed. In addition to some nations of the world that God dealt with in His justice and judgment, look also to such cities that fell under His curse, and were completely eliminated in the Old Testament. Then those in the New Testament, that are marked out for destruction according to His unfailing Word.

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SOVEREIGN GRACE

LANDMARK

PREMILLENNIAL

# The Baptist Examiner

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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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VOL. 65, NO. 5

## ENCOURAGEMENT TO SOUL WINNERS PART I

Charles H. Spurgeon

James is pre-eminently practical. If he were, indeed, the James who was called "The Just," I can understand how he earned the title, for that distinguishing trait in



his character shows itself in his epistle; and if he were the Lord's brother, he did well to show so close a resemblance to his great Relative and Master, who commenced His ministry with the practical sermon on the mount. We ought to be very grateful that, in the Holy Scriptures, we have food for all classes of believers, and employment for all

(Continued on Page 11, Col. 4)

## PRECIOUS JEWELS FROM ROMANS EIGHT PART I

by Paul Jackson

"THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

Romans chapter eight is a treasure chest full of great and precious jewels. All one needs to do is plunge into the great chest

and one by one pull out each precious jewel. Each jewel will bless the heart tremendously. Let's pull them out one by one.

The Apostle Paul speaks about the security of each believer in the first verse of this great chapter. What a great and precious jewel! He says, "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ

Jesus ...". There are precious few in the religious world today who still take a stand for the eternal security of the believer. What a blessing they are missing. Several years ago, I was discussing the Bible with a preacher who did not believe that a Christian could be saved today and never lose his salvation in

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## THE GREAT TASK OF KEEPING THE HEART PART X

The Sword of the Spirit  
Ephesians 6:17  
Bible Reading  
Deuteronomy 8:  
by John Pruitt

Thus far we have studied the five defensive pieces of armor



John Pruitt

that is to be used by Christian soldiers in the spiritual warfare. The girdle of truth, breastplate of righteousness, sandals of peace, shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation.

Now we shall study the "sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God. The Machaira is a small sword, dagger, or saber. It was

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# The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

## THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IN ETERNAL SECURITY, PART I

The greatest blessing God has ever given me is salvation. Oh, I praise Him for this, and I give Him all the glory. The second greatest blessing God ever gave me was when He showed me the precious, wonderful, and blessed truth of Eternal Security.

I was saved in a Holiness Church - The Church of the Liv-

ing God. I knew almost nothing about the Bible at that time (Yes, I was saved and called to preach in this church, despite what some "Priesthood of the Church" men say). I was so glad that God had saved me. My salvation meant so much to me. But I thought I could lose this precious salvation, since that was what that

church taught. Oh, the thought was such a heavy burden and grief. I was so glad I was saved; I wanted to stay saved forever and go to heaven when I died; but I was taught, and ignorantly believed that I might lose this wonderful salvation and still die

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there would be a break with family, friends, and church relationships.

Oh, it was like a bright light came on (not physically, but spiritually). I saw over and over in that wonderful chapter, the precious truth of eternal security. I saw that the same grace that had saved me would keep me saved and that eternal heaven was for me for sure. I will never get over the blessing of that day and that experience. God has shown me many things since then, and given me many blessings; but I have long said, and say again,



Joe Wilson

that that was the second greatest blessing God ever gave me.

You can maybe begin to see why eternal security is so very precious to me; maybe moreso than to many who believed this from the time of their salvation. To this very hour, I have not gotten over the wonderful blessing of that time. I feel sorry for those saved people who do not know and believe this precious truth, and I do believe that there are many such. I know that they are missing out on what was to me such a wonderful blessing. I know the grief and sorrow of thinking that maybe I will lose this and yet go to hell. I would do much to lead any brother or sister in Christ into the wonderful joy of this precious truth.

I have, in the intervening years, made much of eternal security in my ministry. I preach it frequently, and with great joy in my heart each time I do. I will say (almost sadly) that I have learned that there can be a danger in this doctrine - that men can misuse it in a way that seems to encourage sin and dishonor God. This is not the proper use of this

precious truth. Properly understood and used, it promotes love and gratitude to God and consequent holiness of life and faithfulness in service. I have learned that men can overemphasize this truth, and hearers draw unwarranted conclusions from this. I have learned that we need to balance this truth by preaching more than most of us do on the perseverance of the saints. After all, our forefathers preached far more on this than on the exact term, eternal security. In fact, the "P" of the glorious "TULIP" stands for perseverance. It is only in fairly recent years that many of our kind have changed that "P" to "preservation" "preservation" and "persistence" are both true. In fact, they are two sides of one most glorious and wonderful truth. I have begun to preach more than formerly on perseverance, but still I must and do frequently preach on the precious truth of eternal security. After all, some men's perversion and misuse of a truth is no reason for us to abandon it. I want to write (what I realize must be more than one article) on "People Who Do

Not Believe In eternal security". I will have many things to say about such people - and I say this in sorrow over their unbelief, in love for them, in a desire to be of help to them, and especially to glorify the God of all grace - keeping grace as well as saving grace. In fact, the grace that does not keep one saved really does not truly save.

Eternal security is the doctrine that when a person is once saved, he is saved forever. One can never lose salvation. If a man knows that he is now saved, he can and should know that he will be saved forever. Oh, "He is mine, and I am His, forever and forever." "Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me on." The thought came to my mind last Wednesday night as we were singing, as to how many songs a person cannot intelligently and truthfully sing if he does not believe in eternal security. I guess they still sing them, but their singing contradicts their preaching.

The religious world is much

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 5)

**FROM THE EDITOR**

**"Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people...."** (Lev.19:16). A preacher (I sincerely hope he is saved) told a tale on me which I recently learned about. He told some of his church people that I was divorced and remarried. Well, this is true. I don't care who tells this or to whom they tell it. I do not try to hide this from anyone. I really don't care who knows it. We recently had a telephone conversation relative to this. He told me that I had been married twice, that I had two wives, and that I was living in adultery. I told him that he was either a Scriptural ignoramus or a liar, and he could take his pick - and that goes for anyone else who says this. I have been married twice, but I do not have two wives. I have a Scriptural divorce which breaks the bonds of the first marriage. I have only one wife. Anyone who says I have two wives is one or the other of what I said to this man. Further, such a one is so ignorant that he does not know that one minus one plus one equals one. I most certainly am not living in adultery. If I am doing this, that makes dear Katie to be an adulteress, and I resent anyone saying such about her. But this is not the purpose of this editorial. However, let me say as to this that, even though I have been married twice, I am as Scripturally qualified to be a preacher and a pastor as any other man - and anyone who says differently can apply to himself what I said to the afore mentioned preacher.

But, listen to this: this preacher further told some people in his church that I was not only divorced and remarried, but that I had lived for awhile in North Carolina with a woman to whom I was not married. (I started to not tell this, for some of my enemies will rejoice over hearing this, and will be happy to repeat it but I have learned that one's enemies delight to hear things and tell them whether they are true or not, and one's friends will check as to such stories and will not believe them without strong proof, and even then will be slow and careful about repeating them so, I decided to tell this)

Well, a short time after hearing that this preacher had told this on me, I met him in a restaurant. I went to him and told him that I would like to see his proof of this story. (I had been told that he said he could prove it) He told me that it was "hearsay." All the proof he had was, he said "hearsay." I told him that if it was "hearsay," he should not have repeated it. He had no answer to this. How could he?

This preacher says he heard this. He told me the name of the preacher whom he said told him this. I know this brother; I sincerely doubt that he told this. I just doubt that he would manufacture such a terrible and false story and repeat it. I plan to ask him about it.

But what if this preacher did tell the preacher referred to above this story? Still, he should not have repeated it. He is a talebearer. He has sinned against God's Word in Leviticus 19:16, and other places. To make a point, let us just say that the other preacher did tell him this (which I sincerely doubt).

This man said he was told this. He did not bother to find out if it was

true. He never discussed the matter with me. He has lived for some time close enough to me to have asked me about this matter. He says he heard it. He repeated it (I don't know how many times). He never bothered to ask me about it. He does not know if it is true or not. He has not investigated the matter.

Brothers and sisters, this is a terrible sin. I am afraid that many of us, maybe all of us, have, at times, been guilty of talebearing: probably not in a matter as serious as this, but in some ways. God's people need to deal with this matter. Some of the following I have picked up here and there, and maybe some of it is my own.

Before you bear a tale, ask yourself some questions. 1. Is it true? 2. Is it kind to tell it? 3. If it were true of you, would you want it told? 4. Is it for the glory of God to tell it? 5. Does it really need to be told? 6. Will some good purpose be served by telling it?

The preacher referred to in this editorial violated I Timothy 5:19 which says, **"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."** He only claims that one man told him this. Any charge brought against a preacher, or any story told about him should have two or three witnesses thereto - or should not be told or listened to. This preacher violated the text that heads this editorial, and many other portions of the Word of God this preacher violated every rule of right, truth, and love by telling this on me.

Of course the story this man told, which he says someone told him, is not true. I doubt that any of my enemies would even pretend that they know it is true - though some of them might happily repeat it.

This is a terrible sin on the part of this preacher. It is a terrible thing that he told. It could do great damage to a man to have such told on him. Yet, this man told this without any proof at all - and frankly, I doubt he ever heard it. Why did he tell this. Well, the only thing I can conceive of is that he has a malicious spirit and wanted to hurt me.

Let me say this. I am not nearly as upset by this, or fearful about it as one might think I should be. People who know this man will likely not pay much attention to what he says. My friends will not believe this, especially since I have stated that it is not true. My enemies, well, let them do what they will; if they don't have this, they will think of something else - and to tell you the truth, I am not really very frightened by what my enemies might tell or do. By God's grace and strength, I have come safely through so many storms by my enemies; that, frankly, I have very little fear of them anymore.

Most sincerely and honestly do I tell you that I have written all this to warn us all (me included) about the matter of talebearing. Let us be very, very careful about this.

Yours for telling the truth, and not telling it unless there is real need thereof. Just because something is true does not always mean that it should be told. Love, kindness, and a desire to glorify God will be of great help to us all in such matters.

**THOSE**

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and go to hell. I cannot tell you how distressing this was to me.

God was very patient and kind to me. He led me along gently. I was called to preach about a month after being saved. Not knowing much about the Bible, I did much reading and studying in order to bring messages when I had opportunity. The Lord gradually and patiently led me towards the precious truth of eternal security. I could tell a long story as to this. Finally, I had some time alone with my Bible and the Lord, about two hours. I read over and over the sixth chapter of John. The Lord was showing me the truth there. I remember praying something like this, "Lord, if you will show me the truth on this subject, I will follow it no matter what the cost." You see, I was an ordained Holiness preacher, and about all I had known since salvation was Holiness people and churches. I knew that if I accepted eternal security,

## THE TEARS OF OUR LORD

The Bible records three specific occasions when our Lord Jesus wept. These are Luke 19:41, John 11:35 and Hebrews 5:7. In this chapter we shall look at these verses, seeking to understand the causes behind the shedding of these tears in the Lord of life and glory.

We understand that some throughout church history have had a little difficulty in truly believing that the Lord Jesus Christ could have wept at all. This is strange. It is strange because the scriptural account is so clear that Jesus, though divine (I Timothy 3:16), was also very much human. We are told that prior to our Lord's temptation, "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered" (Matt. 4:2). This was real hunger, not imaginary. We also read concerning Jesus going "...to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour" (John 4:5-6). As so many others have pointed out, our Lord, though He was perfect God, was also perfect man, and therefore grew tired.

As further proof of the sacred humanity of our blessed Redeemer, we read that one of His cries from the Cross was, "...I thirst" (John 19:28). Here was real thirst in real agony, spiritually as well as physically. With these references in mind, can we truly doubt that our Lord wept? Since He was very man and very God, it was certainly not impossible for Him to weep as others, although we recognize it must be viewed in a different light from ordinary human weeping.

Undoubtedly one of the greatest sermons Charles Spurgeon ever preached was on the subject, "The Lamentations of Jesus" (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1880, pp. 661-672). To help understand this subject better, and also to let us hear from "the prince of preachers" himself, we can do no better here than to give an extensive excerpt from this excellent sermon:

"Thus our Saviour wept in sympathy with domestic sorrow (John 11:35), and sanctified the tears of the bereaved. We, too, may weep when brothers and friends lie dead, for Jesus wept. There need not be rebellion in our mourning, for Jesus fully consented to the divine will, and yet He wept. We may weep at the graves of those we love, and yet be guiltless of unbelief as to their resurrection, for Jesus knew that

Lazarus would rise again, and yet He wept. Our Lord, in weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), showed His sympathy with national troubles, His distress at the evils which awaited His countrymen. Men should not cease to be patriots when they become believers; saints should bemoan the ills which come upon the guilty people among whom they are numbered, and do so all the more because they are saints. Our Lord's third weeping was induced by the great burden of human guilt which pressed upon Him (Hebrews 5:7; Luke 22:44). This shows us how we, too, should look upon the guilt of men and mourn over it before God; but yet in this special weeping Jesus is alone, there was something in the tears of Gethsemane to which we cannot reach, for He who shed them was then beginning to suffer as our Substitute, and in that case He must needs tread the winepress alone, and of the people there must be none with Him. Behold beneath the olive trees a solitary weeper, enduring a grief which, blessed be His name, is now impossible to us, seeing He has taken away the transgressions which called for it.

We will now turn to this second instance of our Saviour's weeping, and here we find when we look at the original word that it is not exactly expressed by the word used in our admirable English version. We there read, "...he beheld the city, and wept over it;" but the Greek means a great deal more than tears, and includes sobbings and cries. Perhaps it may be best to read it "He lamented over it." He suffered a deep inward anguish, and He expressed it by signs of woe, and by words which showed how bitter was His grief...Jesus is here a king by general acclamation, but king of grief by personal lamentation. He is the sovereign of sorrow, weeping while riding in triumph in the midst of His followers. Looked He ever more kingly than when He showed the tenderness of His heart towards His rebellious subjects? The city which had been the metropolis of the house of David never saw so truly royal a man before, for he is fittest to rule who is readiest to sympathize."

Spurgeon continues by giving some remarkable thoughts on the nature of our Lord. In the interest of our subject, we urge the careful reading of the following words:

"How complex is the person of Christ! He foresaw that the city would be destroyed, and though He was divine He wept. He knew every single event and detail of the dreadful tragedy, and used words about it of special historical accuracy which bring out His prophetic character, and yet the eye so clear in seeing the future

was almost blinded with tears. He speaks of Himself as willing and able to have averted this doom by gathering the guilty ones under His wing (Matthew 23:37), and thus He intimates His Godhead. While His nature on the one side of it sees the certainty of the doom, the same nature from another side laments the dread necessity. I will not say that His Godhead foresaw and His manhood lamented, for so mysteriously is the manhood joined to the Godhead that it makes but one person, and it were better to assert that the entire nature of Christ lamented over Jerusalem. I have never been able to believe in an impassive God, though many theologians lay it down as an axiom that God cannot suffer. It seems to me that He can do or endure anything He wills to do or endure, and I for one cannot see that there is any special glorifying of God in the notion that He is incapable in any direction whatever. We can only speak of Him after the manner of men, and after that manner He speaks of Himself, and therefore there is no wrong in so doing. It brings the great Father nearer when we see Him lamenting the wanderings of His children, and joying in their penitent return. What but sorrow can be meant by such expressions as these? "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together" (Hosea 11:8). "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isa. 1:2-3). Are these utterances of an unfeeling God? I believe it is the Christ, the entire Christ, that both foretells the doom of Jerusalem and laments it."

We turn now to a more thorough look at Matthew 23:37, which reads, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Although tears are not specifically mentioned here, these words must be considered as expressive of the Saviour's great sorrow over the doom and desolation of Jerusalem, as Spurgeon has indicated. Just how do we interpret this puzzling verse? Or is it re-

ally that puzzling, and does it need man's interpretation?

First, all believers in verbal inspiration of Scripture must accept these words at their face value: the Lord Jesus does say that He was willing to gather the people of Jerusalem unto Himself, but that the city would not come to Him! This is the plain meaning and it does us no good (exegetically) to try and make it say something else. Because of the obstinate refusal of the Messiah on the part of Jerusalem, our Lord says, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:38). Desolate means "to leave alone, forsake, to lay waste, and abandon." Certainly, beyond all questioning, this city of Jerusalem was left alone by God, to be utterly destroyed by Titus and his Roman armies in 70 A.D., thus bringing to pass the fulfillment of Christ's words in Luke 19:43, 44.

Secondly, when the commentators are studied on this passage, there is general agreement among them, although they express themselves differently. In his commentary on Matthew, John Broadus says on this verse: "The reference here is to the divine wish and not to the divine purpose. God's will of purpose is always carried out; His will of desire often fails, because the free will of men will not yield" (An American Commentary on the New Testament, p 478). Whether, or not this is the correct way of saying what Broadus is teaching we will leave to the theologians to determine. We do agree, however, that there must be some kind of differentiation between God's revealed will and His sovereign will, although many writers even split hairs over this. Let us believe that what our Lord said here was sincerely spoken and leave it at that.

"Jesus wept". How these words ought to grip our hearts! Our hearts are often so cold that they bear no resemblance whatever to that of the Lord and Saviour. We all need to look long at these words, meditate constantly upon them, and never do anything in any type of Christian service unless we really ask ourselves, "Is my own heart moved with compassion and love for those I minister to, or am I just going through a routine without any feeling for others? Concerning preaching, someone has well said, "To love to preach is one thing, to love those to whom we preach quite another." As we look to Christ, may all of us always seek from Him true tears, that we might weep over others as He did.

"...with strong crying and tears" (Heb. 5:7). Concerning this verse, listen to Arthur W. Pink: "These words not only intimate the intensity of

the suffering endured by our Priest, but also the extent to which He felt them. The God-man was no stoic, unmoved by fearful experiences through which He passed. No, He suffered acutely, not only in body, but in His soul, too. The curse of the law, under which He had spontaneously placed Himself, smote His soul as well as His body, for we had sinned in both, and He redeemed both. These cryings and tears were evoked not by what He received at the hands of man, but what imputed guilt had brought down upon Him from the hand of God. He was overwhelmed by the pressure of horror and anguish, caused by the divine anger against sin" (Exposition of Hebrews, p. 243).

## THOSE

(Continued from Page 2)

divided over this subject. Campbellites, all Holiness groups, Methodists, Free Will Baptists, Catholics, and others do not believe this precious truth of God's Word. Missionary Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and others do believe this doctrine. Hardshell Baptists believe this doctrine, but then rob themselves of the blessings thereof by teaching one cannot know for sure that he is truly saved. So, you see that there is a large division over this doctrine. I feel sure that the majority of professed Christians, if they believe what their churches teach, do not believe this doctrine. Now, I desire to say several things about those who do not believe eternal security.

1. They do not believe the Bible on this subject. I know they say that they believe the Bible. But it does not do much good to say you believe the Bible when you don't believe what it teaches - it adds up to about the same thing. Understand that I am not saying that these people do not believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. I am not saying that they do not believe many things that are taught in the Bible. I am saying that, on this subject, they do not believe the Bible. Their not believing that the Bible teaches this subject, does not change the fact that the Bible does teach it. Since the Bible does teach eternal security, those who do not believe this truth do not believe what the

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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

*If church A shows disrespect for the authority of church B, say by receiving or using an excluded member of church B; should church C treat church A the same as if church A had done to church C what church A did to church B; or should church C just ignore the matter, and treat church A as if nothing wrong had been done?*

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Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall find on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

This is a very touchy issue with me. It is an area in which I have lost a lot of respect for churches and pastors over the years. I have learned that in order to add a member, keep a friend, be allowed to speak at someone's conference or have them speak at yours; men I had great confidence in will compromise. I remember a few years ago hearing a preacher preach at a conference about respecting sister churches' authority. He preached a great sermon. Too bad he did not practice what he preached. A short while later he was preaching at a Bible Conference where the host pastor was an excluded member from a sister church. This is compromise. This is a question that should not have to be asked or answered amongst Landmark Baptists. A few years ago we had a situation arise in our churches. A member was excluded from a sister church. Two of our churches were placed in a position to make a difference. They could do as they should and not allow the pastor of the church that took this excluded member in to preach for them. They could have and should have written a letter of rebuke rather than make a special call to try and get this pastor to preach at their conference. They failed miserably.

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MARCH 13, 1993  
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Because of this failure, there is a great division in our group. Two men I had respected greatly, lost my respect because they compromised truths they had taught me growing up, and in truths I had heard the pastor preach from the pulpit. I would love to comment on this further, but I guess this is enough said. God Will judge these churches for their wrong.

Our text tells us that a church's action is binding on earth and in heaven. It is not just binding at that local church, but at every other true church on earth. Christ is the Head of the church; and when you do not show respect to the authority of one of His churches you are not showing authority for the Head. We have compromised on this point so drastically that I do not know if we will ever recover. It is not important enough to me to come and preach for you, or to have you come here and preach, to compromise the truths I believe. I am afraid that to some of our churches and pastors, it is that important. Let me mention how church C should react in this situation. First, if the excluded member seeks membership at church B; that church should tell them to make things right with the church from which they were excluded. If church B receives this excluded member, then every true church in the country should break fellowship with church B unless it can be proven that church A was wrong in the exclusion. It amazes me how men talk about church authority, but when they have the chance of gaining a new member, the church seems to always be wrong. Usually we do not even check with the church. We just believe the excluded member. If we would cease to fellowship with churches, pastors and members of churches who receive or use excluded members in their services, then perhaps restoration would come about. If church A shows disrespect for one sister church, she is showing disrespect

for the doctrine of church authority and should be excluded from fellowship in sister churches until things are made right. Is it that necessary that we have certain preachers at our conferences? Is it that necessary that we preach at other conferences and fellowship with other churches, that we totally ignore the sins of that church and pastor? I just do not understand. Christ's church is the most important institution on the face of this earth. It is treated so shabbily by some of our so called sister churches. You want other churches to show respect for your church but in order to gain a member or keep a friend, you will compromise. I believe that fellowship should be broken with church A by all knowing churches. They should be rebuked for their action. God forbid that we continue to ignore church authority. I would urge churches and pastors to be careful about who you have preach at your conferences. I would not have a man preach who knowingly showed no respect for church authority. As preachers, we should also beware of where we preach. Let us not insult the authority of a true church of Christ just to be a guest speaker somewhere. It is not too late. Just because things have been done wrong in the past, does not mean they must continue so. May God help us to have the courage and convictions to stand for church authority no matter what the cost. May God bless you all.

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Certainly Church A owes Church B respect and an apology

if she truly believes in church authority. The offended church should contact the offender at once and seek to set things right. Church A owes Church B no less than an explanation of why she has behaved as she has. If the first approach yields no settlement, then a second approach with witnesses should be attempted. If this yields no settlement of whatever kind, and Church A remains obstinate, or insensitive to the situation, there can be not but a break in fellowship.

Assuming that Churches A, B, and C are all churches of like faith and order, Church C should not, cannot, ignore what has been done and simply go on as if nothing has happened. Church C and all other churches of like faith and order must be made aware of exactly what has happened and what has been done to try and rectify the matter. Once they are fully aware and understand exactly the situation, they have no choice, but to shun, or censure fellowship with Church A in some way. All churches should let Church A know that rectification must come about, or broken fellowship must result.

I am aware that love for pastors and churches makes many hesitate about what is needful in a situation such as this, but I don't see what else can be done. Friendship, love for a church should never be an excuse for not seeking what is right. I am amazed that repentance, a desire toward harmony, and an absence of pride are so often preached, but rarely practised. May God give us peace, love, and harmony instead of splintering and alienation. Roman 12:8.

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If I understand the question correctly, you are asking if churches should respect the authority of other churches by honouring their discipline exercised against one of their own members: and, if we are going to have church to church respect for authority, should it not involve not only church "C", but also church "D" to church "X"? Of course there are too many, (even one is too many) churches who will not respect another church in anything because they are more interested in self gain than harmony among their sister churches.

I have worked in the construction business most of my adult

life. I have worked on both union and non-union jobs. My dad started out in the coal mining industry working under some of the most horrible conditions that you could imagine. Many who read this article know what I am talking about. Around the turn of the century laborers began to try and do something about the abuse that they received from company owners by organizing themselves. However, as we know now, the organizing of unions did not solve all of their problems, or even most of the problems; but please understand that if--IF everyone had stuck together, it would have worked. Please do not misunderstand my illustration here. I am in no wise advocating, nor do I approve of any form of organizational union for churches. Obviously that does not work.

Here is the point of my illustration. I believe that most of our kind of churches agree, at least in theory, that all churches should respect the authority of other sister churches; and obviously, if everyone stuck together, we would not be having to answer this question. However, the reality is, that some do and some do not. If I were to guess, I would say that there are more that do not than do. My question is, Where do you draw the line? If church "A" shows disrespect to church "B", and church "C" ignores the matter by fellowshiping with church "A", what should the attitude of church "D" be toward church "C"? Furthermore, what should the attitude of church "E" be if church "D" ignores the matter and fellowships with church "C"; and what should be the attitude of church "F", etc., etc., etc.? Beloved, I am not trying to be facetious or sarcastic or funny. I am only trying to be realistic and examine some of the necessary consequences in respect to church authority. Please do not misunderstand; I believe in church authority and try to respect others in that. Those of you who know me and the church that I pastor, know that that is true.

There is another question that I must ask concerning this issue. If after thorough investigation, (I emphasize the word thorough), church "A" does not agree with the discipline of church "B" against their member, and takes that member into their membership, based on the findings of their "thorough" investigation, should churches "B" and all other churches break fellowship with church "A"? Would such action constitute disrespect for church authority? Can churches "A"- "Z" disagree on such matters and remain friends?

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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

*What do you think of a preacher who says there are absolutely no grounds for divorce and remarriage, yet has divorced and remarried members in his church?*

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There is a Scripture which says, "...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). If we do something and our hearts are not in it, that is, our conscience does not approve of it, how can we say that we are doing it of faith? We would be doing wrong; it would be sin. If I were to perform a wedding ceremony and one or the other of the couple had been unscripturally divorced, how could I perform the ceremony with a good conscience, seeing or believing that one of them had no grounds to remarry? How could I set my seal of approval on the marriage? How could I perform the ceremony in faith? If I could not do it in or by faith then it would be sin. I could in no way perform such a wedding ceremony in faith, because it would be against my better judgment.

How could a minister be exercising faith in doing something that he was convinced that should not be done? Why would he be a party in something that he did not believe was right? If am doing something that my conscience does not approve of, then I ought not to do that thing.

We read in James 4:17, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The sin of omission is a sin of leaving something undone that we know that is a good thing to do. The opposite is true. If we know something that is being done is wrong and we do it anyway, then this is a sin of commission. One is as bad as the other. The committing of a known act that should not be done is equally as bad as omitting something that should be done.

If a minister performs a ceremony of a couple that does not

have grounds to be married, then he is committing a known sin. He knows to do good and he is not doing good in performing a deed that ought not to be performed. He knows better, or at least he says that he does, in saying that they have no right to be divorced or to remarry.

A man who says that there is no grounds for divorce and remarriage and then goes ahead and marries those who have been divorced, is inconsistent. He is performing that which he says that he is convinced in his heart should not be done. Shall we do evil, that good may come?

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We are living in a day when preachers, that is, some preachers, will preach one thing and practice another. There are some who will preach strong on church authority, but will use or receive excluded members in their church. There are some that will preach on the women's place in the church in Bible Conferences, but, will never practice this in their own churches. James 1:8 says, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." A man who will say one thing and practice another is soon to lose respect. I have heard men say when asked what some one believed would say, "I don't know, I haven't talked to him today." Beloved, it pays to be stable, unmoved; then everyone will know what we believe and can quote us without worrying if they quoted us wrong.

I think that a preacher who says there are absolutely no grounds for divorce and remarriage, yet has divorced and remarried members in his church is a hypocrite, this goes for the other ones that I have mentioned. How could anyone have any confidence

in a man or a church that is double-minded? There is a lie caught up in this somewhere, and God hates liars.

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"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife" (Deut. 24:1, 2). In the beginning of this verse a man takes a wife, and marries her. The joining of a man and a woman began when God formed Eve to be with Adam. The two became as one in the eyes of God. "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matt. 19:6). This is the moral position of marriage established by God, and it remained unchanged until the time of Moses. There may have been violations of this position by man, but the position of God did not change relative to marriage. One man, one wife, etc.

Moses had to deal with the problem when the wife began to find no favour in the eyes of the husband. He found some uncleanness in her. That uncleanness was dealt with by Moses from a legal standpoint. The law said that the husband could give his wife a bill of divorcement. Divorce is the legal and formal dissolution of a marriage. Divorcement is the act of carrying out that legal and formal separation. It is the disuniting of that

which was once united. Now as to the uncleanness in the divorce, it can come from only one thing, fornication. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9).

Between verses seven and nine we are given the reason for the change in marriage by the giving of a divorce. "They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but in the beginning it was not so." The change came about, not because of a change in God, but because of the hardness of the hearts of men.

Going back to Deuteronomy 24, we see the establishment of marriage, the disannulling of the marriage, the only reason for the divorcement, and the result that stems from the husband sending the wife out of his house. When the divorce has taken place, for the proper and only reason, the one that is divorced may go and be another man's wife.

There are some other aspects of divorce that we will not have space to examine. Can the wife divorce the husband in the same manner? What about the problem of abandonment that Paul deals with in I Corinthians 7?

The Scriptures that we have used, in my opinion, show conclusively that there are grounds for divorce and remarriage. If there are some that deny these grounds, then they have a problem either with understanding what the Word of God says, or because of prevailing circumstances in their church they wish to overlook what is clearly taught.

## THOSE

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Bible teaches on this subject.

"For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever..." (Psa. 37:28). If a saved person can be lost again, how can it be said, "they are preserved for ever"? "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"

(Jn.3:16). This verse, which is so twisted and mis-used by Arminians, teaches that the believer has everlasting life and will never perish.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life...." (Jn.3:36). Oh, I love this verse for assurance and for security. It does not say that if he holds out faithful to the end, he will then receive everlasting life. It says that the believer hath (present tense, right now) everlasting life. If the saved person has everlasting life, how then could he lose it and go to hell? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life" (Jn.5:24). Many men say that the believer can lose his salvation and come again into condemnation and go to hell. Jesus said this could never be. Why won't men believe what the Bible teaches on this subject?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (Jn. 6:47). This is the chapter that clinched this matter for me; and the best I can now remember, this is the verse that settled the matter to my soul forever. How can a man question the double "verily" of Jesus Christ and teach that the believer does not have everlasting life? But many do this.

Now, my favorite Scripture on the subject, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (Jn.10:27-29). The man who believes a saved person can lose his salvation just does not believe this Scripture. Jesus said He gave them eternal life, and that they should never perish. Men say they can perish; Jesus says they shall not; which do you believe? How anyone can even pretend to believe this Scripture and not believe eternal security is beyond me. Oh, how precious it is to know that one has eternal life, that one can never be lost again, that one is sure for heaven. How little is that god that cannot hold onto his own. We are as safe and secure as the hand of the Father

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## FORUM I

(Continued from Page 4)

Perhaps instead of answering the first question, I have raised more questions, but so be it. Just maybe it is time we began to discuss this matter of church authority openly, in love among the brethren. Perhaps it is time we started making churches accountable for their disrespect by all other churches sticking together. Perhaps it is time churches "A"- "Z" started communicating with one another. Perhaps it is time we began to seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit instead of being so selfish and eager to take someone into our membership without question. Perhaps on the other hand, we should be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water by disfellowshipping another church before doing some investigation into a situation. Perhaps we should not be too quick to shoot before asking some questions. Thank you for your question.

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There is much said in the Scripture concerning the discipline of church members. Christ told the church which He had just organized that if a member "neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17). That is, the fellowship of the church was to be withdrawn from that one. The church at Rome was told, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). The church at Corinth was told, "not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat" (I Cor. 5:11). It was said to the church of the Thessalonians, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw

yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly; and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thes. 3:6).

From these passages we see that the Lord's churches are commanded to withdraw fellowship from those who walk contrary to the Word of God. When a church does this, it is approved by the Lord Himself, for He told the first church, "Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

Now in regard to the question, if church B has excluded an unruly member, that action is approved in heaven. Where, may I ask, does that place church A if she receives or uses the excluded one? Has she not received or used one who is outside the church and one whom God said He would judge? "But they that are without God judgeth" (I Cor. 5:13). If church C ignores what church A is doing, is she not just as guilty as A? I believe that II John 11 could be applied to Church C, "For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

## THOSE

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and the hand of the Son can make us. It will take a power greater than their's to take us from them, and there is no greater power.

Now look at this great Scripture that should convince any believer in the Word of God of the truth of eternal security, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39). Paul was persuaded of the wonderful truth of eternal security. Oh, what a precious Scripture is this! How can anyone even pretend to believe this Scripture and still teach that a saved person can be lost again and go to hell? Such is beyond me. Again I say that those who do not believe in eternal security do not believe the Bible on this subject. Much more Scripture could be given proving eternal security, and those who do not believe in this do not believe those Scriptures.

2. Those who do not believe in eternal security do not know where they are going to spend eternity. It is absolutely impossible to believe that one can lose

his salvation, and still believe that one can know he is going to heaven. Of course, if one is truly saved, he will go to heaven; but if he does not believe eternal security, he cannot know this.

Some who believe that salvation can be lost are very foolish, even absurd, as to this point. I talked with a Campbellite preacher in this city. I told him that he did not, and could not, know he was going to heaven. He insisted that he did know he was going to heaven; how utterly stupid and absurd. I asked him if he believed one could lose his salvation. He insisted that this was the truth, and that he did believe this. I pointed out to him that, if this were true, he might lose his salvation and go to hell. He still insisted that he knew he was going to heaven. How can you prove anything to a man who will not face the logical, even necessary, consequences of what he says? If you do not believe eternal security, I guess you could know that you are saved at the present moment; but you absolutely cannot know that you will be saved the next moment, the next day, the next week, and cannot know you will still be saved when you die. You cannot know you are going to heaven.

My Dad was a Holy Roller preacher. I truly hope he was saved, and somewhat believe this. I was at his funeral. A Holy Roller preacher who had not seen Dad for five years or more said that he hoped that when his time came to die he would be as ready as Brother Wilson was. How foolish. He had not seen Dad in some time. How did he know that Dad had not lost his salvation since the last time this man saw Dad? These people will not face the necessary consequences of what they believe. If you don't believe Eternal Security, you cannot know where you will spend eternity. This was a matter that greatly troubled my soul when I was a Holy Roller. This is why I say that the second greatest blessing God ever gave me was when He showed me I was "Once Saved, Always Saved," that I was sure for heaven. Praise the Lord.

3. Those who do not believe Eternal Security desperately need to formulate, clarify, and state a doctrine as to sin and the losing of salvation. They need to formulate a doctrine as to: 1. Which sins one can commit and still be saved. 2. Which sins one can commit which will cause him to lose his salvation. Very few of them have ever really faced and dealt with this problem.

Of course, Holy Rollers, who believe in sinless perfection, have a semblance of a doctrine as to this matter. They claim to live above sin, and that if one does sin, he will lose his salvation.

However, they will not really face up to this doctrine. I have known many who would preach sinless perfection. But I have never met the person who, when I asked him or her point blank, "Do you live sinlessly perfect?" would say he did. I met one recently in the book store who almost said this. He said he had not sinned that day, but did finally admit that he had sinned a time or two since he got saved.

People who teach sinless perfection will not face: 1. The Bible on the subject. 2. Their own experience. 3. Their observation of others. Further, people who teach sinless perfection usually make their own definition of what is sin. They make mistakes, but they do not sin. They do not do things willfully that they know are wrong when they do them. Of course, they do this, but they try to bolster their doctrine by defining sin in such a way. Well, this is not a discourse on the heresy of sinless perfection, but I just use this to point out that Holy Rollers do have, or think they have, a doctrine as to the sins that cause one to lose his salvation.

But most people who believe you can lose salvation do not even pretend to believe in sinless perfection. Yet, they have no doctrine as to the matter of sin and losing salvation. I have asked many of them: 1. What sins can you commit and stay saved? 2. What sins, if you commit them, will cause you to lose your salvation? They will not even attempt to answer this question. It looks to me like this would be a very important matter to them. It looks to me like, if one believed he could lose his salvation (what could be a more important subject that knowing how you could lose this?) that he would want to know what would cause him to lose it. I cannot think of anything that should be more important to one than this. Yet, it seems that they never even consider this matter. I say again that those who do not believe in eternal security should formulate a doctrine as to what sins will not cause you to lose salvation, and what sins will cause this.

4. Those who do not believe Eternal Security are not like David. When David committed the terrible sins of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, he was greatly grieved over his sins and repented sincerely and deeply thereof; but even then he knew that he had not lost his salvation, for he prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation...." (Psa. 51:12)- He had lost the joy of salvation. He was greatly burdened over his sin. He earnestly desired that the Lord

would forgive his sin, and that he would be restored to sweet fellowship with the Lord; but he did not pray to be saved again, for he knew that he had not lost his salvation.

"...and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Psa.23:6). David was not a Hardshell heretic, for he knew that he was saved. Also, he was not a "Falling from Grace" heretic, for he knew that he was saved forever and was sure for heaven. The person who does not believe in eternal security can not truthfully say what David did.

When the baby that was born of David's adultery with Bathsheba died, David said, "...I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (II Sam.12:23). David knew that his baby was saved and in heaven (I enter not now into the question of a difference here before and after the resurrection of Christ). David knew that he, himself, was saved, would stay saved, and would go to be where his son already was. People who do not believe in eternal security do not and cannot know that they will see their loved ones who died in the Lord ever again. They are not like David.

5. Those who do not believe in eternal security are not like Paul. I have already given Romans 8:38-39 where Paul said he knew that nothing could separate him from the Love of God in Christ Jesus. "...I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim.1:12). What a wonderful verse of blessed assurance of eternal salvation. If Paul had believed he could lose his salvation, he could have never written this. Listen, Paul had committed the matter of his eternal salvation into the hands of the Lord. I wonder where these people who believe salvation can be lost have placed their hope and confidence. If your staying saved is in your hands, you are doomed without hope. If your staying saved is in the hands of the Lord, you are as safe, and safe forever, as the hands of God can keep you. Where is your hope? Where is your trust? Where is your confidence?

"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (II Tim.4:18). If Paul had believed that he could lose his salvation and go to hell, could he have written these wonderful words?

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# THE GRACE OF THE TRINITY IN THE SALVATION OF THE ELECT

by John Bunyan  
(1628-1688)  
Part I-Of The  
Father's Grace

"...by grace are ye saved..." (Eph. 2:8). How we are saved by the grace of the Father. Now this will I open unto you thus:

1. The Father by His grace hath bound up them that shall go to heaven in an eternal decree of election: and here, indeed, as was showed at first, is the beginning of our salvation (II Tim. 1:9), and election is reckoned not the Son's act, but the Father's-- "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world..." (Eph. 1:3,4). Now this election is counted an act of grace--"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5).

2. The Father's grace ordaineth and giveth the Son to undertake for us our redemption. The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world--"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;...That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:7; 2:7; I John 4:14; John 3:16; verses 32,33; 12:49).

3. The Father's grace giveth us to Christ to be justified by His righteousness, washed in His blood, and saved by His life. This Christ mentioneth, and tells us it is His Father's will that they should be safe-coming at the last day, and that He had kept them all the days of His life, and they shall never perish (John 6:37-39; 17:2, 12).

4. The Father's grace giveth the kingdom of heaven to those that He hath given to Jesus Christ-- "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

5. The Father's grace provideth and layeth up in Christ, for those that He hath chosen, a sufficiency of all spiritual blessings, to be communicated to them at their need, for their preservation in the faith, and faithful perseverance through this life: "...not according to our works, but

according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3,4).

6. The Father's grace saveth us by the blessed and effectual call that He giveth us to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1:9; Gal. 1:15).

7. The Father's grace saveth us by multiplying pardons to us, for Christ's sake, day by day--"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

8. The Father's grace saveth us by exercising patience and forbearance towards us all the time of our unregeneracy (Rom. 3:24).

9. The Father's grace saveth us by holding of us fast in His hand, and by keeping of us from all the power of the enemy--"My Father," said Christ, "which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:29).

10. What shall I say? The Father's grace saveth us by accepting our persons and services, by lifting up the light of His countenance upon us, by manifesting His love unto us, and by sending His angels to bring us to Himself, when we have finished our pilgrimage in this world.

## THOSE

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Of course not.

Oh, I praise God for eternal security. It is a very precious truth of God's Word. I feel sorry for those, (many such are truly saved), who do not believe this truth. Of course, if they are truly saved, they are eternally saved; but they miss much blessedness, joy, and assurance by not believing this truth. Continued next issue, God willing.

## CURSE

(Continued from Page 1)

person need experience to make him a stranger in this world is, the birth from above. The adjectives "stranger" and "elect" are used synonymously in Peter's salutation of his first epistle, and

in the generic or broad sense refer to the people of God in or out of the church in every place and ensuing time.

This assertion is diametrically opposed to the position of the New Lighters; their contention is, "Everything written or spoken by Divine inspiration was and is spoken to people in church capacity." I would much rather try and find the grave of Moses than try and prove every word of the New Testament was spoken to Baptist churches exclusively. I cannot believe the shepherds in the fields who received the glad tidings of Christ's birth from angels were in church capacity (Luke 2:8-11). We allow there is much in I Peter which applies to the church only, but to say all therein applies exclusively to people in church capacity is to border on absurdity.

A father away from his wife and children may write home a letter, and may address the most of his words to his wife, but if there is a single admonition, exhortation, or instruction given to the children, then the father's words must be considered a family letter. There is much in I Peter which applies directly to the church, or Bride of Christ, then too, there is much that is applicable to all Christians. This in no way infringes on the glorious fact that the Lord's church is the "...pillar and ground of the truth."

The commission given the church by her Head, Jesus Christ, presupposes a hearing of the truth contained therein by people outside the church. All of God's sheep hear His regenerative voice, and some while as yet unbaptized are caused to see the importance of church membership and that baptism is necessary thereto. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would cause more unbaptized saved people to see this God-glorifying truth, and submit thereto.

W.A. Jarrell said in that monumental book authored by him, entitled, "Baptist Church Perpetuity or History", Pages 470-471, "With Christian love to all blood-washed souls with joyful recognition of the broken and mixed fragments of truth held by others and the good fruits they bear, let us work and pray for the blessed time when all others have planted themselves on the whole truth and nothing but the truth as it is plainly in the New Testament."

Spiritual truth outside of the Lord's church is at best fragmentary, but it is, whatever the measure, truth. To say the church is the repository of truth does not mean all spiritual truth is absolutely shut up in the church, but that all authority for the official handling of Bible truth is restricted to the church. The church

receives divine truth by Holy Spirit revelation, and in obedience to the commission enjoined, the church proclaims the truth to the world. To contend that none can receive the Word of God except those in church capacity would limit the membership of the church to the original church Christ organized out of the disciples of John the Baptist.

A church which receives gospel truth and does not disseminate it will soon be afflicted with the Sardis spirit, it may have a name that it lives, but the Lord knows that it is dead (Rev. 3:1). There is an inviolable law, a healthy organism will reproduce itself. Thus it is with the Lord's churches, they make disciples, baptize them, and in due season reproduces itself by organizing new churches out of them. It is readily seen that preaching the gospel to lost sinners, and the perpetuity of the church are inseparably connected.

Ephesians 3:21 says: "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." The words of this text should serve to buoy up any church that has a faltering spirit, but let us not press the text beyond measure, and try and make it say what it does not say. It does not teach that all of God's glory is without exception shut up in the church. While I am convinced there is nothing in the whole universe that even comes close to bringing as much glory to God as His blood-purchased church, nay, not even the elect angels in heaven, yet, I recognize the fact, the Bible teaches that all creation exists primarily for the glory and pleasure of God (Rev. 4:11). Hell redounds to the glory of God even as heaven does, and it will ultimately be seen that the devil and his rebellion was governed by God's determination to glorify Himself.

It does not demean the ordinance of baptism to acknowledge there are some saved people on the outside of a New Testament church who feebly, but spiritually glorify God. A man asks, "Do you believe a person can go to heaven without being a member of a New Testament church?" I answer with an emphatic "Yes." But go on to add that I also believe a man can ride a bicycle from New York to California, but he will be more tired on arrival than the man who took the jet airplane.

It is being experimentally accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6) that gives the believer the initial strength to serve and glorify God. Their original vitality may be minimal, but it is honest. They are babes, but they are babes in Christ. A case in point is the demoniac of Gadara, out of whom

the Lord cast the legion of demons (Mark). See him sitting, clothed and in his right mind, desiring to follow the Lord. A person in their right mind will desire to follow the Lord and this desire glorifies God. The advocates of the doctrine of the exclusive priesthood of the church are sincere, and are zealous in their efforts to preserve the doctrinal and moral purity of the church but the doctrine has had an antithetical affect.

The doctrine of the exclusive priesthood of the church aborts the history and heritage of the true church, for its roots are in the slime bed of Romanism, and is therefore a curse to the blood-soaked history of true Baptists.

There is no priestly distinction in the New Testament between believers in the church and believers out of the church. It was almost two hundred years after the canon of Scripture was closed that the erroneous distinction was originated. It gained great impetus with the coming of the Roman Catholic Church and was shut up in that harlot system until Campbellism came along.

There is a pure line of Baptist history advocating the priesthood of all believers running all the way back to the apostles, and forward from the apostles through Polycarp who established the church at the foot of the Tiber. From Polycarp, forward through the Novatians, Montanists, Paulicans, Donatists, Henricans, Anabaptist, and on to the Baptists of England, represented by men like Kiffin and McClaren, then across the Atlantic to America where we find the Landmarkers of Philadelphia owning the priesthood of all believers, in which place they said, "This office of Mediator between God and man is proper only to Christ...and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof transferred from Him to any other" (Philadelphia Confession of Faith).

The other stream of history, that of the exclusive priesthood of the church, will find its infamous links in Campbellism, Roman Catholicism, and on down to the spiritualism of Origen and Clement of Alexandria. Origen, Clement, and Cyprrianus were instrumental in perpetuating the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, and they laid the groundwork upon which the despotic hierarchy of Roman Catholicism was built.

Men like Origen, Clement, and Augustine are not to be trusted as

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## CURSE

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Scriptural guides. Origen, straining to win a debate, became reckless, and said, "Noah's ark was twenty-five miles long, and three-quarters of a mile wide" (The Harmony of Science and Scripture, p.212, H. Rimmer). Augustine said, "I would not believe the New Testament if the church did not command me to" (Baptist Church Perpetuity and History, Jarrell, Introduction, p.11). Another of the Origen, Clement, and Augustine stripe, Loyola, founder of the Baptist hating Jesuits, said, to his students, "If you see a black cow in the field, you know it is black, but if the church says it is white, then you know it is white."

The doctrine of the Priesthood of the church leads toward such dangerous errors as infallibility of the church, and private interpretation of Scripture. In the introduction to Jarrell's book (ibid), W.W. Everts, said, "Baptists have always insisted not only on holy ministry...but also on the ministry of all believers" (pg. 9). The witness of Baptist history is overwhelmingly against the theory of an exclusive priesthood of the church. The Old London (1644) Confession of Faith--Particular Baptists of England, says that Christ gave the "Priesthood to His elect, namely, to the subduing and taking away of their sins to their justification and adoption of sons...strengthening in all their conflicts against Satan, the world, the flesh" (Art. 19, recorded in Baptist Confessions of Faith, Lumpkin, pg. 163).

The doctrine of an exclusive priesthood of the church places a curse on the aggregate body of Christ.

It has brought division within the ranks of true Baptist churches. There is nothing in my years as a Baptist that has polarized and split the unity of Baptist churches as the doctrine of the priesthood of the church.

This division has generated an attitude of superiority and bitterness with some, and disfellowship and isolationism are becoming the order of the day. The cause of division is chargeable to the priesthood brethren, for every one until recently held to and preached the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer. The Lord does not look with favor upon those who divide His churches (Prov. 6:16-19).

The priesthood brethren have been the aggressors. They have steadfastly propagated the priesthood doctrine in books, church papers, and have been most vo-

ciferous in presenting it from local church and conference pulpits.

However, all the blame does not lie with our church priesthood brethren, part of the guilt must be borne by sovereign grace Baptists who believe in the priesthood of believers. Our inaction and silence in the face of this error has been subversive to the cause of Christ and His churches. The silence of Baptists who take variance with the church priesthood doctrine may be construed as approval of the doctrine. Therefore, it is past time that those New Testament Baptists who disagree with the doctrine, let their voices be heard, and their disapprobation be known. Ecclesiastical affiliation between the two schools is at this time acutely abbreviated, and the only hope of restoring the great fellowship we once experienced is to Biblically disallow the position, and to take a firm and uncompromising stand against it. Such a stand may eventuate in a total break in spiritual intercourse with those we love in the church priesthood camp, but this would be a small price to pay to prevent further erosion of the Lord's churches.

Let us, while opposing the church priesthood error not go to the other extreme, and grant Arminian Baptist churches ecclesiastical equality with the Lord's churches. To do so would be a far greater evil, yea, it would be any adulteration of all church truth. This is the allegation already brought against us by the priesthood brethren, the charge is not only untrue, but is ridiculous in the light of Baptist history, and the contemporary practices of landmark Baptists. The landmark Baptist doctrine of the priesthood of the believer does not give any credence to the universal invisible theory of the church. On the contrary, our kind of landmarkism has done more in refuting this heresy than all Catholics and priesthooders combined.

The doctrine of the exclusive priesthood of the church is in the true light, unitized sacradotalism, and the view that baptism is the means of induction into the priesthood is at least a distant cousin to Roman Catholic sacramentarianism. The error, if not corrected, will be the mother of ecclesiastical bigotry, as with Roman Catholics and Campbellites, and the antagonism born of this bigotry, if not providentially hindered, will create an impassable and permanent gulf between the divergent churches. God forbid!

The doctrine of the exclusive priesthood of the church places an undue hardship and curse on the new convert and unbaptized believer.

One church priesthood luminary writes; "All glory must

come through the church...there is no glory outside of the church...then no believer outside of the church could bring glory to the name of Jesus" (Austin Fields-The Comforter, October 1974). In support of this contention, Ephesians 3:21 is quoted, but this text does not teach that all glory resides in the church. I agree and preach that there is no ecclesiastical glory to be found outside of a properly constituted Baptist church. However, there are born-again people beyond the perimeter of a New Testament Baptist church who do, spiritually and by design, glorify God.

I love the Baptist church, and no other. I love her ordinances and order of function. Baptism cannot be performed, nor the Lord's Supper observed outside the official assembly of a Baptist church. Nor can any church function with the favor of God except a Baptist church. Simply, no organized church can ecclesiastically glorify God, lest it be a Baptist church, but there are saved individuals in false and heretical churches (Rev. 18:4; I Cor. 6:17), who, while as yet ignorant of the ill state of their church, will one day, we hope and pray, be awakened to the fact and become true Baptists. In doing so, they will glorify God by renouncing their false church, they will glorify God by making application for membership in a New Testament Baptist church, and these two actions precede baptism and greatly glorify God.

The watery grave of Campbellism does not make the subject a Christian, nor do the vestments of Romanism make the wearer thereof a priest with God. Neither does the symbolic water of a Baptist baptism make one, or even help make one a priest with God. It is joyously owned that baptism is the door to infinitely greater service unto God, yea, it is the door to bridal status, but to make it the door to all acceptable service is to put a dangerous strain on its hinges and is to warp the door.

Did not your sweetheart ever do anything pleasing to you before you became engaged to be married? Affirmed. So it is with those whom the Lord calls to a betrothal relationship with Him. They, prior to putting on the spiritual engagement ring (baptism), were in some measure pleasing to the Lord. Then when you carried your beloved bride across the marriage threshold what in expressible joy you both experienced. So it is, with the Lord's precious bride, the marriage consummated in heaven, He carries her across the threshold and through the door from heaven to the millennial earth where she shall reign with Him, serve Him, and bring incomparable glory to

Him (Rev. 21:9-11).

When one man, such as a Catholic priest, or when ten men, or any given number of people take to themselves the connotation, "Official Priesthood," they dangerously infringe on that office which eternally and exclusively belongs to Christ. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5). The Christian's entry into the most holy place is by the blood of Christ, and not by baptism, be it ever so correct. Baptism in its place and purpose is a most cherished ordinance, and landmark Baptists are to be found only in a New Testament Baptist church, and the purpose of baptism is to symbolically manifest the gospel of saving grace, and for admission of the subject to church membership.

Intimacy with Christ begins with baptism, but interest in God begins with the new birth. It is Holy Spirit cultivation of this interest that leads to baptism and the Lord's Supper. The believer comes to the church through Christ and not to Christ through the church, as Romanism and Protestantism teaches. It is always blood before water, and it is always God-pleasing evidence of salvation before baptism. The

God-called pastor will, without exception, ask the baptismal candidate about his or her salvational experience, and when the candidate manifests a quickened spirit and a desire to serve Christ in His blood-bought church, does that not please and glorify God? The church in this case is not acting as a mediator between the candidate and God, but as a mediator between the man and his baptism. No earthly medium can intercede between God and man, not even the Bride of Christ, but Jesus only (I Tim. 2:5).

Some of the New Lighters allow that unbaptized saved persons can pray acceptably with God, but I have not heard nor read where any will allow that the petitioner can use his granted request to glorify God. This is equal to a physician giving his patient medicine in an inaccessible container, or to a loving father giving his crippled child a pair of crutches and forbidding him to use them. Inconsistent? Yes, highly.

The church does not have an absolute exclusive or monopoly on all true religious expression. There is a measure of Christian work for the believer outside of the church. The unbaptized Christian father and husband can

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## THE PRISON

by Tina Valpe

I'm trapped in a prison,  
Oftimes, a very painful prison.  
My chains do not allow much freedom  
I cannot run, jump, or even bend.  
I cannot work as I did in the past,  
The hard work I now long to do.  
Yet, as I ponder the plight of some,  
I realize I'm in a better prison than they.  
I cannot wallow in self pity,  
Nor ignore the needs of others.  
I cannot let my spirit be cast down,  
Nor can I envy those who are less confined.  
Neither can I be apathetic  
To the reality of their eternal destiny.  
You see, my prison is my body,  
And my chains a thorn in the flesh.  
I know I shall someday be released,  
Through glorious rapture or sweet death.  
Now do I fully realize  
That my body isn't really all of me.  
It's just a temporary dwelling place  
That houses my immortal soul,  
I know I'm destined for a better place,  
Thanks to my blessed Saviour.  
Who chose to bestow eternal life  
Upon one so unworthy and unclean.  
Because of God's infinite mercy and grace,  
My immortal soul will live in eternal bliss,  
Until my release, I must watch and pray,  
And humbly tell others of His grace.  
Yes, I'm still locked in a prison,  
But only my Maker has the key.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

--Romans 8:18



## STUDIES IN JUDGES

Chapter 3:7-31

by C.T. Everman

Chapter 3:6 concludes that we might call the introduction to the book of Judges. After giving us a review of the children of Israel under the leadership of Joshua, we were then given a preview of the conditions in Israel as they were during the time of the judges. The generation of Joshua faithfully served the Lord, "And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua,--" (Jud. 2:7). But the next generation, "...knew not the LORD..." that is, they did not acknowledge Him as their Lord. As a result, the LORD no longer drove out the enemy before them (2:21). Instead of driving out the enemy, Israel was content to coexist with them. This led to intermarriage with the Canaanites which God had strictly forbidden. The next step downward was they completely "...forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth" (Jud. 2:13). This brought chastisement from the Lord. This chastisement was that God "...sold them into the hands of their enemies round about..." (2:14). Upon their repentance, "...the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them" (2:16). This cycle repeated itself over and over as we see as we study the book, each generation "corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them... they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way" (2:19).

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forget the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years" (3:7).

This was the chastisement which God had told them would be visited upon them if they disobeyed Him. They served this king, whose name means "cushan of double wickedness." He may have received this name because of his cruel treatment of those who were under his control, for eight years Israel was under the yoke of this king. They must have been eight long hard years for Israel.

"And when the children of Israel cried unto the

LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother" (Jud. 3:9).

Finally, the children of Israel came to realize that they had done wrong. What a terrible thing they had done in turning from the God of their fathers and turned to the gods of the Canaanites. They had indeed learned that the way of the transgressor is hard. By turning from the LORD their God they had brought upon themselves curses instead of blessings (Deu. 28:1-12). Coming to their senses the people repented and called upon the Lord. Their distress drove them to call upon the Lord. Does not distress, and trouble do the same for us? God heard their cry of distress and in His love and compassion for His people He raised up a deliverer, "...Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother." Othniel, Israel's first judge is considered by some to be Israel's most outstanding judge. It is interesting to note that there is nothing negative said about him. Being a nephew or, as some believe, a younger brother of Caleb, he had one of the greatest of role models and had, no doubt, been greatly influenced by that one who "...wholly followed the LORD" (Deu. 1:36). Othniel was an experienced warrior. As a young man he had stepped forward when Caleb asked for a volunteer to fight the Anakim at Debir. There he won a great battle and in doing so was given Caleb's daughter as wife. Now, some 30 years later the Lord calls him to lead Israel again into battle.

"And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim" (Jud. 3:10).

The key to Othniel's success in battle was not because of his experience and skill as a warrior. It was the "...the Spirit of the LORD came upon him..." It was that which gave him the power to do what he could not have done without that aid. We are told that the Spirit of the Lord empowered Gideon (6:34), Jephthah (11:29), and Samson (13:25; 14:6; 15:41). This tells us all of these could not have accomplished what they did apart from the Lord. God empowered these men to perform specific tasks. This tells us that when God calls one to do a work He also gives that one the ability to do the work.

Not only did Othniel go "...out to war..." but he also "...judged Israel..." The duties of a judge was not only to lead Israel in war against their enemies but also to rule in civil matters.

"And the land had rest forty years, And Othniel the son of Kenaz died" (v. 11). Following the victory which God gave Othniel over Chushanrishathaim, Israel had peace for the next forty years. Othniel was a man who followed God faithfully in war, but he also was faithful in his judgeship in the civil affairs of the nation. That entire generation of forty years had rest. But - "...Othniel the son of Kenaz died." Othniel had brought his generation back to repentance and faith in God and they served the Lord during his lifetime, but after his death there came up a new generation which started the second cycle of Israel's departure from God.

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees. So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years" (Jud. 3:12-14).

The second cycle of apostasy began with the words, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD..." Seven times these sad words are given in the book of Judges. How true are the words of Jeremiah, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

This time God used Eglon, the king of Moab to bring chastisement upon Israel. As we study Israel's history we can see that God often used pagan kings to accomplish His purposes. In Isaiah 10:5 an Assyrian king is referred to as "...the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation." Of Cyrus the king of Persia God said, "whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him..." (Isa. 45:1). Is it not a comfort to the Christian to know that the affairs of this nation, the affairs of the world are not in the hands of men, but are in the control of a sovereign God who does all things according to His own purposes?

Eglon, the king of Moab, with his allies, the children of Ammon

and Amalek came against Israel and swept down into central Canaan, taking possession of "the city of palm trees" which was the city of Jericho. From this location, Eglon ruled over Israel for eighteen years. "But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab" (Jud. 3:15).

It took 18 years of chastisement before Israel was brought to repentance. Why did it take so long? Was it because they were so deeply involved with the pagan gods that they refused to give them up and turn to the true and living God? When they did turn to the Lord in repentance and cried unto Him, He in His mercy and grace raised up the second judge to deliver them. This time He chose a man from the tribe of Benjamin, "...Ehud the son of Gera..." It is noted that he was left-handed, which was considered a handicap in that day, yet, we see (read verses 16-25), he made use of that handicap. When Israel sent him to Eglon, the king, with a present (the tribute money) he made a dagger a cubit long, with two sides. This he placed under this raiment upon his right side (v. 10). After presenting the tribute money to the king he told him, "...I have a secret errand unto thee, O king..." (v. 19). After the king sent all out from them, Ehud went up to the king and said, "I have a message from God unto thee" and with his left hand drew the dagger from his right thigh and buried it into the king's fat belly. He then left the room locking the door behind him, and escaped while the servants waited for the king to come out (vs. 23-25).

Having escaped, Ehud went to Seirath; and from the mountain of Ephraim he blew a trumpet, calling all of the children of Israel unto him. (v. 26, 27). To the assembled men of Israel he said, "...Follow after me, for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over. And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valor; and there escaped not a man" (Jud. 3:28, 29).

From this account we can see several things about Ehud, the second judge over Israel. First we see that although he had what many considered to be a handicap (left-handed) he used that handicap

to bring about the work which God called him to do. We see that he went about his job in a well prepared way, making a dagger and hiding it under his coat. He was a brave man, for it took a brave and courageous man to do what he did. We see also that he was a man of faith, for he said to the children of Israel, "...Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand..." He had faith to believe that God had already given them the victory.

By guarding the fords of Jordan where the Moabites could cross back to their own country, they let not a man escape and there were ten thousand killed in this battle. "So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years" (v. 30). For the next 80 years Israel had rest. This was the longest period of time there was rest during the time of the judges. Had they learned the lesson which God would have them learn? It would seem that the generation of Ehud and that which followed were faithful to God at this time but we know this did not last.

And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel" (Jud. 3:31).

All the information we have concerning Shamgar, the third judge of Israel, is contained in this verse. Of what tribe he was from we are not told, nor how long he served as judge. But there are some things we can learn from this verse. The enemy this time were the Philistines, who were beginning to exercise their power over Israel. God raised up this man Shamgar to put them down. As to the name "Shamgar," it is not a Hebrew name and his father's name, Anath, is the name of the Philistine god of sex and war. Because of his name, some believe that he was not an Israelite. He may have been a son of one of the mixed marriages of an Israelite woman to a Philistine man. Regardless, God used him to deliver Israel. In the second place we know he was a farmer, for he used an ox goad to fight the Philistines. An ox goad is along pole with a sharp pointed piece of metal on one end and a blade on the other end. It was used to keep the cattle plowing in the field. In the third, place Shamgar was a brave man. For only a very brave man would face 600 men armed only with an ox goad. His courage must have come from his faith in God.

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# PRECIOUS JEWELS FROM ROMANS EIGHT

by Paul Jackson

Let's plunge a little deeper into God's great and precious chest of jewels. Another precious jewel brought from this glorious chapter is found in verse three. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3).

There is much confusion in man's theology concerning the Old Testament law. Is it good? How do those under grace treat the law? The preceding questions are answered in the Bible. God's law is good according to the Apostle Paul. He states, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12). There was nothing wrong with the law - weakness was not and is not in the law, but man with which the law had to deal was weak. Yes, he is depraved. It is through the revelation of the law that man realizes his depravity. The Apostle Paul characterizes the law as such, "...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Romans 7:7). There was a time when Paul thought he was righteous by the law, but it was the law which showed him his unrighteousness. He says, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revivified, and I died. And the commandment (law) which was ordained to life (as he was taught), I found to be unto death" (Romans 7:9-10). Listen folks, if you think you are saved by keeping the law, you need to listen to the Apostle Paul who learned differently. The law was never intended to save sinners. It points to the one who can save sinners. Listen sinner, you cannot keep the law; it is impossible. You need to trust the one who is able to keep the law for you.

God sent His own Son to live in the flesh and He kept the law of God down to the last jot and tittle. Through Christ, God's elect children are "dead to the law

by the body of Christ" -- through the presence of the Holy Spirit God's elect children are "free from the law of sin and death" -- through sovereign grace the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed (charged to) God's elect children. What a blessing! What a precious jewel! There is no other transition so great as God removing my putrefying, filthy robe of righteousness and giving me the glorious robe of righteousness of my Saviour. It is then that the "righteousness of the law" is fulfilled in His elect children.

Do you possess the precious jewel of imputed righteousness? I sure hope so. Without it you will never see heaven.

## JUDGES

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The question may be asked, What kind of man did God use to judge Israel? There was Othniel, a brave courageous man, a man of faith, one who, from a youth had observed his older brother (or uncle), who had faithfully served the Lord all the days of his life. It was from Caleb he had learned to trust the God of Israel. With this background he was the kind of man God could use. But then God called Ehud to be judge, a man who had a serious defect, yet God used that defect to His glory. Then there was Shamgar, a man from an unknown family, a family that, from his name and that of his father, may have been involved in the worship of false gods. But God used Him to bring about His purpose in delivering Israel.

The lesson we need to learn from this is that God uses different kinds of men. Regardless of their background, their station in life, or any limitations which they may have, God can use them to His glory. God uses people who depend upon Him for their strength. The Apostle Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). God can use you, He can use me; if we depend upon Him for our strength. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:29-31).

God uses people who place their faith in Him and have the

courage to exercise that faith. Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar were different in many ways but they all had one thing in common. They all had faith in God, believing His Word. God had a place for each one of them to do a particular job. God has a place for each of His children. He can use each of us if we have the faith to trust Him. Each of us may have defects, limitations; but that makes no difference with God. We must realize that God can use those limitations for His glory. Hudson Taylor, a missionary to China for 30 years, said he had learned, "God is sufficient for God's work -- God chose me because I was weak enough. God does not do His great works by large committees; He trains someone to be quiet enough and little enough, and then He uses him."

The question is not, can God use us, but is, will we trust Him to use us?

## CURSE

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pray for his family, he can profitably study the Bible, he can take his family to a New Testament church, he can assume the headship of and rearrange his family so as God will get glory and his family gladness.

A.C. Dayton said, "There are some duties which the Master requires of individual Christians, as such, and others of the church, as such" (Alien Baptism, p. 65). To say a saved person outside the church can do nothing to glorify God is to dechristianize the person. He can love God, and such love cannot long remain dormant, such love will endeavor to manifest itself by undertaking tasks for the Lord. The person's efforts will be most awkward, and minutely limited in success, but that part succeeded in will please and glorify God.

W.W. Everts says, "Union with Christ is essential to salvation, and a new life is the only evidence of that union" (Baptist Church Perpetuity and History, p. 8, W.A. Jarrell). The new life will in some way measure and manifest itself, otherwise baptism should not be administered. No Christian is called to leisure or stagnation. This being true of every saved person, how much more it is true of New Testament churches. It behooves every unbaptized believer to find the greatest outlet for the exercise of his faith in God, and a New Testament Baptist church is the answer. There is nothing that can in any wise compare to a New Testament Baptist church in granting a basis for true service unto God. For consistent development and spiritual maturity, the church is absolutely essential.

The term "sacrifice" in the pre-

sent age does not mean giving up something of value, or suffering a loss. On the contrary, it means to exercise a privilege of infinite importance, such as prayer, Scripture study, exercise of a forgiving spirit, etc. To say otherwise is to place a terrible curse on the believer. Why call the person a believer, if he does not believe some truth? If he does believe some truth, will not his spiritual freedom be in proportion to the truth he believes? And will he not manifest appreciation for his ill-deserved freedom? And will not his actions glorify God?

What strange inconsistencies even great and good men fall into when they array themselves against the Word of God. To be consistent, the church priesthood brethren would have to mark invalid, the KJV, John Bunyan's writings, and Spurgeon's works. The invaluable writings of John Gill, B.H. Carroll, along with the voluminous writings of A.W. Pink, would have to be considered void as having no proper foundation. All hymns and theological writings other than by church priesthood Baptists would have to be rejected by them as displeasing to God.

All saved people have some spiritual light, and to walk in any measure of that light is to please and glorify God. It is readily and joyously conceded that a virtuous wife brings more honor to her husband than all their children combined, but are we to say the obedience of the children is to be considered dishonoring to the father? Bearing in mind there is no neutral area or time, a person's actions either glorifies God or reproaches Him. So it is with unbaptized children of God, they in some sense honor their heavenly Father.

Questions for the church priesthood brethren:

1. Was the Centurion of whom Jesus spoke, saying "...Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Mat. 8:10), a member of the church? He was a Roman, and the church at the time was strictly Jewish.

2. Luke 17:17,18 says: "And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." Was this cleansed leper in the church at the time? Did he bring glory to God?

3. Was the Samaritan woman (John 4:39) of whom the Scripture says, "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did," a member of the church when she witnessed of Christ's Messiahship? Was she in church capacity when

Christ spoke to her?

4. Did John the Baptist do any baptizing after the church was started? If affirmed, and he hid (John 4:1-2), into what or unto what did John baptize after the church was organized? Did his baptizing glorify God?

5. Was the thief crucified on the right hand of Christ a member of the church? Negative, for he was not saved until he met Christ on the cross. Did this thief's rebuke of the other, and his petition to Christ glorify God?

6. Is this Scripture true, "Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47)? Was this Centurion a member of the church at the time? Did he glorify God?

7. Does the priesthood of the church function only when the church is in official assembly? If the answer is "Yes," then there is no priesthood except when the church is officially assembled. In which case the unbaptized believer is no worse off for the greater part of the week that a church member. If the answer is "No," then there are individual priests, and the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer is established. Otherwise, there are two kinds of acceptable priests on earth at the same time. Which horn of the dilemma will you take?

8. Can a Christian outside of a New Testament church honestly anticipate the coming of Christ? If allowed that one can, and they can (Heb. 9:28; I John 3:3), will not this anticipation lead to purification of life? Does purification of life glorify God?

9. Is the church to get all the rewards at the Bema seat of Christ? Have all martyrs for Bible truth in this age been Baptists? For those who believe the church will go through the "great tribulation," are all those martyred in the tribulation Baptists? If not, what do the "white robes" given to them signify? (Rev. 6:9-11, 12:11). Did they glorify God?

Many more questions could be asked, but I trust those asked already will suffice to show the contention that it is impossible to glorify God in any sense unless one is a scripturally baptized member of the church is pitifully untenable. Such a contention nullifies the need of evidence of salvation prior to baptism. Baptists have throughout their history contended for believer's baptism, and that belief of the Scriptures glorifies God; yet, the church priesthood doctrine contends that a person must first be in the church before he can glorify God. To make the organized and assembled church the exclusive priest of God on earth.

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## PRECIOUS JEWELS FROM ROMANS EIGHT

by Paul Jackson

This chest is so full of precious jewels that it is difficult to choose one over the other. Near the top of the pile is one that glows brighter than all the others. It is found in verse eleven. **"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you"** (Romans 8:11).

One of the great truths of the Bible is God dwelling in His children. God gives His Holy Spirit to every believer He saves. It is necessary to have the presence of His Holy Spirit in order to survive in this present evil world. Jesus said, **"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you"** (John 14:16-17). There are some precious advantages of having the Holy Spirit with you always.

Those having the Holy Spirit of God mind the things of the Spirit. This Greek word for mind means "through habit". God's children, through habit, do things by the leading of God's Holy Spirit; to the contrary, those of the flesh, through habit, do things by the leading of the sinful flesh.

Those who have the Holy Spirit are dead to sin. Sin has no more dominion over them. The Apostle Paul states, **"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace"** (Romans 6:14). As a result of sin not having dominion, saved people should realize that they are dead to sin also. It is God's Holy Spirit that convicts of sin. We should be thankful for that conviction.

Those who have the Holy Spirit will be raised from physical death in time. Jesus said, **"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all (elect) which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day"** (John 6:39). Four times in John, chapter six, Jesus states that He will raise up His children

the last day.

Can we ever doubt it? Do we still feel we don't have eternal life? **"O ye of little faith"**. There are those who teach that God's children don't have all the Spirit they need to live in this world. These false teachers have poor souls sitting and waiting on something greater. They wait for some wave of emotion to come over them so as to do the Lord's work. What a blessing these poor souls are missing.

If you are out there and know you are saved, realize today that God has given you the Holy Spirit in His entirety and you have the power to do all things.

Let me ask you a very thought-provoking question. Who is your earthly father? You might be puzzled as to why I ask this question. Well, most people think they know their earthly father better than any other person in the world, and this is probably true in most cases. Being human, I am sure your earthly father has, in some way or another, not been able to handle every situation with which he has been confronted. He has done his best in all of them, and you would not trade him for another.

But let me introduce you to the Father of the saved, who is able to handle every situation with which He is confronted. He does not do His best; He does everything perfectly. This leads us to another precious jewel from the great chest of Romans eight: the promise that all who are led by God become the sons of God. **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God"** (Romans 8:14).

There are no negatives when God deals with His children. You will readily note two great positives in the preceding verse. The first is the fact that God leads His children from the beginning, and the second is that only those God leads become sons. God does not get children any other way. He leads them! Jesus says, **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..."** (John 6:44). God's children are drawn to Him by Him. They don't, after a lot of hand raising and highly emotional pleas, out of the "clear blue" get the urge to "accept" Jesus. God's children are hand-picked. We can't help to whom we are born. Our parents couldn't hand-pick the child they wanted. If you are like me, your parents were probably ashamed of you at times. They probably thought to themselves as to how they got stuck with you. Not God! He leads His children, and every one of them He leads, He makes sons. What is there for me to boast about? All I can do is cry, **"Abba, Father."**

I love my earthly dad, but Dad, I must confess, I love my Father

the more. Every day I live, the relationship with my Father becomes sweeter and sweeter. I can't talk to my earthly dad anymore because he is not very coherent, but I can always talk to my Father, and I know He loves me because He led me to Himself to be one of His chosen sons. Hallelujah!

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leaves the individual member with limited access to God; and makes the unbaptized believer destitute of ability to please or glorify God. According to the church priesthood theory the unbaptized saved person is no better off as regarding service unto God than the unsaved person, for neither can please God.

Regeneration makes the subject experimentally a child of God, and puts him in the family of God. The family of God is not, and can never be a church in the true sense of the word. Therefore, it has no ecclesiastical authority, no teaching ordinances and no teaching officers, and has no part in the government of the church. Yet, all the moral and spiritual obligations enjoined on the baptized believer apart from church assembly are equally binding on all Christians. Prayer, Bible study, headship of the husband, stewardship of material things, even tithing, are Christian ordinances, and not exclusively church ordinances.

The church priesthood doctrine makes the church the one and only official interpreter of Scripture. The priesthood brethren contend, that with the institutional baptism of the church in the Spirit, the church became the repository of all spiritual truth, and the Spirit of truth resides only in the church. (Pg. 31, Christ In You). Paul says, **"...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"** (Rom. 8:9). Paul says that no one is saved apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Sharrell Ford says that it is by baptism that one receives the Spirit. Ford is a strong church priesthoder, and one of the first calling himself a Baptist. Ford's doctrine leaves me somewhat puzzled, for if a person receives the indwelling of the Spirit upon his church membership, i.e., baptism, and is later rightfully excluded from his church, is he not by the action of the church deprived of the indwelling of the Spirit? Is not Ford's doctrine close akin to Campbellism?

As truth has a great affinity for truth, so does error have a great affinity for error. There seems to be a general drift or trend among those who abandon the doctrine

of the pre-trib coming of Christ in the air, it appears as if there are a succession of seven doors that many of these dear brethren go through.

1. There is first, the mid-trib door.

2. Then the post-trib door becomes overwhelmingly attractive.

3. Then on through the wide door of A-millennialism.

4. A-millennialism has built into it, and necessarily so, the door of hyper-spiritualization of Scripture.

5. After having gone through the door of hyper-spiritualization of Scripture, it is easy to go through the door of church priesthood, for then the venturer can see the church in every Old Testament shadow, and every New Testament parable.

6. Then having found the church wherein the Holy Spirit exclusively dwells, and in which the Bible truth is snatched up, it becomes necessary to go through the door of anti-gospel instrumentality in regeneration. Otherwise, there is no acceptable accounting for those who are saved, and come to Baptist churches from false churches.

7. Then many go on through the terrible door of antinomianism. This article is written with the hope it will help counteract the leaven of New Lightism which is now running rampant among New Testament Baptists. It is not written nor intended to be an attack on any person or church, but it is written with prayer God will use it in some measure in the negation of the compulsion prevalent among our people to open up new tracts of doctrine.

Why neo-orthodoxy, when the old orthodoxy has served missionary Baptists so well?

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the faculties of the saints. It was meet that the contemplative should be furnished with abundant subjects for thought-Paul has supplied them; he has given to us sound doctrine, arranged in the symmetry of exact order; he has given us deep thoughts and profound teachings; he has opened up the deep things of God. No man who is inclined to reflection and thoughtfulness will be without food so long as the epistles of Paul are extent, for he feeds the soul with sacred manna. For those who predominating affections and imagination incline them to more mystic themes, John has written sentences aglow with devotion, and blazing with love. We have his simple but sublime epistles--epistles which, when you glance at them, seem in their wording to be fit for

children, but when examined, their sense is seen to be too sublime to be fully grasped by the most advanced of men. You have from that same eagle-eyed and eagle-winged apostle the wondrous visions of the Revelation, when awe, devotion and imagination may enlarge their flight, and find scope for the fullest exercise.

There will always be, however, a class of persons who are more practical than contemplative, more active than imaginative, and it was wise that there should be a James, whose main point should be to stir up their pure minds by ways of remembrance, and help them to persevere in the practical graces of the Holy Spirit. The text before me is perhaps the most practical utterance of the whole epistle. The whole epistle burns, but this ascends in flames to heaven; it is the culmination as it is the conclusion of the letter. There is not a word to spare in it. It is like a naked sword, stripped of its jewelled scabbard, and presented to us with nothing to note but its keen edge. I wish I could preach after the fashion of the text; and if I cannot, I will at least pray that you may act after the fashion of it. Downright living for the Lord Jesus is sadly wanted in many quarters; we have enough of Christian garnishing, but solid, everyday, actual work for God is what we need. If our lives, however unornamented they may be by leaves of literary or polite attainments, shall nevertheless bring forth fruit unto God in the form of souls converted by our efforts, it will be well; they will then stand forth before the Lord with the beauty of the olive tree, which consists in its fruitfulness.

I call your attention very earnestly to three matters. First, here is a special case dealt with: **"...if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him"**. While speaking of that special case, the apostle declares a general fact: **"...he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."** When I have spoken of these two points, I mean, thirdly, to make a particular application of the text-not at all intended by the apostle, but I believe abundantly justified-an application of the text to increased effort for the conversion of children.

I. First, then, there is a special case dealt with. Read the verse, and you will see that it must relate to a backslider from the visi-

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ble church of God. The words, "...if any of you.." must refer to a professed Christian. The erring one had been named by the name of Jesus, and for a while had followed the truth; but in an evil hour he had been betrayed into doctrinal error, and had erred from the truth. It was not merely that he fell into a mistake upon some lesser matter, which might be compared to the fringe of the gospel, but he erred in some vital doctrine, he departed from the faith in its fundamentals. There are some truths which must be believed; they are essential to salvation, and if not heartily accepted, the soul will be ruined. This man had been professedly orthodox, but he turned aside from the truth on an essential point. Now, in those days, the saints did not say, as the sham saints do now, "We must be largely charitable, and leave this brother to his own opinion; he sees truth from a different standpoint, and has a rather different way of putting it, but his opinions are as good as our own, and we must not say that he is in error." That is at present the fashionable way of trifling with divine truth, and making things pleasant all round. Thus the gospel is debased, and "another gospel" propagated.

I should like to ask modern broad churchmen whether there is any doctrine of any sort for which it would be worth a man's while to burn or to lie in prison. I do not believe they could give me an answer, for if their latitudinarianism be correct, the martyrs were fools of the first magnitude. From what I see of their writings and their teachings, it appears to me that the modern thinkers treat the whole compass of revealed truth with entire indifference; and, though perhaps they may feel sorry that wilder spirits should go too far in free thinking, and though they had rather they would be more moderate, yet, upon the whole, so large is their liberality that they are not sure enough of anything to be able to condemn the reverse of it as a deadly error. To them black and white are terms which may be applied to the same color, as you view it from different standpoints. Yea and nay are equally true in their esteem. Their theology shifts like the Goodwin Sands, and they regard all firmness as so much bigotry. Errors and truths are equally comprehensible within the circle of their charity. It was not in this

way that the apostles regarded error. They did not prescribe large hearted charity towards falsehood, or hold up the errorist as a man of deep thought, whose views were "refreshingly original;" far less did they utter some wicked nonsense about the probability of their living more faith in honest doubt than in half the creeds. They did not believe in justification by doubting, as our neologians do; they set about the conversion of the erring brother; they treated him as a person who needed conversion; and viewed him as a man who, if he were not converted, would suffer the death of his soul, and be covered with a multitude of sins. They were not such easy-going people as our cultured friends of the school of "modern thought," who have learned at last that the deity of Christ may be denied, the work of the Holy Spirit ignored, the inspiration of Scripture rejected, the atonement disbelieved, and regeneration dispensed with, and yet the man who does all this may be as good a Christian as the most devout believer! O God, deliver us from this deceitful infidelity, which, while it does damage to the erring man, and often prevents his being reclaimed, does yet more mischief to our own hearts by teaching us that truth is unimportant, and falsehood a trifle, and so destroys our allegiance to the God of truth, and makes us traitors instead of loyal subjects to the King of kings!

It appears from our text that this man, having erred from the truth, followed the natural logical consequence of doctrinal error, and he erreth in his life as well; for the twentieth verse, which must of course be read in connection with the nineteenth, speaks of him as "...converteth the sinner from the error of his way..." His way went wrong after his thought had gone wrong. You cannot deviate from truth without, ere one, in some measure, at any rate, deviating from practical righteousness. This man had erred from right acting because he had erred from right believing. Suppose a man shall imbibe a doctrine which leads him to think little of Christ, he will soon have little faith in Him, and become little obedient to Him, and so will wander into self-righteousness or licentiousness. Let him think lightly of the punishment of sin; it is natural that he will commit sin with less compunction, and burst through all restraints. Let him deny the need of the atonement, and the same result will follow if he acts out his belief. Every error has its own outgrowth, as all decay has its appropriate fungus. It is in vain for us to imagine that holiness will be as readily produced from erroneous as from truthful

doctrine. Do men gather grapes of thrones, or figs of thistles? The facts of history prove the contrary. When truth is dominant, morality and holiness are abundant; but when error comes to the front, godly living retreats in shame.

The point aimed at with regard to this sinner in thought and deed was his conversion the turning of him round, the bringing him to right thinking and to right acting. Alas! I fear many professed Christians do not look upon backsliders in this light, neither do they regard them as hopeful subjects for conversion. I have known a person who has erred, hunted down like a wolf. He was wrong to some degree, but that wrong has been aggravated and dwelt upon until the man has been worried into defiance; the fault has been exaggerated into a double wrong by ferocious attacks upon it. The manhood of the man has taken sides with his error because he has been so severely handled. The man has been compelled, sinfully I admit, to take up an extreme position, and to go further into mischief, because he could not brook being denounced instead of being reasoned with. And when a man has been blameworthy in his life, it will often happen that his fault has been blazed abroad, retailed from mouth to mouth, and magnified, until the poor erring one has felt degraded, and having lost all self-respect, has given way to far more dreadful sins. The object of some professors seems to be to amputate the limb rather than to heal it. Justice has reigned instead of mercy. Away with him! He is too foul to be washed, too diseased to be restored. This is not according to the mind of Christ, nor after the model of apostolic churches.

In the days of James, if any erred from the truth and from holiness, there were brethren found who sought their recovery, and whose joy it was thus to save a soul from death, and to hide a multitude of sins. There is something very significant in that expression, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth..." It is akin to that other word, "...considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted," and that other exhortation, "...let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." He who has erred was one of yourselves, one who sat with you at the communion table, one with whom you took sweet counsel; he has been deceived, and by the subtlety of Satan he has been decoyed; but do not judge him harshly; above all, do not leave him to perish unpitied. If he ever was a saved man, he is your brother still, and it should be your business to bring back the prodigal, and so to make glad

your Father's heart. Still, for all slips of his, he is one of God's children; follow him up, and do not rest till you lead him home again. And if he be not a child of God, if his professed conversion was a mistake, or a pretence, if he only made a profession, but had not the possession of vital godliness, yet still follow him with sacred importunity of love, remembering how terrible will be his doom for daring to play the hypocrite, and to profane holy things with his unhallowed hands. Weep over him the more if you feel compelled to suspect that he has been a wilful deceiver, for there is sevenfold cause for weeping. If you cannot resist the feeling that he never was sincere, but crept into the church under cover of a false profession, I say, sorrow over him the more, for his doom must be the more terrible, and therefore the greater should be your commiseration for him. Seek his conversion still.

The text gives us clear indications as to the persons who are to aim at the conversion of erring brethren. It says, "...if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him" One what? One minister? No, any one among the brethren. If the minister shall be the means of the restoration of a backslider, he is a happy man, and a good deed has been done; but there is nothing said here concerning preachers or pastors, not even a hint is given--it is left open to any one member of the church; and the plain inference, I think, is this--that every church member, seeing his brother err from the truth, or err in practice, should set himself, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to this business of converting this special sinner from the error of his way. Look after strangers by all means, but neglect not your brethren. It is the

business, not of certain officers appointed by the vote of the church thereunto, but of every member of the body of Jesus Christ, to seek the good of all the other members. Still, there are certain members upon whom in any one case this may be more imperative. For instance, in the case of a young believer, his father and his mother, if they be believers, are called upon by a sevenfold obligation to seek the conversion of their backsliding child. In the case of a husband, none should be so earnest for his restoration as his wife, and the same rule holds good with regard to the wife. So also if the connection be that of friendship, he with whom you have had the most acquaintance should lie nearest to your heart; and when you perceive that he has gone aside, you should, above all others, act the shepherd towards him with kindly zeal. You are bound to do it to all your fellow Christians, but doubly bound to do it to those over whom you possess an influence, which has been gained by former intimacy, by relationship, or by any other means. I beseech you, therefore, watch over one another in the Lord, and when ye see a brother overtaken in a fault "...ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness..." Ye see your duty; do not neglect it.

Brethren, it ought to cheer us to know that the attempt to convert a man who has erred from the truth is a hopeful one, it is one in which success may be looked for, and when the success comes, it will be of the most joyful character. Verily, it is a wandering sinner; but the joy of joys is to find the lost sheep which was once really in the fold, and has sadly gone astray. It is a

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**"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness"** (Lam. 3:22-23).

Mr. Spurgeon tells of a mother who went to the Emperor Napoleon to ask for mercy for her son. He had committed some breach of the French law. The Emperor replied, "Madam, this is the second time the boy has offended. Justice requires that he should die."

She answered, "I did not come to ask for justice. I beg for mercy."

He answered, "He does not deserve mercy."

"Sire," she said, "It would not be mercy if he deserved it. I ask for mercy."

When she put it that way, the Emperor replied, "Well, then, I will have mercy."

There can be no debate about our sinfulness and guilt. Whether or not we feel our sin or realize our guilt, the Bible states our case clearly: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). And justice demands that "...everyone shall die for his own iniquity..." (Jer. 31:30). What then must we do? We must approach Him who is the Emperor of emperors and beg for mercy. It is true that we do not deserve the Lord's mercy, but it would not be mercy if we deserved it! Sinner, there is mercy to be had, "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (Psalm 86:5). God's mercy in Christ is as a great flood that covers all our sins and drowns them in the blood of Christ. "...God be merciful to me, the sinner" (Luke 18:13).

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great thing to transmute a piece of silver which was silver already, and had the king's stamp on it, though for a while it was lost. To bring in a stranger and an alien, and to adopt him as a son, suggests a festival; but the most joyous feasting and the loudest music are for the son who was always a son, but had played the prodigal, and yet after being lost was found, and after being dead was made alive again. I say, ring the bells twice for the reclaimed backslider; ring them till the steeple rocks and reels. Rejoice doubly over that which had gone astray, and was ready to perish, but has now been restored. John was glad when he found poor backsliding but weeping Peter, who had denied his Master; he cheered and comforted him, and consorted with him, till the Lord Himself had said, "...Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?..." It may not appear so brilliant a thing to bring back a backslider as to reclaim a harlot or a drunkard, but in the sight of God it is no small miracle of grace, and to the instrument who has performed it, it shall yield no small comfort. Seek ye, then, my brethren, those who were of us but have gone from us; seek ye those who linger still in the congregation, but have disgraced the church, and are put away from us, and rightly so, because we cannot countenance their uncleanness;

## A NATION ADRIFT: A Conclusion

In April, 1912, the largest and most luxurious vessel ever built set forth on its maiden voyage. The British liner Titanic had a double-bottomed hull, divided into sixteen watertight compartments. Because as many as four of these could be completely flooded without endangering the ship's buoyancy, the Titanic was considered unsinkable.

On the fateful night of April 14, shortly before midnight, the great liner was steaming through the foggy North Atlantic when it collided with an enormous iceberg. A 300-foot gash was ripped in the ship's right side, rupturing five of its watertight compartments. The Titanic sank into the icy depths, claiming over 1,500 lives.

A tragic, though often untold story about that night concerns one man on another ship, less than 20 miles away from the Titanic. The other vessel was the Californian, and it could have come to the rescue of the sinking liner, if only someone had been listening. But the radio operator had fallen asleep on duty! When help did finally reach the disaster area it was too late to save more than a few.

The very greatness of the Titanic had caused her crew and passengers to feel inordinately confident. "Unsinkable" was such an assuring term. But it proved a fatal misjudgment.

Like the Titanic, our great ship of state, America, has gone adrift and is headed for a potentially fatal collision. Many feel she, too, is unsinkable; but that assessment is rooted in feeling, not fact. The truth of the matter is that America has already run into some "icebergs" that have damaged her hull and caused not a few leaks. She is in grave danger.

Fortunately, others are watching and listening. Unlike the sleeping radio operator, concerned friends are alert to the danger. Men like Alexander Solzhenitzyn, who has spoken so eloquently in calling America to wake up and watch out. The message is clear: It isn't too late.... yet.

seek them with prayers, and tears, and entreaties, if peradventure God may grant them repentance that they may be saved.

Here I would say to any backsliders who are present, let this text cheer you if you have a desire to turn to God. Return, ye backsliding children, for the Lord has bidden His people seek you. If He had not cared for you he would not have spoken of our search after you; but having put it so, and made it the duty of all His people to seek those who err from the faith, there is an open door before you, and there are hundreds who sit waiting like porters at the gate to welcome you. Come back to the God whom you have forsaken; or if you never did know Him, oh, that this day His Spirit may break your hearts, and lead you to true repentance, that you may in real truth be saved! God bless you, poor backsliders! If He does not save you, a multitude of sins will be upon you, and you must die eternally. God have mercy upon you, for Christ's sake.

## PRECIOUS

(Continued from Page 1)

the future. He said to me, "If I could believe that I could never lose my salvation, I would be the happiest man in the world." Well, as I told him then, I tell all the skeptics today - you can rest assured, God gives eternal salvation only.

Later in Romans chapter eight, the apostle teaches us, "...that

neither death, nor life, nor angels, no principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). An untaught lady told me several years ago that she knew these things were in the Bible, but she said, "Preacher, you can separate yourself from God's love." Let's examine that statement more carefully. If you can take yourself out of God's love, then you are greater than death, life, angels, powers (satanic), all things present, all things to come, height, depth, and all creatures.

One who can separate himself is greater than God Himself. Jesus said, "...I give unto them (His elect sheep) eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man (this includes the untaught lady and you) pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all (this includes the untaught lady and you); and no man (this includes the untaught lady and you) is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10: 28-29).

Knowing the above truth is real, how can one get in an eternal state of grace? This is where most have fallen short of God's great truths. Those who believe one can lose his/her salvation, also teach that one can by his/her own merits obtain salvation. Salvation by sovereign grace is another great jewel in this treasure chest. We will dive a little deeper into this treasure chest later.

I pray these jewels will be strung into a great necklace of truth and each of you will hang it around your spiritual life.

## CRITICISM

(Continued from Page 1)

saved person do evil? Yes, one can! The flesh is alive and well even in the believer. Remember what Paul said in Romans 7:18? "...in my flesh dwelleth no good thing:" There is one evil of the flesh, and that is criticism, which does cause me to fret. And how can I not fret and be heart sick over so much criticism and judging among our churches! If people would only be honest with themselves they would admit much of their criticism comes from jealousy. This is a subject within itself. Jealousy leads to anger which is another cause of criticism. God says we can be angry and sin not. (Eph

4:26) But doesn't our anger come out sinful when we judge and criticize others! God's people need to learn to get their feelings out without hurting other people. We are to speak "the truth in love" and love suffers long and envies not. (I Cor 13:4) Many times we become so angry that we don't care about other peoples' feelings. "So be it, he hurt me." "Let the chips fall where they may." "He made me so angry." "Well they needed told!" Is this what the Lord teaches in Luke 6:31? "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." As we have said, angry feelings are permitted, but what we do with these angry feelings is where the sin lies. (Mark 9:42) **And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.** I agree people need to be told their faults. The Bible says to "...exhort one another daily." (Heb. 3:13) Which means to tell them and motivate them to do better. Edify one another, do not tear down. Do you really think hateful criticism builds up? Most people will shut you off when you begin judging them. Just consider the last time someone blasted you with hurtful and accusing words. What did you do? You defended yourself and got mad at them. Did you really learn anything until you cooled down? Perhaps by then you could have focused on what they tried to say to help you. We are supposed to help people when they are taken in a fault. Galatians 6:1 "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Beloved, this is the way to do it, not the way we have seen or heard it done. Tongue lashing leaves deep emotional scars that never heal in this lifetime. It tears up churches, and destroys homes! The tongue is an evil force. James 3:8 "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison". Why do we always focus on the wrong things people do and not the good? How many preachers do you know, that when someone criticized their message he went out and worked harder to improve upon it? Or did he feel hurt, angry, and rejected over it? Now if someone praises the Lord over a message he brought, don't you think he feels more confident about his message and delivery? Wouldn't he work harder on his other messages?

Let's try harder to look for the

good in others, and lift up those taken in a fault, not beat them down with criticism. Sometimes we hurt other peoples feelings even when we don't mean to, but let us be more careful to watch for these "evil doer" words we are using to express our feelings. Remember these admonitions. Proverbs 15:1 "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." James 3:2 "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."

## WHICH

(Continued from Page 1)

Matthew 11:20-24, these cities Jesus pronounced His woes upon. They were Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, Tyre and Sidon, as was Sodom and Gomorrah that deserved the wrath of God.

After stating nations and cities under the wrath of God, we shall mention a few individuals.

The first was Cain, the brother of Abel. Then Ham, the son of Noah. Esau was the son of Isaac. Boasting Goliath, the giant that David killed. Balaam, the money mad prophet. Korah, that rebelled against Moses. Jezebel, the most wicked queen, that killed many of God's prophets, and then the king of Egypt, Pharaoh, in the time of Moses.

Paul writes in Romans 9:17, "For the Scriptures saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout ALL the earth."

Moses was a vessel of honor and mercy, while Pharaoh was a vessel of dishonor and wrath. Time would fail me to mention the names of those in the Old Testament that were ordained and appointed unto condemnation, and are in hell today. Just to name a few such as: Judas, the traitor, King Herod, the murderer of babies, who tried to kill Jesus after His birth. Then proud Caiaphas, the high priest with the Sanhedrin council, charged Jesus with blasphemy. Again there was Pontius Pilate, the governor that sentenced Jesus to death knowing He was innocent. Also Governor Felix that said, go thy way for this time (Paul) when I have a convenient season I

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PAGE THIRTEEN

# THE SAFETY OF THE SAINTS

by C.D. Cole

"When I see the blood I will pass over you..." Exodus 12:13.

"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," I Corinthians 5:7.

God's people are safe -- eternally safe -- no real harm can ever come to them -- the stars in their courses fight for them -- providence watches over them and all things work together for their good.

Some terrible things are coming to pass on this earth - the elements are to melt with fervent heat -- the heavens shall roll up like a scroll -- the stars are to fall -- the earth is to quake -- the sun is to become black as sackcloth -- the moon is to become as blood - but in it all the saints are to be safe.

Plague, famine, war, tempest, and death are coming, but God's people shall be triumphant over them all.

I shall speak on three points today. First, who are God's people? Second, what makes them safe? Third, how do they know they are safe?

I. WHO ARE GOD'S PEOPLE? Distinguish between: A. God's people by creation and His people by redemption. B. The saint is mean in his own sight -- he has no confidence in the flesh. He is a mourner on account of sin. He has more trouble with self than with any other man. C. His hope is in Christ. If you could persuade him to believe that Christ did not bear the punishment of his sins in His own body, the saint would be miserable.

II. What makes God's people safe?

A. What made Israel safe on that night in Egypt when God visited the land in judgment? It was the blood sprinkled on the door casings. God told them what to do to be safe -- He said when I see the blood I will pass over you. He did not say when I see your sorrow, I will pass over you.

B. Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us. It was blood that made Israel safe and it is blood that makes us safe. It is blood that separates us from the guilt of sin and immunizes us from the wrath of God in the day of judgment. God does not say to us today: when I see your good character -- or your good works -- or your baptism -- or your church membership - or your mourning - or your praying -- or your riches -- or your poverty -- it is the

blood God must see if He spares you from judgment. He spared not His Son that He might in justice spare sinners. He put His sinless Son to death that His disobedient sons might not die.

III. How do we know we are safe?

A. Can we know we are safe? John 20:31 says "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." And I John 5:13 says "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on he name of the son of God."

B. Can we be safe and not know it? Refer back to I John 5:13, "...that ye may know that ye have eternal life..."

C. How can we know we are safe? Again I John 5:13 answers us with the simple truth, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

## WHICH

(Continued from Page 13)

will call for thee." But he was marked out from the beginning unto this condemnation being a reprobate. Finally, King Agrippa said after hearing Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

There shall be many such souls in hell that were not far from the kingdom, and almost persuaded, but never came across the line from being lost to being saved, by God's grace.

According to Ezekiel 25:5, 7, 11, 12, 17, five times repeatedly, "They shall KNOW that I am the Lord." God, in His Word, declares that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess this. These vessels of wrath, God tags with a mark of the cursed and condemned. Sinful men like Adam's first born, Cain, was cursed that all may know that whatever God does is right.

John 17:23 says, "That the world may know that thou hast sent me..." There will come a day when all the world will believe in Jesus Christ, but some to condemnation, and others to salvation. The world, in verse 23, is the lost world of unbelievers.

## DIVISION II

Now we turn the page to the good side. Those whom Jesus touched and those who touched Jesus. We know we are chosen

vessels of mercy and honor from the beginning chosen by the Father and given to His Son and will be drawn to Him. Moments after the Spirit's quickening, a new change of life occurs. I have come to believe that when Jesus healed a person, that person was also saved, in most cases. He believed in this merciful and kind Savior, that removed not only his sickness, but his sin. Jesus does a complete job, not half-way. If He begins a work, He will finish it.

Let us look at a few examples that Jesus touched; if not with His hand, most certainly with His Word. I believe this is how it is today. He touches the heart with the Word of forgiveness. Peace is replaced for pain, and the joy of salvation fills the soul by His power. He is made a new person in Christ. In the Scripture, the word "touched" can also mean "to feel, to hold, to embrace." It displays a willingness to heal, as well as to save.

Those That Were Touched By Jesus.

Matthew 8:2-4. This leper was cleansed both from his leprosy and his sins when Jesus put forth His hand and touched him. No man was to touch a leper, because they were labeled unclean, but Jesus did.

Matthew 8:5-13. A centurion came to Jesus in behalf of his servant that had palsy. He did not want to waste the Lord's time in coming to his house, but said, "just speak the word only and my servant shall be healed." Jesus said so with delight, and complimented him for his great faith.

Now the practice of healing is reversed. Instead of Jesus touching and speaking the Word of healing, we find in Matthew 14:36, "And besought him (Jesus) that they might only touch the hem of his garment, and as many as touched, were made perfectly whole." That spells out salvation in my book. Jesus never turned a single person away that came to Him for help. He was never selfish with His time or stingy with His salvation. Of course, all that here saved, as well as healed, were His elect, given to Him by the Father.

Bear with me one more Scriptural illustration that is hard to beat, regarding the pattern of saving and healing a person at the same time. Please read this portion of Scripture in Luke 5:17-25, also in Matthew and Mark. You will love this. When Jesus put to shame notable doctors and religious leaders that needed to hear the truth as to who Jesus was, yet they doubted Him.

This was a hopeless case of a palsy man in his last stage, that was dying. He had to be carried to Jesus by four friends. They were

determined to get him to Jesus in a crowded house, even if it meant tearing up the roof. These four men of faith were determined to reach Jesus one way or another. The main thrust of the scene is that His condemning audience needed to know that the Son of God had power on earth to forgive souls in sin, as well as heal bodies with incurable diseases. Jesus didn't need to touch the palsy man, but just spoke to him loud and clear with authority, "son, take up thy bed and go home to your house."

Did these religious fanatics rejoice over the salvation and healing of this deadly diseased man? No! They sought for means to put Jesus to death. They were vessels of wrath. The four men that carried their sick friend to Jesus, were men of faith, thus vessels of honor, and vessels of mercy.

Praise God for His Son that did not only heal due to sin, but saved people in sin. No case was too hard for Jesus to handle, regardless of the congregation, or the opposition confronting Him.

We who have been saved by His great grace, can rejoice now and forevermore that we are vessels of honor and instruments of righteousness, meet for the Masters use, in each of our various callings, for His eternal glory.

## GREAT

(Continued from Page 1)

used in close hand-to-hand combat by the Roman soldier. This offensive weapon sometimes had two edges. It was used to ward off the enemy, either by wounding or killing.

This is the Christian's sword. The Word of God is inspired of the Holy spirit, but is also used by Him to confound the doctrines of the Devil. The Lord Jesus demonstrated the sharpness of the sword of the Spirit when He was tempted of the Devil. Matthew four. Notice what is said about the Word in Hebrews 4:12.

The Word is two edged because it condemns as well as converts the souls of men and women. It is the Word through the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation. It is the Word at the Great White Throne Judgement as the divine and holy law that shall condemn the reprobate sinner in

the end.

The Scriptures teach us that there are three things that we (all believers) are to do with the Word of God as a sword. (1) We are to study it; II Timothy 2:15, (2) We are to prove it; II Timothy 2:15, (3) We are to preach it; II Timothy 4:2.

Three things that the Word of God is to the sinner: First, the Word of God is quick. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword..." It has been for the same gospel through all ages.

Second, the Word of God is unto salvation. "And that from a child thou has known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." People were able to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ through the Old Testament Scriptures.

Third, the Word of God condemns the sinner. The same Word that brings the good news of salvation also reveals the horror of condemnation. It is sharper than any two-edged sword.

The sword of the Word cuts deep into the sinners heart, revealing and exposing his/her sins as a surgeon would expose a cancer in surgery. Just as the surgeon takes his scalpel and skill-

(Continued on Page 16, Col. 1)

I would never preach a sermon (the Lord forgive me if I do) which is not full to overflowing with my Master. I know one man who said I was always on the same old string, and he would not come and hear me preach any more. But if I would preach a sermon without Christ in it, then he would come. Ah, he will never come while this tongue moves; for a sermon without Christ in it, a Christless sermon, is as a brook without water, a cloud without rain, a well which mocks the traveler, a tree twice dead, a sky without a sun, a night without a star. It were a realm of death, a place for mourning for angels, and laughing for devils. O Christain, we must have Christ and we must preach Christ!

C. H. Spurgeon

## BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

You should consider purchasing "Christ In All The Bible" by Earl Cummings. This book is being used by missionaries, pastors, teachers, and in colleges and churches. It takes a proper stand on the doctrines of sovereign grace. It deals with Christ in the Old and New Testaments. It deals with types and symbols of Christ. It tells of the person and work of Christ; also of His coming again. The book lists numerous Scriptures which tell about Christ. It gives many lists concerning Christ in the Bible. The book is a paper back. It sells for \$9.95 plus postage. Order from our book store or from E.E. Cummings, Route 3, Box 168, Rusk, Tex. 75785. You will be blessed by this book.

## REVELATION

by Willard Willis

**"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges" (Rev. 2:12).**

Pergamos, at the time of the writing of our text, was blessed with a library which contained two hundred thousand parchment rolls. Mark Antony, at a later date, took the parchment rolls to Alexandria, Egypt and presented them to Queen Cleopatra.

There was great opposition to God in Pergamos and the surrounding area. There, in fact, was a grove near to Pergamos in which there were temples dedicated to Jupiter, Minerva, Apollo, Venus and Bacchus. There was also a sixth temple which was dedicated to Aesculapius, their favorite god. It becomes quite obvious that witnessing for our Lord in the area of Pergamos was no easy task. Witnessing, however, was not impossible, since the one for whom they witnessed, had "the sharp sword with two edges." It was not only that He had the sharp sword with two edges, but He knew and knows how to wield that sword so that all of His pleasure is accomplished.

**"...These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges" (Rev. 2:12).**

Jesus, in John 15:5 said, "...without me ye can do nothing." This fact was especially true in the area of Pergamos where the opposition was very great. The opposition in Pergamos, in fact, was so great that the saints there, as far as their own strength was concerned, were at a complete stand-still. They, without the Lord Jesus and His sharp sword, could accomplish absolutely nothing. They, however, as Paul said in Philipians 4:13, could "...do all things through Christ..." who strengthened them. These same truths, of course, apply to us today, too. The Lord, with His sharp sword with two edges, will always accomplish His purpose among men. There will be none, according to Daniel 4:35, who will be able to "...stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

**"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth" (Revelation 2:13).**

The one who knew their works was that one who carried the sharp sword with two edges. The fact that He knew their works also meant that their works had

been recorded and that a report card would be given to them at a later date. Those with the highest grades on their report cards would be assured of the greatest reward for their works. It is as stated in the following passage of Scripture.

**"And, behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).**

The conditions under which we perform our works for the Lord will determine the extent of the reward. The conditions in Pergamos were such that it was like walking in a field that was infested with snakes. This is because of the fact that Satan's seat was in that area of the world. Satan's throne, in other words, was there and it was Satan's purpose to attract all of the people in the area to his throne. We know from the various temples in the area, that Satan's efforts had proven to be very successful. God's people, however, in the area of Pergamos, held fast to the name of the Lord Jesus even though such action was equal to a tree withstanding a violent wind storm.

They had heard and heeded that which Paul had admonished Timothy to do. Paul, in fact, said to Timothy:

**"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 1:13).**

The saints at Pergamos had been entrusted with the keeping of God's Word, and they, in spite of the opposition, or the violent winds of heresy, were holding it fast. I can assure you that each of those dear saints will receive a great reward from that one who has the sharp sword with two edges. The Lord, in fact, said to them that they had not denied His faith. The fact that our Lord made this statement to the saints at Pergamos means that He will also say the same thing to them at His judgment seat. One, of course, cannot begin to measure the joy that will be theirs in that day.

The "faith" to which our text relates, has to do with the entire scope of the Scriptures. The saints at Pergamos, then, in not denying the faith, had not failed to publish it as it had been given to them. The Lord called it, "My faith" and they did not try to change it, but only to publish it as it had been delivered to them. They not only published it for others, but they kept it pure for themselves and their children and the reason for their action was so that their Lord would be glorified. We may say, then, that the gates of hell did not prevail against the Lord's church at Pergamos. They, in spite of all the opposition,

remained the pillar and ground of the truth.

The subject text points out that the saints at Pergamos did not fail their Lord "even in those days wherein Antipas" was the Lord's "faithful martyr." The word "even," as it is used here, emphasizes the extreme conditions that were prevailing at that time. It would have been the natural thing for the sheep to have been scattered, but our text points out that they, in spite of the death of Antipas, held fast and did not deny the Lord's faith. The phrase, "even Antipas," leaves one to speculate that he may have been the pastor of the church. This fact meant that the death of others was sure to follow, but the thought of death did not effect their stand for the faith. We may say that God's grace was more than sufficient for them.

**"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication" (Revelation 2:14).**

This passage of Scripture bears out Romans 7:21 where Paul said **"...when I would do good, evil is present with me."** We who strive for excellence in the Lord's churches today, also, in many things, fall short of His glory. Let us, however, continue, through His grace, to strive for excellence in doctrine and in practice.

The charge which our Lord placed against the church at Pergamos was that they held to "the doctrine of Balaam." The Lord proceeded to advise John that the doctrine of Balaam related to the fact that Balaam "taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication." The saints at Pergamos were certainly tempted with the doctrine of Balaam, since there were several famous temples that had been constructed in a grove near to the city of Pergamos. These temples had been dedicated to Jupiter, Minerva, Apollo, Venus and Bacchus. There was also another temple there which had been dedicated to their favorite god whose name was Aesculapius. We are to understand, then, that some of the members of the church at Pergamos had not made a complete break with the world system which surrounded them. They were obviously trying to please two masters in that they saw no harm in eating things which had been sacrificed at the heathen altars. The Lord, however, called their action "fornication." It was fornication

because they had joined with the heathen in idolatrous feasts.

**"So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Revelation 2:15).**

The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes can be interpreted, the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. This teaching, according to some writers, said that participation in the heathen festivals in the grove near to Pergamos, was not evil, since it concerned only the physical body and did not touch the spiritual man. It is said that the Nicolaitanes taught that, one, in order to master sensuality, must be acquainted with the whole range of its experiences. This same teaching today would encourage God's children to experience drunkenness, etc. Let each of us, however, remember that our Lord said that He hated the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.

**"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Revelation 2:16).**

The word them, as it is used in the above text, points out that not all of the members in the church at Pergamos were guilty of the subject sins. The entire church, however, was held accountable because they had not taken the appropriate action against the guilty. The word "repent," then, has to do with the entire body at Pergamos while the words "fight against them," relates only to the evil doers. The Lord, then, in essence, said to the church at Pergamos, "If you don't repent and take corrective action, I will take the necessary action." We, therefore, do church members a favor when we work to correct their evil ways. We, in other words, stay the hand of that one who has the sharp sword with two edges.

**"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Revelation 2:17).**

Our Lord, even though He has the right, does not stop with a command not to do such and such things. He always assures us that there is a reward to those who hear and heed His commands. We, in fact, know from Hebrews 11:6 that there is a reward for those who diligently seek Him. We can always be sure that we, when following our Lord rather than the world, will gain far more than we will lose or than we would have gained from the world. Our text points out that

those in the church at Pergamos would receive the hidden manna and a white stone if they would hear and heed His word to them.

The "hidden manna" is in contrast to the meat which was offered to the idols. One can be sure that meat offered to idols is a very poor substitute to the hidden manna. The taste and the nutrition received from the meats offered to idols would last for only a moment in time, but the hidden manna would be an everlasting portion from the hand of their loving Father.

It is to be noted carefully that the hidden manna and the white stone were for those that overcame, or for "him that overcometh." The white stone, then, and the "new name" written thereon, relate to victory-victory over this world. The white stone will be a trophy for a race well run, or a job well done. The stone is to be white - white, which, according to Revelation 19:8, refers to the righteous deeds of the saints. The white stone will speak of the victory which has been obtained through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The saints in the church at Pergamos, when the going became very difficult, could fasten their eyes of faith upon the hidden manna and the white stone. These, to faith, would be like seeds planted beneath the soil - the soil or dirt of heartaches and discouragements. They would need God given patience to wait for God's promises to become a reality. This is why the graces of faith and patience cannot be separated. Faith always says to us, "Wait on the Lord," or be patient.

When William Carey announced that he wished to go overseas and preach the gospel to the heathen, a pastor replied, "Young man, if God wishes to save the heathen, He will do it without you!" What a bad spirit and what error! Yes! God can accomplish His purpose and save His people WITHOUT ME and WITHOUT YOU; but He will use SOMEONE to send the messenger, and SOMEONE to pray for and support His servant. I want that someone to be you and me! What a privilege and joy to have something to do with His glorious purpose to glorify Christ Jesus in calling out a people. Today, pray for your pastor as he travels and preaches, encourage and support the missionaries, invite someone to hear the Word, give out a tape or a book, and let us be "about our Father's business."

## GREAT

(Continued from Page 14)

fully cuts through the flesh, so the two-edged sword of the Spirit cuts through the self-righteousness of man's flesh to reveal the ugliness of sin. I praise God that one day Twenty-One and a half years ago the Sword of the Spirit cut deep into my soul!

**WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION--**For the reprobate sinner who does not receive the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, the Word of God will be an indictment and an accusation against his sinful life and his sinful nature. (Romans 3:10).

Revelation 20:12 This same Word will be His condemning witness to reveal every single secret sin, wether it be of thought or deed. The sinner dare not slip out of this life into the next without the blood of Jesus Christ applied to his account! Will the Sword of the Spirit be unto you salvation or condemnation?

**FOUR THINGS THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS TO THE BELIEVER** II Timothy 3:16 **FEDERAL AUTHORITY--**First, Hebrews 4:12. The Word of God is quick and powerful. It is authoritative. There are many authorities that demand our allegiance, but when there is a conflict between God's Law and man's law, we must obey God. There is not one of God's moral laws that we should not obey. Acts 5:29 says, "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."

Second, II Timothy 3:16. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" We can accept the Bible as the holy Word of God. Therefore, we can follow its leadership, obey its commandments, claim its promises, and proclaim its doctrine as the truth.

This brings us to the third thing that the Word of God is to the believer. Psalm 1:1-3 "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also

shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." II Timothy 3:16 tells us that the Scriptures not only are Holy Spirit inspired, but are also profitable. 1. For doctrine. This is the whole system of Christian faith handed down, or delivered to the saints of every age. 2. Reproof is the revealing and exposing the sins of the flesh through teaching and preaching. 3. Correction is the conviction by the Holy Spirit through His Holy Word when we are in doctrinal error, or disobedient to the laws of Christ. 4. The Holy Spirit's sword also teaches us in the ways of righteousness. Verse seven, how to praise God. Verse 11, how to obey God. Verse 27, how to witness of all of His sovereign works.

Fourth, the Sword of the Spirit sustains us. By it we learn of the wonderful promises of God for His children. He has promised to remain with us, to answer our prayers, to carry us through temptation, comfort us in times of trial, and tragedy, to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory, to give us grace to help in time of need, and one day to return and receive us unto Himself and to take us into glory.

Paul says to God's people, "Take the Sword of the spirit which is the word of God." Surely the keeping of the heart is a great task, and by taking unto us the Sword of the Spirit we can deliver hurtful blows to the cause of Satan. We can withstand in the evil day. Amen.

Whenever anybody says to me, "Your view of the atonement, you know, is very old-fashioned; the doctrine of substitution is quite out of date; " I am not at all shaken in my belief. The gentlemen of the modern-thought school, who have been to Germany for their theology, do not like the glorious doctrine of substitution. They think that the atonement is a something or other, that in some way or other, somehow or other, has something or other to do with the salvation of men; but I tell them that their cloudy gospel might have surrounded me untill my hair grew gray, but should never have found peace with God, nor come to love the Lord at all, if it had not been that I distinctly saw that He, Who knew no sin, was made sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God in Him. When I realized that, although I had gone astray from God and broken His righteous law, He had laid on Christ my iniquity and punished Him in my stead, my soul found rest at once; and to this day it cannot rest under any other explanation of the atonement of Christ. So I bear my own personal witness, and many of you can heartily join me in bearing similar testimony. You have been with Christ, so you can speak of the power of His substitutionary sacrifice as begetting peace in your soul.

C. H. Spurgeon

## GOD'S DECREES

SOVEREIGN Ruler of the skies  
Ever gracious, ever wise;  
All my times are in thy hand,  
All events at thy command.

His decree who formed the earth  
Fixed my first and second birth;  
Parents, native place, and time,  
All appointed were by him.

He that formed me in the womb,  
He shall guide me to the tomb:  
All my times shall ever be  
Ordered by his wise decree.

Times of sickness; times of health;  
Times of penury and wealth;  
Times of trial and of grief;  
Times of triumph and relief;

Times the tempter's power to prove;  
Times to taste the Saviour's love;  
All must come, and last, and end,  
As shall please my heavenly Friend.

Plagues and deaths around me fly;  
Till be bids, I cannot die;  
Not a single shaft can hit,  
Till the God of love sees fit.

John Ryland

## CAN YOU IMAGINE THIS?

Paul playing the lottery?

"Thou shalt not steal" (Ex.20:15). "...if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thess. 3:10).

Controversy is never a very happy element for the child of God. He would rather be in communion than be engaged in defense of the faith or in attack upon error. But the soldier of Christ knows no choice in His Master's commands. He may feel it to be better for him to lie upon the bed of rest than to stand covered with the sweat and dust of battle; but as a soldier, he has learned to obey, and the rule of his obedience is not his personal comfort but his Master's glory and his Lord's command. The servant of God must and will endeavor to preach and maintain the one gospel of grace which his Master has revealed to him because he loves his Master and he loves that gospel. He knows no person nor reason that would cause him to compromise what he knows to be true!

--Copied

when He made the garden, there was no foot to walk in it. Nothing was everywhere, and yet out of nothing He made all things. He spoke and it was done; He commanded and it appeared. You say there is nothing in the sinner to whom you preach? That's wonderful, for there is in that state of nothing room for the great God to create something! Inasmuch as the heart of man is empty and the soul is dark, the conditions are right for God to create a new heart and a right spirit and put His grace where there was no grace. If you had to convert the sinner, then I would agree that your task is hopeless; but if salvation is of the Lord, you may comfort your heart with this thought, that he who created all this marvelous earth out of nothing can also create life, love, faith, and hope where there are no spiritual ingredients nor interest with which to work.

## CAN THIS BE DEATH?

Can this be death-  
To be released from fear and sorrow,  
From sickness, weariness and pain?  
To be removed from sin's enslavement,  
From Satan's influence and domain?  
Can this be death-  
To be set free from my sin nature,  
From evil bent to do the wrong?  
To be set free from inclinations  
That would rob me of my song?  
Can this be death-  
To be presented in His presence,  
The One who loves me evermore?  
To be accepted in the fullness  
Of Christ whom I adore?  
Can this be death-  
To be escorted by the angels  
To my home prepared above?  
To be established in the dwelling  
That is furnished by His love?  
Can this be death-  
To know complete fulfillment  
As I look upon His face?  
To feast upon the glories  
And riches of His grace?  
Can this be death-  
With all that it can offer,  
It is joy that overflows!  
It is peace that knows no measure  
It is vic'try o'er my foes!

Martin Wedge

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Grace Baptist Church of Gladwin, Michigan will have their annual Bible Conference on Labor Day Week End, beginning this year.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

There will be a Bible Conference at the Beverly Manor Baptist Church at 209 Vohland St. in Washington, Illinois 61571 April 5-7, 1993. For further information, write or call Pastor Michael McCoskey. Phone (309) 745-8927.