

AARON'S PRIESTLY GARMENTS

"And they shall make an ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple and of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work," [Ex 28:6](#).

The Law Service was a system of types, and shadows, and figures. The various feasts, and sacrifices, and ceremonies represented, and acted out, divine truth. In the New Testament day we have God's revelation, explained in clear, under-standable terms. No room is left for misunderstanding—not in the fundamental principles, anyway. If we take God at his word, we can discover all we need to know and do religiously.

Israel did not have such a clear revelation from God. But, even under the Old Testament Law Service, Israel had bene-fits which were not given to the Gentile world. They were able to know things about God which the Gentiles could not even guess at. Paul says, "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God," [Ro 3:1-2](#). That could not be said about any other people.

In the New Testament day we have Christ revealed as the very *image of God* himself ([2Co 4:4](#)). God in all his glory is revealed in the person of his Son. Every attribute of God is revealed in his Son.

In that day they had types and shadows. A shadow differs from the very image of any object in that the shadow only provides an outline. But even those bare outlines were far more than the Gentiles had.

And even though we have a much more clear revelation in this day, we should never minimize those types and shadows. Those shadows—those outlines if you will—can be very valuable in illustrating the principles that are more clearly revealed in the New Testament day. We do not accomplish much if we study the shadow without examining it in the better light of the New Testament, but, on the other hand, we lose very much if we never consider those God-provided Old Testament illustrations of divine truth. We do ourselves a great disservice when we go to the bookstores to find books of illustrations, when God has provided so much better illustrations in his Word. Charles Haddon Spurgeon is probably the best known preacher since the days of the apostles. Somebody once asked him, "Brother Spurgeon, is there any particular rule you go by in interpreting an Old Testament text of scripture?" He said, "Yes, there is; when I study any Old Testament text, I position myself on that text, and from the vantage point of that Old Testament text, I look all the way cross country to the New Testament, and I try to see Jesus." That is a good rule for any Bible student. If the text does not help you to see

Jesus, in some aspect of his person, either in his grace, his mercy, his love, or perhaps, in his righteous indignation against sin, you have missed the point. Whether we are able to sort out the significance of any particular sacrifice or feast of the Law Service or not, every provision of the Law is intended to teach us some great truth. It can be a very satisfying experience to spend time consider-ing those instructions, and, every now and then, seeing some great truth illustrated.

Christ is our prophet, our priest, and our king. The Old Testament priesthood represented the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sacrifices those priests offered represented the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. Whether it was a lamb, or a bullock; whether it was a dove or a pigeon, it represented the Lord. It illustrated some aspect of his person and work.

The garments they wore represented the various aspects of the ministry of the Lord. The gold, the blue, the purple, and the fine twined linen, all represented him. In all of our studies we should be careful to keep our eyes on him. [Heb 12:2](#), “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despis-ing the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

“And they shall make an ephod of gold...” [Ex 28:6](#). In [Ex 28](#), God gave the provisions for the priestly garments Aaron and his sons were to wear when they performed their duties about the Tabernacle. One of those garments was an ephod, a kind of many faceted, many colored, jacket made of *fine twined linen, with cunning work*. The various characteristics of the ephod all represented the Lord, and the work he performed on our behalf. The gold was a symbol of the Lord and his great worth to his people. [Isa 13:12](#), “I will make a man more precious than gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” That man is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gold has been a store of value from the very morning of time. In Genesis, when we read about the four rivers that flowed out of Eden, we are told, “And the name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good: there is the bdellium and the onyx stone,” [Ge 2:11-12](#) . That takes us as far back in human history as we can go.

We use fancy little scraps of paper as units of exchange, and we pretend they are money. But, paper is not money; gold and silver are money. Paper money only has value, because people believe it has value. The government tells us paper is money; we pretend it is money; we use it as if it was money; and as long as we can keep up the pretense, it serves the purpose of money.

If paper was real money, it would not be so constantly losing its value.

Suppose you were to hide a hundred dollar bill, and a hundred dollar gold

nugget, and one hundred years from now, somebody finds both of them. Which of them do you believe would have done the best job of holding its value? Jesus Christ is “the same, yesterday, and today, and for ever,” [Heb 13:8](#). He does not lose his value.

In 1940, you could buy a brand new automobile for about \$400, or you could buy that same automobile for about 12 ounces of gold. You cannot buy a new automobile, today, for 12 ounces of gold, but it will buy a much better automobile than you can get for \$400.

“And they shall make an ephod of gold, of blue....” Blue is the color of the sky. The Lord came from heaven to earth that he might carry us from earth to heaven. [Joh 3:13](#), “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.” This world is not our home, nor for long, anyway. We have something far better waiting for us, after awhile.

“And they shall make an ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple....” Purple is symbolic of royalty. In the old days only the aristocracy wore purple. Purple dye was made by crushing the shells of a tiny marine creature; it was very expensive. Our Lord is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; he owns every thing that exists. God gave the very best heaven had for my redemption and yours; price is no object with him.

I have friends who are waiting for a day, when the Lord will finally claim his kingdom. They cannot imagine that he is a king now, but they are sure he will be some day. They tell us he meant to establish a kingdom when he came the first time; but he could not get any help, and he could not quite get the job done, but they are sure that when he comes back the second time he will be more successful.

But, you cannot help but wonder, if he could not do it the first time, why do they think he will be any more successful the next time?

But, my Lord did not fail; he did all he intended to do the first time. Isaiah said, “He shall not fail, nor be discouraged...” [Isa 42:4](#). Before he went away, the Lord himself said, “**I have finished the work** which thou gavest me to do,” [Joh 17:4](#). Others may believe the Lord is a failure, if they wish to, but the Bible teaches that he accomplished everything he intended to accomplish.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the absolute ruler in all things. He taught us to pray, “For thine is (right now, at this very moment) the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever,” [Mt 6:13](#).

The Lord is the head over his creation. The very heavens “declare the glory of God,” [Ps 19:1](#). He is the head over the church. His word is our command. We are bound to do all he says, and to leave all else alone. There are a lot of free thinkers involved in religion. They enjoy dreaming up projects of their own. They are more interested in their imagination than they are in the Lord’s

revelation. But, the Lord is King of Kings. He provides us everything we need in his service, and he will tolerate no insubordination; he will not recognize man's little freelance campaigns. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," [2Co 10:5](#).

"And they shall make an ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, and scarlet...." Scarlet represents the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ours has been called a bloody religion—a slaughter house religion. People are offended at the sight of blood. They would not be nearly so offended at the thought of blood atonement, if they could see the great need for that shed blood. They would not be nearly so offended at the thought of blood atonement, if they could see themselves as the sinners we all are. [Heb 9:22](#), "And almost all things are by the law purged by blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

If any less price could have satisfied divine justice, God would not have required the price he did. God would never have sent his Son to suffer the agony, and the indignity he suffered, if that was not the price that was required to satisfy our sin debt. It was the greatness of our sin that required the price he paid; no less price would have satisfied divine justice.

They were to make it of "fine twined linen with cunning work." The Bible does not leave us any doubt as to what is represented by the *fine twined linen*. The fine twined linen represented the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. [Re 19:8](#), "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." The only righteousness we have, that will stand before God, is the imputed righteousness of our Lord; our righteousness is far too defective. [Isa 64:6](#), "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

When I was just a boy I heard an old brother telling how he hoped to gain a home in eternal heaven. He said, "I know we are saved by grace, but when I stand before God in judgment, I hope I have enough good works to finish out the score." I was just a little boy at the time, and I had a lot to learn; I still do, but I knew there was something wrong with that statement.

Can you imagine anybody standing before the court of eternal justice, and dragging out an old dirty handkerchief, he has been carrying around for two weeks—with a cold—and dangling that before the throne of God, and saying, "Here is my claim on eternal heaven."

My youngest daughter is thirty years old; but when she was about six years old I used that expression in a sermon. After the service she told me, "Now, Daddy, that was gross." If she thought that was gross, she should have heard

the literal translation. The translators seem to have kept our feelings in mind, when they translated that verse.

But, even though we may feel the expression is gross, that is exactly what the Bible teaches: “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Those who would trade the *fine linen* of the imputed righteousness of God’s Son for the *filthy rags* of their own righteousness have made a poor trade.

Make it of “fine twined linen, with cunning work.” The cunning work—the skillful work—represents the wisdom of God in our salvation. No mind less than the mind of God could have ever devised a plan that would save the people of God, and satisfy both the grace and the justice of God. Any plan man could have come up with would have sacrificed one or the other. The grace of God will be satisfied in the salvation of his people, but the justice of God will also be satisfied in that our sins have been put away by the sacrifice of his Son on our behalf. [Ro 3:26](#), “To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, *and* the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

God did not sacrifice justice in order to be gracious. “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied,” [Isa 53:12](#). Every attribute of God will be satisfied in the salvation of his people. God did not hogtie justice in order to be gracious. God did not tell Justice “Now, Justice, you be still; Justice, don’t you say a word; I am going to save this child, and there is nothing you can do about it.” The grace of God will be satisfied; every subject of grace will be with God in heaven. The love of God will be satisfied; everyone God loves will be there. And the justice of God will be satisfied; their every sin will be paid for. No mind less than the mind of God could have found a way to do it. No mind less than the mind of God could have found a way to satisfy both the grace and the justice of God.

[Ex 28:9](#), “And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel.” When Aaron performed the duties of his office he represented everybody whose names were written on those two onyx stones, and that is all he represented. He did not represent the Egyptians. What he did was no benefit to the Egyptians. He did not represent the Moabites, nor the Ammonites, nor the Philistines. He represented the twelve tribes of Israel, and he wrote the names of those he represented on those two onyx stones.

The Lord Jesus Christ, our great high priest, represents all the elect of God. In his suffering and death he did not represent the angels; he did not represent Adam’s race; he represented his people, his elect. “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham,” [Heb 2:16](#). This *seed of Abraham*, this elect of God, is not a nameless, faceless mass of people. Before God ever created the world, he wrote their names in his book.

[Re 13:8](#), “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names

are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” [Re 17:8](#), “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

God is in control; he knows what he is doing. He is not stumbling around in the dark, trying first one method and then another. Before he created the first planet, the first star, the first blade of grass, he determined every part of this great plan of redemption and salvation, and he determined who would be the beneficiaries of all he does.

The Lord knew exactly who he represented; he knew who he was dying for. He wrote their names in his book before the foundation of the world. Isaiah said the same thing in different words. “Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me,” [Isa 49:16](#). That is an even stronger statement than the two statements by John in the Revelation. Not only did he write the names of his people in his book, he engraved their very persons in the palms of his hands. There can be no question that the Lord had this verse in mind, when he said, “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 many pluck them out if my hand,” [Joh 10:27-28](#). If our persons are engraved in the palms of his hands, how can the adversary remove any child of God from his providential care, without destroying some part of the very hand of God.

Symbolically, their names were written in the two onyx stones; actually, they were written in the book of life, and engraved in the palms of Lord’s hands.

“And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial,” vs. 12. Notice that those two stones were to be carried on the priest’s shoulders. One of the uses of our shoulders is to assist us in carrying heavy loads, and that is exactly the symbol involved in these onyx stones being placed on the shoulders of the priest. Our Great High Priest provides for his people and cares for them; he carries us on his shoulder. “.....and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old,” [Isa 63:9](#). Again he promises to *carry them in his bosom*. “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. The wording is different, but the lesson is the same. The Lord instructs his people, and leads them; but more than that, he carries them. “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself,” [Ex 19:4](#).

We are often told that God did not elect individuals, he only chose his family—as a collective group of people. He chose them *en masse*; no names, no individual characters, were ever under consideration. But God anticipated that objection before it was ever raised, and he provided the answer in this figure.

Listen to the instructions for *the breastplate of judgment*: “And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, *even* four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a figure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes,” [Ex 28:16-21](#).

The name of Judah was on one stone, the name of Reuben on another stone, the name of Zabulon on another stone, and so on.

Notice that the names were written collectively on the two onyx stones, and then they were written again on the stones of the breastplate of judgment. The first time they were written collectively; the second time they were written individually. The Holy Spirit will not allow the figure to be misunderstood. Each name in the breastplate of judgment was written on a separate stone all by itself. The collective family of God is made up of all the individual members.

Suppose that on the first day of school a teacher decides to give every student in her class a bright shiny apple. She buys a bushel of apples, but she wants to make sure that each child gets an apple, so she asks the merchant, “How many apples do I get in a bushel.” And he replies, “Oh, there are no individual apples in this bushel—these are all collective apples.” To say the least, we would not think the man was giving a straight answer; and, yet, this is the very dodge that is generally used to evade the clear Bible doctrine of God’s choice of his people. It takes every individual member of the family to make up the entire family of God. How could he choose the entire family without choosing every individual in that family.

“And thou shalt make ouches of gold; And two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches,” [Ex 28:13-14](#). Chains have always represented bondage, and that is what they represent here. We are servants of the Lord, bond-slaves of

the Lord. We are his property; we belong to him. We are his property, because he is our creator. And we are his property, because he redeemed us and paid for us in his suffering and death.

Perhaps, there are those who object to the thought of being the property of someone else. Somebody may square his shoulders, and insist, "I am my own man, I will do as I please," but I cannot make that claim. I am not my own man; I never have been. There was a time when I was in bondage to sin, a slave to sin. I was certainly not my own man at that time. And then God sent his Spirit into my heart, and saved me by his grace. I still cannot claim to be my own man; I belong to him.

Bear in mind that we are talking about being the Lord's property. If we are his property, he will take care of us. There can be no greater sense of security than knowing we belong to him.

It is significant that these are not chains of iron; they are *chains of gold*. These chains bind us to him, and they are precious to those who love and trust in him. Others may object, if they choose, but I would not trade these chains of gold for all the wealth of this world.

"And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate," ([Ex 28:23](#)). The ring is symbolic of eternity; it has no beginning nor end. In this instance the rings are symbolic of the eternity of God, and his everlasting love for his people. These rings are like the chains; they are *rings of gold*.

The eternity of God is one of his attributes, and it is precious to his people. It is one of the delights of the children of God to think on his eternal attributes, to think about him, and what he is like. The love of God is as eternal as he is, and from all eternity that love has reached out to every heir of grace. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee," [Jer 31:3](#). The love of God is not so fickle and changeable as the love of man is; if God ever loved you, he will always love you. The love of a mother for her child is a symbol of God's love for his children. It illustrates what his love is like.

"Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee," [Isa 49:15](#). As precious as the little baby is to its mother, it is not nearly so precious as every heir of grace is to our Lord. As tenderly, and as gently, as she cares for her child, she is never so tender and gentle as the Lord is toward his own.

"And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually," [Ex 28:29](#). He carries you on his shoulder, and he carries you on his heart. There was never anything, or anybody, so near to the

heart of God as those he has chosen, and redeemed. There was never a newborn baby so near to the heart of its mother, as every heir of grace is to their Lord.

You are so near to the heart of God that he gave the very best heaven had for your redemption. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” [Joh 3:16](#). Someone has said that the great price God paid for our redemption was an indication of how much we were worth to him, but that is not the case at all. We are, everyone of us, worthless, hell-deserving sinners. God did not pay the great price he paid because of our great worth. He paid that great price, because of his great love.

Whether the saints of that day understood all that was represented by those emblems of not, the various instructions God gave for the observance of the Law of Moses were very graphic illustrations of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it behooves us, in this day, to reflect on those things. Just before the Lord was crucified, there were some Greeks who came where he was with the request, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” Oh, that all of us might approach these Old Testament lessons with the same thought in mind.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Abraham And Isaac On Mount Moriah

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC ON MOUNT MORIAH

“And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham, and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of,” [Ge 22:1-2](#).

I enjoy the figurative, or symbolic, lessons of the Bible. Most of us understand word pictures, and illustrations, better than we do abstract explanations, and the Bible provides us with an abundance of types, shadows, and figures, especially in the stories of the Old Testament. Sometimes those lessons can be hard to understand, but when we once recognize what is under consideration, the lesson usually becomes very clear, and very simple.

I hear people complain about how hard the Bible is to understand, but usually the people who talk that way are people who rarely ever pick up the Bible in the first place. They have no idea what it teaches, because they have no idea what it says. God intends for the Bible to be read and understood. Simplicity is the very hallmark of the Bible. Paul said, “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward,” [2Co 1:12](#).

In the types, shadows, and figures of the Bible, God used people, and events, to act out some of the most profound Bible truths. And they acted out those truths in a way that, once we recognize the lesson, it sticks in our mind much better than bare words and arguments ever could.

The passage before us provides one of the clearest Old Testament figures of the substitutionary death, and sacrificial atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. The various elements of this figure are clear symbols of what Christ accomplished in his death, burial, and resurrection.

We are told that *God did tempt Abraham*. The word *tempt* has more than one meaning. It does not always mean *to entice to do evil*. God never did entice anybody to do evil. James said, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man,” [Jas 1:13](#). God did not entice Abraham to do evil; but he did test him; he proved him.

God did not test Abraham for his own benefit; God already knew exactly what Abraham would do. There is nothing God does not know, and you can be sure he knew what Abraham would do, better than Abraham did. God understands us better than we understand ourselves. But God tested Abraham, tried him, proved him for my benefit and yours.

In this scene between Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah God used those two men to act out a clear and detailed preview of the grandest transaction of all time. Two thousand years later—if not on this very spot, at least in sight of this spot—the grandest transaction of time and eternity was going to take place.

“God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”

We know this is a figure, because the Bible says it is. Not every event, and not every character in the Old Testament, is a symbol or a figure of something. Preachers can wear themselves out, trying to find a figurative lesson, when there is no figure, no shadow, no type, involved.

One of the perks that goes with the territory, if you have been preaching for a while, is that sometimes a young preacher will ask you, “What does this passage mean?” I read the passage, and I tell him, “This is what they did, and this is what they said, and these were the consequences; that is all I see in the text.”

“But don’t these things represent something?”

“No, not that I can tell. This is what they did, and this is what they said, and these were the consequences.”

“But, isn’t there another lesson in addition to that.”

“No, this is what they did, and this is what they said, and these were the consequences.”

But, sometimes he will just wear himself out, trying to find some deep, dark lesson that is not there in the first place. I believe that one reason so many people are sure they cannot understand the Bible is that they have been taught to look for something that is not there to be found.

I believe that if there is a figurative lesson in any passage, it will be fairly clear there is a figure involved. One way you can know that something is a figure is that the Bible calls it a figure. That should be simple enough.

Baptism is a figure of death, burial, and resurrection. The Bible calls it a figure in so many words. Peter said, “The like *figure* whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.” Human ingenuity cannot design a clearer figure—a clearer illustration—of death, burial, and resurrection than baptism by immersion in water.

The sacrifices of the Law Service, the lambs, the turtle doves, the bullocks, were figures of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible makes that plain enough. But lest we might have missed the point, Isaiah explains it for us. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth,” [Isa 53:6-7](#).

When the Lord finally did appear on the scene, God had John the Baptist, standing in the river of Jordan, with a huge crowd standing there, waiting to be baptized. And, with that crowd of people looking on, he pointed to Jesus and said, “Behold *the Lamb of God*, which taketh away the sin of the world,” [Joh 1:29](#). The type was finally giving way to the antitype, and God would not allow us to miss the point.

God intended for his people to see those Old Testament sacrifices as illustrations of the various aspects of the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he intended that, for centuries to come, preachers would use those figures to explain what he accomplished on behalf of his people. He provided this fairly simple, and easy to understand way, for preachers to explain the gospel.

Paul shows that the Tabernacle was itself “a *figure* for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect,” [Heb 9:9](#). It prefigured, or illustrated, what the Lord would be to his people, and what he would do for them.

Another way to know that a person is a figure is that the Bible calls the figure, and the object of the figure, by the exact same name. Joshua was a figure of

the Lord. Joshua, or Jehoshua, in the Old Testament, and Jesus in the New Testament are the same name in two different languages. Joshua in the Hebrew, and Jesus in the Greek, both mean *deliverer*, or *savior*. It was as if he went around with a sign on his back, saying “My name is Joshua; I am a figure of the Savior.”

David was one of the clearest Old Testament figures of the Lord. He was such a clear figure of the Lord that, in some Old Testament passages—[Ps 89](#) for instance—it is not always easy to tell if the writer is talking about David the son of Jesse, or the Greater David, the Son of God.

I am convinced that if there is a figurative lesson in any passage, the figure is usually fairly easy to recognize. And if the figure is not fairly clear, I think it is a good idea to just leave it alone. Preachers would get in a lot less trouble if we never did explain anything we do not understand.

In this text Abraham the father of Isaac, is a figure of the God the Father. Isaac, the son of Abraham is a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I don't think it takes a rocket scientist to figure that out. God calls Isaac *thy son, thine only son* in order to let us know he is a figure of God's *only Son*. But the Bible makes it clearer than that. Paul says, “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up *his only begotten Son*,” [Heb 11:17](#). We have heard that expression before, haven't we? “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,” [Joh 3:16](#). God saw to it that the translators used the exact same expression in referring both to Isaac and the Lord Jesus Christ. They are both called *his only begotten son*. He will not let us miss the point.

That expression is the way the words appear in the King James Version of the Bible. I am not going to wax so bold as to say the King James translators were inspired in the same way the apostles and prophets were inspired. That is not true. The apostles and prophets were inspired in a manner that no other group of men ever has been. When they were writing the things they wrote in the Bible, God would not allow them to make a mistake. But, on the other hand, I do not have the slightest doubt that those honorable and godly men who translated the King James Version of the Bible were mightily influenced and assisted by the Lord's Spirit. Their work was very much like the preaching of a minister who is preaching under the power and demonstration of God's Spirit.

No minister of today is infallible. No matter how powerfully he may be preaching, he can still make mistakes, even when he feels to be the closest to the Lord. But while that is true, when he is preaching under the influence of the Spirit, he is able to preach with an ability which is not his own. While I would not claim infallibility for the King James translators, I have no doubt

that we can see the immediate influence of God's Spirit evident in their work, and I become very impatient when I hear others, who are much less informed, and probably much less spiritual, challenging their conclusions. I have no doubt that it was the Spirit of God that prompted them to use the exact same words in referring both to Isaac and to the Lord. God will not allow us to miss the point.

By the way, if I might digress for a moment. [Joh 3:16](#) is not an Arminian text. There is not an Arminian text in the Bible.

Those who teach the Arminian system manage to come up with their proof texts by taking those verses, which either identify the children of God, or make conditional promises to the children of God, and applying them to the wicked. On the basis of those texts—which are the property of the children of God—they tell the wicked, “If you will do thus and so you will become a child of God.”

But those promises were never intended for the wicked. Those verses were intended for heaven-born souls. Without exception, those texts are either conditional promises to those who are already born of the Spirit of God, or they are texts which identify the heaven-born soul by describing his conduct. No one has the right to take those texts and pretend they are propositions directed toward the wicked.

But, back to our subject. God's Spirit went all through the Bible putting little clues all along the way. He provided passages, and expressions, that are intended to shine the light on each other. I love to find those things that connect up. They just snap together. Those verses are made just like they were intended to fit together.

Some of you who are my age might remember a fad that came along about forty years ago. Do you remember snap beads? They were made out of plastic, and they were about as tacky as anything can get, but they illustrate my point. Those little beads were made so you could snap them together to form gaudy little bracelets and necklaces. They were about the tackiest things I ever saw, but they lasted for a little while, and then, like all fads, they disappeared. But the point is that they were made to pop together.

I don't mean any disrespect to any passage in the Bible, but a lot of these passages are like that. They are intended to just pop together. They connect to each other, and explain each other. I believe that is an indication of the way we are to study the Bible. We are intended to go through the Bible reading it prayerfully, and carefully, and applying it to our lives.

And we are to look for these simple connections. It did not take a rocket scientist to put snap beads together. A little two or three year old could do it. And I tell you, any heaven born soul, with just normal understanding can go

through the Bible, and understand all he needs to understand about what he is reading.

Abraham was a symbol of God the Father; Isaac, his only begotten son, was a symbol of God's only begotten son.

God says to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

It was not enough that Isaac should be offered on just any mountain. God would lead Abraham to the mountain, but, it had to be a particular mountain—one mountain—in the land of Moriah. He would have to walk for three days to get to that mountain. Later on that mountain was called Mount Moriah.

It was on that same mountain, a thousand years later, that David offered a sacrifice, and Jerusalem was spared ([2Sa 24:18-25](#)). The destroying angel was going through the land. Seventy thousand people had already died. The angel had his hand stretched out over the city of Jerusalem, which was itself a symbol of the people of God. They were under the sentence of death. David, the son of Jesse was here a clear symbol of the Greater David, the Son of God. He offered a sacrifice, and because those sacrificial animals died, the people of Jerusalem lived. The entire matter was a clear figure of the sacrificial death on behalf of his people. All the elements of the figure fit in place. Because Christ died in our room and stead we were delivered from the sentence of death. David would not accept the offer of Araunah (Ornan) to give him the animals to sacrifice; he insisted on paying for the full price ([2Sa 24:24](#)). The purchase price that was paid for our redemption was the most expensive transaction the world has ever known; the Lord Jesus paid that price, by the offering of himself.

The city was delivered by the offering of that sacrifice, but God had already determined to deliver the city before the offering was made ([2Sa 24:16](#)). That is a figure of God's determining before the foundation of the world that he would save his people by the offering of his son. All the different parts of the figure fit; it all took place on the same mountain on which Isaac was offered; and it is all a figure of what God would do on behalf of his people—on this very mountain.

Bear in mind that Solomon's Temple was built at Jerusalem (on Mount Moriah at *the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite*, ([2Ch 3:1](#))). The Lord was crucified at Jerusalem, on a little hill called Calvary, just outside the wall of the city of Jerusalem.

The offering of Isaac, and David's sacrifice at the threshing floor of Ornan, were both figures of the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, and Abraham walked for three days in order to arrive at the very place where, two

thousand years later, the Lord would suffer and die. The Bible does not say that Abraham set up his altar on the very spot where the cross was set up, but it is hard for me to imagine that God required Abraham to walk three days to arrive at this place, and only had him to build the altar somewhere on the mountain. I believe he built the altar on the very spot where—two thousand years later—the cross would be set up.

The offering of Isaac was a figure of the greatest transaction of time and eternity, and God caused Abraham to walk for three days in order to act out this figure at the very place where the transaction would take place. The solemnity of all that took place there—over a period of two thousand years—is awesome beyond expression.

“And Abraham rose up early in the morning...” ([Ge 22:3](#)). The salvation of his people was not an afterthought with God. He began very early—before the foundation of the world. “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in him before the world began,” [2Ti 1:9](#).

God does not have a Plan B. He has known from the very beginning what he was going to do with regard to the salvation his people, and he has never wavered from it. There are those who believe God has tried any number of ways of saving people, and for the most part, failed in the effort. There is one system of doctrine that teaches he has tried five different ways; the gospel is his sixth effort, and he has one more *thousand year* effort (his seventh attempt) yet to go. Others believe the Mosaic Law was one effort of saving people, and he abandoned that effort, because he imagined the gospel would be a more efficient way of saving people. But none of that is right; God only has one way of saving people for heaven. There is only one way of saving people that would have been consistent both with his justice and his mercy. He will save his people, but he will save them in a just and righteous manner. He will save them by fully atoning for the sins—fully removing their guilt—and imputing his own righteousness to them.

“Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world,” [Ac 15:18](#).

“But he is in one mind, and who can turn him, and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth,” [Job 23:13](#).

I like the expression somebody used in describing an Old Baptist preacher. The old brother said, “That Old Baptist preacher, he like an old ram.” He said, “When that Old Baptist preacher start to preach, he just back up, and he back up, and he back, until he back up all the way before the foundation of the world, and here he come.” The old brother had a quaint way of telling it, but he was right. We like to go all the way back to the beginning. God has never

changed his way of saving sinners, and it is the very way he determined on *from the foundation of the world*.

For those three days Isaac was under the sentence of death. I believe those three days are a figure of the three years of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. During all that time the Lord Jesus Christ was under the sentence of death.

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled the ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad man will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" ([Ge 22:3-5](#)).

These young men followed Abraham and Isaac to the foot of the mountain. But that was as far as they could go. There were young men, twelve of them, who followed the Lord as far as they could go. Abraham told these men, *Abide ye here....* The Lord told the disciples, *Tarry ye here....* ([Mt 26:38](#)). The figure is clear enough; these young men were figures of those disciples who followed the Lord, but who could only follow him so far. They could not go the rest of the way with him.

The Lord said, "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people, there was none with me," [Isa 63:3](#). There was a transaction that was going to take place on that mountain, and these young men had no part in that transaction. And there was a transaction that took place on Calvary, and the twelve disciples had no part in that transaction. The one is a figure of the other. The apostles were witnesses for the Lord. They walked with him and talked with him for three years. They were witnesses of the message he preached. They were witnesses of his suffering and death. They were witnesses of his resurrection. But they had no part in what took place on Calvary. What took place that day on that little mountain called Calvary was the most momentous transaction in all of time and eternity, and no one had any part in that transaction except the Lord Jesus Christ and his Father.

"And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you," ([Ge 22:5](#)). I do not believe Abraham entirely understood all that would take place on the mountain. He had no idea how far this would go. But he was convinced that no matter how far it went, he and Isaac were going up on the mountain, and he and Isaac were going to come back down again. Paul explained it for us. Let me go back to the text we read a moment ago. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promise offered up his only begotten Son, of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be

called. Accounting that *God was able to raise him up even from the dead*, from whence also he received him in a figure,” [Heb 11:19](#). Abraham was convinced that if it went that far, God was able to raise Isaac from the ashes, and he was sure he would do just that.

“And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son....” ([Ge 22:6](#)).

The load Isaac carried up the mountain was a figure of the load the Lord carried to Calvary on our behalf. The wood did not represent the cross itself; a man named Simon helped to carry the cross, ([Lu 23:26](#)) The wood represented the load of my sins and yours.

Abraham laid this load of wood on his son. God laid our iniquity on his son. “And the Lord hath *laid on him* the iniquity of us all,” [Isa 53:6](#). “Who his own self *bare our sins* in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye are healed,” [1Pe 2:24](#). The Lord carried our sins to Calvary, and there on Calvary he put our sins away.

“And he took the fire in his hand and the knife, and they went both of them together,” ([Ge 22:6](#)). Abraham carried a fire up on the mountain. The Bible says, “For our God is a consuming fire,” [Heb 12:29](#). This fire, obviously, is a figure of the wrath of God against sin. The religious world has much to say about the love, and mercy, and grace of God. It does not have nearly so much to say about the justice and righteousness of God. It is not nearly so interested in the wrath of God against sin. God is, indeed, loving, and merciful, and gracious; but he is also righteous and just in all he does.

God will save every heir of promise, every subject of his mercy and grace; but he will also be righteous and just in their salvation. He will not sacrifice his own justice in order to satisfy his love. Every attribute of God will be satisfied in the salvation of his people. The fire will completely consume the wood; after the work is done, the wood will no longer exist.

The wrath of God against sin did its work on Calvary. The wrath of God against sin was poured out on the person of his Son. He suffered the full penalty of the law against sin. The law can require no more; it is as though our sins had never been.

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us,” [Ps 103:12](#).

He carried the fire in his hand, and a knife. I do not believe it takes the most brilliant person to recognize that this knife is the sacrificial blade of the Old Testament Law Service. This same knife is found all through the Old Testament.

That blade could kill, but it could not give life. No matter how much you sharpened it, it could never give life. The sharper you made it, the more

effective it was at killing, but it could never give life. And that describes the Law Service. The Law was always an instrument of death; it was never intended to give life. That is one thing the denominational world has never figured out. They seem to think the Law of Moses was one of the ways God used in an effort to save people from everlasting ruin.

We said it a moment ago. The various systems of doctrine seem to think God has a variety of ways of saving people. One system of doctrine teaches that God has tried six different methods. They tell us we are presently in the *sixth dispensation*, and in this *dispensation* he is trying to save people with the gospel. They are sure he is largely going to be a failure in this effort too, but they tell us he has one more *dispensation* to go, and that *dispensation* is going to last a thousand years, and at that time, he will try just one more method of saving people.

God never has tried to do anything. God never has had more than one way of saving people for heaven, and the law is not it—it never was. No matter how sharp you make the sacrificial blade of the law, it can never give life.

There is another aspect to the symbolism of this knife. There is a scarlet ribbon that reaches from the morning of time all the way to the cross of Calvary. All through the Old Testament the priest would take the animal, often a lamb, and he would drive the sacrificial blade home into the heart of that little animal, and that rich, warm, red blood would flow out of the wound, over the blade, and perhaps, over the hand of the priest in charge. Every time that service was performed it would extend that scarlet ribbon that reached all the way to Calvary. There at Calvary the Lord, the great antitype, poured out his own blood on behalf of his people.

And there, at the end of the way, God stationed John the Baptist, pointing to the Lord, and saying, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” [Joh 1:29](#).

“...and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and *they went both of them together*” ([Ge 22:6](#))

They went *both of them together*. Abraham and Isaac were in agreement. Abraham could never have done what he did, if Isaac had not been agreeable to it. Abraham was way over a hundred years old at this time. Isaac was a young man in the very prime of life. Do you think Abraham could have bound Isaac on the altar, if Isaac had refused to be bound. God the Father, and God the Son, are in agreement with regard to the matter of our salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ was perfectly willing to do all he did, and to suffer all he did on our behalf.

“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God,” [Heb 10:7](#).

“And Isaac spake unto Abraham and said, My father, and he said, Here am I, my son, and he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together.” There are three different ways you can read the expression, “God will provide *himself* a lamb.” And no matter which way you read it, it is still right. I like texts you cannot read wrong.

You can read this word *himself* to be what our English teachers call an *appositive*. God will himself provide a lamb. That is right, isn’t it? God will do the work himself. If you read it that way, it is right.

Or you can read the word *himself* to be a direct object. God will provide himself to be the lamb. The Lord Jesus Christ was and is God. He is as much God as the Father is God. He was God, when he went to Calvary. He always continued to be God. He continued to be what he had always been, and he took upon him what he had not previously had. He continued to be God, and he took on him a human nature. It was in his human nature that he suffered and died. He was “put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit,” [1Pe 3:18](#). So if you read it to say that God will provide himself as a lamb, it is still right.

Or you can read the word *himself* to be an indirect object. You can read it to say that God will provide a lamb for himself. In other words, he will provide the lamb to satisfy the demands of his own righteous judgment against sin. You can read it that way, and it is right that way as well.

One thing I think people forget is that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished something with regard to God himself. It satisfied the righteousness of God in the salvation of his people. “To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus,” [Ro 3:26](#). The suffering and death of Jesus was for the purpose of satisfying the righteous demands of God in the salvation of his people.

Without doing any damage to the verse, you can paraphrase it to say, “God *himself*, will provide *himself*, as a lamb *for himself*.” I like verses you cannot read wrong.

“And they came to the place which God had told him of, and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order” (vs. 9). Abraham *laid the wood in order*. Every aspect of our salvation is *in order*. There are no contradictions, nothing that does not fit.

Some forty seven years ago, I began preaching in denominational churches. That was all I knew, and for several years I did the best I could to preach their doctrine; but I just could not make it all add up. One part of their doctrine would contradict another part of their doctrine. I was convinced there ought to

be some kind of *order*, some kind arrangement. I thought the doctrine should all fit together, and I just could not make it fit.

After awhile the doctrine did all begin to come together, but by the time I began to find some kind of order in the doctrines of the Bible, I found myself preaching principles that were very different to what I had been taught. For about two years, I found myself preaching the doctrine of salvation by God's sovereign grace in denominational churches. That was an interesting situation.

I finally learned about the Primitive Baptists and found a home among them. I was convinced all along that there was an order to the doctrine of the Bible, that it should all come together in some kind of system. It was the delight of my life to discover a people who knew something about what that order was and appreciated it as much as I did.

Our people don't have seminaries. We are not interested in having seminaries. But Primitive Baptist preachers are the most systematic preachers on earth with regard to the system of Bible doctrine. There is a system—an order if you will—about the doctrine of the Bible, and if any Bible student will study the Bible, and just let it say what it says, that system, that order, will become abundantly apparent.

"Abraham....laid the wood in order, and *bound Isaac his son*, and laid him on the altar upon the wood" ([Ge 22:9](#)).

Isaac submitted to be bound. There is no question about that; but he was bound, nonetheless. When the Lord was crucified, there were people milling around at the foot of the cross, challenging him to come down from the cross.

"And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross....He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God," [Mt 27:39-40,42-43](#).

Ever since I was a little boy, I have heard the question asked, "Was it possible; for the Lord to come down from the cross?" I have heard some people argue that he could have come down from the cross, if he chose to. And I have heard others argue, just as vehemently, that he could not come down. Let me tell you. There was no way the Lord could come down from the cross.

But, somebody protests, "Now, hold on just a minute; my Lord can do anything he chooses to do." That is right; God can do anything he chooses to do; but he could not come down from the cross. Why could he not come down from the cross? He was bound there, and there was no way to break that bond.

Those nails could not hold him on the cross. He created every atom and every molecule in those nails. He could have vaporized those nails into oblivion any time he wanted to. That was not what held him there. What did hold the Lord on the cross? He was bound there by his own word. He had promised that he would do what he was doing, and he was bound by his own word to do it. There is an expression I used to hear a lot. I don't hear it much anymore. But I used to hear people say, "Let your word be your bond." I don't hear that expression as much as I used to. Sometimes people promise to do something, and they do not have any intention of doing what they say they will do. But I can tell you this. If God says he will do something, you can put it in the bank. "The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand," [Isa 14:24](#). God swore to it. God cannot even think a lie, much less tell a lie. But, more than that, God swore he would do all he purposed to do. The Bible does not mention many things God cannot do. He cannot deny himself ([2Ti 2:13](#)). He cannot swear by one greater than himself ([Heb 6:13](#)). And he cannot lie. ([Heb 6:18](#)). In other words, he cannot do anything that is contrary to his own nature and attributes.

If God had failed to do all he purposed to do—all he swore he would do—you would not think very much of him, would you? Sinful man routinely goes back on his promises, but we should never imagine that God would do any such thing.

Could he come down from the cross? No, he could not come down from the cross. He was bound there by his own word. He was bound there by his own nature and attributes. That is the tightest of all bonds.

"And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son," ([Ge 22:10](#)). At that moment, Isaac was as good as dead. Abraham had gone far enough. And, then an angel speaks from heaven. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham, and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only son from me."

At this point the figure changes. Up to this point, Isaac has been a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Abraham stretches forth his hand and takes the knife to slay Isaac, Isaac is as good as dead. Isaac represents the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, at that point, that part of the figure is complete.

Now the figure shifts to the "ram caught in a thicket by his horns" ([Ge 22:12](#)). The ram then becomes a figure of the Christ, and Isaac becomes a symbol of every heir of promise. There is a substitution that takes place.

Substitution is at the very heart of the gospel. “Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering *in the stead of his son*” ([Ge 22:13](#)). The very heart of the gospel is that the Lord Jesus Christ took our place.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,” [Isa 53:5-6](#). First, Isaac was *bound* on the altar. Then the ram was *caught* in a thicket by his horns. It is the same figure. Isaac was *bound*; the ram was *caught*. They both represent the Lord binding himself to do all he promised to do.

I love the way the Spirit goes through the Bible, providing figures, to illustrate the most profound of all truths, and scattering clear and simple clues all along the way.

Then, lest we might have still missed the point, God sent John the Baptist to identify the Lord—to point him out as the Lamb of God, the great antitype of that sacrificial ram.

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” [Joh 1:29](#).

“And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son” ([Ge 22:12-13](#)).

That is substitutionary atonement as clear as language can make it. Abraham “offered him up—in the stead of his son.”

“And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord, it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies” ([Ge 22:14-17](#)).

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Absolutism: What Does It Really Teach?

ABSOLUTISM: What does it really teach?

The following is a quote from Elder R.H. Pittman’s little book of *Questions and Answers*.

“What is Absolutism? A. It is an erroneous and strained view of the doctrine of predestination. Its advocates teach that God absolutely predestinated all things that come to pass, both good and evil; that what is going on in the world now, that which has transpired in the past, and that which will come to pass in the future was all predestinated before time, and could not be otherwise from what it was, is, or will be, that all the acts of men and devils were predestinated. This doctrine is not Bible doctrine—Elder Sylvester Hassell said it was imported from Italy. It was first published among Baptists by the paper known as **Signs of the Times** in 1832. Since that time the doctrine has been made a hobby by a few Baptists, yet none of our churches were organized upon such a doctrine—it is not found in the articles of faith of any Baptist church. It is a left handed, confusing kind of predestination, and has been the cause of strife and division. Its advocates are not satisfied with predestination as Paul expressed it. They seek to prop up predestination on one side by ‘absolute,’ and on the other side they spread it over ‘all things.’ The doctrine, when run to its logical conclusion, is nothing less than fatalism, for it makes God as being the author of sin, though most of its advocates deny this.”

When Elder Hassell said *Absolutism* came out of Italy he was, no doubt, referring to an Italian Catholic-turned-Protestant theologian by the name of Jerom Zanchius. Zanchius (or Zanchy, historians spell his name different ways) was born in Italy in 1516 just before the Reformation broke out in Germany. He was contemporary with Calvin, Luther, Knox, and the other great Reformers. He taught at Strasburg and later at the university of Heidelberg. Persecution drove him from Italy to Germany, and finally to England.

He wrote the proto-Absolute document entitled *The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination*. That book is the clearest, the most comprehensive, and the most logically consistent book on the subject. It became the standard statement of that doctrine. If it does not prove the doctrine, it cannot be proven. The book has continued to be published until this day. My old tattered and torn copy was republished by Baker Publishing House in 1978. It only contains 170 pages, but it gives a concise and entirely adequate explanation of what the doctrine of Absolute Predestination is all about.

In order to give as brief an explanation of the doctrine as possible, and yet look at different aspects of the subject, I will limit my remarks, for the most part, to Zanchius’s book and those theologians he quotes.

In order to make his point, Zanchius does what every Absoluter must do. **He spends most of his time proving points that were never in question.** Then, having proven those points beyond all possible challenge, he adds his

Absolute conclusion to the argument, as if the points he has just proven have something to do with his conclusion.

When I say those points were never in question, bear in mind that I am reading the book as a Primitive Baptist, and approaching the subject from the point of view of our people. In order to give Zanchius his credit, we need to keep in mind that he was writing, primarily, for people who believed that salvation from eternal damnation depends on the merit of the sinner. They believed it was up to the sinner to earn a home in heaven. And, considering who he was writing for, the points he spends so much time proving were the very questions that were under attack. So it was proper that he should begin by showing where he was coming from.

But the fact remains that, from our Primitive Baptist point of view, those points were never the question.

Having said all that, we need to point out that, no matter how clearly, and how conclusively, you may have proven your point, you have not accomplished anything, if your premise has no connection with your conclusion.

Zanchius spends most of his time talking about the attributes of God, and it is proper that he should do that. If Bible students spent more time studying what the Bible tells us about God and his attributes, it would clear up most of the questions in religion. There is no room for a sovereign, all-wise, almighty, God of will and purpose in most of what passes for the Christian religion of our day. Let the Bible student accept the description God gives of himself, and the petty, silly notions of the religious establishment would vanish in a moment.

Zanchius deals with the attributes of God, and up until he starts talking about the predestination of sin and wickedness he does a good job of it. Then he gets completely off the track and out of the Bible.

He shows that God is almighty, all-wise, and all-knowing, but that is not the question.

There is nothing God does not know. He knows everything there is to know—past, present, and future ([Isa 46:9-10](#)). He knows everything from the mightiest heavenly body to the tiniest insect. “He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names,” ([Ps 147:4](#)). He knows every sparrow that falls to the ground; he numbers the very hairs of your head ([Mt 10:29-30](#)). He knows what you are going to do before you do it, and even when you are sure that is not what you are going to do ([2Ki 8:12-13](#)). He identifies kings and calls them by name long before they are born ([1Ki 13:2](#); [Isa 44:28](#); [45:1](#)). His “eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” ([Pr 15:3](#)). Who would dare deny any of it?

If there is a solitary atom in the farthest reaches of the universe, you can be sure that God knows everything there is to know about it. He knows where

that atom is today; he knows where it was a thousand years ago; and (if time should last) he knows what its exact location will be a thousand years from now.

Long before we were born, he knew all about every member of the human family. He knew where and when we would be born, and he knew all the events and circumstances of our lives. There is not a thought that ever entered our minds, or a move that we ever made, but that he knew all about it. And he knew it from all eternity. The God we serve has never learned anything; he has never forgotten anything; he has always known everything.

But it is strange logic that thinks his knowing everything there is to know, somehow, proves that he manipulates circumstances and events in order to cause men to sin—according to a foreordained schedule.

Zanchius shows the sovereignty of God in the salvation of his people, and in his dealings with them, and with the wicked, but again, that is not the question.

Of course, God is sovereign. He states it over and over again. “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?” ([Mt 20:15](#)). “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him what doest thou?” ([Da 4:35](#)). Nobody has the right to challenge God for anything he does.

There is no need to multiply proof texts. God is sovereign over all creation. It is his property; we are his property; and he has the right to do with us what he will.

But that is a far cry from pretending that God gave man a law, irresistibly causes him to break the law, and then punishes him for doing what he could not keep from doing.

He shows that God exercises his almighty power in creation, and in his government of the world.

That is exactly what the Bible teaches. “The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God,” ([Ps 104:21](#)). There is not an animal in the forest, nor an insect in the grass, but that God feeds it, and provides for it. Men can build accurate timepieces, but, no matter if their timepiece may be accurate to the thousandth of a second, they still correct it by the movement of the stars through the heavens. Who could doubt there is a God in heaven, who keeps every star on course—and on time?

He “upholds all things by the word of his power,” ([Heb 1:3](#)). It is by his power that every tiny electron is held in its orbit around the nucleus of its atom. His power holds every planet in its orbit around the sun, and every mighty galaxy in its course through the heavens. That power holds sway from

the inner workings of the nucleus of the tiniest atom to the farthest reaches of creation, and holds it all together.

What we call *Physical Law* is nothing more than God's usual way of sustaining the created universe, and causing to operate in a consistent manner. Zanchius talks about the providence of God as it protects and provides for his people, and for every other creature. He proves that the providence of God embraces the mightiest angel and the tiniest insect. He proves that God numbers and names every star in the sky. He shows that God feeds every animal in the forest. He shows that there is no place in the universe beyond the power, the wisdom, and the surveillance of our all-wise, all-powerful God. He makes all those arguments, and he provides indisputable proof texts to prove his point.

But, again, all of that is a far cry from saying that God causes men to sin according to some prearranged program.

It does not make any difference how well you may prove your points; it does not accomplish anything, if those points have nothing to do with the subject in question.

The question is: did God by one eternal decree absolutely and unchangeably predetermine everything that will ever happen in time and eternity? Did God predestinate all the good—and all the evil—in the world? Emphasizing the attributes of God does not prove that point.

No matter how brilliant you may be, when you study about God and his attributes, there comes a point at which you are left in wide-eyed, slack-jawed amazement. At that point our learning must give way to wonder.

God is all-wise; he knows everything there is to know. You and I are not all-wise; we do not know everything, and we never will. God will always be the creator, and we will always be the creature. We will always stand in wonder and in awe of him. There are some things we will never be able to fully explain.

We should be wary of any system that tries to explain the unexplainable—any system that tries to bring God down to our level. We should beware of any system that charges God with conduct that is contrary to his own nature and attributes.

The Bible tells us all we need to know about the nature and attributes of God. We do not need to add our own philo-sophy. We can spend the rest of our lives studying and contemplating what we are told, and it will be the delight of our lives, if we do just that. Consider, if you will, some of what the Bible does tell us, and it will remove much of the difficulty.

First, God is infinite; he is not bound by time nor space, but you and I cannot comprehend infinity. He is eternal, but we cannot comprehend eternity.

The nearest we can come to understanding eternity is to think of it as unending time. He is (at one and the same time) the beginning and the end, the first and the last. That is not the same as saying he is the beginning, and he will be the end. He is both—at the same time. We cannot comprehend that. Brilliant though he was, when John Newton wrote that beautiful old hymn *Amazing Grace*, the best he could do was, “When we’ve been there ten thousand years.” We know what he was trying to say, and we rejoice in the thought. But days and years are the opposite of eternity. There is coming a time when days and years will end, and we will be eternally with the Lord. One of the names of God is *I AM*. All is *one eternal now* with him. You and I are creatures of time; we are bound in time, and bound by time, but not so with God.

You and I are locked into time, and traveling through time one moment after another. That does not apply to God. He is the unchangeable one. If God were bound by time the way we are—to say the least—he would become one day older every twenty-four hours. But he does not become any older; he does not change.

Time does not encompass God the way it encompasses us. He is the “high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity” ([Isa 57:15](#)). He is not bound by time; it is the other way around; he encompasses time.

What tiny, tiny little creatures of time we all are. Think about it for a moment. Each of us occupies such a tiny little spot in the universe. We are such little things that if some-body backs off more than a few hundred yards he will have trouble even seeing us. If he could back off somewhat farther, he would have trouble spotting the earth we live on, and if he backed off far enough he would have trouble seeing our sun as anything more than a tiny speck away out yonder in the night sky.

That does not apply to God; he is everywhere at one and the same time. If you could build the largest hydraulic press, you still could not compress God into the tiny little space you and I occupy.

In much the same way that we are locked into one tiny little spot in the vastness of the universe, we are also locked into one tiny instant in time. With us there is a past, a present, and a future; but we can never possess any of it except the present. The future is always on its way; the past is forever gone; and the present lasts for such a brief instant that we can never know it until it is gone.

You may have thought about how brief a moment the present is. If you have not, do think about it for a moment.

If the present lasted for a full minute, you would never have a car wreck. You could avoid most any accident, if you had a full sixty seconds to react. If the present lasted for as much as a second you could never have a prize fight.

Given a full second, any third rate boxer could get out of the way of his opponent's fist. If the present lasted the thousandth part of a second, we could not have computers. If a computer could not split every second into a million parts and beyond, it would be so slow you could never get anything done. But as brief a moment as the present is, that is all you and I have. But not so with God; he inhabits eternity. You could as easily compress God into the little spot you and I occupy as you could confine him to the tiny instant we call the present. He is the *I AM*. All is one eternal now with him. Being the eternal one, past, present, and future are all the same with him. We can never entirely explain God, and there is nothing with which to compare him. "To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him," ([Isa 40:18](#)). All we can do is adore, and wonder, and worship.

We need to realize that there are some things the Bible teaches about God and his work—without explaining how he does what he does.

Much of the *how* of what God does is so far beyond our ability to comprehend, that we could not understand it—no matter how well it was explained.

Suppose some rocket scientist should take the next six months to explain to somebody like myself how they managed to build the space shuttle. Suppose he writes out every complex mathematical formula involved, and explains every intricate step. Suppose he explains all the scientific principles that must be taken into consideration. Do you suppose I could understand all he said, so I could explain it to the next person. No, of course not. He would lose me just after he said, "Now here is the way we did it..." His entire presentation would be beyond my comprehension. But even that is a very lame illustration compared to the thought of understanding some of the things God does.

The Bible tells of any number of things God does without explaining how he does it.

We are told that in the very morning of time—by the word of his power—God created the world out of nothing. He simply spoke the word, and vast worlds sprang into exist-ence. We are convinced it is so, but it is beyond our comprehension to understand how he did it.

By the same power he speaks the word, and one dead in trespasses and sins is made alive in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God takes up its abode in the heart of the sinner, and he is born again. Again, we are told what he does, with no explanation of how the Spirit does its mighty work.

We are told that at God's appointed time the Son of God became man. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us"([Joh 1:14](#)). If the very heaven of heavens cannot contain him, it is beyond our ability to understand how he could become a tiny baby his mother could hold in her arms. Not only does

the Bible not explain how he did it, it goes on to say it is a *mystery* ([1Ti 3:16](#)). If it is a mystery, we could not understand it, even if it was explained. It would no longer be a mystery.

The most central message of the gospel is the resurrection of our Lord. He rose from the dead, and one day he will raise us, and fashion our bodies like unto his own glorious body. How will he put our sleeping dust together again, and rejoin it to our departed spirit? Again, we are told it is a *mystery* ([1Co 15:51](#)). Raising the dead is not part of our job description, so we do not need to be concerned that we cannot explain how he will do it.

But that is not good enough for the theologian; he feels a need to explain everything. And if he cannot find his explanation in the Bible, he has a world of philosophy at his disposal.

Paul had some less than flattering things to say about philosophy ([Col 2:8](#)). The earnest Bible student is convinced the Bible provides every explanation we need. If the Bible does not provide it, we do not need it; but that does not deter our theologian friend. He finds in pagan philosophy a principle called *fate*, and it exactly fills the need. By searching the pagan philosophers he finds an explanation the Bible does not provide.

By stripping *fate* of some of its most objectionable features, and dressing it up in a *Christian* garb, he is able to remove the *mystery*. He can now explain how God can foretell the future.

The pagan doctrine teaches that everything that happens in time was predetermined long ago by a blind *fate*. Everything, right down to the tiniest gyration and pirouette of a falling snowflake, was determined long ago, and nothing can be changed. Almost a thousand years before Jerom Zanchius was born, a pagan prophet named Mohammed taught that, "Whatever is written is written." Nothing can be changed; we are swept along by our *fate*. The Absoluter strips *fate* of its *blind fate* stigma by bundling it with the omniscience of God. Hence *fate* is no longer *blind*.

He strips it of its *random* nature by bundling it with the will and purpose of God. Hence, for the Absoluter, God is able to foretell the future, because he has determined to manipulate, and orchestrate everything that happens so that everything takes place just the way he determined to make it happen. It is still a pagan doctrine; but he has made it more acceptable to an inquiring (and bewildered) student of the Bible.

The Absoluter is able to remove the *mystery* from God's ability to foretell the future, but what a price he pays in the transaction.

By the time he gets through explaining God, he is left with a deity that does not correspond to the God of the Bible. He is left with a deity that looks, for all the world, like the gods of the pagans.

1. My first objection to Absolutism is that it teaches that God is unable to know about sin in advance, unless he has determined to manipulate and orchestrate circumstances in order to bring about the sin.

You need to be very careful when you talk about what God cannot do. The Bible only lists three things God cannot do: he cannot lie ([Heb 6:18](#)); he cannot deny himself ([2Ti 2:13](#)); and he cannot swear by one greater than himself ([Heb 6:13](#)). In other words, he cannot do anything that is contrary to his own nature and attributes.

But he can foretell what is going to happen in the future without in any way predestinating man's sin. The fact that he can foretell the future is one of the proofs that he is God.

But listen to what our proto-Absoluter, Jerom Zanchius says about it, and bear in mind that he is their standard bearer.

"Therefore, His determinate plan, counsel and purpose (i.e. His own predestination of causes and effects) is the only basis of His foreknowledge, which foreknowledge could neither be certain nor independent, but as founded on his own antecedent decree." (*page 135*) That is an exact quote; you can look it up.

Notice that Zanchius is sure God could not be certain about what was going to happen in the future except for "his own antecedent decree." In other words, the only way he can know about the sin is for him to *decree* the sin. That sounds like dangerous reasoning to me.

But there is more; he says this "predestination of causes and effects," this predestination of sin and wickedness, is "the only basis of his foreknowledge." **Can you believe that anybody in his right mind would argue that God has to prop up one of his own attributes by predestinating sin?** God's foreknowledge (his prescience if you want to be precise) is one of his attributes, and his attributes do not need to be propped up. But Zanchius is sure *the only basis* of God's foreknowledge is "His predestination of causes and effects." In other words, according to Zanchius, if God did not predestinate everything that is going to happen, his foreknowledge would come crashing to the ground.

But I did tell you that Zanchius borrowed this doctrine from the pagan philosophers.

But, lest anybody might think we misunderstood him, listen to him again in the same paragraph. "Again, we cannot suppose him to have foreknown anything which He had not previously decreed." He is sure God could not have fore-known it, if he had not decreed it.

Allow me one more quote. "Now, if God foreknew this, He must have predetermined it, because His own will is the foundation of His decrees, and His decrees are the foundation of His prescience" (*page 91*). I believe that

should remove all doubt about what he was saying. Zanchius was sure that God's ability to predict sin has no foundation except his own willingness to predestinate sin.

These brilliant Absoluter theologians are so determined to explain everything about God, that they are willing to charge him with predestinating sin, in order to explain how he can foretell the future.

The Absoluter is convinced that he presents the attributes of God in a way that puts all other systems to shame. He magnifies God as no one else does. The fact is that he envisions God as having to prop up his own attributes.

He presents this imagined predestination of sin and wickedness as a crutch for his omniscience to lean on.

According to him, if omniscience did not have this crutch, it would stumble and fall. That is not the way my Bible describes God.

[Isa 46:9-10](#), "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure."

I realize the Absoluter claims that text, but before he can prove ownership, he will have to prove his notion that God is *pleased* with sin and wickedness.

The things God has decreed to do are his *pleasure*.

But the Absoluter insists that God does not predestinate sin; he simply removes his restraining hand, and man sins according to his own sinful nature. He restrains the man, and keeps him from sinning, or he removes his hand, and allows him to work out his own sinful impulses. And so he goes through all of time, either restraining or permitting sin, and he does it to such a degree that all that happens takes place according to his preconceived plan.

At first glance, there seems to be some logic to the answer. Who could deny that when God's removes his restraint from the sinner, he runs into every sinful excess. And who could deny that God does prevent man from being as wicked as he could be. The Absoluter is convinced that in this way he can explain everything that has happened, or will ever happen.

But when we look a little closer, we discover that the explanation falls far short of the goal. For one thing, most of what happens in time has no moral dimension at all. There is nothing either good or evil about a snowflake falling in one spot or another. There is nothing either good or evil about a bird lighting on one limb rather than another. Even if we would accept the Absoluter's premise, it would fall far short of providing a foundation for the foreknow-ledge of God. It would fall far short of showing how God knows ahead of time every gyration and pirouette of every falling snowflake.

The foreknowledge of God does not need a prop, and even if it did, the Absoluter has not found a prop sufficient to carry the load.

2. My second objection to Absolutism is that it teaches that the sin of Adam was the result of God's irresistible will.

Before he transgressed, Adam did not have a sinful nature to motivate and control him. So we come back to the question: if, as our Absoluter friend tell us, every sin happens, because God removes his restraining power, and man simply acts out his own sinful impulses, what about the sin of Adam?

If I might repeat myself, when the Absoluter explains how it is that God can foretell every little detail about every sin that will ever be committed—without being the cause of the sin—he will tell you that God simply leaves the sinner to his own nature, and his own devices, and the nature of the sinner works its way in exactly the way God predestinated that it would.

There can be no doubt that God often gives people over to work their own destruction, but to use that explanation to show that God, somehow, predestinated every sin is simply a dodge.

For one thing, the explanation breaks down, when you apply it to the sin of Adam. There can be no question that God knew beforehand what Adam would do. He provided the Lord Jesus Christ as the remedy for sin, before that first sin was committed. But until he sinned, Adam did not have a sinful, corrupt nature to motivate and control him.

When it comes to the original sin of Adam, the Absoluter has no choice—if **he is going to save his pagan philosophy**—and that is to trace the sin of Adam to God himself. That is exactly what our friend Zanchius does. Listen to his explanation:

“On the whole, if God was not unwilling that Adam should fall, He must have been willing that he should, since between God's willing and nilling there is no medium. And is it not highly rational as well as scriptural, nay, is it not absolutely necessary to suppose that the fall was not contrary to the will and determination of God? Since, if it was, His will (which the apostle represents as being irresistible, [Ro 9:19](#)) was apparently frustrated and His determination rendered of worse than none effect.” (page 89)

Notice two things: first, he points out that the will of God is *irresistible*. He is right about that; but he goes on to claim that God (irresistibly) willed that Adam should sin.

Hear him again: “Surely, if God had not willed the fall, He could, and no doubt would, have prevented it; but he did not prevent it; ergo, He willed it. And if he willed it, He certainly decreed it, for the decree of God is nothing else but the seal and ratification of His will.” (page 88) Again, notice that he ultimately traces the sin of Adam, not to rebellion on the part of Adam, but to the decree of God himself. According to Zanchius, Adam sinned, because God irresistibly willed for him to sin.

Again, “and Luther observes that ‘God permitted Adam to fall into sin because he willed that he should so fall,’” (page 46). I doubt that needs any explanation.

He goes on, “From what has been laid down, it follows that Augustine, Luther, Bucer, the scholastic divines, and other learned writers are not to be blamed for asserting that ‘God may in some sense be said to will the being and commission of sin,’” (page 54). In this statement he is sure that nobody should *be blamed* for tracing every sin on the part of every person to the will of God.

Let me say again that Absolutism is the result of bund-dling the pagan philosophy of fatalism with the Bible doctrines of the power, and wisdom, and purpose of God—to the great scandal of those doctrines.

By doing that it removes the stigma of being *blind* and *random* from the notion of an irresistible, unchangeable *fate*. And it explains God’s ability to know the future in a way the carnal mind can comprehend.

In other words, God is able to tell what is going to happen from the first to the last moment of time, because that is the way he is going to orchestrate and manipulate all things and make them happen. In order to do that, he finds it necessary to argue that Adam sinned, because God irresistibly willed for him to sin.

But Bible truth does not need pagan philosophy to prop it up, and any time you call on pagan philosophy to explain God and his work, you will find yourself explaining God in a way that is much more compatible to the pagan way of thinking than it is to the description he gives of himself in the Bible. That will become abundantly apparent as we look further at this Absoluter’s arguments.

3. My third objection to Absolutism is that it teaches God causes men to sin.

The Absoluter bristles at that statement, and he insists that he does not believe God causes anybody to sin. He explains that God uses something he calls *second cause*, whereby he so manipulates, and orchestrates circumstances that man simply acts out his own sinful nature by reacting to those circumstances. He has a real problem when he tries to apply that notion to the sin of Adam, but we have already talked about that.

Here is what Zanchius says about *second cause*. “That God often lets the wicked go on to more ungodliness, which He does (a) negatively by withholding that grace which alone can restrain them from evil; (b) remotely, by the providential concurrence and mediation of *second causes*, which *second causes*, meeting and acting in concert with the corruption of the reprobate’s unregenerate nature, *produce sinful effects*; (c) judicially, or in a way of judgment,” (page 64). He allows that these *second causes*, which are

themselves *providential* (provided by God) *produce sinful effects*. He thinks God provides the *second causes* that *produce sinful effects*, and he is sure this, somehow, exonerates God from causing the sin and perversion the wicked do.

But, in spite of this lame dodge, Zanchius makes it abundantly clear that he thinks God is the sole cause of everything that happens—good, bad, and indifferent.

Listen to these direct quotes. Keep in mind that we have provided the italics to point up what he is saying.

“*Whatever comes to pass, comes to pass by virtue of this absolute omnipotent will of God,*” (page 50).

“The will of God is so *the cause of all things*, as to be itself without cause, for nothing can be the cause of that which is *the cause of everything*,” (page 50).

He appeals to Luther for support, “God worketh all things in all men, *even wickedness in the wicked*,” (page 65).

“*He produces actions* by his power alone, which actions, as neither issuing from faith, nor being wrought with a view to the divine glory, nor done in the manner prescribed by the Divine word, are on these accounts *properly denominated evil*,” (page 66).

“Every work performed, *whether good or evil*, is done in strength, and by the power derived immediately from God himself,” (page 66).

Again, he appeals to Luther, “God would not be a respect-able Being if He were not almighty, and *the doer of all things that are done*, or if anything could come to pass in which He had no hand,” (page 68).

If, in those quotes, Zanchius and Luther do not clearly and unambiguously charge God with being the *cause of all things, whether good or evil*, I confess I do not know any way words could express that doctrine. These Absoluters are so determined to provide an explanation of how God can foretell the future that they are perfectly willing to charge him with causing sin—in order to prop up their lame doctrine.

At first glance, Absolutism, like its sister doctrine, Calvinism, can be very beguiling. It seems to be a system that explains and organizes all things from the beginning to the end of time. It teaches that God is totally in charge, that nothing is beyond his control, that every motion, from the rise and fall of mighty empires to the fluctuation of every falling snowflake is according to one unchangeable master plan.

But when you scratch it just a little, you discover just below the surface, notions that are diametrically opposed to all the Bible teaches us about God and his attributes. It presents us with a god who must prop up his own attributes. It presents us with a god who is very much like us, a god who can only know the future, because he manipulates and orchestrates the future.

We can be sure that God does know everything that will ever come to pass, and he knows it down to the tiniest detail. But he knows that because he inhabits eternity. He is not bound by time the way we mortals are. That is a point the Absoluter readily acknowledges; but he never allows that fact to interfere with his system.

God is in charge; nothing is beyond his control. His power reaches to the mightiest heavenly bodies, and to the tiniest subatomic particle. But that does not mean he manipulates moral creatures and causes them to sin.

Our second article of faith says, “We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, and the *ONLY* rule of faith and practice.” Pagan philosophy can be interesting to study, and I have spent my fair share of time studying it. But we should be cautious about supplementing the Bible with men’s philosophy.

We must always keep in mind that is what Absolutism is. It is the pagan doctrine of *fate* dressed up in a Christian garb and made to look like Christian doctrine.

It has been said that, “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread,” and, unwilling to stand in wide-eyed wonder at the majesty of his Maker—the Absoluter rushes in with his book of pagan philosophy in hand.

Rather than simply acknowledge that God is God, and we are not—he traces all the sin and wickedness of the world to the decrees of God, and (either overtly or covertly) charges God with being the cause of every sin. He explains God in a way that is entirely different from the pure and thrice holy God of the Bible.

To end where we began, there comes a time when we must acknowledge that no matter how brilliant you may be, when you study about God and his attributes, there comes a point at which you are left in wide-eyed, slack-jawed amazement. At that point our learning must give way to wonder.

[Isa 55:9](#), For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Adam's Transgression

ADAM’S TRANSGRESSION

[Ge 2:16-17](#), “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

Our Articles of Faith say, “**We believe in the doctrine of original sin.**” By that we mean, “We believe in the doctrine of *the origin of sin.*” It means the same thing. In other words, this is where sin started; this is the origin, the

source of sin. This is why we are the way we are; this is how we came to be sinners. We believe that when Adam partook of the forbidden fruit, he became a sinner, and all his posterity became sinners with him, and in him. Adam sinned and brought the wrath of God on all mankind.

But that raises a question. How is it that one man, eating a handful of fruit, half way round the world, and six thousand years ago, had that kind of impact on all mankind? How did one act by one man bring the wrath of God on all men? I believe the Bible makes it plain enough.

Before we look at the consequences of Adam's sin, we need to first point out that Adam stood as the federal head of all his offspring. By *federal head*, we mean that he represented us; whatever he did was as if we had done it.

But you tell me, "I don't like this representative principle. If that is what the representative principle is all about, I don't like it." Well, you live with the representative principle every day of your life, whether you like it or not. A few months ago, we elected people and sent them to Washington to represent us. For better or worse, we elect representatives, and we send them to Nashville, or Raleigh, or Washington, to do whatever it is they do. And whatever they do, they do in our name. They represent us, and whatever they do is just as if we did it.

Several years ago there was a congress that had been in session for some time, and according to the news media, they had not accomplished a thing. They got to calling them *the do nothing congress*. One evening on the six o'clock news, the news anchor made the comment that congress had been in session for so many weeks, and they had not accomplished anything yet. They only had so many weeks to go, and if they were going to do anything, they had better do it in the next six weeks.

I thought that was the best news I had heard out of Washington yet. If they could just hold out for six more weeks, we might have it made until next year. I am one of those folks who think the less they do in Washington, the better I like it.

But, anyway, Adam did stand as our representative; he stood as our federal head. If you object to his representing us, do you believe you would have done any better? Suppose God should say, "Okay, we are going to wipe out Adam's record, and from this moment forward, you are going to stand or fall on your own record. I am going to judge you on the final day, based on what you do from today until the day you die."

Bearing in mind that it is only going to take one transgression to plunge you off into eternal damnation, do you think you would do better than Adam did? Knowing my track record, I believe I had just as soon leave it the way it is. Having said all of that, let us look see what the Bible says about it. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou

mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” [Ge 2:16,25](#).

The Bible does not mention very many things God cannot do. It says he cannot lie ([Heb 6:18](#)); he cannot deny himself ([2Ti 2:13](#)); and he cannot swear by one greater than himself ([Heb 6:13](#)). In other words, he cannot do anything that is contrary to his own nature and attributes. But the point we are getting to is that God cannot lie. If God says it, it is right.

In the little town where I live there is a church related college, and being church related, they require their students to take the required amount of instruction in Bible. I don't know why they bother. Somebody told me his son-in-law had just graduated from that college. He said the very first thing the professor told him in the first lecture in Bible 101 was that when God told Adam, “In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,” God lied. I don't know why they teach the course. Why do they even pretend to believe the Bible, when they make a comment like that? God said, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” and since God said it, we can be sure that, the very day Adam sinned, he died. But Adam lived to be 930 years old, so obviously God was not saying he would die a physical death the day he sinned. He did not mean that Adam was going to keel over, and fall stone cold dead on the ground the instant he ate the fruit. He died a different kind of death.

Well, if God did not mean Adam was going to die a physical death the instant he sinned, what did he mean?

I have been told that Adam did not die a physical death; he died a spiritual death. But did Adam die a spiritual death? Are we to believe Adam had spiritual life and lost it? If Adam had spiritual life and lost it, would it not be possible that you and I might do the same thing. We have been born of the Spirit; we have spiritual life. If Adam could have spiritual life and lose it, why could we not lose our spiritual life?

The Bible says that is not going to happen. In [Joh 10:27](#), the Lord says, “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.” No person who has spiritual life will ever lose it; he will *never perish*.

Adam did not die a spiritual death; he did not have spiritual life to lose. He was not a spiritual being. The Bible says that. In [1Co 15:46](#), “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural and afterward that which is spiritual.” Look it up; it was talking about Adam. He was first a natural man, *and afterward* a spiritual man.

As God created him, Adam was an innocent, upright, natural man; he was not a spiritual man. There was no moral dimension to being devoid of the spirit.

He was simply what God made him. He was a good, upright, innocent, natural man.

For that matter, he was not yet a proper subject to live in heaven. If he had been, that is where God would have put him. He was a proper subject to live in the Garden of Eden, and that is where God put him.

Then he sinned, and he died; but what kind of death did he die? The Bible tells us plainly enough. [Eph 2:1](#), “And you hath he quickened who were *dead in trespasses and sins*.” Adam trespassed and he sinned, and **he died in trespasses and sins**. I believe a third grader could understand that, don’t you?

There is a principle I think we should go by in preaching. If you cannot make it simple, leave it alone. I believe the best way to preach is to preach in such manner, that the little ones can understand—and hope the old folks can keep up. So what kind of death did Adam die?

He trespassed, and he sinned, and he died in trespasses and in sins.

When did that happen? It happened the very day he sinned. God said, “For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” It happened in the manner, and at the time, God said it would.

I believe it happened the very instant he sinned. No sooner had Adam sinned, than there was a profound change that took place. **His very nature changed.** He immediately went from being an innocent, upright, natural man to being a wicked, sinful, depraved, natural man. In a moment we will see that the change in his nature became immediately evident. He did not fall stone cold, dead on the ground, but as soon as he sinned, it became obvious that everything was different to what it had been.

There are no degrees in death. There is no dead, deader, and deadest. As soon as Adam sinned, he was totally, completely dead in trespasses and sins, and everything he did, from that moment on, demonstrated that he was indeed dead in tres-passes and sins. Physical death would come many years later, and that death was also the result of his sin; but the death he died the day he sinned was total, and it was instantaneous. In the next few pages, I hope to show the profound change that took place in Adam as soon as he sinned.

As soon as he sinned, everything was different. Before he sinned he was a good, upright, innocent, natural man. As soon as he sinned he became a wicked, sinful, depraved natural man. He was still devoid of the spirit; but he was devoid of the spirit before. After he sinned he is devoid of the Spirit—and alienated from God.

As soon as he sinned he began to demonstrate by his conduct what he had become. The Bible takes us step by step through what Adam did, and what the consequences were. It records what he did, how he did it, and what he did to us. That is what I want to notice.

In [Ge 1:26](#) we read, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” On the strength of that text any number of theologians have explained that mankind is made in God’s likeness and image, but the text does not say that.

Adam was created in the likeness and image of God, but when Adam began to father children, he “begat a son in *his* own likeness, after *his* image.” Adam was created in the *likeness* and *image* of God; **you and I were born in the likeness and image of Adam.**

And that is our problem. We were not born with the nature Adam had before he sinned; we were born with the nature Adam possessed—after he sinned and transgressed the law of God. We are what we are, because of what Adam made us, because of what Adam did to us.

Adam was created an upright, innocent natural man. He was a natural man, but a natural man created in the likeness and image of God. Then he sinned, and he lost what he had. He became a wicked, depraved, sinful natural man. **And when he began to father children it was that wicked, sinful nature he passed on to his offspring.**

Every living creature begets offspring based on its own nature. Dogs give birth to dogs. Cats give birth to cats. And sinners give birth to sinners. Because Adam sinned every human being from that day to this has been born a sinner. The fountain was poisoned at his source. When Adam sinned, his nature became sinful, and he passed that sinful nature down to his offspring. Children do not grow up to be sinners. We were born sinners. We came into this world with that sinful nature about us. I know there are a lot of people who have the idea that you turn into a sinner at age twelve, or perhaps, at age seven. But no, we were born sinners.

A man went to the hospital to visit his sister; she had just delivered a new baby. And he did what we all do; he went to the big plate glass window where they show the babies; and he did all the ooh’s and ah’s, and made silly faces. He finally went back to his sister’s room and told her, “I believe that is the prettiest little sinner, I ever saw.”

That offended his sister. She was just plumb upset with him. How dare he come back here and tell me my baby is a pretty little sinner? She got all put out. But a day or so later, her time was up, and they sent her home. And they sent the baby with her. About six weeks later, she called her brother. She was at her wits end, and she said, “You are right, that baby is a sinner.”

We do not turn into sinners. We were born sinners. We came into this world selfish, and self centered, and always thinking about ourselves. As soon as we were able to have any kind of thoughts, we thought about ourselves. Let me ask you, suppose you set a little two year old in the middle of the floor. He is old enough to sit up and play with his toys. Put a half dozen toys around him.

He only needs two, one for each hand. But there are a half dozen toys around him. He has not even noticed some of them.

Then you set another two year old among those toys. You know what is going to happen. That second baby is going to pick up one of the toys. Now what is going to happen? That first baby may not have paid any attention to that toy until the other kid picks it up, but he will let him know right now, "That is my toy, and you put it down, and leave it alone." And if he does not put it down, he may clap the other kid over the head with one of the toys he has in his hand.

Did you ever wonder how babies seem to know that if you take an object and hit it up against the head of another kid, it makes him unhappy? Did you ever wonder where they learn that? You don't have to send him to kindergarten to teach him. He comes into this world knowing how to hit, and with a strong inclination to do it. We were born sinners. We came into this world with that nature.

I have heard it said that, if you want the truth, ask a child. You have heard that, I am sure. I have heard that all my life. That is another of those things that are just not true. A child will tell you the truth, if he is not afraid of the truth. But if he is afraid of the truth, he can come up with the most bodacious lies. You can walk into the room; there are crayon marks all over the wall, and he has a crayon in his hand, but he did not do it. His little invisible friend did it. The Bible tells us, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." A child comes into this world knowing how to lie; you have to teach him to tell the truth; and you have to teach him the consequences of lying.

Bear in mind that when Adam sinned, he wilfully, deliberately, rebelled against God. He sinned, knowing full well what he was doing, and what the consequences would be. I have had people tell me the serpent tricked Adam into doing what he did. But did the serpent trick Adam? God knew somebody would say that; so he provided a text to answer the objection. Paul told the young preacher Timothy, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived was in the transgression," [1Ti 2:14](#). That makes it clear enough; the serpent did not deceive Adam; he did not trick him into sinning.

Adam was not deceived, but notice the rest of the verse, "But the woman being deceived was in the transgression." The serpent did trick the woman, but he did not and could not trick Adam. Adam was too bright for the devil to deceive him.

Have you ever read any of those self-improvement, self-help books that talk about how we only use ten percent of our mental capacity? Sometimes they claim we only use about three percent. I think that may still be on the high side. But when they talk about how we only use a small percent of our mental

capacity, the thing they forget is that, even though the mental capacity may be there, Adam blew all the circuits.

We still have walking around sense, but we do not have the intellect Adam had before he sinned. Outside of the Lord Jesus Christ, Adam was the most brilliant man who ever lived. Does the Bible say Adam was the brightest man who ever lived? It does not say that in so many words, but it does give a very good demonstration.

Read [Ge 2:19](#). “And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.”

How many different species of living creature do you think there are in the world? A German scientist by the name of Ernst Mayr claimed there were 17,600 different species. That is the smallest estimate I ever read. I don't know how he came up with that exact number. It is always a guess when they tell us how many species there are, because they cannot know for sure what constitutes a species.

Nowadays, they are more likely to say there are over three hundred thousand species. Evolutionary types always inflate the number; they want to come up with more species than Noah could get on the ark, but that is a subject for another time. But suppose the smaller number is correct, and there are only 17,600 different species. If that is right, Adam came up with over 17,000 names, and more than that, he remembered the names.

Did you study a foreign language in school? Did you study French, or Spanish? Perhaps, some of you may have studied Latin. They hardly ever teach Latin any more. What is the toughest part about mastering any language? Building a vocabulary, right? If you can build a big enough vocabulary, you can get by without a grammar. If you string enough words together, and sprinkle in an assortment of prepositions, and a few adverbs of time, you can get your point across without a grammar. It may be mighty clumsy, but if you have a sufficient vocabulary, you can improvise without a grammar.

Do you know anybody who could go to the local bookstore, and buy a dual language dictionary, perhaps, a French-English, or Spanish-English dictionary, and master it in one reading. Do you know anybody who could read a dual language dictionary like a novel, and just lay it on the shelf. He will never have to look up a word; he read the book; he remembers what it said.

Do you know anybody who could do that? Of course not. Nobody you ever met could do that, but Adam could. I have checked it several times; most of those dual language dictionaries have about 15,000 entries. That is about the

number of species there are supposed to be in the world. Adam gave names to every living creature—and he remembered what he had named them.

Not only could Adam have read that dual language dictionary, and recited every entry; he could have made up all the entries in the first place.

Regardless of how many species there are, Adam came up with names for all of them. You and I could not come up with that many different phonetic combinations. After awhile we would exhaust all of the possibilities, and we would call something a baboon, and something else a bow-boon, and maybe a booboon. We could never remember which was which; but Adam could.

Adam did not have a computer; he did not need one. His brain worked better than any computer. He was the brightest man there ever has been. The point is that the serpent could not deceive Adam. But the very instant Adam sinned, he went from being the brightest man who ever lived to being as dumb as a post. How do I know that?

Anybody who thinks he can run into woods, and stand behind a tree, and hide from God is as dumb as a post.

The Bible takes us step by step through what transpired in the garden, but if you read carefully, you will discover that much of what people think they read is not right. Most people seem to think that when the serpent tempted Eve, she partook of the forbidden fruit, and then she went to Adam and told him what she had done. Then when Adam learned what his wife had done, he also partook of the tree. Many of you have heard it explained that way, and you are sure that is what it says. But the Bible does not say that.

Read [Ge 3:6](#), “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also to her husband **with her**, and he did eat.” Notice those two words: *with her*. The serpent did tempt Eve, and she did partake of the fruit before Adam did. **But she did not go anywhere to tell Adam anything.** Adam had been *with her* the whole time. He was a witness to the entire affair.

I have heard the question asked, considering that Eve partook of the tree first, what would have happened, if after Eve sinned, Adam had refused to eat? The answer I usually get is logical and reasonable enough. I am usually told, that if that had happened, Eve would have died, because of her sin, and God would have provided Adam with another wife. That is logical, and reasonable—and totally wrong. Adam was complicit in everything Eve did.

We are told that Eve “was in the transgression.” It did not say, “The woman being deceived transgressed.” She was in *the transgression*; there was only one transgression. What happened in the garden that day was all a unit. Adam was involved in all that transpired. Notice, “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in *the transgression*.” Adam stood as our federal

head; he was responsible for what happened in the Garden that day, and he was involved from the very beginning.

Let us back up and see exactly what happened. Eve was not alone when she partook of the tree. Adam was there, observing what was going on the entire time. We are told he was *with her*.

But before we look at the details, I would like for us to get the picture of these two in the garden. The Garden of Eden must have been a beautiful place. Considering all the beauty there is even now in nature, I doubt we can begin to imagine how beautiful Eden was.

I believe Adam and Eve were probably the two most physically attractive people who ever lived. God does not create ugly. Ugly is the accumulated result of 6,000 years of sin. Our generation is the genetic leftovers after 6,000 years of depletion of the gene pool. Imagine two of the most physically attractive of all people, in the most beautiful of all surroundings, with a personal relationship totally unmarred by selfishness and sin.

Eve was without doubt the nearest and dearest thing in all world to Adam.

“And the Lord God said, It is not good that a man should be alone; I will make him and help meet for him....and the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And of the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of man,” [Ge 2:18,21-23](#).

God took one of Adam’s ribs to form a wife for him. It is significant that he did not use a bone from his foot. That might have signified that he had the right to grind her under his heel. The husband is the head of the wife, but he has no right to take advantage of her. I love to preach on the relationship between a devoted husband and wife. When you see that relationship for what God intended it to be, no woman should ever object to the husband being the head of the wife.

He did not take a bone from his head; that might have signified that she had the right to domineer over her husband. But he took a rib, a bone from his side, signifying that she was to be constantly at his side; she was to be his constant companion. He took a bone from under his arm, signifying that she was to be the subject of his constant protection—his constant embrace. He took a bone nearest his heart, signifying that she was to be the nearest, and dearest, and most precious thing in all the world to him. The more we understand what the Bible teaches about the proper relationship between the husband and wife, the more precious, and the more dear, that relationship becomes.

I love to preach on the relationship between husbands and wives. I have spent much of my adult life running all over the country filling appointments, and sometimes pastoring churches miles away. For over six years I served a church four hundred miles away. I went down there twice every month; I went twice a lot of weeks, three times in a week on two different occasions. The people used to talk about what a great sacrifice I was making, spending so much time going up and down the highway. I would remind them that I was not making the sacrifice; there was a little woman back in Tennessee, who was making the sacrifice. I would tell them, "I am not the one left at home, feeling to be all alone, and crying myself to sleep at night." I do not blush to tell you, that I cannot think of her without a special and warm feeling running all over me. One of the great tragedies of our Primitive Baptist people is that we have never realized what a treasure we have in our pastor's wives. It is such a beautiful relationship God has provided between husbands and wives. That is one of the reasons he took a bone nearest his heart to signify that she was to be the nearest, and dearest, and most precious thing in all the world to him.

But now we see Adam with his beautiful wife. She is the nearest and dearest thing in all the world to him, and then the serpent comes on the scene. **The most wicked, the vilest, the most contemptible being in all the universe invades this paradise.** That wicked being comes on the scene, and he begins to deceive, and to corrupt the wife of Adam.

Keep in mind that Adam knew exactly who the serpent was. Do you think God left Adam in the dark about who the serpent was? No, Adam knew exactly who he was, and what he was up to. God did not keep Adam in the dark.

So here comes this vile creature; he approaches the sweet and beautiful wife of Adam, **and Adam just stands there and does not say a thing.**

He should have told the serpent, "Now, you listen here, if you have anything to say, you talk to me; and I don't want to hear anything you have to say, so just get away and leave us both alone." He did not do it. He stood back; and did not say a word. He allowed this vile creature to deceive, and confuse, and confound his wife. Keep in mind that the serpent did not deceive Adam; he knew exactly what was going on. But he did deceive Eve. "The woman *being deceived* was in the transgression."

The serpent was deceiving Eve, and confusing her, and Adam knew it. He knew all the while this vile thing was taking advantage of his wife, and he did not say a thing. The serpent confused her, and deceived her, and persuaded her to eat the forbidden fruit. And Adam just stood there, and allowed the serpent to have his way with her.

"The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made, and he said unto the woman, Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden." This vile, disgusting creature challenges the word of God—the honesty of God—and Adam just stands there and does not say a word to defend his Maker.

"And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." It has been pointed out a million times over that she told it wrong. She added the part about touching the fruit. I am not sure whether she intentionally told it wrong; Paul did say she was deceived. She may have been confused about that too.

But whether she knew she was telling it wrong or not, Adam knew; he was not deceived. He stood there, and listened as she misrepresented God and did not say a word.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die." The serpent made God out to be a liar. God said, "You will die." The snake said, "You are not going to die." It is obvious one of them was lying. If God was telling the truth, the serpent was lying. If the serpent was telling the truth, God was lying. The serpent made God out to be a liar; Adam was standing there, and he did not say a word.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The serpent first challenged the word of God. Then he called God a liar. And third, he said, "God is up to no good." He said, "God is holding out on you; there are some good things available for you, and God doesn't want you to have them."

Can you imagine somebody standing by and allowing this vilest of all creatures to vilify and slander God the way the serpent did, and not saying anything. That is what Adam did. **When Adam took a bite of the forbidden fruit, that was the visible and physical climax of what had been going on all along.**

We have considered the sin of Adam from the vantage point of his rebellion against God. Before we look at the consequences of Adam's sins, it would be a good idea to look at his sin from another vantage point. And looking at it from that point of view will cast light on much that is going on in the world today.

Notice exactly what Adam did. First, he abdicated his place as the head of the house. He allowed his wife to speak for him. He allowed her to make the decision for him, and he accommodated his reaction based on her decision.

That a simple description of feminism.

It would be wrong to say that feminism and original sin are the same thing; they are not. But it is undeniable that sin and feminism came into the world at the same time, and in the same way.

It is also undeniable that feminism began, because the first man abdicated his place as the head of the house, and his wife stepped up to fill the void. It is said that, “Nature abhors a vacuum.” There will always be feminism in the world, so long as the husband fails to occupy his God-appointed place as the head of the house.

It is the duty of the husband to be kind and compassionate. It is his place to love his wife as his own body ([Eph 5:28-30](#)), and to care and protect her as he protects and cares for his own body, and the welfare of his wife is to be his greatest concern; but he is, nonetheless, to occupy his place as the God-appointed head of the house.

When Adam sinned, he went from being a good, upright, innocent natural man to being a wicked, depraved, sinful natural man. His nature changed, and like the dog passing his nature to all his offspring, Adam passed that wicked, depraved nature to all that would be born of him. When he fathered children, he fathered them, begot them, in “his own likeness, after his image” ([Ge 5:3](#)). He begot them in the *likeness* and *image* of the wicked, depraved sinner he had become. **All those born of Adam are simply Adam multiplied—multiplied in his sin and wickedness.**

A few years ago I read an article about seedless oranges. According to the article, every seedless orange in the world is traceable to a mutant orange tree that was discovered about a hundred years ago on an orange plantation in Brazil in South America. A plantation owner discovered that he had a tree on his plantation that was producing seedless oranges. And being the business man he was, he knew there would be a market for that kind of orange. He knew how to nurture and propagate the tree; so now we are able to go to the grocery store and buy seedless oranges. Every seedless orange tree in the world is traceable to that one mutant tree.

Just as every seedless orange is traceable to that one mutant tree, every sin is traceable to Adam’s partaking of that tree in the garden. When Adam sinned he became a mutant, corrupt tree, bearing corrupt fruit, and all his offspring inherit the nature of that corrupt tree, bearing the same corrupt fruit.

Keep in mind that Adam knew exactly what he was about to do, and what the consequences would be. Think about it; there are only two conclusions you can reach. Either Adam knew what he was doing, and what the consequences would be, or else God kept him in the dark.

Could you imagine, even for a moment, that God kept Adam in the dark about the consequences of his sin? Either God provided full disclosure, so that Adam knew all the consequences of what he was about to do, or else God

blindsided him. Can you imagine that God waited until after Adam sinned, and then said, "Surprise, surprise, look what a kettle of worms you have opened up." No, of course not.

Every sin that has ever been committed is the result of Adam's sin; it is the working out of the sinful, depraved nature Adam handed down to all his posterity. Think, for a moment, of all the sins, and all the sinners that have come in the wake of Adam's sin.

To name just a few, Adolf Hitler had six million Jews killed, simply because he did not like Jews. How did Adolf Hitler come to be the way he was? He was the way he was, because of the way Adam became when he sinned. He was the way he was, because of the sinful nature he inherited from Adam.

We read in the newspapers about people kidnaping little children, or young girls, and mistreating them, and killing them. Where did that kind of conduct come from? It came from Adam's sin.

We read about parents chaining a retarded child in a closet, and leaving it to live out its days in the dark, almost on starvation. How did that happen? That is the result of what Adam did. That vile, sinful nature has been handed down through the ages. Did Adam know about Adolf Hitler? Did he know about King Herod, or Jack the Ripper? No.

But he knew that if he did what he was about to do, there would be men like Adolf Hitler; there would be men like Saddam Hussein, and Osama ben Ladin. He knew that if he did what he was about to do, there would be untold millions of wicked human beings who would some day burn in the flames of eternal damnation.

But knowing full well what he was about to unleash on the world, he did it anyway.

We have already pointed out that, no sooner than Adam sinned, he went from being the most brilliant man who ever lived to being as dumb as a post.

Anybody who thinks he can run into the woods, and stand behind a tree, and hide from God is as dumb as a post.

But, also, no sooner than he sinned, he went from being a good, upright, natural man to being as mean as a snake.

When Adam sinned, he started this entire business of sin, and it has been going on ever since. He stood as our federal head. In the sense that he introduced sin to mankind, he stands guilty of every sin mankind had ever committed.

Let me illustrate it this way. If you set a fire in one apartment of a huge apartment building, do you think that, maybe, the fire you started in one room might spread to the next room, and the next, and the next. Do you think the fire you started might burn the entire building?

Suppose they brought you to trial and your attorney explained, “Now listen, my client did not burn those other apartments; he only burned one apartment.” Do you think that would cut any ice with a jury? I don’t think they would not pay any attention to that. They would say, “When your client burned that one apartment, he started the fire that burned the whole building.”

Suppose you set that fire in the middle of the night, and you knew there were people sleeping in the other apartments. Do you suppose you might be held accountable for the death of those people, or do you think your lawyer might get you off by explaining that you only burned one apartment?

When Adam partook of the fruit of the tree, he started the fire that burned the whole building. Every sin that has ever been committed started and spread from that one sin. He corrupted the fountain at its source, and that source—that nature—has been handed down to every person descended from him.

Listen to Adam’s explanation. “And I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself, because I was naked. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked; hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I com-manded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” ([Ge 3:10-12](#)).

Did you ever hear anybody say, “It’s not my fault; it’s that woman.” “It’s not my fault; I would never have been the way I am, if it was not for that woman.” That is nothing new. When there were just one man and one woman in the world, the first man tried to blame his sin on his wife.

First off, Eve was deceived; she was truly confused in the matter. Paul said, “Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” Adam knew that, in some sense, Eve was walking around in a fog; she did not entirely understand what was going on. But Adam knew exactly what was happening, and he allowed it to go on.

More than that, the commandment was given to Adam; it was not given to Eve. “And the Lord God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat....” ([Ge 2:16](#)). Eve did not stand as our federal head; she did not represent her offspring; Adam did.

He knew exactly what he was doing, and what the consequences would be. He knew that if he did what he was about to do, those would be the consequences, and he wilfully, deliberately, rebelliously, did it anyway. He will-fully brought all on the world all the wickedness that has resulted from his sin—and when God asked him about it, he tried to blame it all on his wife. Anybody who would try to blame that on anybody—espec-ially on the one, who up until that time had been the dearest and most precious thing in all the world to him—has to be as mean as a snake. Human language cannot express

the wickedness, and the guilt of what Adam did to himself, and to all his posterity. **And he tried to blame it all on his wife; that is, he tried to blame her with every wicked act that has ever been committed.**

One other thought in closing. And this is the counter-balance to all we have said.

No sooner had Adam sinned than God took the skin of an animal to provide a covering for their nakedness. I like to think the animal was a sheep; but I don't know that; the Bible does not say. But a sheep is so often used as a symbol of Christ, I like to think God used a sheep in that first symbol.

That animal had to die in order for his skin to be a covering for Adam and Eve. The skin of that animal, whatever it may have been, was symbolic of the suffering, and death, and imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. His imputed righteousness is the only covering we have, or need, for our sin. That skin covering their nakedness symbolized that, in spite of their sin, they were children of God, and the sins were covered by the imputed righteousness of their Savior.

If the grace of God reached such a sinner as Adam was, there is no sinner so vile that the grace of God cannot reach him.

**Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Believing In Christ**

BELIEVING IN CHRIST

John tells us, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," [Joh 3:36](#).

This is a favorite text, with our Calvinist friends. They are sure it teaches that if one does not hear and believe *the preached gospel* he has no hope of eternal heaven. The simple problem is that they cannot tell the difference between believing in Christ, and believing the preacher—when he tells them about Christ.

Believing Christ or Believing the Preacher

It is that distinction—believing Christ and believing the preacher—that makes all the difference. And make no mistake; that is the subject under consideration. John says it in no uncertain language. He talks about *he that believeth on the Son*, and he talks about *he that believeth not the Son*. **Not one word about believing the preacher.** Not one word about believing the *soul-winner*.

The carnal nature of men—even very spiritual men—is such that **they cannot resist slipping man and his work into the formula.** Man wants his recognition. But you can push and tug all you want to; it will not work. This text does not provide the slightest crack to squeeze man and his work into the

operation. Jesus Christ is the one and only Savior, and he will not share his honor with any other.

[Isa 42:8](#), “I am the Lord; that is my name: and **my glory will I not give to another**, neither my praise to graven images.”

The One and Only Savior

God is the one and only Savior; he does not need any help. **But the pride of man bristles at the thought that God saves his people without any help from man.** He just cannot bear the thought of being left out of the process. **There are some very real differences between Arminianism and Calvinism; but on this point they are identical.**

To be sure, they approach the question from different directions. The Arminian is convinced *God cannot* save the sinner without his help. The Calvinist is sure that he could save the sinner all by himself; but *he will not*; he always calls on man to do his part. But different though they are, both are convinced that man has his part to play in the salvation of sinners. **The one says *God cannot*, and the other says *he will not*, save the sinner unless he participates in the matter.**

On this most fundamental level they both teach the same thing as regards the preached gospel. The Arminian says that, in order to be saved, the sinner must hear the gospel and believe it, and *it is up to him* whether he does. The Calvinist says that in order to be saved the sinner must hear the gospel and believe it, and *God will see to it* that he does.

The one teaches that believing the gospel is the *condition* to eternal life; the other teaches that it is the *means*. **Both teach that there is an unbreakable bond between salvation and the preached gospel.** On that level they are identical.

Both insist on inserting man and his work into the formula, and **they bristle at the thought that God saves sinners without their help.** It is unthinkable that God would engage in such an important work without involving them. It wounds their pride. But unthinkable though it may be, that is what the Bible teaches.

[Isa 63:5](#), “And I looked, and **there was none to help**, and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury, it upheld me.”

The prophet tells us the *arm* of God brings salvation, and he does it without any *help*. It is human pride that imagines God needs our help in anything he does. If he cannot do it without our help; he could not do it with our help.

One Way of Saving Sinners

Keep it always in mind that God only has one way of saving sinners. He says, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell

from whence it cometh or whither it goeth, **so is everyone that is born of the Spirit,**" [Joh 3:7-8](#).

Notice four things: First: everybody is *born of the Spirit* in the same way. God does not have one plan for the adult, another plan for the dying infant, another for the idiot, and another for the man who is never reached by the preacher.

If he saves the dying infant without the help of the preacher, he saves the adult the same way. The text does not allow for the slightest variation—"So is *everyone* that is born of the Spirit."

If God's word is true—and who would dare deny it—we are all born again in exactly the same way. With such clear evidence it is foolish for anybody to imagine different plans for the idiot, for the dying infant, and for the person who never hears the gospel message.

Second: the wind is sovereign; it blows *where it listeth*, where it chooses. Keep in mind that this wind is the Holy Spirit. It is hard to imagine a more graphic metaphor than the wind representing the Spirit of God. The wind blows in places where the foot of man never treads. It goes where the preacher never goes. God is not limited by man's puny efforts.

Third: wherever it goes, it makes its presence, and its effects, known. Can you imagine a mighty hurricane passing through unnoticed? We all remember Hurricane Andrew. Can you imagine Andrew passing through—and nobody noticing?

The wind of God's Spirit is no less powerful than the mightiest hurricane. Hurricane Andrew did not have any greater effect on the landscape, than God's Spirit has on the heart of the sinner, when it does its mighty work. That is why God uses the wind to represent his Spirit. When God's Spirit does its work in the heart of a sinner, it turns his world upside down. He comes to love the things he once had no use for; and he hates things that were once the delight of his life. Once God's Spirit comes into his heart, he can never again be happy in sin. If he finds contentment, he will find it in Christ Jesus—or else he will never find happiness.

And fourth: you cannot tell *whence it cometh and whither it goeth*. The preacher does not carry the Spirit with him, and it is not at his beck and call. God sovereignly and irresistibly sends his Spirit into the heart, and he does not call for an audience to watch him do his mighty work.

[Isa 45:15](#), "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, thy Savior."

The Saved are the Believers

But our friends have a literal arsenal of proof texts which they think prove that the preacher—the *soul winner*—is involved in the process. They point to all those texts which identify the saved as *those who know God*. In other

words, the saved are those who know God, **and they are sure it is their role to provide the proper introductions**, as if God could not introduce himself to his own child.

They point to those texts that identify the saved as *those who believe in Christ*, and they are sure the sinner could not possibly believe until they talk to him—and tell him what to believe—as if the Spirit of God is unable to witness in the heart of the sinner.

They point to those texts that talk about the personal relationship between the sinner and his Savior. It seems never to have occurred to them that the Lord Jesus Christ—living in the heart of his child—is a deeper, and more personal, relationship than the mind of any man can imagine.

It is hard to imagine that any person could believe he is able—by his preaching—to provide the sinner with a more personal relationship with his Maker, than God himself can provide by dwelling and witnessing in the heart of his child. **To imagine such superiority of the work of the preacher over the work of the Spirit of God is arrogance in the extreme.**

Christ in the Heart of the Sinner

To cast a little more light on the subject, consider, if you will, what happens when a person is quickened by the Spirit. **When he is born again; the Lord Jesus Christ—in the person of his Spirit—comes into his heart.** There are not many things the Bible tells us more often than it tell us that. [Ro 8:9](#), “...if so be that the Spirit of God dwell **in you**...” [Ro 8:10](#), “And if Christ be **in you**...” [Col 1:27](#), “...which is Christ **in you**, the hope of glory.” [Ga 2:20](#), “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**...”

In regeneration Jesus Christ, personally and vitally takes up residence in the heart of his child.

The very heaven of heavens cannot contain him, but he lives in the hearts of his redeemed, born again children. If the universe cannot contain him, how could he possibly live in the heart of one person? **He can do anything he wants to do; he is God.**

A New Life Within

When a person is born again, a new life enters his life. Jesus Christ himself tells us he is life itself.

[Joh 14:6](#), “I am the way, the truth, and **the life**.”

He is life itself, and when he comes into our hearts in regeneration, a new life comes into our life.

[Col 1:27](#), “Which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.”

When we receive this new life within, we may not understand what is going on, but we cannot help but know that everything is different than it once was. Whether he ever hears a gospel sermon or not, once Jesus Christ comes into

his heart, he can never again enjoy sin the way he once did. He now has an appetite for better things, and that hunger will never be satisfied until it is satisfied in Christ.

If he has a hunger for righteousness, he is a blessed character; Christ lives in his heart.

[Mt 5:6](#), “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

He will never respond to the gospel message unless he has a hunger for the righteousness that is revealed in the gospel. And if he has that hunger, he is already a *blessed* character; the Spirit of God already lives in his heart.

Coming to Know Christ

But somebody objects, “All you have said is well and good; but you have still not shown me that the Spirit teaches the sinner to believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God as a person; and that is what the Bible teaches; it teaches that those who are saved believe in the person of Jesus Christ.

Well, let us see if the Holy Spirit teaches us to know Jesus Christ, and to believe in him—as a person—or not. First, let us look at what the Bible spells out, and then look at how he demonstrates that very fact in nature.

First off, the Bible teaches in the clearest language that the Holy Spirit teaches us to know Jesus Christ—as a person.

[Joh 15:26](#), “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, **he shall testify of me.**”

That sounds plain enough to me; the Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus Christ as a person. But there is more.

[Joh 15:13-15](#), “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. **He shall glorify me:** for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that **he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.**”

That ought to make it plain enough. It is the special work of the Spirit—not to glorify himself—but to glorify the Son. This is the province of the Holy Spirit, **and there is nary a word about the preacher.**

It Wounds Their Pride

This is the reason our Calvinist friends get so hysterical. They are confronted with the Bible doctrine of the Holy Spirit and its mighty work. They are told God can do his work without depending on them to help, and they are offended that they are left out of the process.

They are very much like the *men of Ephraim*, who became so enraged at Gideon, when he went to war with the Midianites without asking them to

help. They wanted the recognition that comes from victory in battle, and they felt cheated.

Because they are left out of the work of quickening sinners from death in sin to life in Christ, they are convinced they are out of a job. But Bible doctrine does not leave the preacher out of a job; it leaves him with more to do than he will ever accomplish. It just shows that he cannot do God's work—and that upsets him to no end.

A New Life in His Life

God gives us in nature a good illustration of this new life we receive in regeneration, and the evidence that new life brings with it. Bear in mind that this new life is “Christ in you the hope of glory” ([Col 1:27](#)). It is Christ himself living in your heart.

For nine months an expectant mother carries her child in her womb. There is a beautiful parallel to that in regeneration. **Like the born again child of God, she has a new life within.** In being born again, Jesus Christ—who is life itself—comes into the life of his child, and when that happens, that new life will make itself known.

Let me ask you. When that child begins to kick and squirm, do you think its mother needs a gynecologist to convince her of the life and existence of the child? A gynecologist can teach her ever so much about her condition. He can tell her things she needs to know, things she needs to do, but there are some things she will know without any instruction from the gynecologist.

There is much the preacher can teach us about the Lord, and what he has done in our hearts and lives, but you can be sure that if a life so vast the universe cannot contain him has come into your heart, **there is some things you are going to learn directly from him without any input from the preacher, or anybody else.**

Again, do you think that mother requires the assistance of her friends and neighbors to teach her to have a personal relationship with that child. Do you think she needs them to assist her in learning to love it, and to look forward to the day when she can see its face, when she can hold it in her arms, and hug, and squeeze it.

Or do you think there is going to be a love—a bonding if you will—between the mother and child, whether anybody else has any input or not. Do you think that maybe—just maybe—that relationship between the mother and her child is the sweetest and the most tender of all relationships. And do you not think her relationship with that new life within is a faint reflection of the relationship between the saved sinner and the Lord Jesus Christ living in his heart?

The Fruit of the Spirit

We cannot explain how Christ can live in the heart of the sinner. God takes care of that, and it is not our responsibility to figure out how he does all he does. But you can be sure that if one so vast the universe cannot contain him does come into the heart of the sinner, **he will make it manifest that he is there.**

How will he do that? The Spirit of God is like a tree; it bears fruit. “But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is not law,” [Ga 5:22-23](#). **That is not the work of the preacher; that is *the fruit of the Spirit*.**

Those who would have us believe there is an unbreakable bond between the preached gospel and the salvation of sinners would also have us believe that those who live in remote areas never reached by the gospel—who never hear the preached gospel and so never have the opportunity to believe it—are doomed to eternal damnation.

They assure us that if we would only respond to their pleas for money, and help send the gospel to them, there are many who would live in heaven, who otherwise they would burn in the flames of eternal damnation.

But the Bible teaches no such thing. Read the text again. [Ga 5:22-23](#), “But *the fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” **Those are the fruit of the Spirit, and no person ever produced *the fruit of the Spirit* unless he was in possession of the Spirit.** If any person has those characteristics—if he behaves in that way—it is an indication that God’s Spirit lives in his heart. It is evidence that he is heaven-bought, heaven-born, and heaven-bound.

The preacher may not have done his work; the soul-winner may not have reached him. But God’s Spirit has reached him, and done his work. **God’s Spirit will do his work, whether the preacher does his work or not.**

He is Truth Incarnate

When one is born again, Jesus Christ—who is truth incarnate—comes into his heart. He will spend the rest of his life sorting it all out, **but as surely as Jesus Christ lives in his heart, truth lives in his heart.**

[Joh 14:6](#), “I am the way, **the truth**, and the life.”

Keep in mind that the very universe cannot contain him, and **truth is one of his attributes.** That truth is as vast, and as powerful, and as all pervasive, as he is. If he is the very embodiment of truth, and if he lives in the heart of the sinner, is there any way you can deny that **truth lives in the heart of the sinner?** How can you deny it without either denying that he is what he says he is, or else denying that he can dwell in the heart of the sinner?

The Benefit of the Gospel

Unless, and until, the gospel comes to him in power, his mind will be in a state of confusion. He may not know much, if anything, about the doctrine of the Bible. He may not understand the doctrine of the incarnation, and depravity, and redemption.

Truth lives in his heart, but he still needs the gospel, and the gospel preacher, to help his mind to understand what his heart already knows.

Much of what the sinner knows in his heart is in “groanings which cannot be uttered” ([Ro 8:26](#)). He needs the preacher, and the gospel, to help him find words to express what he has been taught in his heart; but he would not be groaning and agonizing over sin, and his need of a Savior, if the Spirit had not already done its mighty work. There is no way to calculate the benefit of the gospel in helping him to understand what God has done in his heart.

But the preacher takes far too much credit, when he thinks his preaching helps God in bringing the Spirit of God into his heart in the first place.

It Wounds Their Pride

It is at this point that the Calvinist—no less than the Arminian—becomes hysterical, when you tell him God can, and does, save sinners without assistance on the part of the preacher. It wounds his pride when you tell him God does not need his help.

The majority of the religious world errs in their disparaging of the Spirit of God, and its ability to do its work without the assistance of man. They err in their notion that the Spirit cannot go, unless they go along and help in the work. **They err in their notion that they can do by their preaching what the Spirit cannot do by its power**—quicken and teaching the heart of the sinner.

The Calvinist—no less than the Arminian—would have us believe the Spirit will not do its work, unless the preacher pitches in and helps out. They are sure the Spirit never exercises its quickening and teaching power in those regions where the preacher never goes. But the Spirit is not limited by the going and witnessing of the preacher.

The Spirit is no less powerful than the Father and the Son, and he will be no less successful in doing his work. God created worlds without number in places where the foot of man will never tread, and his Spirit is able to quicken sinners in those regions the preacher never reaches.

The Spirit of Truth

Not only are we told the Son is truth itself ([Joh 14:6](#)), we are also told the Spirit is “the Spirit of truth.”

[Joh 14:17](#), “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.”

[Joh 15:25](#), “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even **the Spirit of truth**, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”

The Spirit of God is *the Spirit of truth*, and when that Spirit sovereignly, irresistibly, comes into the heart of the sinner in the work of regeneration, **truth comes into his heart**. There is no way you can deny that fact without denying the Spirit of God is what God says it is.

All Taught of the Lord

Most of the confusion in religion would be cleared up if we would acknowledge the office and work of God’s Spirit in the salvation of his people. It is placing the gospel and the gospel preacher in the office of the Holy Spirit that has produced most of the confusion. The preacher has his work to do—and it is the most important work any man ever engaged in—but it is not the preacher’s place to do that work that can only be done by the Spirit of God.

After its work in regeneration, the work of the Spirit is one of teaching.

[Isa 53:12](#) “And **all thy children** shall be **taught of the Lord**; and great shall be the peace of they children.”

Notice that God promises he will teach *all* his children. **It does not say anything about every child of God being taught by the preacher.** The preacher may be lazy, or incompetent, or rebellious, but God will do his work, whether the preacher does his work or not.

Who Can Imagine Such Folly

We are told it is the responsibility of the preacher to warn people, and to assist them in escaping hell, and making sure they will live in heaven after awhile. What a terrifying thought it is to think that God would suspend the eternal destiny of millions of poor sinners on the faithfulness of preachers. That would be folly in the highest degree. Who would dare accuse God of such poor judgment. Who could believe that God—who has all the power there is—would place such responsibility in such irresponsible hands.

The notion that the eternal destiny of sinners depends on the faithfulness—and the effectiveness—of other sinners to teach them can lead to some of the strangest conclusions.

Over fifty years ago I attended a seminar on *soul-winning*. One of the points the instructor impressed on us was the importance of personal grooming. She stressed that we should wear clean clothes; our shoes should be shined; our hair should be well combed; we should brush our teeth, and we should be sure to use a mouth wash. Wouldn’t it be terrible if our bad breath might offend the person we were witnessing to, and he would not listen. This might be the only chance he would ever have to hear and believe the gospel. He might turn away and never again have a chance to be saved.

I was just a boy, and I had a lot to learn, but it seemed a little harsh to think that somebody might burn forever because of bad breath. And it certainly seemed unfair that one person might burn in the flames of eternal hell, because somebody else had bad breath.

There is no end to the strange conclusions you will face, when you insist the eternal destiny of sinners depends on the work and faithfulness of other sinners.

He Guides Into All Truth

Not only does the truth of God come into the heart of the sinner, when Christ comes into his heart, he promises to guide his people into *all truth*.

Joh 16:13, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth.**”

The Holy Spirit is a far more effective teacher than our friends are willing to admit. **Inspiration places no limits on the ability of the Holy Spirit to teach God’s people.** Again, we need the preacher, and the gospel to help us sort it all out. Our carnal nature is such that it will twist and distort anything that does not suit its prejudices; and the witness of the Spirit does not suit the prejudice of the flesh. Even after one is born again, he still needs the gospel to deliver him from his own strange ideas.

But the ultimate teacher of every child of God is, and has always been, the Spirit of God himself. It is that Spirit that shines the light on the Bible, and on our own experience.

Joh 14:26, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring **all things** to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

There is no need to comment. If anybody will not admit what that verse says without comment, he would probably not admit it with comment. The Spirit is not limited in its ability to teach his people.

Conviction for Sin

Second, it is the work of the Spirit to convict the sinner of his sinful condition, and his need for a Savior.

2Co 7:10, “Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

Mt 5:4, “Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.”

If one mourns because of sin, it is evidence the Spirit of God lives in his heart. The sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, does not mourn over sin. **He is a sinner and glad of it; he loves to sin.** He is convinced that nothing is very much fun, if it is not at least, a little bit *naughty*, a little bit sinful.

That is the reason places like Las Vegas, and Bourbon Street in New Orleans, and X-Rated movies, and risqué pictures, make so much money. The sinner

loves to sin, and if you tell him what he is doing is sinful, you only whet his appetite for more of the same. He is as much at home in sin as a fish is at home in the water. It is his natural habitat; he would not consider being any other way.

If you find one who mourns because of sin, you have found one who has already been quickened by the Spirit. The Spirit of God has come into his heart. It has taught him he is a sinner, and he needs a Savior.

The wicked often mourn over the consequences of sin; he may even tremble at the thought of eternal damnation, but if one mourns because of sin—because his ways displease his Maker—he is already born of the spirit of God. The wicked man does not care whether his ways please God or not, and if he does show a preference, he is happy to show his disdain for God and godliness.

If he can no longer enjoy those kinds of conduct that once gave him the greatest satisfaction, and he now hungers for something better, **how can he help but believe** something has happened in his life. If one so vast and so magnificent that the very universe cannot contain him has just taken up residence in his heart, how can he help but believe that something is very different.

Assurance of Salvation

The question is asked, “How can you know you are a child of God.” Again, the Bible provides an adequate answer.

[**Ro 8:16**](#), “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

It is the Spirit that gives us assurance of salvation. The Calvinist is sure the Spirit is unable—all by itself—to give us that assurance. The preacher needs to do his part. He needs to explain that we have heard, and believed, and repented of sin; we have met the prescribed conditions; **so we should take his word for it**—we are now the children of God.

That is another of those differences between the doctrine of the Bible and the doctrine of most of religion. Most of religion assures its people they are the children of God, because they have done what is required, and **they should take the preacher’s word for it** that they are now children of God.

The Bible teaches that if one is born again, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” The one says we should take the word of the preacher; **the other says we have the witness of the Spirit.** If I must say so, that sounds like a big difference.

If I might digress for a moment, that is one of the reasons for the multitude of psychologists, psychiatrists, and therapists in our day. We have such a multitude of advisers who try to help people without first pointing them to that one *Comforter*, who has already taught them in their hearts. Instead of

pointing them to a multitude of *authorities* who can never agree among themselves, if these advisers would rather point their people to that one Comforter, who is never wrong, who is always available, and who has the solution to every problem, how very much more they could help their people. But do we not need the preacher to teach us? Yes, we need the preacher. The Holy Spirit is infallible, he is never wrong. But we are not infallible. We make terrible mistakes, and reach ridiculous conclusions. We need the preacher, and access to the Bible, to help us sort it all out. **But you can be sure the preacher will never be able to teach our heads, unless the Lord has already taught our hearts.** There can be no doubt that, especially in this work, God uses the preacher to confirm, and reinforce, that assurance. But the preacher cannot reinforce the assurance of salvation, unless the Spirit has already done its work.

Bringing Life and Immortality to Light

So what benefit is the preacher? The sinner needs the gospel preached in power to help his mind sort out what his heart already knows. He needs the gospel to bring life and immortality to light—to cast the light on what has happened in his heart.

[2Ti 1:10](#), “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and **hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.**”

The gospel does not bring life and immortality; it brings life and immortality to light. It casts the light on what has already taken place. It explains to the sinner what has happened in his heart.

From Faith to Faith

Paul tells us that by the gospel “the righteousness of God is revealed **from faith to faith,**” [Ro 1:17](#).

That vital (living) faith, that comes with regeneration, responds to the evangelical faith, that comes with the gospel, and he is able to understand with his mind what he has believed in his heart all along. The gospel enables him to sort it all out. **He is able to know with his mind the Christ whom he already knows in his heart.**

And is there anybody who dares deny that the Christ revealed in the gospel is **the same Christ who has lived—and witnessed—in his heart all along? Not only is Jesus Christ *truth, and life*; he is love; he is the very essence of love.**

[1Jo 4:8](#), “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for **God is love.**”

When this love—a love bigger and more powerful than the universe itself—comes into the heart of the sinner, you can be sure it will have its effect. God himself, living in the heart of his child, will teach that child to love him, and to love his fellow man. Just as surely as that expectant mother

believes in, and enjoys, and loves the child in her womb, the heaven-born soul believes in, and enjoys, and loves the Lord Jesus Christ, living in his heart and soul.

The gospel preacher can teach us to know more about the Lord, and the more we learn about him, the more we learn to love him. But the preacher has far too high an opinion of himself, when he thinks the sinner cannot love the Lord until the preacher teaches him how.

It was jealousy of God that brought sin into the world in the first place. The serpent taught our first parents to be jealous of God, and to aspire to occupy the throne with him. Most of modern religion springs from this same jealousy of God—this unwillingness to admit that God can do his work whether the preacher does his work or not.

Evidence of the Love of God

If you will, consider a couple of illustrations. During the conflict we call *Desert Storm*, the first war in Iraq, Saddam Hussein closed the Baghdad airport. Hundreds of Westerners were trapped; they could not get out of the country. It had not been long since the Iranians had held more than fifty of our people hostage. It was a time of national grief, and national outrage. It looked like the same thing was about to happen all over again.

A young lady was interviewed one evening on the six o'clock news. She told how she had escaped from Baghdad. An Iraqi citizen had loaded as many people as he could get on a *Land Rover*, and started across the desert for the Jordanian border. She said he drove ninety miles an hour. I really doubt that; it is hard to imagine going ninety miles an hour over the desert. But, no doubt, it seemed like he was going ninety miles an hour.

She said from time to time he would be stopped by Iraqi soldiers. They would turn him back. He would start back toward Baghdad until he was well out of sight of the soldiers, and then he would make a wide swing, and head out toward Jordan. When he unloaded his passengers, they tried to pay him. He would not take any pay; he did not want their money. He was just trying to save the lives of people who might otherwise die in Iraq.

Since Islam is the established religion of Iraq, and it is dangerous for anyone to embrace any other religion, and since the man probably grew up in Iraq, it is likely he is a Muslim. He may never have heard a Christian sermon in his life. He may never have had the opportunity, as our friends express it, to *accept Christ as his Savior*. According to the most of our friends, since he never made that all important public profession, if he died in that heroic effort, he is today burning in the flames of eternal damnation.

But that man has more evidence that the Spirit of God lives in his heart than most of the church members I know. The wicked do not behave the way that

man did. You can be sure he would never have behaved the way he did if God's Spirit had not been in his heart, motivating and strengthening him.

The Works of the Flesh

The majority of the religious world has far too high an opinion of man in his unregenerate state. They are sure the wicked often produce the same righteous works as the born again child of God, or at least, that they often produce works so similar to those of the righteous that nobody can tell the difference. But the Bible teaches that is not the case at all; it describes the conduct of the wicked in very clear language.

In Galatians, chapter five, Paul tells us the kind of conduct the sinner engages in before the Spirit does its work. "Now **the works of the flesh** are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like....," [Ga 5:19-21](#). The human mind cannot imagine a change so profound as the change that takes place when the Lord Jesus Christ, in the person of his Spirit, comes into the heart of a sinner.

Before he is born again, he is flesh, all flesh, and nothing but flesh, and the works of the flesh are manifest in everything he does.

After he is born again, he still has the flesh, that old nature, to contend with, and so long as he lives, that old nature will manifest itself in a variety of ways. But now he has Christ dwelling in his heart, aiding him and prompting him to do better. And this man proved by his conduct that Christ Jesus lived in his heart, and motivated him, and strengthened him to do what he did. But our friends tell us that, because he was born in a land where the gospel is never preached, and he would never hear a gospel sermon, he will one day burn in eternal damnation. **Such a cruel doctrine shames the name of our Lord.**

The Power of God to Save Sinners

God has all the power there is; he can do anything he wants to do. Who could believe he would make hearing and believing the one critical condition to salvation, and not see to it that every individual had ample, and equal, opportunity to hear the gospel and respond to it?

Who could believe that God would so mock his creatures as to withhold the very means that could save them from eternal misery? Or to say it only slightly differently, who could believe he would place the means of salvation in the hands of men, who are so often unconcerned, incompetent, or even rebellious? Who would dare charge his Maker with such folly?

A Cold-blooded Calvinism

Consider another illustration. During the last war in Iraq, the news media told of an Iraqi lawyer who learned of an American soldier (I believe her name

was Jessica Lynch) who was being held and tortured by Iraqi soldiers. At great risk to his own life he managed to learn the building, and the very room, in which she was being held. Then he walked some five miles—through the battle—to deliver the information to the Allied forces. The Allies sent a *special operations* team and brought her out alive. Again, this man was probably a Muslim; he may never have heard a gospel sermon.

The Calvinist differs from the Arminian in some ways. The Arminian teaches that hearing the gospel and believing it is the *condition* to escaping eternal damnation. The Calvinist says that hearing the gospel and believing it is the *means* God uses to save sinners from eternal damnation. But both of them agree that unless a person hears and believes the preached gospel he will burn in eternal damnation.

This man probably never heard the gospel preached in power; he never had an opportunity to respond to it and—according to that doctrine—if he had died in that heroic effort he would today be burning in eternal hell. **It is a cold-blooded doctrine** that consigns to eternal damnation one who has such sincere love for his fellow man—one who has such clear evidence that God’s Spirit lives in his heart.

Those Who Oppose Themselves

We have no interest in disparaging those who believe that doctrine, and we will not question their sincerity. Carnal pride is a powerful thing, and—especially in matters of religion—it will insert itself in the place of the greatest honor, if it can. If there is any way to show that his efforts make the difference, he will do it.

The Spirit of God in his heart teaches him the exact opposite. Paul says, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would,” [Ga 5:17](#).

There is a constant warfare in the heart of the heaven-born soul. The Spirit prompts us to honor and magnify our Lord; our carnal nature would seize the credit and the attention for itself. We are told that in meekness we are to instruct “those who oppose themselves,” ([2Ti 2:25](#)), those whose carnal nature denies what the Spirit teaches in their heart.

But, while we have no desire to belittle those who believe in Arminianism or in Calvinism, we are truly thankful to know the grace of God reaches much farther than weak, fallible, and temperamental preachers have ever gone. We are thankful to know that if one has genuine, sincere love for God and for his fellow man, he is heaven-bought, heaven-born, and heaven-bound.

CASTAWAY

[1Co 9:27](#), But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a *castaway*.

What was Paul afraid of? He was genuinely concerned about something? What was it?

He expresses concern, that after he has preached to others, he might himself be a *castaway*. What does he mean by being a *castaway*?

We cannot imagine he is concerned that, having been born of God's Spirit, he might lose his home in eternal heaven. He has preached far too clearly, that if one is chosen, redeemed, and born of the Spirit, heaven will be his home. Nothing can separate him from the love of God, and nothing can deny him his home in eternal heaven. He is not concerned that he might someday spend eternity with the wicked in eternal damnation. But he is genuinely concerned about something.

Again, we ask, what is it?

He is concerned that, in spite of all God has done for him, and all he has experienced in service toward God, he might prove unfaithful to his calling, and lose everything worthwhile in this life. He is concerned that he might be *castaway* from the fellowship of the saints, and the benefits of a godly life.

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that the saints will be *preserved by grace, and never fall finally away*. Some of our Articles of Faith use the word *persevere*, instead of *preserved*, and again, it is clear the saints will *persevere* in a state of grace. That is, they will never cease to be the children of God. They will never cease to have the Spirit of God in their hearts, and that Spirit will continue to have its effect. They will never lose what God has prepared for them in heaven.

But are we also to believe the saints will, without fail, *persevere in the pursuit of holiness*? Are we to believe that until the end of their lives they will be found in the pathway of faith and obedience? They will persevere in a state of grace; but is it possible that one might depart from the pursuit of holiness, and be found at the end of his journey in a state of rebellion?

God has sworn he will have them with him in heaven; but has he made the same promise about rescuing them from their own folly in this life? Has God guaranteed that, in spite of their sometimes rebellion, he will, without fail, bring them back to the fold. Has he provided some kind of assurance that the truly born again person cannot make ultimate shipwreck of his life? Are we to believe that, regardless of how reck-lessly a truly born again person may behave—for a time—he can be sure that God will ultimately rescue him from his rebellion, so that he will finish his journey in full triumph of a living faith.

Or, quite the contrary, does God warn that the truly born again person may so conduct his affairs that he experiences the temporal wrath of God, and destroys his witness, and his own personal welfare in this life.

Granted, we have God's assurance that if he has ever loved us, he will always love us ([Jer 31:3](#)). We have his assurance that all the forces of evil combined will

never be able to separate us from his love ([Ro 8:35-39](#)). We have it from the same Apostle Paul that those who were chosen in eternity past are the exact same people who will be glorified in eternity to come ([Ro 8:28-30](#)). We have God's promise that his sheep, his people, will never perish ([Joh 10:27-30](#)).

There is nothing the Bible teaches more clearly than it teaches the eternal security of the child of God.

[Joh 10:27-29](#), 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 me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

[Jer 31:3](#), The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. God gave his Son as the redemption price to pay the sin debt of his people. That chain of redemption is a golden chain which reaches all the way from eternity past to eternity to come.

[Ro 8:28-30](#), "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Notice that those who were chosen in eternity past are the exact same people who will be glorified in eternity to come. And notice how Paul traces these same people from their being foreknown to their being glorified. No distinction is made between them; they are the same people.

The list of proof texts goes on and on. If one is chosen, redeemed, and born of the Spirit of God, he is sure of eternal heaven.

But that is not what Paul is concerned about. Granted the truly chosen, redeemed, and born again person is heaven-bought, heaven-born, and heaven-bound. He will never lose what God has provided for him after this life is over. God has determined to have his people with him in eternal heaven, and he will do all he has purposed to do. God makes that point so clear that he confirms it with an oath.

[Isa 14:24,27](#), The Lord of hosts hath *sworn*, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass, and as I have pur-posed, so shall it stand....For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

God purposed to bring the redeemed home to glory, and he swears he will do it. It was not necessary for God to swear. God cannot lie; a simple statement would have been enough. But for our benefit, he swore that he would do all his pleasure. He will have every one of the redeemed with him in heaven. If God says it—and swears to it—that ought to settle the question.

But there are those who go beyond the God's promise that he will bring the redeemed safe home to heaven, and reach the conclusion that he has also promised he will not allow them to make ultimate shipwreck in this life.

In their misdirected zeal, they assure their hearers that, regardless of how vile one's conduct may be, if he is one of the redeemed, God will not allow him to persist in a state of rebellion forever. They assure their hearers they may "fall into grievous sins, and, *for a time*, continue therein;" they may, "incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves."

They tell us that if one is truly born again, he may—for a time—stray from the pathway of duty, and *for a time* he may rebel against his Maker, but, if he is truly one of the redeemed, he will, without fail, return to the pathway of duty. God will see to it that he repents and returns to the fold.

And, without question, that is sometimes the case. Some-times the rebelling child does return to the fold. That was the case with David.

David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and he had her husband Uriah killed to cover up his sin ([2Sa 11](#)). He sank about as low as a person can sink, and he suffered for that crime as long as he lived. But he repented; he found forgiveness; and he spent the rest of his days serving the Lord. That was not the case with his son Solomon. Solomon was clearly a child of God; but he finished his life in a shameful condition. We will look more at Solomon in a moment.

That was the case with *the prodigal son*. He left the protection of his father's home. He wasted his inheritance in a far county, with harlots and riotous living ([Lu 15:11-32](#)). But one day, he came to his senses. He said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants." His father did not make him one of the hired servants. He had compassion on him, forgave him, and restored him to his former state. He killed the fatted calf, and called for his friends to make merry and rejoice with him.

There can be no doubt that often the wayward child does return home. That is not the question. The question is, does God provide any kind of guarantee that will always be the case. Does God guarantee that the prodigal will come to his senses. Our purpose in this little study is to examine what the Bible teaches on the subject. Does God provide a guarantee that—regardless of how you may behave *for a time*—he will ultimately bring you back to the fold? Do we have God's guarantee that the truly redeemed and born again person *cannot* make ultimate shipwreck of his life?

I fear that those who reach that conclusion lay claim to a promise God has never made. You can be sure that God will do all he has promised to do; but God

has never promised that he will not allow you to destroy yourself. These good brethren assure their hearers that their rebellion will only be *for a time*; God will see to it they finally return, and, the outcome will be that they will “*certainly persevere to the end.*” They insist that if a person is elect, God will not allow him to continue in rebellion. He will, without fail, come to the end of his life in a state of obedience.

But, regardless of how sincere those teachers may be, the Bible provides no such assurance. It does not guarantee the rebel will finally see the error of his way and turn from it.

One unintentional side effect of such reasoning is that it has the potential of encouraging the sinner to continue in his sin until God calls him back.

We do not believe for a moment that those who teach that notion would willingly encourage the sinner in his sin. We have no reason to believe they are anything less than honest, God-fearing people. They are as concerned to encourage a life of service and obedience as those who oppose the doctrine, and they would rightly recoil from any suggestion to the contrary. But doctrines do have consequences, and the potential is there, nonetheless.

The notion that God has guaranteed he will bring one back from his state of rebellion has the potential of making the sinner complacent in his misconduct. The Bible teaches that the truly born again person can so behave himself that he loses everything worthwhile this side of the grave; he can so act as to make total shipwreck of his life. **The person who assures him that he cannot suffer such loss is providing a guarantee he can never fulfill.** Those who are born of the Spirit of God are not in danger of eternal damnation. They are the children of God; they are the objects of his love, and he will not allow the objects of his love to suffer eternally. **But, while the child of God is eternally secure in Christ, that does not mean he can sin with impunity.** There are dire consequences to the born again child of God, who willfully, persistently, lives after the flesh. Paul refers to those penalties as a fate worse than death.

[Heb 10:26](#), “For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but *a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*”

Paul is saying the rebel is left *without consciousness of a hope* in Christ Jesus. “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” What state is he in? Here it is. “*But a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*” *The adversaries* are those who are enemies to God and all that is godly. He is a child of God, and he will live in heaven some day, but he feels none of the power of that hope in his heart. Instead there is fear, that fear of fiery indignation, which will one day *devour the adversaries.*

“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden the Son of God under foot, and counted the blood of the covenant

wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace.”

Paul is telling us about something worse, a “sorer punishment,” than death. What is worse than death? It is for a child of God to be cut off and in the condition we have been talking about.

Sometimes we talk about what a harsh thing the law of Moses was. And the Law of Moses was a harsh system. But for a person to be stoned to death was really a less punishment than to be left here in this life, cut off—completely cut off—from the joys and the benefits he might otherwise have had.

“Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing.”

“The blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified....” Is that talking about a dead alien sinner? Those who will one day suffer eternally are not sanctified by the blood of the covenant. He “counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace, for we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord, and again, *The Lord shall judge his people,*” ([Heb 10:29-30](#)). This is talking about *his people*. If there was ever any doubt, that should remove it.

[Heb 10:31](#), “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Peter talks about the same thing. [2Pe 1:5](#), “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temper-ance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity, for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”

It does not mean those sins are still charged against him. The Lord put those sins away at Calvary, and he “hath *perfected forever* them that are sanctified” ([Heb 10:14](#)). Those who are redeemed and born again are *perfected* and that *forever*. The man in this condition has not ceased to be born again; he has not ceased to be a child of God, but he is *blind*; he *cannot see* afar off, and he has “*forgotten* that was purged from his old sins.”

He has not ceased to be purged from his sins; but he has *forgotten*; that is, he has *no credible witness* in his heart that he is a child of God. He is a child of God, and heaven will be his home—but he has no reason to think so.

That brings up a serious question. Somebody tells me the thought that he has no credible witness that he is a child of God takes away all the assurance from a humble, prayerful, child of God who stumbles along the way; but that is not the case at all.

The principle we are talking about *holds no terror* for the humble, prayerful child of God, who sometimes fails. But it also *holds no comfort* for the person living in a continuing state of rebellion. **There is a world of difference between the two.** I am fearful that, on the one hand, I will discourage the occasionally stumbling child of God; but I am just as fearful that I will encourage one living in a continuing state of rebellion.

Every heaven born soul stumbles from time to time—but he can never be at peace in his sin. He sins, but he is miserable in his sin, and he wants to do better.

If a person is comfortable with his sinful condition, and persists in it, it can only mean one of two things: *either he is not a child of God*. He is flesh, all flesh, and nothing but flesh, and we should not be surprised that he is comfortable living after the flesh. One day his judgment will be *according to his works* ([Re 20:12](#)). Or else, like the person Peter describes, he is a child of God, but he has so continued in sin that *God has given him over to judicial blindness*. He is *blind*; he *cannot see afar off*; and he has *forgotten* he was once purged from his old sins.

He may truly be a child of God, but he has lost every reason to think so.

The Bible teaches that—in some sense—the child of God can perish. And it teaches just as clearly that, so far as this life is concerned, that perishing is sometimes total, permanent, and irreversible. The Bible gives some clear examples.

[Mt 21:18-20](#), “Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered, and when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee from henceforth forever, and presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away.”

Bear in mind that this was a good plant, a good tree; it could have brought forth good fruit. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. So this tree was capable of bringing forth good fruit. This tree is symbolic of a child of God, who is not bearing the fruit he ought to bear. The Lord hungered; he looked for food on this tree; he came to it, and found no fruit thereon, but leaves only, and he said to it, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth, forever.”

This was a good tree. It was capable of bearing good fruit. It did not; The judgment of God fell on it, and let me ask you: How long do you believe it is going to be until this tree bears good fruit?

“Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever.” That is long enough, is it not? Never again will this tree bear the fruit it might have borne. This tree might at one time have borne that fruit, but now the judgment of God rests on it, because it did not bear fruit, and now, **there is no possibility this tree will ever again be the fruitful tree it might have been.**

[Mt 24:14](#), “The kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.”

There were three servants. To one servant he delivered five talents, to another servant, two talents, and to another servant, one talent. The man with five talents went out and worked with them, and doubled what he had. He gained five talents. The man with two talents went out, and considering what he had to work with, he did the same thing. He doubled what he had. He gained two talents.

Not all of us have the same capacity. God does not require me to use your talent. All God requires of me is to do the best I can with what I have. That man with two talents did just as well as the man with five talents. He just did not have as much to work with. But the man with one talent “went and hid his talent in the earth,” and when his Lord came back he challenged him. The Lord commended those other two servants, and gave the same commendation to the man with two talents as he did to the man with five talents.

But in verse twenty-four the man who received one talent came and said, “Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sowed, and gathering where thou hast not strawed, and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth, lo, there thou hast that is thine. His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed; thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then, at my coming, I should have received mine own with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents, for unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And he cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth.”

Notice that these were all servants of the same Lord. They all had talents given them from the same Lord. They all had the ability, according to their own capacity, to serve their Lord. The man with one talent could not do as much as the man with five talents, but he could have done just like the man with two talents. He could have used what he had. But he did not use it, and he lost it.

Let me ask you again, what do you believe was the prospect that his Lord would ever give him another talent. What do you think is the prospect that his Lord will say, “Okay, you have had one probation; you missed out that time, but I am going to give you another chance.” It is not going to happen, is it? He was cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

These were all three servants of the same Lord. They all had talents with which they could have served their Lord. **The third servant did not, and his loss was total, permanent, and irreversible.**

[Joh 15:1-5](#), “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in

me. I am the vine; ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me, ye can do nothing.”

Let me ask you: is this talking to children of God, or is it talking to dead alien sinners? It is talking to children of God, is it not? He says, “I am the vine, and ye are the branches.” The dead alien sinner is not a branch in Christ Jesus. This is talking to the Lord’s children. Now notice verse six, “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and *men* gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

Is that talking about eternal damnation? It is not *men* who cast anyone away into that terrible place. But notice that it is men who cast these people into the fire. Sometimes that happens by a vote in conference in church. “Men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

It does not always happen that the person is turned out of the church. I have known some people who were in the condition described in these verses, who stayed in the church the rest of their lives. They never did anything so outward, so obvious, that they would ever be dealt with by the church, and yet, their joy was gone. Everything they had ever experienced was gone. It had been gone for years. There was no spiritual joy about them, and yet, they stayed in the church, and, sometimes, were the most insistent on making all the decisions. It becomes a problem in the church, when that happens.

“If a man abide not in me (that is, one of these branches in Christ) he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

Again, the same question we asked awhile ago: after this branch is cast into the fire and burned, what do you believe are the prospects that branch will ever be put back in the vine, and bear fruit in the vine.

There is nothing that can separate the child of God from the love of God, but the child of God can so persist in sin, and go on, and on, until he loses everything worth having in this life.

We talk about a person losing the joy of his salvation. He can do that. He loses the joy of the church, the joy of the gospel. He wonders why the preacher cannot preach the way he used to preach. He allows, “That preacher used to go to the pulpit every Sunday morning and he would just set this place on fire, but he just can’t preach like that any more.” Perhaps the preacher preaches as well as ever. Maybe the man cannot listen the way he used to. He cannot hear the way he used to hear.

A person stands to lose the joy of the church, his home in the church, his job, his business, his family, his children, his home, his health, and, perhaps, even his sanity. There is no end to the things a person stands to lose—this side of the grave.

I am sure some of you can think of someone you have known very well. There is no doubt in your mind that he is a child of God. You have been with him in church. You have seen him rejoice under the preaching of the gospel, and you

cannot doubt that he is born of the Spirit of God. But today, he has made shipwreck of his life.

You can supply the name. Everybody knows somebody who fits the pattern. He has lost the joy of his salvation; he has lost the joy of the church; perhaps, he has lost his home in the church; he lost his wife; his children will not talk to him; he lost his job; he lost his business; he lost his home; he lost his health. He lost everything worth having—this side of the grave.

The text says, “Men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” There is no possibility those branches will ever again be put back together and put back in the vine to bear fruit here in this life.

[Heb 6:1-6](#), “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impos-sible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

I believe it is clear enough that he is talking about a child of God. He says if that person shall fall away, it is impossible to renew him again to repentance, seeing “they crucify to them-selves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” That is still talking about the branch that was cut off and cast into the fire. It is talking about that fig tree to which the Lord said, “Let no fruit grow on thee from henceforth forever.” It is talking about that one talent servant whose talent was taken away and who was cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Paul says it is impossible to renew such a person to repentance.

Somebody may want to know, “But what if he decides to repent?” He cannot do it. It is not possible for him to repent. A person cannot repent just any time he decides to. **If God does not give repentance you cannot repent.**

[2Ti 2:25](#), “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will *give* them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”

[Ac 11:18](#), “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles *granted* repentance unto life.”

[Ro 2:4](#), “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God *leadeth* thee to repentance?”

The one text says that God *gives* repentance, the next text says that he *grants* repentance, and the last text says that he *leads* to repentance. If God does not give repentance, if he does not grant it, if he does not lead you to it—you cannot repent.

You cannot just wake up one morning, after you have lived for a long time in a bad way, and say, “Hey, I believe I will repent today. I believe I will change my way. I am going to turn over a new leaf. I am going to start doing better.” It does not work that way. The religious world thinks you can do that. They think that is all there is to it. But they are wrong.

You cannot just wake up one morning and decide, “I am going to do better.” If God does not give repentance, you will never repent. If he does not grant repentance, if he does not lead you to repentance, you cannot repent. The text says it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. You can talk to the man all you want to, but you will never get him to repent. He cannot repent. It is not within his capacity.

I would like for us to notice some characters the Bible talks about, who were in that condition.

[2Pe 2:15-16](#), “Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but was rebuked for his iniquity, the dumb ass speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet.”

That is talking about Balaam, a prophet in the Old Testament. Balaam is one of the most mysterious characters in the Bible. One of the reasons he is so mysterious is that he behaved himself in such manner that, sometimes, it is difficult to tell whether he was a child of God or not. I believe when we look at him closely, the Bible makes it clear enough that he was a born again character. Balak called for him to come and curse Israel, and he wanted to do it. Balak had promised him all kinds of wealth if he would curse Israel. Balak was afraid of Israel. He said, in [Nu 23:7](#), “Come and curse me Jacob, and come defy Israel.” But Balaam could not do it. In verse eight, he replied, “How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed, or shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied, for from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him, lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and number the fourth part of Israel, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

Balaam wanted to die the way Jacob did. Do you remember how Jacob died? He died in his own bed, in his right mind, with his family all around him, with his mind on the Lord, and he was talking about the Lord and his goodness. Balaam said when he came to die, that was how he wanted to die—in his own bed, in his right mind, with his family all around him, and with his mind on the Lord.

Does that sound like a dead alien sinner to you? One who wants to die with his mind on the Lord bears evidence of an experience of grace.

And in verse nineteen of that same chapter ([Nu 23:19](#)), he says, “God is not a man that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent, hath he said, and shall he not do it, or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” Balaam had more light on Bible doctrine, and he manifested more light in that one verse of scripture than ninety-nine per cent of the religious leaders in America today.

And in [Nu 24:17](#), “I shall see him but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh, there shall come *a star out of Jacob*, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.” Some two thousand years later there came wise men from the East, who had seen the *star* that signaled the arrival of the King of Israel—the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ. They saw that star and they came to Bethlehem, looking for the Messiah. [Mic 5:2](#), “And thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.”

They had the prophecy of Balaam about the star, and they had the prophecy of Micah that the new *ruler in Israel* would come out of Bethlehem. Two thousand years after Balaam prophesied the star would appear, it did appear. The wise men saw it; they knew the time of the Messiah was at hand; and they went to Bethlehem, looking for the Lord.

I believe the Bible gives proof enough that Balaam was a child of God. The wicked do not talk the way Balaam talked; they do not pray the way Balaam prayed. Balaam prayed, wanting to “die the death of the righteous.” He said, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” But it did not turn out that way. Notice how Balaam died.

[Nu 31:8](#), “Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword.”

The very last thing recorded about Balaam is that he died fighting against the Lord’s people. When the Bible gets around to relating his death, it records it almost as a footnote, as if to say, “Oh, by the way, Balaam was killed in the battle too.”

What happened to Balaam? Balak offered him money if he would curse Israel. He tried to curse Israel, and he could not do it. Balak made the offer again, and Balaam tried again to curse Israel, and he still could not do it. Balak made the offer the third time. Balaam tried to curse Israel the third time, and he still wound up promising blessing upon Israel.

[Re 2:14](#), “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.” Balaam tried to curse Israel, and he could not. He said, “I cannot curse those the Lord has blessed.” But he had seen Balak’s money, and if there was any way he could earn that money, he wanted to do it. He had discovered that God would not allow him to curse his people.

Balaam was also a crafty man in a natural way. He finally went to Balak and said, “Balak, I have got it all figured out; God has blessed Israel, and I cannot curse them, but here is what you can do: if you will send bad women down there, you can get Israel in trouble with their God.” He taught Israel to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

He says, “I cannot curse them; God has blessed them, and I cannot undo it, but if you will send enough bad women down there, and get Israel to misbehave, and

offer sacrifice to strange gods, you can get them in trouble with their God, and bring the wrath of God on them.” He earned his pay, but he lost everything.

[Mt 16:28](#), “What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Balaam did not lose his eternal destiny, but he lost every-thing worth having in this life. Have you ever seen it? Have you ever seen a child of God, who sold out, and died, fighting against the very cause that he had, at one time, supported? Sure you have. It happened to Balaam.

Another good example is King Saul. He started out just fine. He was humble, and self-effacing, and he showed good judgment. He gave ample evidence he was a child of God.

[1Sa 10:6](#) , “And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy unto them, and shalt be *turned into another man*. And it was so, that when he turned his back to go from Samuel, *God gave him another heart.*”

Every word in the Bible is there for a purpose. The expressions, turned into *another man*, and God gave him *another heart* are significant—they mean something. What happens in regeneration? God takes out the hard and stony heart, and gives a heart of flesh. The person is born again; he is a new man.

Even though Saul was a big man physically, he was small in his own sight. He was very humble, very self-effacing. But he became king, and it went to his head. He was not able to handle it, and he became lifted up in pride. Once, the priest did not arrive on time, and he tried to do the priest’s job for him. That got him in trouble. From there on, it was downhill.

Samuel sent him to destroy the nation of Amalek. Amalek had stood against Israel, when Israel came into the land of Canaan, and God commanded Israel to destroy the entire nation— just wipe them off the face of the earth. Because of their immoral life style, because of the way they lived, they were riddled with disease, and God intended to use Israel, like a surgeon’s scalpel to remove that diseased flesh from the human race.

Saul did not do that. He saved King Agag, and the best of the cattle alive. When Samuel arrived, he asked Saul, “Have you done what you were supposed to do?”

“Yes, I have done exactly what I was told to do.” And Samuel wants to know, “Well, if you have, what meaneth this lowing of the cattle in mine ears?”

“**Be sure your sin will find you out.**” Samuel says, “I hear cattle lowing on the other side of the hill. What is that commotion, if you have destroyed all of Amalek, and all their livestock?”

[1Sa 15:15,22-23](#), “And Saul said....the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed....And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft....”

The Amalekites were involved in witchcraft, and Saul was telling Samuel, “You are no better than they are. Your rebellion is just like their rebellion.” Witchcraft was a part of their national religion. He says, “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry, because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”

[1Sa 15:26](#), “And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee, for the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned to go away, he laid hold of the skirt of his mantle, and it rent, and Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou. And also the strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it, or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good.”

[1Sa 15:35](#), “And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.”

[1Sa 16:1](#), “And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, *seeing I have rejected him* from reigning over Israel?”

What do you believe was the likelihood Saul would continue to be the king of Israel? None whatsoever. He had lost it. It was gone. His rejection was total, and complete, and irreversible. He lost the kingdom; he lost his life, and eventually the lives of his family.

Admittedly, there are those who question whether either Balaam or King Saul were children of God; but that just goes to make the point. When a person behaves the way those two men behaved, no matter how charitable we may try to be, we can never know for sure, whether they were children of God.

We can never know, and if they ever knew, they have long since “*forgotten they were purged from their old sins.*”

They no longer have any *heart-felt assurance* they are the children of God.

We may reasonably question whether Balaam and Saul were children of God, but we will take a few moments to notice other characters we have no choice but to recognize as children of God, and they demonstrate the same principle.

It is possible for the truly born again person to end his days in a sinful condition. Some of these characters may have repented of their ways, but if they did, the Bible does not record it. **The last thing the Bible records about them is their rebellion.**

[Ge 6:11-12](#), “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”

There is no more notable saint in the Bible than Noah. He lived in a wicked and depraved age, when *all flesh had corrupted his way*. The world was awash in wickedness.

In that wicked age Noah stands out as the one man who “found grace in the eyes of the Lord,” (vs. 8). No other man in history was blessed the way he was. Except

for Noah and his family, the entire human race perished in the flood. All mankind since that time is descended from him.

After God singled out Noah from the rest of mankind, Noah finally succumbed to his own fleshly weakness. He stood firm in an age when he was surrounded by wickedness. But later, when he was surrounded by nobody except his own family he fell.

[Ge 9:20-22,28-29](#), “And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without....And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.”

Surely, nobody would question that Noah was a child of God. After the experience related above, he gave a comprehensive prophecy of the future of the three great divisions of mankind; **but so far as his personal conduct is concerned, the very last thing the Bible tells us about Noah finds him stinking, stumbling, falling down, passed out, stark-naked drunk.**

After that shameful report, the next thing we read about is his death.

Solomon is another character who demonstrates the same lesson. Regardless of how noted a saint one may be, he is still liable to fall. Who could forget Solomon’s humble request, when God said, “Ask what I shall give thee.” He did not place any restriction; he just told him to say what he wanted. Solomon did not ask for riches, nor long life, nor the life of his enemies. His simple request was, “Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this thy people that is so great?”

[\(2Ch 1:10\)](#). He did not ask anything for himself; he just wanted *wisdom and knowledge*—just enough ability to judge the people aright.

It was Solomon who recorded God’s promise, “If my people which are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked way, then will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin and heal their land.” That is instruction for the ages. Every nation on earth needs to hear and heed that message.

Listen to God’s promise to Solomon. [2Ch 7:17-18](#), “And as for thee, *if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked*, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments; then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have cove-nanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be a ruler in Israel.”

God promised Solomon a perpetual dynasty reigning in Jerusalem—but that promise was conditional. It was only “if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked.” If he transgressed, there would be a far different result.

[2Ch 7:19-20](#), “But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I

have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.”

But, after God had so blessed Solomon, he went astray. It would be hard to find anybody, who started out so high, and fell so low. He violated every condition God laid on him, and God punished him and his posterity the way he said he would.

We are told that “Solomon loved many strange women”

([2Ch 11:1](#)). He gathered a thousand wives and concubines for his harem. He went from being the most eminent of saints to being the most lascivious of libertines. He was the Hugh Hefner of his day.

It is questionable whether Hugh Hefner could have kept up with him. Hefner has never had the money Solomon had. Solomon gathered up the gold of Ophir ([2Ch 9:18](#)), and he “made silver in Jerusalem as stones” ([2Ch 9:27](#)). He used that power and wealth to assemble those thousand women, for no other reason than to satisfy his carnal lust—and they turned his heart astray.

Before long, we find him worshiping with those strange wives at their pagan, demon-worshiping altars.

[1Ki 11:4-5](#), “For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.” (Note: Paul described the nature of those Gentile *gods*. [1Co 10:20](#), “But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to *devils*, and not to God.” The word in the Greek is *daimoniois*, demons).

He engaged in those evil religions, and his life began to reflect their evil ways.

[1Ki 11:6](#), “And *Solomon did evil* in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father.”

In his rebellion against God, he was not satisfied with occasionally worshiping at pagan altars; he built altars for the pagan gods of all his wives.

[1Ki 11:7-8](#), “Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.”

God made promise of great blessing to Solomon, and to the nation under his rule—but those promises were conditional.

[1Ki 11:9-11](#), “And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice. And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he kept not that which the Lord commanded. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.”

Solomon was to be the last king of the united kingdom. After his death, God left his son Rehoboam with two tribes, and gave the other tribes to Solomon's servant, Jeroboam.

The last thing the Bible tells about Solomon finds him plotting to have his rival Jeroboam assassinated.

[1Ki 11:39-41](#), "And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever. *Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam....*And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?"

Those who are sure, that if you are one of the redeemed and born again, God will ultimately bring you back from your life of rebellion—regardless of far you may have strayed— will have a hard time proving their doctrine by the life of Solomon.

Did Solomon ever repent of his plotting to have Jeroboam killed? Did he ever return to his former faithfulness. If he did the Bible says nothing about it.

Solomon was clearly a child of God, but he came to the end of his days in a very shameful condition.

Allow me one more example. Uzziah was made king when he was only 16 years old. [2Ch 26:4-5](#), "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord....[he] had understanding in the visions of God; and *as long as he sought the Lord*, God made him to prosper."

"God made him to prosper," but it was only "as long as he sought the Lord." That did not last. He was finally lifted up in pride, and that pride was his downfall.

[2Ch 26:16](#), "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction; for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense....*And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death*, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper.

Uzziah ended his days as a leper. Leprosy is a terrible dis-ease. The flesh rots; one by one, the fingers and toes die and fall off. A leper was not allowed to come close to healthy people. He was forced to wear a cloth over his face and cry out, "Unclean, unclean," if anybody approached. Such an eery, frightful, sound that must have been. It is impossible to catch its horror on paper.

Leprosy is a symbol of sin, and in this instance, it is a symbol of that sinful condition in which many a disobedient child of God ends his days.

The gospel is a comforting message. There would be no need for comfort, if we never had doubts and fears. The children of God have every right to be encouraged. From time to time, it is the lot of every heaven born soul to have seasons of doubts and fears. To every trembling child of God who is beset by doubts, and who mourns because of his shortcomings, I would bid you to take courage. That very distress is one of the evidences of grace. The wicked have no such concern. They are comfortable with their sin. They enjoy any activity all the more if they think it is sinful.

[Mt 5:4](#), "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

[Isa 40:1](#), “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.”

Those who constantly call on the family of God to question their salvation are simply abusing the Lord’s children. They take the joy out of the gospel and the church. They teach the children of God to live in fear of eternal damnation, when they should be living in prospect of a better day to come.

In that, I am talking about those humble, prayerful children of God who—in their faltering, often failing, way—are trying to serve the Lord. I am not talking about those individuals who are living in open rebellion against their Maker.

We must acknowledge there are those who use the doc-trine of eternal security as a cloak to hide behind. They once made a profession of faith, and, because of that long-ago profession, they are sure eternal heaven will be their home. Their lives reflect nothing of their profession, but they are sure eternal security will take care of them—regardless of how they behave.

For those in that condition, I have very little encouragement. The Bible offers nothing but, “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries,” ([Heb 10:27](#)), and I have no license to offer anything more. Their lives give no reason to believe they are children of God. Perhaps, I am writing to one, who truly is a child of God, who is in that condition. True, you made a profession many years ago; but for all we know—for all you know—what you felt at that time may have been nothing more than emotion. If it was truly the Spirit of God, how can you so easily continue in a state of such willful rebellion?

Or perhaps you are one of those like the barren fig tree, or the one talent servant, who was given over to destruction. There is no comfort in that thought.

Repentance was no longer available for that one talent servant. He could not repent; God would not grant him repentance. As far as this life is concerned, it was all over. He was cast into *outer darkness*, where there was *weeping and gnashing of teeth*. If you are in that condition, and if God’s Word is true, you are likely facing your share of weeping and gnashing of teeth. That weeping and gnashing of teeth can come from a lot of things, loss of your job, loss of your health, sickness of one you hold the most dear. The rebellious child of God stands to lose everything worth having this side of the grave.

Perhaps, you are thinking, I have been this way for a long time and nothing has happened. That may mean you are like Balaam or King Saul. God may have written you off. Again, I must point out that Paul described your case.

[Heb 10:26-27,30-31](#), “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.... Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord, and again, *The Lord shall judge his people*. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Notice that is talking about *his people*. If that does not terrify you, there is no need for me to say anything more.

There is one other consideration. There truly is such a thing as a *nominal professor*—a person who professes, but does not possess, the Spirit of God. Paul described them.

[2Co 11:13-15](#), “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

These nominal professors pretended to be children of God and ministers of the truth. We have no reason to believe they were either.

Many of those we sometimes call *backsliders* belong to this group. They were once interested in religion, but their interest faded. They once learned much of the letter of the truth. (You can teach a parrot to say the words.) And they shed a lot of tears; but it was nothing more than emotion. They are not children of God, and they will burn someday.

On the other hand, it is possible for a truly born again person to make shipwreck of his life. He can so persist in sin that God delivers him over to judgment.

He is chosen, and redeemed, and born again. Heaven will be his home—but we have no right to encourage him in his condition. He may be one who has been delivered over to judgment, or he may never have been a child of God in the first place. **Either way he is headed for destruction—either in this world, or in the world to come.**

The truly chosen, redeemed, and born again, are sure to be *preserved by grace*, or *persevere in a state of grace*, if you would prefer to say it that way. One day, they will every one arrive safe home in glory. But you will search the Bible in vain for any guarantee that God will ultimately rescue them from their own folly. You will search in vain for any guarantee they will every one finish his journey in the full triumph of a living faith.

I am sure there are those who will insist I am being too harsh, and I must admit that I am fearful of discouraging any little child of God who is beset by doubts and fears. But I am also fearful of encouraging any rebel in his war against his Maker.

Perhaps there is yet hope. The prodigal son was in a far country, wasting his substance in riotous living. Perhaps there is some little child of God reading this, who is in that condition. If that is your case, I would bid you to rise and return to your father’s house.

One day, the prodigal came to his senses. He said, “How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants.”

His father did not make him one of the hired servants. He had compassion on him, forgave him, and restored him to his former state. He killed the fatted calf,

and called for his friends to make merry and rejoice with him. Just four verses before that account, we read, “I say unto you, that likewise *joy shall be in heaven* over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance,” ([Lu 15:7](#)). There is no more happy scene in the Bible than the scene where the prodigal came home.

Pray that God would give you repentance. You cannot *work it up* on your own, but plead with your Maker that he would *give* it to you. Perhaps, there is yet hope. Who can tell?

[Jon 3:9](#), “*Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?*”

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Dinosaurs: An Eyewitness Account

DINOSAURS: AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

[Job 38:1-4](#), “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding.”

The book of Job is one of the most fascinating of all books. It provides information not found anywhere else. The very first expression in this passage reminds me of a comment a denominational preacher made to me several years ago. We had been having a long running conversation about the way God saves his people. He seemed to think he was getting the short end of the conversation, and he said, “Harold, did you ever wish God would just speak from heaven and say, “Okay, everybody, listen up, I am going to tell you the way it is.” I said, “What do you think the Bible is?” That is exactly what God does in the Bible. He says, “Okay, listen up,” and then he tells us everything we need to know.

“**Then the Lord answered Job** out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?”

Job’s miserable comforters had been giving him all kinds of advice, more advice than he probably wanted. Sometimes they told the truth, and sometimes they didn’t. They did not always know what they were talking about. After awhile, God spoke to Job out of the whirlwind, and said, “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” Nowadays, we might say they were *blowing smoke*. They were just confusing the issue. God said they were *darkening counsel* by words without knowledge; they did not know what they were talking about. He said, “Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.” They had been so quick in giving their opinions. God challenged them to talk to him; he would ask the

questions. He says, “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding.” He wants to know, “Were you there; how do you know so much about it?”

The book of Job contains internal evidence it is the oldest book in the Bible. I believe it contains evidence, that it was written during what paleontologists call the *ice age*.

Also there is also an abundance of evidence the book was written during the time when dinosaurs still roamed the earth. It provides us with **Job’s eyewitness report** on the nature and behavior of dinosaurs.

When you tell somebody you do not believe in evolution, he almost always brings up the subject of dinosaurs. He wants to know, “Don’t you believe in dinosaurs?” **But what do dinosaurs have to do with evolution?** Dinosaur fossils have been discovered all over the earth, and there can be no question that those huge creatures once roamed the earth, but what does that have to do with evolution? Somehow people have the idea that, because they have found the fossils of dinosaurs, they have confirmed evolution; but the fact dinosaurs once existed has nothing to do with evolution.

Dinosaur fossils have been found all over the earth. People have been finding them for hundreds of years, but they started digging them up in earnest a little less than two hundred years ago. But the existence, or non-existence, of dinosaurs has nothing to do with the question of evolution.

Evolutionists examine the fossils of dinosaurs, and other extinct creatures, and they draw some of the most elaborate conclusions. Then they try to intimidate Christians with their theories about what (they pretend) those fossils prove.

But let me tell you that Christians do not have to take any abuse from those people. They remind me of something Jerry Clowers used to say. He liked to talk about those people who are “educated beyond their intelligence.” It is hard for me to understand how, otherwise intelligent, people can believe some of the yarns evolutionists spin about fossils and how they came about.

My automobile did not evolve; somebody built it. If there had not been somebody to build it, it never would have existed. And you and I did not evolve; we have a Maker, and if we had not had a Maker, we would not have existed.

We do not have to be intimidated by the pretended learning of evolutionists. They dig up a pile of old bones and guess what they mean. Really, they dig up a bunch of old bones and fantasize.

But we do not have to guess. **We had one of our men on location.** He was there when dinosaurs were still walking around, terrifying people. And he wrote it up. We still have his report. We have his word for word description of two different kinds of dinosaurs. He tells us what those two kinds of dinosaurs

were called in his day. He tells us what they looked like, and how they behaved.

We have had his report for over four thousand years, and for all that time the opposition has been hammering away at his testimony, and they cannot disprove it. It is a principle in any trial, that if you cannot dispute the evidence, you impugn the witness; you show that the witness is not credible; he cannot be believed. We have had his testimony for four thousand years; and the opposition cannot do anything with it.

Our children are being taught in school that they are really the result of a grand accident; they just evolved.

It is no coincidence that we are seeing such a moral decline. The morals of Americans are worse every decade than they were the decade before. That is one thing the righteous and the wicked agree on. The righteous and the wicked agree that Americans are steadily becoming more immoral. The difference is that the righteous are grieved over it, and the wicked think it is a good thing. The wicked are glad to see the morals of Americans decline. I have not changed the subject; I will get back to it.

There are any number of causes of the moral decline that is going on in America, but one of the greatest problems is that you cannot tell children all their growing up years they are nothing more than highly evolved animals without expecting that after awhile they are going to start behaving like animals. You can count on it. If you drill it into their heads, that they are simply animals, they will begin to behave like animals.

You cannot, year after year, drill it into people's heads that God is not their creator without their eventually getting the idea it is none of God's business how they behave.

When I was in school, evolution was taught as a theory. Today it is taught as a proven fact. **Evolution has not been proven; it cannot be proven.** But the establishment is determined to have it taught as a proven fact.

The ACLU has been one of the leaders in this campaign. They call themselves the American Civil Liberties Union, but they are not interested in anybody's liberties except their own. Just a few weeks ago the ACLU sued the school district in Amite, Louisiana. The school district put a disclaimer in their science books. It said something like this: "We present this material as the scientific theory of evolution. We do not endorse or deny any theory of the origin of matter and energy. We are aware there is more than one theory of the origin of matter. There is the theory of evolution, and the theory of creation, etc. We encourage the student to consider the various theories and make up his own mind."

The ACLU sued the school district to stop them from telling those students they had the right to consider various theories and make up their own minds. As of this time, that suit is still pending.

But somebody is forever asking, "What about all the evidence the evolutionists have produced." The fact is there are three kinds of evidence of evolution. There is the evidence that has nothing to do with the question. For instance, the fact there were once great dinosaurs has nothing to do with evolution. That just proves that some creatures have become extinct. We already knew that. There is evidence that has been misunderstood; and there is evidence that has simply been falsified.

I want to notice just a few examples of the evidence that has been deliberately falsified. When you believe God is not your creator, it is easy to conclude it is none of his business what you do, or what you tell. It is easy to get the idea it is alright to falsify the facts to prove your argument. If you are not answerable to God for anything you do, there is nobody to call you to account for your conduct. There is nothing to stop you from forging your evidence.

In 1859, an apostate ministerial student by the name of Charles Darwin wrote a book entitled, *The Origin of the Species*. It was that book that gave the greatest impetus to the modern version of evolution. There is nothing new about the idea of evolution. The notion of evolution has been around from before the dawn of recorded history. **Most pagan religions have had evolution as a basic doctrine.** But Darwin gave the greatest emphasis to the modern form of evolutionism in *The Origin of the Species*. He insisted that all of life evolved from lower life forms, and they had in turn evolved from non-living matter.

But people began to ask him for his evidence. He said the evidence would be found in the fossils. Then they wanted to know, "Where are the fossils?" He did not know.

Then in 1912, an English school teacher by the name of Charles Dawson found an old skull in a gravel pit in Piltdown, England. It was the skull of a man, and the jawbone of an ape. They were sure they had found *the missing link* between humans and animals, the missing link between man and ape. It was part human and part ape, or so they insisted. They put it in their textbooks. It came to be called *Piltdown Man*, because it was found near Piltdown, England. The story stayed in the textbooks for forty years.

I very well remember the week they discovered it was a fraud. I was a junior in high school in 1953. I read it in one of the news magazines, *Time* or *Newsweek*. When it was first *discovered*, it made front page news all over the world. When it was discovered to be a fraud, it was buried in the back pages of newspapers, and news magazines.

Forty one years later, they finally went back and re-examined the skull. They discovered the skull was not really three hundred thousand years old after all. It was closer to a thousand years old. And the jawbone actually was the jawbone of an ape, but instead of being three hundred thousand years old, it was probably brand new when they *discovered* it. They also discovered it had been treated with iron pyrites to make it look old, and it had been sanded down with very fine sandpaper to make it fit the skull.

It took the world's most brilliant scientists forty years to discover it was an out and out forgery. It was a deliberate hoax to prop up a theory that cannot be supported any other way.

Several weeks ago, I waded through a book by an evolutionary scientist by the name of James Trefil. I like to get both sides of the story. He talked about *the Piltdown Hoax*. He said he had been to England, and the skull is still on display in a glass case in the British Museum in London. (I wonder why they keep it on display almost fifty years after it has been proven to be a hoax.) He admitted, "The fact the teeth had been filed was pretty clear." It took the world's most brilliant scientists forty years to notice those sandpaper marks, which today, after almost fifty years, are still *pretty clear*.

Even though Mr. Trefil admits the whole thing was a farce, he still tries to defend the perpetrators. He thinks Arthur Conan Doyle (the author of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries) probably played a trick on the researchers of that day. It is a fact that Arthur Conan Doyle did live at Piltdown, England, but if he fooled those evolutionists, you can be sure they wanted to be fooled. They had already reached their conclusion; they were looking for evidence to support it, and they would accept any help they could get.

It is strange they waited about introducing that notion until Mister Doyle was long since dead, and could not defend himself.

Until the late '60's we had a law in Tennessee that made it a crime to teach evolution in the public schools. In 1922, the ACLU was getting ready to challenge that law. They put an advertisement in Tennessee newspapers searching for anybody who was willing to teach evolution in Tennessee schools, and submit to be put on trial. There was a young man by the name of John Scopes, who wrote back and volunteered for the task. They met with him in a drug store in Dayton, Tennessee, and laid their plans. He was brought to trial in 1925, in Dayton Tennessee, in what has become known as *the Monkey Trial*.

About the time they were preparing for the trial at Dayton, Tennessee, there was a man by the name of Harold Cook, who discovered a fossil tooth in Nebraska. He thought the tooth belonged to an *ape man*, a kind of in-between creature, not quite human, but not quite an ape either. With nothing more than that tooth to go by, they were able to reconstruct the entire man. They learned

that his lips stuck out, kind of like a chimpanzee. He had heavy brow ridges. He walked all bent over, and his knuckles dragged the ground when he walked. They called him *Herpero-pithecus haroldcookii*. They seem to love those scientific sounding names. Most people called him the *Nebraska man*. I like the comment Mark Twain made about that time. He said, "There is something fascinating about science. One gets such wholesale returns of conjectures out of such a paltry investment of facts."

For some reason they did not use Mr. Cook's tooth in the trial in 1925, but in 1927 they went back to Snake Creek, Nebraska and dug up the rest of the skeleton. **It was a pig.** Those brilliant scientists couldn't tell the difference between a tooth of an extinct pig, and the tooth of an *ape man*. But the story doesn't stop there. In 1972, a man by the name of Ralph Wenzel discovered the pig wasn't even extinct. He discovered an entire herd of those same pigs in a rain forest in Paraguay in South America. So much for *Hesperopithecus*. One more illustration, there was a Dutch medical doctor by the name of Eugene Dubois, who was a disciple of the German evolutionist Ernst Haeckel. He was determined to prove that man evolved from some kind of ape man. He expected he would probably find the fossils in the South Pacific. So in 1891, he joined the Dutch army, as an army surgeon, and had himself assigned to Java, where he could dig and hunt for the fossils of this ape man. He hadn't been there long until he found what he was looking for. He found the skull and thigh bone of what he said was an ape man. He called it *Pithecanthropus erectus*. It got in all the textbooks, and stayed there for thirty years.

Thirty years later, when his hoax was about to be exposed, he called people in and admitted he had known all along it was really a gibbon, an ordinary ape. I am sure he did not want to tell it; it proved that his entire career as an evolutionist scientist had been a fraud. But I am told that he was about to die, and he didn't want to go out into eternity with that lie on his record. He went on to tell that he had also found two human skulls in the same location as the ape skull. It is obvious that man could not have evolved from those apes, if humans lived at the same time, and in the same place, as the apes. He admitted he had kept those skulls hid for thirty years.

You could make a career of studying the out and out forgeries that lie at the very heart of the notion of evolution, but perhaps, those three instances will give some idea of the kind of evidence the theory is based on.

There are only three kinds of evidence for evolution: the kind that has nothing to do with evolution, the kind that has been misunderstood, and the kind that has been forged. Christians do not have to take any abuse from the evolutionists. I cannot understand how, otherwise intelligent, people can believe any such notion.

Evolutionists fantasize about long ago ages, when (they tell us) lower life forms were evolving upward. They talk about a long ago time when dinosaurs and other strange creatures roamed the earth. But God has assisted his people by providing us with an eyewitness account, written during that very time. Bear in mind that the dinosaurs did not live some sixty-five million years ago, as the evolutionists would have us to believe, but rather a few thousand years ago. It was during that time this book was written, and it gives us a God-inspired, and God-preserved, record of what it was like.

It seems that Job lived during what paleontologists refer to as *the ice age*. That is another of the things evolutionists throw at us, when we tell them we do not believe in evolution. They want to know if we do not believe there was an ice age. They tell us there is geological evidence of an ice age, and they assume that if we do not believe in evolution, we must also deny there was ever an ice age. Of course, there was an ice age. There is no evidence there was more than one ice age; but there is an abundance of evidence for one. There is evidence in the huge boulders deposited by the glaciers of that age, and the scars they made in rocks. There clearly was an ice age, and that is probably when Job lived.

Did you ever notice Job has more references to ice, and snow, and frost, and cold, than any other book in the Bible? People talk about whatever is on their mind. These people talked a lot about cold weather. I believe these people were cold. Is that proof it was written during the ice age? No, that is not enough proof.

But, in [Job 38:29](#), listen to what Job says. “Out of whose womb came the ice?” There is only one conceivable ice formation that could be described by that expression, and that is the slow moving ice of a glacier.

Is that sufficient to prove that Job lived during the ice age? No, but there is more. Listen to the next verse ([Job 38:30](#)), “The waters are hid as with a stone.” When are the waters hid as with a stone? When they are frozen solid. That still is not enough, but listen to the next expression, “And the face of the deep is frozen.” *The deep* is a poetic expression referring to the ocean. We still sometimes refer to the ocean as *the deep*. Job said, the surface of *the deep* (the ocean) is frozen. In Job’s day the surface of the ocean was frozen.

Also, Job lived during a time when some people lived in caves, and we might properly call them *cave men*. There never has been any such thing as an *ape man*, half ape and half man, but from time there have been *cave men*, people, who, for whatever the reason, lived in caves. Some of them were Job’s neighbors.

They were just as human as you and I are. But they behaved like animals, and the people treated them like animals. Job had such a low opinion of them, that he said, he wouldn’t even let their fathers take care of his dogs ([Job 30:1](#)).

They were too sorry to put out a crop, they dug up roots and chewed on them rather than raise anything. You could hear them off out in the bushes braying like animals. If they came around civilized people, they treated them like animals and ran them off. If they don't like what you said, and if they were close enough, they might spit in your face. They were a very uncouth sort of people.

In [Job 30](#), Job says, "But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock." He said he wouldn't even let their fathers take care of his dogs." [Job 30:4](#), "Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat." They would not put out a crop; they had rather dig up roots, and chew on them. [Job 30:5](#), "They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief)." When they came around civilized people, they ran them off like a thief. He goes on, "**to dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth.**" People have found their drawings in caves. [Job 30:7](#), "Among the bushes they brayed." You could hear them off in the bushes, making all sorts of strange noises. "Under the nettles they were gathered together. They were children of fools, yea, children of base men, they were viler than the earth. And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword. Their abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face." They were just a human as anybody else, but they acted like animals until people treated them like animals.

In the book of Job, God provides a written record of a long running conversation between Job and his friends. These were fairly well informed people. They had a lot of things wrong, but it is obvious they were thinking people. And the book of Job allows us to know what people believed, what they thought, and what they knew, four thousand years ago.

The book of Job was probably written somewhere between the time of Abraham and the time of Moses. The reason I am convinced it was written prior to Moses' day is that, first off, these were widely read men. They spent most of their time discussing moral, ethical, and religious questions, and they never once quoted Moses. As well informed as these men were, if the law of Moses had been around, these men would have quoted it; they didn't. They lived and died before Moses' day.

I believe it was written after Abraham's day. Notice that Job lived in the land of Uz. In the years after the flood the descendants of Noah spread out into the vast empty places of the earth. They and their descendants repopulated their respective areas. The various regions came to be called by the name of the man who was the ancestor of most of the people who lived in that area. We are told, "They call their lands after their own name, [Ps 49:11](#)"

Job lived in the land of Uz; it was the area settled by Uz. If you want to look it up, you will discover that Uz was Abraham's nephew ([Ge 22:20-21](#)). There is another character in the book of Job named Elihu. "Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite," [Job 32:2](#). Notice that Elihu was a Buzite. He was descended from Buz. Buz and Uz (or Huz) were brothers. So Elihu and Job were descended from Uz and Buz, Abraham's nephews. That seems to indicate the book was written sometime after Abraham's day.

Also, you will remember that after the flood, the life spans dropped almost steadily every generation. Before the flood, it was common for people to live to be almost a thousand years old. Most of the people listed in Genesis chapter eleven died somewhat younger than their fathers did. Noah lived 950 years, but his son Shem only lived to be 600 ([Ge 11:10-11](#)) Moses lived to be 120; his father Amram, lived to be 137; his grandfather Kohath lived to be 133; Levi lived to be 137; Jacob lived to be 147. Their life expectancy declined steadily. Job lived to be 140, about as long as Jacob did. If that is an indicator, and I believe it is, then Job lived along about the time of Jacob.

But to get back to our original premise, Job lived when dinosaurs still roamed the earth. In spite of all the protests to the contrary, dinosaurs were still around four thousand years ago. Job talked about them.

Somebody might say, "Now, Harold Hunt, I have read my Bible through five times, or, maybe, ten times, and the word *dinosaur* is not in the Bible." That is right; it is not. I will tell you why it is not. First off, our King James Version of the Bible was translated in 1611. The word *dinosaur* did not come into existence until the year 1841.

There was an English scientist by the name of Richard Owen, who was the world's foremost expert on comparative anatomy. In 1841, in a scientific paper Owen was delivering before the Royal Academy of Science in London, England, he talked about dinosaur fossils, and he was the first to call them *dinosaurs*. He coined the word. He got the word from the Greek word *deinos* (terrible) and *sauros* (lizard)---terrible lizard. They have been called dinosaurs ever since.

What were they called before that day? They were sometimes called *dragons*. In the Bible they are sometimes called *leviathan* or *behemoth*.

Evolutionists claim dragons are a myth; they never existed. But they dig up their fossils, put them together, and call them dinosaurs. Have you ever looked at pictures of dragons. Don't they look like skinny dinosaurs? Sure they do.

If there never were any such thing as dragons, why is it that, all over the earth, there have been ancient cultures who have believed there were? People have

been digging up dinosaur fossils for hundreds of years, but, until Richard Owen renamed them, they were usually called dragons.

In [Job 40](#), Job talks about one kind of dinosaur; he calls it *behemoth*. “Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar.” ([Job 40:15-17](#)).

The Bible is inspired of God. There are no mistakes in the Bible; you can depend on every word. But God did not inspire the center column references. Publishers included them for our convenience. Sometimes they are right, and sometimes they are wrong; but they are never inspired. The center column reference in my Bible says behemoth was an elephant. But the text says behemoth “moveth his tail like a cedar.” An elephant does not have a tail like a cedar tree; an elephant’s tail is more like a rope.

I never saw a dinosaur, but I have seen their fossils. You may have been to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. and walked around that huge dinosaur skeleton. It does have a tail like a cedar tree. Behemoth was one kind of dinosaur that lived in Job’s neighborhood.

Job goes on to say, “His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron,” [Job 40:18](#). And in [Job 40:23](#), “Behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not; he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.” So much for behemoth.

In the next chapter ([Job 41](#)) he talks about *leviathan*. “Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? Or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?” The center column in my Bible says that is a whale. But Job throws out the challenge; “Can you draw out leviathan (a whale?) with a hook? “Canst thou put a hook into his nose? Or bore his jaw through with a thorn?” ([Job 41:2](#)). [Job 41:7](#), “Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? Or his head with fish spears?”

Why, sure you can do that to a whale. That is the way they were harvested, before the environmentalists put a stop to it. They would go after them with harpoons with a barb (a *hook*) on the end.

He says, “Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more. Behold the hope of him is in vain; shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him? None is so fierce that dare stir him up,” [Job 41:8-10](#). People are not so afraid as that of whales. But if I came up on a Tyrannosaurus Rex, I would do exactly what Job said, wouldn’t you. I would give him plenty of room. When Job came across leviathan that is exactly what he did. He did not dare to *stir him up*.

In [Job 41:14](#), “Who can open the doors of his face? His teeth are terrible round about.” Whales don’t have that kind of teeth. But paleontologists have been digging up dinosaur teeth, and that does describe their teeth. Job said,

“His scales are his pride.” Does a whale have scales? No, but this creature did. “His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered. By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.” [Job 41:15-21](#).

If you mention that to an evolutionist, he will just smile and tell you that dinosaurs couldn't breathe fire. But we know very little about what dinosaurs could do. About the only thing we really know is the shape of their bones. We do know that during the 15th and 16th centuries, when the European explorers began their great voyages of discovery, no matter where they went, they found ancient cultures, who had legends of fire breathing dragons. If there never was any such thing, how is it those primitive cultures---who had no contact with each other---all believed there was a time when there used to be fire breathing dragons? Where did the idea come from?

In San Diego, California, there is an organization of scientists called the Institute for Creation Research. They have published several articles about a beetle called the *bombardier beetle*. This little insect has two tiny chambers in his abdomen. One of them is filled with hydrogen peroxide, and the other is filled with enzymes, and something called quinones. Those tiny little chambers have plumbing that runs down to a mixing chamber. When a predator gets after the bombardier beetle, he swings his little behind around in the direction of the predator; he empties those two chambers into the mixing chamber, and in an instant the quinones and hydrogen peroxide turn into hydroquinones at 212 degrees Fahrenheit . He sprays it in the face of whatever is after him, and that takes care of his adversary.

We don't know all the dinosaurs could do, but we do know there have been dinosaurs discovered with exactly the same plumbing in their heads the bombardier beetle has in his abdomen. We don't know for sure what those chambers were for, but it looks mighty suspicious to me. We also know there are some substances that burn if they are simply brought together. There are other substances that burst into flames if they are exposed to air. There is no reason to doubt there were some dinosaurs that could breathe fire.

Bear in mind that we are not looking at bones and guessing, and we are not falsifying an unprovable theory. **We had our man on the scene.** We have his eyewitness report. The opposition has been hammering away at it for four thousand years and they cannot disprove it. “Yea, let God be true.”

EVEN CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

[Ex 12:1](#) “And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

[Ex 12:2](#) This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

[Ex 12:3](#) Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:

[Ex 12:4](#) And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

[Ex 12:5](#) Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

[Ex 12:6](#) And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

[Ex 12:7](#) And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

[Ex 12:8](#) And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

[Ex 12:9](#) Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

[Ex 12:10](#) And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

[Ex 12:11](#) And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it *is* the LORD'S passover.

[Ex 12:12](#) For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

[Ex 12:13](#) And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”

The Old Testament Passover was a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that, because Paul refers to the Lord as *Christ our Passover*.

[1Co 5:7](#), “...for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

The Law Service provides us with an entire system of types, and shadows, and figures, of Bible truth. Those figures served as a kind of prophecy for the

children of Israel during the time of the Old Testament, and they still serve as illustrations of Bible truth in our day.

Those figures are found, in the feasts, and sacrifices, and ceremonies of the Law Service, and in many of the experiences of the saints of that day. They literally acted out divine truth, and it is amazing how clear, and how graphic, those figures can be. But, while those figures are found throughout the ceremonies of the Law Service, and the lives of the saints, we should never get the idea that every story recorded in that part of the Bible is a figure or a symbol of something.

Most of the stories recorded in the Bible are not symbolic of anything at all. They simply tell us what they did, what they said, and what the consequence was. The passage may, very well, serve to make a point, but it is not necessarily a symbol of anything. Many a minister has worn himself out trying to explain the symbolic connection of some passage, when there is no symbol to be found.

One of the experiences that seems to go with having preached for a long time is that sometimes people get the idea you are well supplied with answers. I feel flattered when somebody comes to me with a question, but I have always been much better supplied with questions than I have with answers.

Some young preacher is forever coming to me for an explanation of some passage. The text seems to be plain enough, and I tell him, "This is what they did, and this is what they said, and these are the consequences."

"But, what does it symbolize?"

"I can't tell that it symbolizes anything. This is what they did, and this is what they said, and these are the consequences."

"But is there not some deeper meaning than that?"

"Not that I can tell. This is what they did, and this is what they said, and these are the consequences."

In some sense, most people understand the Bible better than they think they do. One of the reasons so many people are convinced they cannot understand the Bible is that they have been taught to look for something that is not there. If it is not there, you are not going to find it, and you should not beat up on yourself, because you cannot see it. I believe most people would be better off, if they would just accept the simple lessons of the Bible for what they say, and not be forever looking for some great mystery.

Granted that there are mysteries in the Bible we are never going to figure out. We could not understand some of those mysteries, even if they were explained to us. They are beyond our capacity to entirely understand. We will never entirely understand the doctrine of the Trinity. The Bible teaches it, and we believe it, but it is beyond our capacity to entirely explain it. We will never entirely understand the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the very heaven of heavens cannot contain him, how could he become a little baby his mother could hold in her arms? How could he become incarnate in human flesh and walk around among us? The Bible calls it a mystery ([1Ti 3:16](#)), and if it is a mystery, you and I cannot entirely explain it. If we could, it would not be a mystery.

We cannot explain how God is going to raise the dead on that final day. Paul calls the resurrection a mystery ([1Co 15:51](#)), and, if it is a mystery, you and I cannot entirely explain it.

Suppose a sailor dies and is buried in the sea. His remains are eaten by fish, and those fish are later caught and eaten by other people, and the flesh of those fish becomes the nutrition that makes up the flesh of these other people. Then they finally die, and are buried. How will God ever sort it all out? You can be sure that the God, who created the universe and everything in it, will not have any trouble on that day, but you and I cannot explain it.

Why does God save one person and pass another by? The only answer God gives—and, I believe, the only answer we will ever have—is, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight” [Mt 11:26](#). It pleased God, and if it pleased God, that is as far as I am going to pursue the question. I do not dare challenge him.

I doubt that we will entirely understand some of these mysteries, even in the world to come. We sing a song that says, “We will understand it better by and by.” We will, indeed, understand it better, but, that does not mean we will know everything there is to be known. In order to know all about it, we would need a mind as great as the mind of God—and we will never have that. God will always be the Creator, and we will always be the creature. When we arrive in that world, we will just as surely stand in awe of God, and his attributes, and his work, as we do in this life.

We would not deny that there are some subjects that by their very nature—and our own finite nature—we cannot understand, but the fact remains that God intended for the Bible to be read and understood. Any humble, prayerful, and obedient child of God can read the Bible and understand those things which will satisfy his present need.

But, back to the subject of *figures*: how can you tell if something is a figure?

Well, it helps, if the Bible tells us—in so many words—that it is a figure.

Baptism is a figure; the Bible says so. [1Pe 3:21](#), “The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us (not the putting way of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” It is a figure of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord, and it is a figure of the child of God, dying to sin, and rising to walk in newness of life.

The sacrifices of the Law Service were a figure. Again, the Bible says so.

[Heb 9:9](#), “Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.”

The deliverance of Isaac on the mountain was a figure.

[Heb 11:18-19](#), “Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence he received him in a figure.”

And, it helps if the type looks so much like the antitype that you cannot always tell which is under consideration. King David was one of the clearest Old Testament types of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was such a clear and convincing type of the Lord that, in some passages such as [Ps 89](#), you cannot always tell whether you are reading about David, the son of Jesse, or the Greater David, the Son of God.

It also helps if you have someone, obviously sent from God, to point to the antitype and call him by his typical name.

[Joh 1:29](#), “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Every lamb, for that matter, every animal, sacrificed under the Law Service, was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and here we have John the Baptist calling our attention to that fact. There is a scarlet thread that reaches all the way from the Garden of Eden to Calvary. When Adam sinned, God made coats of skins for him and his wife. In order for them to have coats of skins, an animal had to die.

[Heb 9:22](#), “And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

The Bible does not tell us what kind of animal it was. It is purely an opinion of mine, but I think it was a lamb. Every time the priest, or in the case of the Passover, the head of the house, took the sacrificial blade, and drove it home into the body of the sacrificial animal, the rich, warm, red blood of that sacrifice, flowed out of the wound, over the blade, and perhaps over the hand of the priest, and that shed blood extended that scarlet thread—the scarlet thread that reaches all the way to Calvary. It appears to me that God has made the Bible as clear as it needs to be.

Sometimes I have trouble finding my way around in some of these big city hospitals. The way they have changed, and remodeled, and added on, I can get lost. But, some of the hospitals have come up with a simple way of helping out. “Do you see that red circle over there on the floor, and do you see the long red line leading from it? Well, you follow that red line all the way to the end, and you will be right where you need to be.” I can follow that kind of directions.

But in the Bible God does even better than that. God has John the Baptist stationed right at the end of that long scarlet ribbon, to announce that we have arrived at the end of our journey. There at the end of that long scarlet ribbon was the Lord Jesus Christ, ready to be baptized by John and to start his own public ministry.

[Joh 1:29](#), “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

There was John pointing to the Lord, and announcing that this is the one you have been waiting for. This is the one who was symbolized and prefigured by all those other sacrificial lambs. He was pointing people to the Lamb of God, pointing them to the Savior. That is what I am trying to do, I am trying to point you to the Lamb of God. Far too much of religion points people away from the Lord, and back to themselves— away from the Lord and his righteousness, and back to themselves, and their own accomplishments. It is the place of the gospel preacher to point people to the Lord, and away from themselves.

[Ex 12:5](#), “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year, ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats.”

The Passover lamb had to be without blemish. If the Lord Jesus Christ had not been a perfect sacrifice—a sinless sacrifice—he could not have paid our sin debt. He would have died for his own sins. Except for the Lord Jesus Christ, every person, who ever died, died because he was a sinner.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only perfectly righteous, perfectly sinless, person who ever lived.

[1Pe 2:22](#), “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”

[1Pe 1:18-19](#), “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

It had to be a male of the first year. It could not be a newborn lamb, that might survive, and might not. And it could not be an old ram, broken down with age, that was going to die before long, anyway. It had to be in the full vigor of its strength.

In his divine nature, the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal one. He always has been, and he always will be. But according to his human nature, when the Lord died on the cross, he was thirty three years old. He was in the full strength of his manhood.

Notice that in verse three it is a lamb. Then it is the lamb, and finally it is your lamb. It has been said that the sweetness of the gospel is in its personal pronouns, my Lord, my Savior, my Redeemer. I like to preach about the Lord,

the Savior, the Redeemer, but he is most precious to my soul, when it is my Lord, my Savior, my Redeemer.

I like to preach about election, and predestination, and redemption, and regeneration, and resurrection, but more than that I like to preach about the one who did the electing, and the predestinating....I like to preach from [Joh 3:16](#). “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” That is not an Arminian text; there is not an Arminian text in the Bible. But more than that, I love to preach on [Ga 2:20](#), “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

I love to preach about God’s love for *the world*, the vast world of his elect family; but, more than that, I love to preach about how he loved me, and chose me, and redeemed me. I discover that the longer I live, and the more I preach, the more personal my preaching becomes, the more I am amazed at the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

True religion is more than a system of doctrines and religious principles. True religion is rooted in a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,” [Ga 2:20](#).

That is what makes religion vital and real. It is that close and personal, day to day relationship with my Lord. It is being able to feel that he lives in my heart, and that I am able to enjoy fellowship with him.

I believe it is possible to preach the truth, to be right on target, so far as the letter of the doctrine is concerned, and still be, for the most part, somewhat academic in our preaching. I read an article a few days ago that I really thought was doctrinally sound, but for all the fire there was in it, for all the passion you could discover, he could just as well have been writing about Napoleon Bonaparte. When somebody talks about my Lord, I want him to give me the idea that the Lord means all the world to him.

“And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.” God speaks as if there was only one lamb. And, indeed, they were considered as a unit.

Every Passover lamb pointed to that one Lamb of God. All of the Old Testament types and shadows, and feasts, and sacrifices, and all the Old Testament prophecies pointed to the one man, Christ Jesus.

[Ex 12:6](#), “And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.”

I have read articles where preachers just wore themselves out trying to explain why they kept up the Passover lamb for four days, but they did not keep it up four days. They kept it up for three days and a part of a day. I know it says they put the lamb up on *the tenth day*, and they kept it up until *the fourteenth day at evening*, and it does sound like first grade arithmetic to say that they kept the lamb up for four days, but that is not right.

Bear in mind that the evening preceded the morning of the Jewish day. You don't have to read Josephus or Edersheim to find that out. Just go to [Ge 1](#). That is one of the first lessons in the book.

[Ge 1:5](#), “And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

Their day did not begin at midnight the way we count time; their day began at sundown of the previous day. They put the lamb up on the tenth day. They kept it up the remainder of that day, and the eleventh day, the twelfth day, and the thirteenth day. That makes three days and a part of a day.

The lamb was not kept up during any part of the fourteenth day. The evening of the fourteenth day began at sundown of the thirteenth day. That was when the Passover Lamb was killed. The Passover Lamb was a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, and those three days, and a part of a day, correspond with his public ministry. His ministry lasted three years, and a part of a year.

That also corresponds with Daniel's prophecy. Daniel says the Messiah was to be cut off in the midst of that seventieth week ([Da 9:24,27](#)). He did not say that he was to be cut off in the precise middle of the week. That would have put us at exactly three years and six months into his public ministry. The lamb was kept up for somewhat more than three days, and the ministry of the Lord lasted for somewhat more than three years. That is as precise as we are able to be, and as precise as we need to be.

The Jewish priests began their public ministry at 30 years of age. But when the Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, began his public ministry, we are only told that he “began to be, as was supposed about 30 years of age.”

It appears to me that God has installed a double blind to prevent anyone from discovering the precise age of the Lord at the time of his crucifixion. If we could determine his precise age (according to his human nature) we could, then, better determine the precise day of his birth. But, far too much has already been made of the day of his birth, and the idea of any celebration of that day.

The Bible instructs us to celebrate, not the day of his birth, but the fact of his death and resurrection. If God had wanted us to know precisely when the Lord was born, he would have told us—or at least given us more to go on.

[Ex 12:7](#), “And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.”

That house with the blood applied symbolized the Lord Jesus Christ. Every symbol pointed to him; he is our all in all. They were safe, provided they were in that house. We are safe, because we are in him.

[2Co 5:17](#), “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”

[Ro 8:1](#), “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”

[Ex 12:8](#), “And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs shall they eat it.”

They were to eat the flesh of the Passover Lamb. The Lord Jesus Christ is our meat and drink. His sacrificial death is the ground of our life.

[Joh 6:53](#), “Except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no life in you.”

The lamb was to be *roast with fire*. When he suffered and died on the cross, he stood as our substitute. On our behalf, he came through the raging fire of the wrath of God against sin. They were to *eat the flesh* with *unleavened bread*, and with *bitter herbs*. Leaven is a symbol of human pride and conceit. So long as we are proud of ourselves, and satisfied with our own accomplishments, we will never be able to *eat the flesh* of this Passover Lamb.

We will never be able to see the Lord as high and lifted up, until we see ourselves as entirely lost and undone, we will never be able to see him as our one and only Savior. Leaven puffs up the bread. We are to abstain from everything that feeds and puffs up the old carnal nature.

Pride is the mother of every sin. It was pride that tripped up Adam in the Garden of Eden, and pride has been man’s downfall ever since. More than that, leaven is a symbol of evil. Paul tells us to “Abstain from the very appearance of evil,” [1Th 5:22](#).

A little boy was getting ready for school. He called downstairs, “Momma, is this shirt too dirty, do I need to get another one?” Now, his mother could not see that shirt; she could not know if was dirty or not, but she told him, “Yes, it is too dirty, get a clean one.” When the little boy came downstairs, he said, “Momma, how did you know that shirt was dirty; you could not see it?” It makes you wonder why he asked, if he knew she could not see it, but that is not the point. She said, “Son, if you have to ask, it is.” That is a very good rule for all of us. “If you have to ask, it is.”

We are all faced with questions in our lives. “Is this course of action all right, or not?” If you have to ask whether a particular course of action is morally wrong, it is. Paul gave the rule, “And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” [Ro 14:23](#).

“Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall,” [1Co 10:12](#).

It has been my observation that those who seem to do the most repenting are those who seem to have the least need to repent. And those who seem to do the least repenting are those who seem to have the greatest need for it. It is one of the peculiarities of our carnal nature, that we can convince ourselves that most anything is alright, if we will just argue with ourselves long enough. We will convince ourselves that, at any other time, and under any other circumstances, this would probably be the wrong thing to do, but just this once, and under these circumstances, it will probably be alright.

And it is also one of our characteristics, that our conscience will often let us down at the very time we need it the most. Sometimes, at that very time, our conscience will be quiet until we have carried through on that wrong decision, and then our conscience wakes up with a vengeance. It is then, when it is too late, that our conscience finally wakes up and begins to challenge us. Rather than depend on our faulty and undependable conscience, how much better it is to listen more closely to the Lord, and “abstain from all appearance of evil.”

[Ex 12:9](#), “Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire, his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.”

The Passover Lamb could not be eaten *raw*, nor in any way *sodden with water*. It could not be boiled; it had to come into direct contact with the fire. When the Lord suffered on the cross, there could be nothing to diminish his suffering. He must suffer the full penalty of the wrath of God against sin.

There could be nothing to diminish his mental anguish; in his agony he was forsaken by the Father. That was when he cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? [Mt 27:46](#). And there could be nothing to diminish his physical suffering.

The *vinegar mingled with gall* ([Mt 27:34](#)) would have had a slightly narcotic effect, but he would have no part of it. He would pay the full price for our redemption. They were to use “his head with his legs, and the purtenance thereof.” There was a use for every part of the Passover lamb. Our religion is to involve everything we say, and everything we do. It is to dominate our entire life.

I have heard it said that our religion is not a religion of the head; ours is a religion of the heart. Well, if ours is a religion of the head, as opposed to a religion of the heart, there is nothing to it. There is very much of religion that is purely lip service. It is words only.

True religion affects the heart. If Christ lives in the heart of a person, and if that person is trying to walk in a manner that pleases his Lord, he can experience the very presence of God in his heart.

[Ac 17:27](#), “That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.”

We feel after the Lord with our hearts, not with our hands. Our religion is, indeed, a religion of the heart. But, while our religion is clearly a religion of the heart, it is also just as clearly a religion of the head. The two are not mutually exclusive.

The doctrine of the Bible involves the most logical, the most reasonable, the most intelligent principles, man has ever known. The principles of the Bible not only stir the heart; those same principles are sufficient to challenge and satisfy both the simplest of minds, and the most brilliant minds that have ever lived. It is one of the beauties of the Bible that the little child and the adult can read the same texts, and both can be edified and instructed by what they read.

“His head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.”

Our profession involves all we say, and all we do, and all that goes with it. If the way we walk does not reflect the way we talk, then all we say is a waste of time.

Long ago, someone challenged a half-hearted Christian, “Don't tell me what you are, because what you do speaks so loud I cannot hear what you say.” If our life does not reflect our profession, our religion is a waste of time. There is no room in the life of the obedient child of God for any little cubby hole reserved for his favorite sin.

[Ex 12:10](#), “And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning, ye shall burn with fire.”

The rising sun was to see no trace of the slain lamb. That has to do with the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord himself announced, “It is finished,” [Joh 19:30](#) . the work is complete. Again he said, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,” [Joh 17:4](#). Anytime God repeats himself, he does it for our benefit. He repeats himself, because it is important that we not miss the point. Religious types have been arguing with the Lord ever since that time. They are sure the Lord's work will be complete, when they add the finishing touch. But, we have God's word for it, that his work is finished.

[Ex 12:11](#), “And thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and ye shall eat it in haste, it is the Lord's Passover.”

The Bible provides a better commentary on these expressions than any preacher can produce.

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,” [Eph 6:14-15](#).

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” The *loins girded* have to do with the restraint, the self-control, that is necessary in

our service toward God. If we would serve God acceptably, it is necessary that we restrain the wanderings, the imaginings, of our mind, and center our thoughts and our affections on Christ, and on him alone.

I love the way the Bible explains the Bible. I love the way these verses fit in with each other, and connect up with each other. They fit together and connect up with each other like the couplings on two train cars. No matter how sincere and how diligent you may be in your efforts, you will never be successful, unless your loins are girt about with truth.

He went on to tell them to have “your shoes on your feet.” Shoes have to do with walking. Israel wore the same shoes for forty years in the wilderness. There is a particular walk God requires of his children, and he will be satisfied with no other. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,” [Jer 10:23](#).

The walk God requires of his children today is the walk he has always required. If any act was morally unacceptable to God one hundred years ago, that kind of conduct is still unacceptable. If any kind of practice was unscriptural in the church one hundred years ago, that practice is unacceptable today. Moreover, they were to have their shoes on their feet in the sense that they were to be ready to travel. The call to leave Egypt was to come during the night, and they must be ready to answer the call. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season,” [2Ti 4:2](#).

“And your staff in your hand.” David prayed, “Thy rod and *thy staff*, they comfort me.” The Scriptures seem to be plain enough that the *rod*, the strait edge, or plumb line, is the Bible. It seems logical, then, to conclude that the *staff* must be the Spirit of God. That is what we lean on, and trust to support us, every moment of our lives.

“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie....” [Heb 6:18](#). Those *two immutable* (unchangeable) *things* in which it was, and is, *impossible for God to lie* are the same *rod* and *staff*. They are still the two unchangeable, two always dependable supports for the faithful child of God.

“And ye shall eat it in haste, it is the Lord's Passover.” Brethren, if we are going to do anything in the Lord's service, we had best get busy, we are not going to be here long.

Sometimes some of our denominational friends want to know, “Why do you Old Baptists not believe in missions? Do you not believe you ought to go into all the world and preach the gospel?” And then we explain that we do believe in going, we just don't believe God gave us the authority to send somebody else.

A large number of our ministers spend their time in little else except going. Some of them have been accused of *keeping the road hot* in their constantly going all over the country, preaching the gospel. Then somebody wants to know, “What is your hurry?”

Well, I confess that I am in a hurry. I don't expect to be here long, and if I intend to do any preaching, I will have to hurry.

[Ex 12:11](#), “And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord’s Passover.”

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
From Judaism To Calvinism

FROM JUDAISM TO CALVINISM

Preface

“And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” ([Heb 11:36-38](#)). Before the Lord went away, he told the disciples, “They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” ([Joh 16:2](#)).

In that one sentence the Lord recorded in advance much of the history of the church. The experience of his people has been one long trail of blood. At every turn the adversary has used fair means and foul to hinder the gospel. In this little booklet we will look at some of the experiences of the saints. But while we will be as faithful as possible to record that long trail of persecution, we want to be as careful as we can be of the tender feelings of those who read these lines. We have no desire to injure the feelings of any person.

For centuries Christians have chastised the Jews for crucifying the Lord. But when we read the Bible record we discover that “the common people heard him gladly” ([Mr 12:37](#)). It was the religious leaders, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and scribes, who saw him as a threat to their wealth and power, and they dogged his every step. “The chief priests and elders [the religious hierarchy] persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus” ([Mt 27:20](#)). It was at their urging that the multitude cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him.”

By the same token, for centuries Protestants have chastised Roman Catholics for persecuting their ancestors, and there can be no question that during what we call the Dark Ages, and especially during the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Inquisition did sentence untold numbers of Protestants, Anabaptists and other dissenters to be tortured and killed. While that record is clear, it does not give anyone the right to act as if our own Catholic neighbors were involved in those atrocities. Most of us know Roman Catholics who are as decent, as honest, as God-fearing as any of us. We need to be careful about

the way we present the historical record. The Lord pronounces a great woe on those who offend one of his little ones.

One thing we hope to demonstrate in this booklet is that while Protestant writers have been faithful to record the transgressions of the Catholic Inquisition, they have been just as careful to conceal the fact that when the shoe was on the other foot, the Protestants were just as brutal in persecuting those who differed with them. Again, we tremble at the thought of putting the facts on paper. We cannot hold the Protestants of our day responsible for the transgressions of their predecessors. But our people have the right to know the facts.

For over 400 years, Protestant writers have been rewriting their history, and very few Protestants of today have any idea of their own history. In 1554, John Fox published the Latin edition of his *Book of Martyrs*. He detailed the suffering of his brethren, especially under the reign of Queen Mary. No one can read his material, especially some of his other letters, without being convinced that John Fox was a truly godly man. But, godly man though he was, when he published his English edition in 1563, his loyalty to his friends would not allow him to record their own atrocities against the Baptists, Quakers and others.

In the Peasants' War, the German peasants had requested such rights as choosing their own pastors, gathering firewood to heat their homes, supplying their tables with fish and game, and being paid for any work they did above what was customary. The German princes refused, and Martin Luther urged them to "stab, kill, and strangle" them. 50,000 peasants (many of them Anabaptists) were butchered at Luther's urging. Fox recorded Luther's struggle with the Pope, and especially his objection to the sale of indulgences, but for what he called *causes reasonable*, he did not tell about Luther's involvement in the slaughter of the peasants. In his early days, Luther advocated liberty of conscience, but Fox did not record that he later urged that Anabaptists should be pursued to the death, and that he made good on that threat. The Catholics burned Baptists; the Lutherans more often drowned them.

To his credit, Fox does mention John Calvin's involvement in the burning of Michael Servetus, but he pretends Calvin was swept along with the spirit of the time. He does not mention that Calvin had previously threatened that if Servetus ever came to Geneva, he would see to it he would never leave alive. He mentions that Calvin tried to prevent the burning. He does not mention that Calvin wanted him beheaded instead. He does not mention that the Consistory, of which Calvin was President, ordered a child's head to be chopped off for striking his parents. He mentions that Calvin "made all the people declare, upon oath, their assent to the confession of faith" he and

William Farel had written. He does not mention that those who objected were driven out of their homes, and banished from the town.

Fox died long before the Presbyterians took over Parliament in England in the 1640's. So he was too early to record their drive to assume the power that once belonged to Rome. By 1611, the Protestants learned that burning Baptists at the stake only fueled the fire. But that did not stop them from arresting Baptist preachers, and leaving them to starve and freeze in filthy jails until they finally died there. Among many other things, if a person happened to die not long after being baptized, they pretended the chill of being immersed was the cause. They then charged the preacher with murder, and did all within their power to have him hanged. Samuel Oates was one preacher so charged.

When the Puritans came to America in 1629, they set up their own theocracy, and forbade any other kind of worship. Until the First Amendment put a stop to it, they arrested, publicly whipped, and banished Baptists and Quakers. They drove Roger Williams from his home in the dead of winter. They publicly whipped Obadiah Holmes until he had to sleep for weeks on his knees and elbows. Because she refused to pay a tithe to support the Puritan minister, they arrested Isaac Backus's mother on a cold winter night, even though she was burning with a fever, and carried her off to jail.

Again, we have no desire to injure the tender feelings of those who identify themselves as Calvinists. Many of them are the victims, not the villains, in this matter. They have just not done their homework. They have no use for Arminianism, and they have no taste for much of what, today, passes for the Christian religion. Some of those they see on television look more like religious charlatans than gospel preachers. Then they read brilliant and articulate Calvinistic writers, and it seems like a breath of fresh air. They devour their books, without realizing there is a much better, and more scriptural alternative.

It seems very few of today's Calvinists have actually studied Calvin as an original source. They usually know him from very carefully—and cautiously—selected quotes by Calvinist writers. I have no doubt that many of those good brethren would recoil with horror at much of what John Calvin actually did and taught.

Our American people have been so free for so long we have forgotten what religious persecution is all about. The First Amendment has been so effective in quelling persecution, we have forgotten how brutal both Catholics and Calvinists were so long as they were able use the law to force conversions. We hope to show that a person does not have to be an Arminian, nor a Calvinist. There is another system, which for want of a better term, we call Bible doctrine.

From Judaism to Calvinism

The single greatest mistake in church history is the notion there was a fundamental difference between the way the Roman Catholics persecuted Protestants and Baptists, and the way early Protestants (most of whom were Calvinists) persecuted Baptists, Quakers and others. A careful reading of church history clearly shows the Protestants were just as bloodthirsty as the Catholics ever were.

There were three differences between persecution by Catholics and Protestants.

- 1.** First the Protestants never gained such absolute power, for so long, and over so large an area, as the Catholics did. That limited the scope of their power to persecute. It did not limit its severity; but it did limit its scope.
- 2.** Protestants gained just as much satisfaction in burning and hanging Baptists as the Catholics ever did, and they did more than their share of it. But experience taught them they would not suffer as much backlash, if they instead left Baptist preachers to starve for years in cold, filthy jails until they finally died. All the while their families were freezing and starving on the outside. Sometimes, their wives and children joined them in jail, and they all starved together. If anything, the Protestants were more cruel than the Catholics.
- 3.** Protestants have done a much better job of rewriting their history, and most people are unaware of their atrocities. For instance, when John Fox wrote his *Book of Martyrs*. He was very faithful to record the persecution of Protestants by Catholics, but he was just as careful to conceal the fact the Protestants were just as vicious with Baptists. For instance, he faithfully recorded the steadfastness of the Protestants, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, as they were led to the stake to be burned. He did not record that not long before that he had personally pleaded with Cranmer not to burn a Baptist, Joan Boucher, (Joan of Kent) at the stake. It would have taken away from the story, if his readers had known he was probably reaping what he sowed.

Thomas Crosby (1738) tells us, “These sad instances of persecution practiced by the Protestants in this king’s reign against the Anabaptists are in Fox’s Latin book of martyrs [1554], but left out in his English edition [1563], out of a tender regard, as is supposed, to the reputation of the martyrs in Queen Mary’s day” (vol. 1, pg. 59). Fox published both editions of his book while John Calvin was still living, and, regardless of his *tender regard* for the reputation of his friends, with that book he began a whitewash, that has continued now for over 400 years.

But how did this conflict with Catholicism come about? How did Baptists come to be so in conflict with Protestantism? The Bible provides clear answers.

You might spend a lifetime studying every piece of religious and philosophical literature available, and regardless of however ancient, or however modern, your material may be, you will discover in all of it the same notions, and the same arguments. New features, new ideas, new eccentricities, are added; but the fundamental principles are always the same. Suffice it to say, the adversary constantly changes his face, but he never changes his ways. No really new religion, no new philosophy, no fundamentally new doctrine, ever comes on the scene. It is always a different version, a modification, a new combination of old doctrines.

The Bible provides all the material you need to answer any false doctrine you will ever face. It will always be some variation of a doctrine that was faced by Christ and the Apostles.

During his public ministry the Lord was constantly harassed by the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes—by unbelieving Jews. “The common people heard him gladly” ([Mr 12:37](#)), but the Pharisees and other religious leaders laid wait for him, “seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him” ([Lu 11:54](#)). They mocked him, ridiculed him, and plotted to kill him. They were not concerned whether what he told was the truth or not; they had no interest in the miracles he performed; they just wanted him dead. Finally they took him through a mock trial, and crucified him.

After his crucifixion, it was still the Jews, and Judaism, that most persecuted the early church. The Gentile authorities did not pay them much attention, but the Jews dogged their every step. No persecution was too harsh, no measure too underhanded. They were determined to wipe the church off the face of the earth, and to sweep the name of Christ from the pages of history.

Then in the year 70 A.D. the Roman authorities besieged the city of Jerusalem for five months; they starved the inhabitants into submission, overran the city, and burned it to the ground. Flavius Josephus records that a million people died during the siege, and one hundred thousand were sold into slavery.

Fifteen hundred years before, when God gave them the Law, he promised them great blessing, if they kept the Law. But he warned them they would suffer if they disobeyed. They had long since ceased to observe the Law, but in spite of the fact they despised the Law, and cast it behind their back, that Law was still in full effect. The Law would exact its penalty. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, God described in detail what they suffered in 70 A.D. They fell victim to the Law in all its fury. God did exactly what he had promised.

The back of Judaism was broken. The Jews who survived were sold into slavery, and scattered to the four winds. The Jews would themselves become the hunted, the persecuted. God had promised, “And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the otherAnd thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life” ([De 28:64,66](#)). In that condition they could no longer harass and bedevil the Christians.

But that brings on a curious question. Virtually every conflict of Christ and the Apostles was in a Jewish context. That is the constant theme, especially, in the book of Acts. Very nearly every attack was from the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes—the Jews. We are well informed of how they suffered at their hands.

Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.; the Jews were scattered among the nations, and from that time until now, Christians have had little direct contact with Jews or with Judaism. Pharisee is a name we no longer fear. Most of us have never been inside a synagogue. Unless we have a Jewish doctor or lawyer, some of us from small towns may not even be acquainted with a Jew. We have conflict enough with Gentile detractors, but it is not often that a Jew dissects and attacks one of our sermons.

Since that is the case, why are the historical parts of the New Testament almost entirely given over to conflict between the early Christians and Judaism? Why are we told so much about the Pharisees and Sadducees? Why prepare us for battles we will never fight?

If we miss that question, there is not much of church history that will make sense. If we get that question right, it is amazing how simple church history becomes.

The book of Acts is not out of date. We need every piece of information it contains. We need that information, because virtually every battle the Church has ever been called on to fight has been with *those basic principles* that go to make up Judaism. Our battles are not with Judaism itself; we have very little contact with Judaism. But most every conflict has to do with practices that have been *borrowed from Judaism*. That is the reason the New Testament provides so much material about Judaism. That is the place the major battles have always been fought.

The fiercest battles in the early church were with those who wanted to merge Judaism with the Lord’s church. That is the theme of the book of Galatians, but the material we need is spread throughout the entire New Testament. If the Pharisees could not destroy the church from without, they would subvert it from within. They would make the church like themselves.

In [Ac 15](#) we read, “And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be

saved” ([Ac 15:1](#)). They wanted to make the church into a Jewish sect. They almost divided the church at Antioch, but Paul fought that battle and won it. Later in the same chapter we read, “But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses” ([Ac 15:5](#)). Paul challenged them, “Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear” ([Ac 15:10](#)). Those Pharisees *believed*, but they did not believe as much as they should. They did not believe the grace of God was sufficient without their keeping the law—without their carrying their traditions over into the church.

This Pharisaism/Judaism sometimes crept in, and swept away whole churches. Hassell tells us, “The first fifteen Bishops (or pastors) of the church of Jerusalem were all circumcised Jews, and this church united the law of Moses with the doctrine of Christ” (pg. 367).

More often than not, it was a mixture of Judaism and heathen philosophy that was brought in. Paul warned us, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” ([Col 2:8](#)).

Their greatest success came in the year 180 A.D. In that year Pantaenus, a “converted heathen philosopher,” founded the Academy at Alexandria. Clement, another “converted heathen philosopher,” followed him in 189 A.D. The most famous of the Alexandrian teachers was Origen. He and Clement are two of the most often quoted of what the Roman Catholics call *the Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Origen headed the school from 202 until 232. The school operated for 215 years and closed in 395 A.D.

Hassell tells us, “The last teacher was Didymus, in A.D. 395. The two objects of this Alexandrian school were to prepare people, especially the young, for the church, and to prepare talented young men to preach. The number of students was very great, and it is said that many eloquent preachers were sent out from this school” (pg. 365). He goes on, “Religion was gradually blended with and superceded by philosophy. *Judaism and paganism were kindly brought in*; and a broad, liberal, *eclectic* system, adapted to accommodate and reconcile all parties was devised.”

In those seven words we have the key to the perversion of the Christian religion: “Judaism and paganism were kindly brought in.”

The Academy at Alexandria finally accomplished what the Judaizers had been trying to do for generations. They combined this *eclectic* combination of Judaism and paganism with their idea of the Christian religion. *Eclectic* just means you take a little from here and a little from there, depending on what suits your fancy.

With that combination of Judaism, paganism, and some Bible doctrine they put together the framework of what, over the centuries, developed into the Roman Catholic Church. That is exactly what Catholicism is, a combination of those three systems.

In order to understand what the Academy accomplished we need to first know what Pharisaism/Judaism taught. Keep in mind that when we refer to Judaism we are not talking about the Law of Moses. Sometimes even the best of writers talk about those who added the Law of Moses to the gospel, when it was not the Law they added at all; it was Judaism. The two are not the same. The Law of Moses had long since ceased to be practiced by the Jews when John the Baptist appeared on the scene. When Paul refers to his own life prior to his Damascus Road experience, he does not refer to his service under the Law. He says, “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in *the Jew’s religion*, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in *the Jew’s religion* above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers,” ([Ga 1:13-14](#)). Notice that he says nothing about the Law of Moses; he was not serving under the Law. He calls it *the Jews’ religion*. In the original language the word is *judaismo*—Judaism. He repeats it twice in two verses, so we will not miss it. The Jews had forsaken the Law and replaced it with Judaism—the Jews’ religion.

Judaism is a parody—almost a mockery—of the Law of Moses. It does teach much that was contained in the Law, but its primary purpose has always been to explain away the Law and set it aside. It is their way of justifying themselves in violating the Law. They replaced the doctrine of God with “the commandments of men.” That is the way the Lord explained it.

“Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” ([Mt 15:8-9](#)).

To understand something of what happened we need to look at five basic doctrines of Judaism. Those five doctrines are not all that is involved in Judaism, not by any means; but they are five of the most distinctive features of the system. They are the doctrines it is most necessary to understand, if we would understand what Judaism is all about.

But before we get to those five doctrines, we need to look at another of the doctrines of the Pharisees. One of the most fundamental doctrines of the Pharisees, and the doctrine most basic to their entire system, was fatalism. Granted, what one writer affirms, another denies. Every false doctrine is like that; no false doctrine is ever consistent with itself. But most Pharisees were

convinced that God predestinated everything that would ever be done by men or devils.

If a person would learn about Judaism, there are any number of books available. Perhaps the best known authors are Flavius Josephus and Alfred Edersheim. There are any number of others, most of them written by devout Jews in defense of Judaism.

The Pharisees' brand of fatalism was like the Absolutism of our day. Alfred Edersheim records, "But the Pharisees carried their accentuation of the Divine to the verge of fatalism. Even the idea that God had created man with two impulses, the one to good, the other to evil; and that the latter was absolutely necessary for the continuance of this world, would in some measure trace the causation of moral evil to the Divine Being. The absolute and unalterable pre-ordination of every event, to its minutest details, is frequently insisted upon. Adam had been shown all the generations that were to spring from him. Every incident in the history of Israel had been foreordained, and the actors in it—for good or for evil—were only instruments for carrying out the Divine Will" *The Life and Times of the Messiah*, pg 317.

He goes on, "But there is another aspect of this question also. While the Pharisees thus held the doctrine of absolute preordination, side by side with it they were anxious to insist on man's freedom of choice, his personal responsibility, and moral obligation....It was, indeed, true that God had created the evil impulse in us; but he had also given the remedy in the Law" ppg 318,319.

This absolutism, this notion that God gave man a law, forced him to break it, and held him responsible for doing what he was forced to do, is only one of the doctrines held in common by the Pharisees, by Augustine, and by John Calvin.

But it is not necessary to go to the bookstores to learn about the nature of Judaism. Much of the New Testament is given over to recording the persecution, and crucifixion, of Christ by the Jews—by the devotees of Judaism. They were the most bitter enemies of the Lord and of his church.

1. First, they had a kind of reverence for the scriptures bordering on superstition. They were sure that was where they got eternal life. The Lord corrected that notion. He told them it was the role of the scriptures to talk about him. "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me" ([Joh 6:39](#)).

Their scribes were, like Apollos, *mighty in the scriptures* ([Ac 18:24](#)). They numbered every word and every letter. They bathed themselves before they would sit down to transcribe any part of the text. They would not correct more than the tiniest number of typos in their work. If they made more than the smallest number of mistakes, they did not correct them; they destroyed the

work and started over. Of all the charges the Lord made against them, he never once charged them with corrupting the manuscripts.

But with such a superstitious regard for the scriptures, they were still convinced the scriptures by themselves were not enough. They had a huge body of oral traditions which they taught alongside of, and sometimes in opposition to, the Law.

2. Notice that, not only did they raise their traditions to a level with the Bible, they changed whatever they did not like in the scriptures, and taught “for doctrines the commandments of men” ([Mt 15:9](#)).

One of the commandments is “honor thy father and thy mother.” It is our place to respect and provide for our parents. Their tradition set that commandment aside, and pretended that anything they did for their parents was simply a *gift*; it was not necessary for them to do it. But the Lord said, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a *gift*, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” ([Mt 15:3-6](#)).

3. Judaism provided a form of church/state union with the High Priest as the supreme leader. But somebody objects, was that not exactly what God provided under the Law of Moses? No, it was not. Under the Law they did have church/state union—but it was with God at the head. The High Priest was not God. They had long since rejected God as their king. God told Samuel, “They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them” ([1Sa 8:7](#)).

The church/state union of Judaism was of purely human origin. It began in the period between the Old and New Testaments. Hassell records (pg. 166) that Judas or Aristobulus, the son of John Hyrcanus, was the first to reign as priest-king about 106 B.C. His grandfather was Mattathias, the founder of the Maccabean dynasty. About that time there was much struggle and infighting both between the Jews themselves, and against the Syrians, under Antiochus Epiphanes, and later against the Romans. There were enormous changes going on among the Jews, and it is uncertain whether Aristobulus can be credited with establishing the arrangement.

What is certain is that, under the occupation of the Romans, the High Priest was allowed to exercise a kind of lordship over the people, based on their own laws and traditions, so long as they did not try to overthrow their Roman conquerors, and so long as they did not impose capital punishment. If they wanted anybody executed, they had to deliver them to the Romans ([Joh 18:31](#)). Up to that point, church and state were one.

4. God provided circumcision as a covenant with Israel, but they perverted the practice, as they did so many things. Many years before, God had given circumcision as a sign to Abraham that he was righteous. “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he* had, yet being uncircumcised” ([Ro 4:11](#)). Circumcision did not make him righteous; it was a sign that he *was* righteous.

Circumcision was a seal of righteousness to Abraham only; it was not a seal of righteousness to anybody else. Many of those who were circumcised were not righteous. Some of them were unspeakably wicked. To them it was a sign they were the *natural male offspring* of Abraham, and as such, they had a right to the *natural benefits* that belonged to the offspring of Abraham—so long as they obeyed the Law given. It did not guarantee heaven to anybody. But they began to look to circumcision for salvation. It was circumcision that separated them from all other nations, and they thought that made them superior. They were sure salvation reached as far as circumcision reached. Circumcision gave them a monopoly on God; if you were circumcised, you were safe; otherwise you were doomed.

Paul put an end to that notion. “For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgression the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” [Ro 2:-25-29](#).

5. The fifth point is that they were so sure of their superiority, they thought they had the right to persecute, torture, and kill those whose preaching they counted to be a threat. The Lord said, “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” ([Joh 16:2](#)).

They were alarmed at the preaching of Stephen, and they arrested him, and brought him before the council. While he preached to the council, “All that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel” ([Ac 6:15](#)).

They *saw his face*; the evidence of God’s presence was clear, but it made no difference with them. The high priest questioned him, and he delivered a sermon that should have brought them to repentance, but when he finished his speech, we read, “When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart,

and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord. And cast him out of the city, and stoned him” ([Ac 7:54-58](#)).

Both the attitude of Paul before his Damascus Road experience, and the attitude of the Jews toward Paul after he began to preach, illustrate the mindset of Judaism. They were sure they had the right to persecute, torture, and kill those whose doctrines they counted to be a threat.

“And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul....And Saul was consenting to his death....As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison,” [Ac 7:58](#); [8:1,3](#)). At that time Paul was still called Saul. He got his first taste of Christian blood that day, and he would never lose his appetite for Christian blood until his experience on Damascus Road. When he could find no more Christians in Jerusalem he went to the high priest for authority to pursue them wherever they might be found. “And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” ([Ac 9:1-2](#)).

“And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders; from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished” ([Ac 22:4-5](#)).

“I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities” ([Ac 26:9-12](#)).

Before the Lord appeared to him, Paul was the hero of the Jews. He was the rising hope of Judaism. He was so *exceedingly mad* against the Christians, he had them arrested, beaten, imprisoned, and whenever possible—executed. After he began to preach the gospel they treated him in the same way. Three times they beat him with rods; five times they laid thirty nine stripes on his back ([2Co 11:24-25](#)). When he went back to Jerusalem, they tried to kill him,

and they would have done it, if the Roman soldiers had not rescued him. He got away that time, but they still pursued him, hoping to do away with him. Judaism is a very broad and complex religion, and these five doctrines are not all they teach, not by any means. We have singled out these five doctrines, because, more than any others, these are the five principles that were involved, when, as Hassell tells us, "Judaism and paganism were kindly brought in" at the Academy of Alexandria. If you keep those seven words, and those five doctrines in mind, it will simplify your study of church history. After the Academy at Alexandria, the next great force to appear on the scene was Augustine of Hippo. The Academy closed in 395 A.D. Augustine was ordained in 391, four years before the Academy closed. He was appointed bishop at Hippo in 396, and published his *Confessions* in 398. So his rise exactly coincides with the demise of the Academy.

The Academy worked out the merger between pagan philosophy, Judaism, and their idea of the Christian religion. They educated young ministers and sent them out to propagate their new doctrines. But while Clement, Origen, and the other teachers at the Academy worked out the system, it was left to Augustine to use the political and military power of the Empire in support of the new system, and force it on the people.

Augustine was a born genius. His writings fill several large volumes, and they continue to be republished after 1600 years. There are very few writers who are still being studied after that long a time.

Augustine was as much a philosopher as he was a preacher. Among many other things, he laid the foundation for modern psychology, and his works are still being studied from the point of view of the psychologist. Unlike most psychologists, he started his inquiry with the doctrine of original sin, and human depravity. Not many modern psychologists will acknowledge either one, and that cripples their entire system. With those two principles as a starting point, he was able to produce a profound and wide ranging system of psychology. Much of his *Confessions* is given over to the subject. He did that 1500 years before Sigmund Freud, but even til this day, very few, if any, psychologists can equal his insight into the human psyche.

He had a vast knowledge of the scriptures. Regardless of the subject under consideration, he always had an array of proof texts he could call into service. Whether the text proved his point or not, he could convince his followers they were on solid Bible ground.

But as well known as his life and legacy are, he remains a mystery. When I was searching for the Lord's church, I spent considerable time studying his books. I was still a teenager fifty years ago, when I first struggled, line by line, through his *Confessions*. The book is tattered and yellow with age. It has

my little *ex libris* on the fly leaf. I used to do that when I finished a book. At last count, I had nine of his huge volumes in my library.

His experience and struggles of mind are such reading as will move any God-fearing person to tears. It is not easy to read of his heart-searching struggles of mind without coming to the conclusion this is a heaven born soul.

But he had a darker, much darker, side. He had political skills that would have made Machiavelli proud. He could manipulate and persuade the emperors of Rome and Constantinople. He got those proud and arrogant men to issue the decrees he used to arrest, torture, and banish those preachers, who would not submit to his authority. When all else failed, he had them killed.

Sylvester Hassell says, "Augustine's theory of the right of a State to persecute its citizens to make them conform to a national religion involved the germs of absolute spiritual despotism, and of even the horrors of the Inquisition; but in practice he is said to have urged clemency and humanity upon the magistrates.

Sacramentalism and religious persecution are as diverse from predestinarianism as night is from day; and as Augustine held all these three principles, we learn that even God's regenerated people may be in great darkness on some important points, while they have light on other points still more important—in other words, that we are utterly dependent on the Holy Spirit to open our understandings and hearts, and to enlighten us on all spiritual subjects" (History ppg 406,407).

G.H. Orchard, was not so gentle with Augustine as Elder Hassell. He writes, "In 412 Cyril was ordained bishop of Alexandria. One of his first acts was to shut up all the churches of the Novationists, and strip them of everything of value. Augustine, supported by a kindred spirit in Cyril, exercised all his influence, and consequently the edicts procured against the Donatists, were now of a more sanguinary character."

"The Catholics found by experience, that the means hitherto used had been ineffectual against the Donatists; they now prevailed on Honorius and Theodosius, emperors of the east and west to issue an edict, decreeing, *that the person re-baptizing, and the person re-baptized, should be punished by death.* In consequence of this cruel measure martyrdoms ensued."

"Gibbon remarks on these edicts, that 'three hundred bishops, with many thousands of the inferior clergy, were torn from their churches, stripped of their ecclesiastical possessions, banished to the islands, proscribed by law, if they presumed to conceal themselves in the provinces of Africa. Their numerous congregations, both in cities and the country, were deprived of the rights of citizens, and the exercise of religious worship. A regular scale of fines, from ten to two hundred pounds of silver, was curiously ascertained according to the distinctions of rank and fortune, to punish the crime of assisting at a schismatic conventicle; and if the fine had been levied five

times, without subduing the obstinacy of the offender, his future punishment was referred to the discretion of the imperial court. By these severities, which obtained the warmest approbation of Augustine, great numbers were reconciled to the Catholic Church; but the fanatics (or faithful) who still persevered in their opposition, were provoked to madness and despair.”

“Augustine owned, the city of Hippo had been full of conventicles, till he procured penal laws for their suppression. When the Donatists reproached him with making martyrs of their bishops and elders, and told him God would require an account of their blood at the day of judgment; he replied, ‘I know nothing of your martyrs, martyrs! martyrs to the devil. There are no martyrs out of the church, besides, it was their obstinacy, they killed themselves,’” (Orchard’s History, ppg 94,95).

I cannot deny that I have been moved by reading Augustine’s account of his experience, and his spiritual struggles. But then I read of his using his enormous influence to bring about the death of so many innocent people, whose only offense was in worshipping their Maker in ways he did not approve. And I cannot conceive of how any heaven born soul could engage in what was nothing more than calculated, cold-blooded murder. It was judicial murder, but it was murder, nonetheless.

It is far too much that he drove them from their families, from their homes, and from their churches, but for him to have them killed is simply unexplainable. And, keep in mind that, more than any other person, Augustine was the instigator and enforcer of what he calls these *penal laws*.

After 1600 years, the name of Saint Augustine is still one of the most revered of names, and I really would like to give him the benefit of the doubt. But I hear John asking, “For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen” ([1Jo 4:20](#)). And I confess that I have a hard time understanding how a humble, loving child of God could treat people the way he did. How could he go to such lengths to get laws passed demanding their death.

Somebody tells us that Augustine was simply the product of his times; that it was the practice in that day to torture and kill those who refused to be converted. But that does not explain anything. More than anybody else, he was the man who started the practice.

Had Augustine later expressed remorse over the people who died because of his campaigns, we might reach other conclusions. Even a secular court of law takes remorse into consideration. But the fact that Augustine seems never to have regretted the many innocent people whose death he brought about, and the fact that, from all we can learn of him, he died, totally unrepentant over their deaths, we must forever withhold judgment.

It is, or should be, a source of great relief that it is not our responsibility to determine the eternal destiny of others. And yet, it leaves us bewildered how any heaven born soul could behave the way this *Saint* Augustine did and escape the chastening rod of his maker.

“For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son, whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons,”
[Heb 12:6-8](#).

All of that brings on the question, what could cause a person like Augustine to behave the way he did? If he did have an experience of grace, what could make him spend his life persecuting the saints? What could prompt him to have them tortured, banished, and killed? It is impossible to imagine anything more contrary to the doctrine of grace.

The answer is found in the doctrine he preached. It does make a difference what you believe, and you can be sure that any time such a brilliant, strong willed, and self important person advocates the doctrine Augustine preached—to the limit the law allows—he will behave the way Augustine did. Whether you are talking about the Christian religion in America, or Nazism in Europe, or Communism in Russia and China, or the doctrine of Augustine and his followers, every doctrine produces its own peculiar kind of conduct. There is nothing history teaches more clearly than it teaches that lesson.

What, then, did Augustine teach? First, he taught much that is clearly true. He taught what would later be called the *Five Points of Calvinism*. He taught them as John Calvin taught then—not as the Bible taught them—but he taught them nonetheless. He is recognized by Calvinists as the founder of Calvinism. He made the same serious mistakes John Calvin did, and we will get to that later, but he did teach those doctrines.

He was clear on other major doctrines. He taught the creation, and the inspiration of the scriptures. He taught the resurrection of the dead, final judgment, and heaven and hell. On many points he was as clear and as accurate as we could expect anybody to be.

Those doctrines were not what made him the tyrant he became. We already pointed out the Academy merged pagan philosophy, and Judaism with their idea of the Christian religion, and Augustine continued that tradition. That was what made him a tyrant.

1. Judaism claimed the power of the sword to force conformity. Augustine claimed that power, and he applied to Honorius and Theodosius, the emperors of the Eastern and Western Roman Empire for authorization to use force, lethal force if necessary, against the Donatists.

From all we can learn of the Donatists, they taught essentially the same doctrines the Primitive Baptists teach today. They would not recognize infant baptism; they believed baptism should be limited to believers. They refused to recognize the baptism of the Catholic party. (At that time the Catholic party had not entirely coalesced into the Roman Catholic Church as we know it.) If someone came to them from the Catholics, they required them to be baptized. The Catholics said they rebaptized them. The Donatists said they only baptized them; their first baptism was not valid.

One of the reasons they would not recognize Catholic baptism was that many of the Catholic preachers were openly immoral. They insisted wicked preachers could not perform valid baptism. Augustine claimed the wickedness of the preacher did not affect his ability to baptize.

They insisted they were the true church and the Catholic party was not. For these doctrines and others, Augustine pursued them, closed their churches, and claimed their meeting houses for his own party. He had their preachers banished from the land, and if they persisted in returning, he had them executed. It was because of that the Donatists charged him with making martyrs of their preachers.

One thousand years later, John Calvin and the other Reformers would follow precisely in the footsteps of Augustine. They copied more than his doctrine. They copied his bloodthirst for preachers who would not submit to their authority.

When Calvin wrote about Anabaptists, he called them *heretics* and *blasphemers*, *dogs* and *filthy dogs*, *swine* and *filthy swine*. He made no effort to conceal his bitter hatred for them, and to the limit of his ability he dealt with them the same way Augustine had dealt with the Donatists.

Those who think we criticize Calvin and the Reformers unnecessarily should put themselves in the place of the wife of some Anabaptist preacher, who stood by, watching helplessly as her husband was burned alive. She watched in horror as his skin blistered and burned, and his hair caught on fire. Imagine the feelings that must have gone through her as she wondered what would become of her and her little family. Imagine how bewildered she must have been, as she wondered how those Protestant preachers could get such satisfaction in delivering other preachers to be killed.

In order to justify their treatment of Anabaptists, the Reformers made the most outrageous charges against them. They accused them of baptizing people naked, devil worship, conniving at human sacrifice, plurality of wives, plotting to overthrow the government, etc. They used every means available to inflame the masses against them.

Baptists have never seen the need for supplements to the Bible. For that reason they have never adopted confessions of faith in the manner the

Reformers have. But in the 1600's and 1700's they put out a spate of confessions.

Those confessions of faith were totally different from the Protestant confessions. They were never intended to be supplements to the Bible, and they were not intended to be standards of doctrine. They were purely a defensive measure. They hoped that by issuing a clear statement of what they believed, and how they worshiped God, they could get the Reformers to stop torturing and killing them. They enjoyed very little success; the Reformers already knew what they believed. It was their existence they resented.

There are those in our day who pretend those Baptists put out their confessions voluntarily, but we have their word for it, they would never have put out a confession if they had not been forced to do so.

In the preface to the second volume of his four volume history, Thomas Crosby tells us, "And the rather, because they declare, 'they are *forced* against their whole minds to publish it, for the clearing of their innocency in such things.'" Notice that he quotes them as saying they were "forced *against their whole minds* to publish it."

Crosby lived during the time those confessions were being issued. His father in law, Benjamin Keach, was one of the three leading Baptists in England. The other two were Hansard Knollys and William Kiffin. All three of them signed the Second London Confession. It seems reasonable to think the signatories of the confession were better aware of their own motives than those who try to second guess them in this day.

They issued the confession, because their very lives, and the safety of their families, depended on it. They did it in an effort to get the Protestants to stop tormenting them.

Our Calvinist friends will continue to rewrite their own history. They will continue to cover up the cruelty of their founders. But history is too plain to be concealed. Anyone with the will to look at the record can learn the facts. The only difference between persecution by Catholics and persecution by Protestants was in the duration and the scope.

2. Judaism perverted circumcision. They looked to it for salvation, and insisted that salvation only reached so far as circumcision reached. If one was not circumcised he was doomed. Augustine preached that baptism took the place of circumcision. The Law called for babies to be circumcised; therefore babies ought to be baptized. Like Judaism before him, he taught that salvation only reached so far as baptism reached, and he pursued to the death those who refused to submit their babies for baptism.

3. Judaism had church/state union with the High Priest at its head. Both Augustine and Calvin insisted the church should be allied with the state, and the government should have the power to enforce religious decisions. The

Westminster Confession (Chap. 23, sec. 3) still claims the right of the civil magistrate to *suppress heresy*, and to see to it that church ordinances are “duly settled, administered, and observed,” in other words to prosecute those who will not submit to their authority. It is only the First Amendment to the Constitution that prevents them.

4. Judaism called on the scriptures for their authority, but they had their huge body of tradition as supplements to the scriptures. Augustine claimed the authority of Confessions of Faith, and decisions of Councils as supplements to the scriptures. Especially with his notion of the union of church and state, he called on the decrees of the magistrate as authority. One thousand years later, Calvinists would prepare such documents as the Westminster, Savoy and Belgic Confessions, and the Canons of Dort as their *secondary authorities* to supplement the Bible.

5. Judaism changed what they did not like about the Law. Augustine claimed the same right. He substituted the baptism of babies for the baptism of believers. Calvin would later claim the right to change sprinkling for immersion where immersion was not convenient, because of weather, etc. Augustine and the Catholic party finally prevailed, but it was only after they had closed literally thousands of Donatist churches, killed many of their preachers, and confiscated their meeting houses.

We already quoted Sylvester Hassell to the effect that, “Augustine’s theory of the right of a State to persecute its citizens to make them conform to a national religion involved the germs of absolute spiritual despotism, and of even the horrors of the Inquisition.”

The pattern laid down by Augustine in his campaign against the Donatists set the pattern for the Roman Catholic Church for more than a thousand years. Literally rivers of blood were shed by those who thought they had the right to persecute and kill those who would not submit to their authority. Augustine was long since dead when the Roman Catholic Inquisition was doing its torture and killing, but he was the man who laid the groundwork.

The Inquisition was a court system set up by the Catholic authorities to try those whom they deemed to be heretics. Those who refused to deny their faith were tortured and killed in the most diabolical ways. They were burned at the stake. They were put on the rack, and their bones were pulled out of joint.

They were tied up in sacks with scorpions. They were scalded with boiling oil. Human ingenuity exhausted itself in devising new ways of torture.

That persecution reached its height in what has come to be called the Spanish Inquisition. Thomas Torquemada was at its head. Under his leadership there was a constant parade of innocent victims led to the stake and burned alive. Their only offence was in worshipping God in a manner not approved by the

Roman Catholic authorities. He did his job so well that today, over four hundred years later, Spain is still virtually clear of spiritual religion. Our Calvinist historians have been faithful to relate the huge numbers of their own people who were killed during the Roman Catholic Inquisition. But they have been as silent as the tomb about literally thousands of innocent, God-fearing preachers who were torn from their homes, from their families, from their churches, and finally banished from the land—by this first and most illustrious Calvinist preacher.

For almost 400 years now, the Protestants have been grinding out their books, rewriting their history. They have kept us well informed about the suffering they experienced at the hands of the Roman Catholic authorities during what has come to be known as the Inquisition. What they have been very careful not to mention is that when the Calvinists were in authority, they were just as bloodthirsty as the Inquisitors ever were.

The main difference was that the Roman Catholics persecuted Protestants and Baptists, while the Protestants and Catholics both persecuted the Baptists. That was the one thing they could agree on. They were both determined the Baptists must not survive.

We have already pointed out that Calvinism did not begin with John Calvin. Calvin simply resurrected the ideas put forth over a thousand years before by Augustine. That fact becomes obvious to anyone reading Calvin's huge work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. If you will go through the two volumes underscoring his various quotes (underscore the name of the source only), you will notice, first, that except for a few quotes from pagan philosophers, his quotes are always from Roman Catholic authorities. You will also notice that he quotes Augustine twice as often as he quotes all the other Catholic authorities put together.

The Reformers never intended to forsake the Catholic religion; they intended to live and die as good Catholics. They just did not intend to be *Roman* Catholics. They would not be subject to the Pope of Rome. Calvin and the other Reformers hoped to bring about a reformation, to produce *a new form*, of the Catholic religion. That is why it is called the Protestant Reformation (literally the re-form-ation). Calvin wanted to restore the Catholic religion to what it had been in the time of Augustine. In that he was totally successful. The Presbyterian Church of Calvin's day was precisely what the Catholic Church had been in Augustine's day.

In this little booklet we have only taken the briefest look at those doctrines both Catholicism and Calvinism borrowed from Judaism. There are several doctrines on which Calvinists and Catholics disagreed. The Reformers dropped auricular confession, selling indulgences, and penance. They did not carry over the doctrine of purgatory, or limbo, or transubstantiation, or papal

infallibility. But even though they did not claim infallibility, anybody who refused to subscribe to Calvin's confession was forbidden to live in Geneva. Claiming to believe all that is in the Bible was not enough; they had to subscribe to Calvin's confession. That seems close to claiming infallibility for Calvin.

There were several points on which the Reformers disagreed with Rome, but on those principles they borrowed from Judaism, Catholicism and Calvinism were and are identical.

There is much more that needs to be said about Calvinism, and I am preparing a book of about 200 to 250 pages in which we will take a longer look at the system. The book is almost complete, and we expect to send it to the printer by January 31st.

In that book, among other things, we will notice that John Calvin did not himself fully believe the Five Points. He believed in Unconditional Election, but, inconsistent though it was, we will show that he preached Universal Atonement.

The Synod of Dort and the Westminster Confession taught that man's depravity is the source of his sin, and man only sins when God permits him to sin. In the book we will show by direct quotes from Calvin that he laughed at the notion of God only permitting sin. He taught that when men sin, it is because God *holds the helm*, and *directs* their efforts. He insisted they sin because God *bends them to execute his judgments*. He went so far as to say that God "*forces* the reprobate to do him service." None of the great Protestant Confessions would go with Calvin so far as to say God *forces* sinners to sin. We will show that even though the Five Points, as they were preached by John Calvin, resemble five points of the doctrine of salvation by grace, it is only a resemblance. John Calvin was seriously at odds with Bible doctrine on every single one of those doctrines.

We will show that the Baptists in England in the 1600's were some of the bravest, and most self-sacrificing people that ever lived. They showed enormous steadfastness as they suffered every indignity we can imagine at the hand of their Calvinist tormenters. We will show that the Protestants put the Catholics to shame in their ability to torment Baptists.

We must be very cautious and very reverent when we talk about those brave warriors. For that matter, we should be very careful about criticizing those brave men who put out the London Confession and other confessions of that time.

We are walking on sacred ground. None of us have spent years starving and freezing in a filthy jail for the things we preach. None of us have worried about how our wives and little ones were suffering while we were languishing in jail. None of us have seen our husbands beaten and hanged.

But while we bow our heads with tears in our eyes when we consider the faithfulness of those brave warriors, we still need to be aware that for all their faithfulness, they made just as serious mistakes as the Baptists in any age have.

For one thing, at the same time they were planting Baptist churches, many of the Baptists of that day, especially around London, had not yet broken with the Establishment Church. Henry Jessey was still ministering to the Establishment church at St. George's in the morning, while he served a Baptist congregation in the afternoon. John Tombes was the minister of the Establishment church at Bewdly, when according to Crosby's History, he "there gathered a separate church of those of his own persuasion, continuing at the same time minister of the parish." The list goes on and on of those who served Baptist and Protestant churches at the same time.

The point is that, regardless of how brave, and how self sacrificing those men were, the very last place you should go to look for Baptist infallibility is among preachers who serve as Baptist pastors at the same time the serve as pastors of Protestant churches. And, that being the case, we should not be surprised that they incorporate some Protestant doctrine in any confession they put forth. There were a lot of subjects they had not made up their minds about. The purpose of the gospel was one of them.

We will show that when the Puritans (Calvinists all) came to America, they set up a tyrannical theocracy, especially in New England, in which they tortured, banished and, sometimes, killed, those who would not submit to their authority. They arrested Obadiah Holmes and beat him publicly for no other offense than preaching without their permission. They took a whip with three prongs and laid thirty lashes on his back. For weeks he had to sleep on his knees and elbows; he could not suffer his back to touch the bed.

They persecuted Baptists in that manner until the First Amendment took away their power to do so. We will show that, while the First Amendment denied the federal government the power to regulate religion, it did not take that power from the states, and it was another fifty years before, in 1841, the Puritans (Congregationalists) in New England were finally forced to relinquish that power.

During that intervening 50 years, they still taxed the general population to pay their own preachers. They continued to seize the property of Baptists and claim it for their own. Isaac Backus was a well known Baptist preacher. His aged mother refused to pay her tax to support the establishment preacher. She was sick and burning with a fever, when the authorities arrested her on a cold, rainy, winter night, and carted her off to jail.

We will show that, even when Baptists began to gain some relief from paying to support Establishment preachers, they still had to prove they were

supporting their own denomination and their own preachers. One statute required them to produce endorsement from five churches, and they had to prove the orthodoxy of those churches. It was against that backdrop they were virtually forced to adopt the New Hampshire and Philadelphia Confessions. That was the only way they could retain their church property, blunt the malicious charges the establishment preachers made against them, and gain some relief from their oppressive taxes.

We will show that when the Separate and Regular Baptists came together in 1787, they did it on the basis of the London Confession. But they adopted the confession with the understanding that nobody was required to believe all of it. That was the result of a compromise with Arminians in their own ranks. Again, any collection of Arminians and predestinarians is not a good place to look for Baptist infallibility.

We will show that John Leland compared those who placed too much confidence in any confession with those Catholics who place too much confidence in the virgin Mary.

The First Amendment makes the former kind of persecution more difficult, but it does not entirely prevent it. Even now there is a strong movement in America to curtail religious freedom.

We will look at the effect the recent Supreme Court decision with regard to Eminent Domain will have on religion. City governments can now seize private property and award it to private developers. If they choose to do so, there is nothing to prevent those developers from then selling a portion of that property to any church with sufficient funds to meet building codes and zoning restrictions.

For a long time Disney Corporation has been no friend to the Christian religion. They aggressively support gay rights; and they lace their children's films with pagan themes, and sexual innuendo. For the last 9 years they have been boycotted by American Family Association.

But according to *World* magazine (Dec. 15, 2005), "Al Weiss, a top-ranking Disney executive, is planting churches— doctrinally sound ones, and lots of them. As chairman of the board for newly formed Vision USA, Mr. Weiss aims to raise \$300 million over the next ten years for aggressive church planting in 50 of the country's most influential cities."

Thanks to the Supreme Court, they can again take your church building and transfer ownership to another church. Only today it takes three or four steps to do what once only required one or two steps.

Lest we might be too reassured by the promise that those new churches will be *doctrinally sound*, we should read the rest of the article. We are told the organization has teamed up with "a former youth pastor at John Piper's Bethlehem Baptist church" and "Though affiliated with the Baptist General

Conference (BGC), Vision USA has partnered with a range of denominations willing to affirm the Lausanne Covenant, male eldership and Reformed theology—most recently aligning with Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City.”

It sounds for all the world like we are being led right back to the very practices the First Amendment put a stop to.

The government would never try to tax people to pay the salaries of denominational preachers. But there are those who are even now trying to find a way for the government to fund what they call *faith based initiatives*. That will free up those churches’ other funds to pay their preachers. The bottom line is still the same.

Our liberties are under attack. For over 200 years Americans have been properly proud of our freedom of speech, but Congress has a bill *in conference* that would make it a hate crime to criticize homosexuality. If that bill becomes law, any minister can be arrested and prosecuted for saying homosexuality is sinful. It is already happening in Canada and Sweden. If the law passes, it will happen here.

And if the courts decide the pastor was speaking as an agent of the church, it is a short step to arguing that any homosexual can sue the members of that church for civil damages. There is more than one way to take away our meeting houses, our homes, our property.

Someone has said, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” I believe that is right. Someone else has said, “Forewarned is forearmed.” We hope to have the book ready to distribute by April. I believe the need is urgent, and it is our goal to provide a free copy for every preacher who will return a request card. We request your prayers and any assistance you may feel impressed to provide for what I believe is a necessary effort.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Husbands Love Your Wives

HUSBANDS LOVE YOUR WIVES

“Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it,” [Eph 5:25](#).

Sometimes, it seems that people get the idea the Bible is a Sunday book; but, the Bible is not just a Sunday book. The Bible is to be the man of your counsel every day in the week. And for that matter, if the Bible is not your guidebook from Monday through Saturday, you are wasting your time to consult it on Sunday.

There is a little wall motto I have seen, and no doubt, most of you have seen it. It says, “When all else fails, read the instructions.”

Just about anything you buy, nowadays, comes with an instruction booklet. If you can buy a \$3.95 pocket calculator, it will generally come with a little paper leaflet, or if you buy a washing machine, or an automobile, you will get a more comprehensive owner's manual; but most everything comes with instructions.

Well, the Bible is the owner's manual for my life and yours. These are God's instructions for constructing our lives.

There is no situation in which you will ever find yourself, but that the Bible gives full and complete instructions as to how we ought to behave ourselves. It will teach us how to be better citizens, better neighbors, better parents, better hus-bands, better wives, better children. It will teach us how to be better employers, better employees, better business men.

No matter what situation in which we may ever find our-selves, the Bible gives us all the instruction we need as to how we should conduct ourselves in that situation. It does not describe every conceivable detail of every problem we might ever face. If it did, it would be a volume so large nobody would ever read it.

It is not necessary for the Bible to describe every detail of every conceivable problem. But, it does provide broad, basic instructions, and those instructions go to the very heart of every conceivable problem. They give us all the tools we need to work with. If we will apply those principles to our lives, we will get along much better, and we will get along much better with other people. It is hard to imagine a more important relationship, than the relationship between husbands and wives.

The family and the home are the very foundation of civil-ization itself. God established the family and the home, before he provided mankind with any form of human govern-ment. He established the family and the home, before he gave the Law of Moses to Israel, before he established the New Testament church.

In the very morning of time, when there were only two people in the world, God provided marriage, provided the family, provided the home, as the very foundation of all human society; and you can count on it, that any time the family and the home begin to fall apart, the way those institutions are falling apart in America today, our very society itself is in danger.

Our society seems to be coming apart at the seams. It is not necessary to recite all the problems we are facing. The people on the six o'clock news keep us well informed. And every time some new outrage takes place, news commentators want to know what is happening? What is causing it? Where is the root cause?

They tell us the solution is that we have to pass more laws against guns; but, we already have more laws against guns than anybody is trying to enforce.

Somebody says we need to spend more money on schools; but, we are spending more money per student, even after inflation, than we have ever spent. They tell us we need more school counselors; but, again, we have more counselors than we have ever had, and the situation gets worse. Little feel-good projects will never solve the problem.

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” [Ps 11:3](#).

The foundation of civilization itself is in the loving relationship between husbands and wives, and parents and children. And when that foundation begins to fall apart, no band-aid you can put on the problem will ever provide the solution. Our problems began in the home, and if they are ever solved, they will be solved in the home.

A person could make a career out of writing on this subject, and a little booklet like this cannot do more than glance at the subject, and only one aspect of the subject, at that. But while we can never tell everything that needs to be said, I believe we do well to say as much as we can.

Paul says, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

Notice that this is not a statement of fact, and it is not a promise. It is a commandment. It simply tells us what we are to do. “Husbands, love your wives.”

I am sure that very few people are aware of how society, and the attitudes of society, affect our own way of thinking. We talk the way we think. We listen to others talk, and we learn to think and talk the way others around us think and talk.

In many ways, we are the product of our culture, our environment. Different people, in different countries, and different cultures, think differently. To name just one exam-ple, people talk about how Americans cannot understand the Chinese. We come from a different background than the Chinese. We think differently than the Chinese. We look at things differently than they do. People in India have an entirely different culture to ours. And because they have a different culture, they think differently. If you do not know where they are coming from, there is no way you can entirely understand the way they think. The only way you can entirely understand it is to have grown up there, and to be acquainted with that way of thinking.

People who have grown up in a Bible-based environment, who have gone to church Sunday after Sunday, and heard evangelical Christian ministers expounding the moral prin-ciples of the Bible, come from an entirely different environ-ment, a different culture, than those who have never been inside a church. Every person born of Adam has the same carnal, sinful nature, but your environment, and the ideas you are hit with day after day, have an effect on the way you think.

In many ways we have allowed the thinking of society to shape our thinking about the marriage relationship. We should rather listen to the Bible to learn what that relationship should be. And because our society is not so well acquainted with the Bible as it should be, much of our thinking about marriage is not nearly as scriptural as we might think it is. Our attitudes often come more from the influence of our friends, than they do from the Bible. One common expression has to do with what we call *falling in love*. That is a good and valid expression, and it represents a very real and precious experience with most every married couple. In a moment, I want to make some comments about the time when you first meet that special person, and the bells ring, and the lights flash, and from that day on, nothing is ever the same.

But, notice that is not actually the way this text says it. Notice what the text says, and this is the rule for every child of God. It says, "Husbands, love your wives." How is the husband to love his wife? "...as Christ also loved the church." Husbands are to love their wives "as (in the same manner that) Christ loved the church."

Do you remember reading in the Bible about the Lord *falling in love* with the church? It does not say it that way, does it? He does not love us *because of* us; he loves us *in spite of* us. It was not that we caught his eye, and he was so attracted to us, that he could not help falling in love with us. No. No. No. Ezekiel tells us, "None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou was born," [Eze 16:5](#). That does not sound like we were so attractive, we just caught his eye. There was nothing about us to commend his love for us. But before I say too much on that thought, let me make a few comments about the other side of the question.

We are taught to wait for the time, when we meet that special person, and we are instantly attracted to her, and the lights flash, and the bells ring, and the skyrockets burst in the air. Well, that is very often the way it does happen. I well remember the first time I ever met my wife. She caught my eye the first time I ever saw her.

When I got out of high school, there were no jobs to be had. Those of you, who are my age, will remember, that in the mid-1950's, jobs were hard to find. Alcoa Aluminum is the major employer in our area, and they had people laid off with twenty years seniority. You could not find a job.

If there had been any jobs, I would have had trouble finding one. I was so thin, when I got out of high school, that my wife will not let me tell in her presence how thin I was. And since she will not allow me to tell it in her presence, I will just keep it to myself. But anyway, I was not a prospect for a job that required any kind of physical exertion.

But, I finally got a job in direct sales. You spell that *door-to-door*. They do not do that any more. Nowadays, direct selling is done over the telephone—usually while you are eating supper. But back in those days direct selling meant going door-to-door, and the reason you did not have any trouble getting a job in direct selling is that they did not have to pay you, if you did not make a sale. Every dollar you made was a percentage of a dollar you took in.

Those people on the telephone are paid, at least, minimum wage. Federal law requires it. But with those door-to-door sales jobs, they did not even have to pay you that. So it was no problem to get that kind of job. I got a job selling small household furnishings door-to-door. We sold most any small item you could throw on your automobile. We sold on credit, *a-dollar-down-and-a-dollar-a-week*. That is not a figure of speech; that is the way we did it. A dollar down and a dollar a week. We went back each week to pick up the dollar. I would go door-to-door selling my goods, and collecting those dollars. Anyway, when I started to work, my wife's mother had an account with the company. One Tuesday, I went by to pick up the payment. Nobody was home; so I went back that evening. You were required to make back-calls. When I went back that evening, they were all there. It seemed like the whole clan was there. That little house was full of people.

But over in the corner sat one of the prettiest girls I think I ever saw. She was not paying any attention to me, but she sure caught my eye. She was sitting in an easy chair on the other side of the room. I did not say anything; the room was full of people. But the ideas began to form, and the wheels began to turn, and I began to think about the situation.

The next week, I went by at the regular time, on Tuesday morning, to pick up the payment, and she was the only one there; her mother was gone. She came to the door, and brought the receipt card, and the dollar, and paid me. I asked if it would be alright if I came calling that evening, and it would, and I did, and as the expression is, the rest is history.

I did not find out, until years later, that it was by design, that her mother had gone visiting that particular day. And it was by design, that she was at home on Tuesday morning, on a school day. She laid out of school—I had been set up. I got the idea later the whole clan was in on it. I was the only one involved who did not know what was going on.

I am not complaining. Sometimes, God intervenes to do for us what we do not have the judgment, or the foresight, to do for ourselves. I have no doubt the hand of God was involved in bringing us together. I shudder at the thought of how my life might have turned out differently, if it had not been for that series of events. I do not even want to imagine what might have become of me, if I had not had her by my side for all of these years.

There are some people who believe God is the effective and moving cause of everything that ever happens. I do not believe that. God is not the cause of everything that happens in this world. But while that is true, God is still in charge; he still reigns on the throne. He does cause things to happen, and he does stop things from happening.

That is one of the most reassuring of all thoughts. Every evangelical Christian finds comfort in believing it. He believes it, whether he thinks he does or not. The fact that we pray is evidence that we believe God intervenes in the affairs of men. Why would anybody pray, if he did not believe God intervenes in the affairs of men?

Even those who claim to be atheists pray. When they really get in trouble, they pray. I am not entirely sure whether there are any real atheists, in the first place. He may be an atheist five minutes later, but when he gets in a really tight spot, even an atheist prays. And even an atheist believes that God intervenes in the affairs of men, and causes things to happen, or stops things from happening. That is why he prays.

When I look back over my own life, at some of the times when God has clearly intervened in my life, and changed the course of events, I cannot help but marvel at the way he has cared for me, and protected me. Sometimes, he has protected me, most of all, from my own folly.

I do not want to take anything away from the expression *falling in love*. How we enjoy recalling that special time in our lives.

But the point I am getting to is this: no matter how special a relationship any husband and wife may have, in every marriage there come times, when the lights do not flash, and the bells do not ring, and there are no skyrockets.

Nothing. Those special feelings are just not what they were at one time.

Imagine a young couple who have just met. All the right things happen. One thing leads to another. They marry. There are children. Then one day, she is at home with the children. They are all sick, or at least, they are all crying. The phone is ringing. The bill collectors are calling; they want to know where is their money? The landlord wants to know where is the rent? The washing machine is out of balance, and it is bouncing around like it is going to turn over, but she cannot see about it now; she has to change a muddy diaper. She is all stressed out.

There was a time, when I would preach on this, that I would talk about how she was sitting on the edge of the bathtub, leaning over the commode flushing out dirty diapers, til my wife explained to me, "They don't do that any more; nowa-days, they just load them and throw them away." But, when ours were in diapers, they did flush them out. It is probably good they did sell the old *birdseye* diapers, when ours were little. If the disposables had been available,

I don't think we could have paid for them. I have no idea, how many thousands of times my wife has there flushing out dirty diapers. But she is at home; the kids are sick; they are all crying; the washing machine is shaking the house down. She is seeing after one of children, and she thinks she is coming down with the same thing they have, and if that happens, she does not know who is going to change those diapers. She is wondering, "How in the world did I ever get myself in this kind of mess?" She is wondering, "Where are all those bells now? Where are all those lights, and all those skyrockets now? What happened? How did I ever get in this kind of predicament?"

He is in about the same frame of mind. He is broke. The old car is making a racket. He is sure it is liable to quit any time. There was a time when he had the shiniest car on the block. He kept it all waxed and shined, and he was proud of it. Now he would just be glad, if it would start in the morning. And she does not look the way she used to. The first time he saw her, she was the prettiest little thing he ever saw. He could not keep his eyes off her. Now, when she gets up in the morning, her hair is in curlers, and the part that is not in curlers is going off in every direction, and she comes paddling through the house in that ratty old housecoat she has been wearing ever since before they got married. And make-up? She has forgotten what that is for. Then, one day, they go trailing off to a marriage counselor. Now, I don't want to disparage that profession. A lot of those people give some good advice—and some of them give some mighty bad advice. It would not do to make a blanket condemnation of the profession, but some of their advice is not as good as it could be.

I used to work with a young fellow. He was still in his twenties. He had been married three times, and divorced twice, and he was in process of being divorced the third time. When I worked with him, he was going to night school at the university—studying to be a marriage counselor. I thought, "Fellow, with your track record, you really do need to take some classes on that subject." I don't know if he ever became a marriage counselor, but if he did, I am not entirely sure I would recommend his services.

I don't want to be disrespectful of the profession, and I don't want to imply that that young man is typical of those who are engaged in that work. I just want to point out that there is a better way.

They explain to the marriage counselor that—along with all the other problems—they just don't feel the same way they used to feel toward each other. They are not sure they even love each other any more. What do you expect? They fell in love; why should they be so surprised if, after awhile, they fell right back out again.

All this talk about *falling in love* makes it all sound too much like an accident. You can be sure that, no matter how exciting and all-consuming a love two people may have for each other, building and maintaining that relationship over a lifetime is no accident. If two people want the warmth and the satisfaction of that relationship to survive and to grow, it is up to them to make it happen.

In every marriage there come times, when the bells do not ring, and the lights don't flash, and the skyrockets don't burst in air. But, God knew that would happen before he provided us with the benefits of marriage and the home, and, before we had the need, he provided the solution. The Bible gives us all the instructions we need to keep the fire and the excitement in a marriage. In the text before us he says, "Husbands love your wives." Those few words are a much more profound statement than most people have ever realized. God can say more in one sentence that the rest of us can say in an hour. If you go to any large book store, you will find an entire section on self-improvement, motivation, marriage enrichment, and the like. Among other things they will tell you how to generate a better, happier, more congenial marriage.

But the Bible provides all that and more. In the very morning of time, it was God, who performed the first marriage ceremony, and it was God who wrote the first marriage manual. Those instructions are scattered all through the Bible, but there is one book in the Bible, that is almost entirely given over to that one subject.

I am talking about the Song of Solomon. There are two main themes in the Song of Solomon. On one level, the entire book is an allegorical lesson with regard to the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church. No human production could paint a more beautiful picture of the relationship between Christ and the church than Solomon paints in the Song of Solomon.

But notice. Solomon uses the relationship between a devoted husband and wife as an allegory—an illustration—of the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church. The two subjects go together. We cannot study the one without learning something about the other.

I enjoy preaching from the Song of Solomon from an allegorical point of view. I enjoy preaching about the sweet and tender relationship between Christ and the church. I like to explain how Christ loves the church, and the church loves her Lord. I like to preach about the way they talk to each other and about each other.

But more often than not, I preach on the book from a practical point of view. I like to show that the relationship between Christ and the church is the pattern for the relationship between husbands and wives.

Once, years ago, I was reading the Song of Solomon. I have no idea how many times I have read it. For many years now, I have made a point of reading the book, at least, once every month. Somebody may wonder, “Do you need to read it that often?” You do, if you want to keep it in your mind. It is a good idea to keep reading it over and over and over.

While I was reading it, I could not help but notice how many times this man told his wife how much he loved her, and how many times she told him how much she loved him. And I wondered, if I talked to my wife the way that man talked to his wife, is it possible that, maybe, just maybe, my wife might talk to me the way that woman talked to her husband. As I recall, about that time, that was not exactly the way she was talking to me.

Did anybody ever tell you, “My wife and I never have short words?” If anybody ever tells you that, do you know what that proves? It proves he will also lie about other things.

Now, I do recall a few times when my wife and I have gone for some period of time without so much as one short word. Well, actually, we were not having any long words either. It would not do to say anything.

But, I wondered, if I talked to my wife the way this man talked to his wife, is it possible that my wife might talk to me the way this woman talked to her husband. I tried it; it works.

One thing I have noticed about wives. They just will not be outdone. If you are mean, and smart-in-the-mouth, and always saying more than you need to say, she can get just as mean, and smart-in-the-mouth as you can. And there is a thing called escalation. Every response raises the discussion to higher level. Each person winds up trying to outdo the other; things get out of hand, and you wind up saying things to each other that leave scars that will never heal. Nobody ever wins that battle.

I have heard that for husbands and wives to fuss and fight is not so bad; that just makes it so much sweeter when you make up. Don't kid yourself. The only reason it is so sweet to make up is because you were so miserable in the meantime.

On the other hand, if you try to see how considerate and understanding you can be, generally, after awhile, she will outdo you in that way too. She will be more kind, and consid-erate, and understanding than you are. If I am going to be outdone, I had rather be outdone be outdone that way than to be outdone in the other way, wouldn't you?

Now, it may take her awhile to figure out what is going on. If you are not used to talking to her that way, it may leave her very bewildered to start with. She may wonder what you are up to. But, if she finally figures out that it is genuine, she will not likely be outdone. But bear in mind that it may take awhile. A huge ship does not turn on a dime; it takes awhile to change course.

The God-ordained relationship between a husband and wife reflects the genius, and the love of God. When God created Eve, he took a rib from Adam's side. There is a beautiful symbolic lesson in that. He did not take a bone from his foot. That might have signified that the man had the right to grind her under his feet. He did not take a bone from Adam's head. That might have signified that she had the right to domineer over him. But he took a rib, a bone from his side, to signify that she should be his constant companion. He took a bone, the very nearest to his heart, signifying that she was to be the nearest thing to his heart. He took a bone from just under his arm, signifying that she should be the subject of his constant embrace, the subject of his constant protection.

From that bone he fashioned the woman, and brought her to the man. God performed that first marriage ceremony, and in that ceremony he said, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

Over the years, as two people live together, work together, struggle together, and sometimes suffer together, in a very real sense, they become one. When one is happy, the other is happy. When one is sad, the other is sad. When she hurts, he hurts.

My wife has been sick for the last several days. I cannot say for sure, that I would be glad to trade places with her. But I think I would be glad to trade places, at least, for awhile. It hurts me for her to hurt.

I am almost never sick. I am not sure whether I have ever had the flu. I have allergies every now and then. I have just a trace of an allergy right now. It is no real ailment, just a little drainage. I don't think I have had a cold more than twice, and that was years ago. So it does not seem like such an unfair thought for me to trade places with her for a little while. In some sense, two people really do become one. Anyway, I think I would be glad to trade places, but you cannot do that.

Mothers often feel that way about their children. There have been any number of times a mother has sat by the side of a child, who was burning up with fever. The mother would have given anything if she could just swap places, if she could just crawl in the bed, take the ailment herself, and let the child get up and run and play. She would be glad to do it.

A devoted husband and wife have that kind of feeling for each other. When the Lord said, "They twain shall be one flesh," he meant it. There is a sense in which two people really do become one.

But, on the other hand, when he said, "They two shall become one flesh," notice that he did not say, "They shall become one mind."

I learned a long time ago, that my wife still has a mind of her own. I have been trying for over forty years to teach her to think the way I think—and she

just cannot get the hang of it. I get the idea, that she does not want to think the way I think. Somehow or other, she has it in her head that I am not always right.

But, as much as I would like for her to agree with me, she is not supposed to think the way I think. If you ever find a husband and wife who always think exactly alike, that just proves one thing. One of them is not thinking.

Husbands and wives do not think alike. God did not intend for us to think alike. That is one of the profound differences between men and women. We do not think alike. For one thing, men have a tendency to be risk-takers. We have a tendency to take chances. We like to think, "It's alright; I can do it; I can pull it off; I won't have a bit of trouble." It does not matter that we have failed the last ten times. We tell our-selves, "I can do it; I know how to handle it."

Women, generally, have a tendency to be more interested in security. They want to be assured they will have tomorrow what they have today. That is not a universal rule. Of course not. But it does tend to be that way. Men are more apt to be risk-takers; women are more concerned with security.

God intended that, every now and then, she would rain on your parade. He intended for her to help you keep your feet on the ground. Very often, you need that anchor to bring you back to reality.

My wife does not always think the way I do. Sometimes, I look back in retrospect and realize that she was right. I am more idealistic; sometimes I get my head in the clouds. I have a tendency to see things the way I wish they were. She has more of a tendency to see things the way they actually are. She has not always gone along with every idea I have come up with, and it has been a great benefit to me that she has not. A few years ago, I was called as pastor of a church in Mississippi, almost four hundred miles away. I went down there twice every month—twice a lot of weeks.

Why did I not move to Mississippi? Well, at that same time I was serving another church here in Tennessee, and preaching here six times a month. It makes more sense to live in Tennessee and drive to Mississippi twice a month, than it does to live in Mississippi and drive to Tennessee six times a month.

Now, the thought of moving to Mississippi did go through my mind, and my wife was agreeable enough. She said, "That is alright with me; I do hope you will come back and visit me every now and then." That settled that discussion.

I served the church in Mississippi for several years, but after awhile I felt like my work there was done, and I was no longer needed. Serving the church there was one of the most beneficial experiences of my life. I believe my work was some benefit to them, but I cannot imagine that I helped them nearly so

much as they helped me. I shall always thank the Lord, and look back with fond memories at the time I spent with them.

But, after a few years, my work there came to an end—and I did not even have to move back to Tennessee. I was still living right where I had been for over thirty years. Her concern for security balanced my idealism, and it saved me the trouble—and the expense—of relocating twice in seven years. God used her to keep my feet on the ground, and I learned to thank him for it. Women are not intended to think exactly like men. We need their point of view to balance and complete our own. It is kind of like a car battery. When you go to an auto supply store to buy a battery, suppose the man told you, “This is a brand new kind of battery. It does not have a negative pole; it has two positive poles. We do not like anything negative; so we have started manufacturing batteries with two positive poles.” Would you buy it? Of course not. You would not have a battery with two positive poles. It would not start anything. The two poles of a battery are supposed to be different. Men and women do not think alike; they were not intended to think alike, and that is to our benefit.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.”

That is a commandment. It is not a promise. And it is not a statement of fact. If you want those lights to flash, and those bells to ring, it is your responsibility to make it happen.

But anyway, back to a point I started to make a moment ago. I wondered if I talked to my wife the way that man talked to his wife, might my wife talk to me the way that wife talked to her husband. If I was as careful to tell my wife how much I loved her, and how special she was to me, might she respond in the same way. I tried it; it works.

Several years ago, after I had preached on this subject, somebody asked me, “Brother Hunt, how often do you think I ought to tell her that?” Well, I believe the first thing in the morning, and the last time at night, and just a lot of times in between, is a very good measure.

Now, bear in mind, there are times when that is not the best thing to say. In fact, there are times when nothing you say is right. There are times that the only thing you can do is to take a walk—a long walk—and you would probably do well to be right quiet, when you get back. It might even be a good idea to wait till the next day before you say very much.

But, generally, the first thing in the morning, and the last thing at night, and a lot of times in between is a good enough rule.

But, will she not get tired of hearing you say it? It goes without saying that there will be times when she does not want to hear anything you have to say. Right in the middle of a heated argument is not the best time to say it. At the wrong time, it might sound a little like mockery. But still, that little book, the

Song of Solomon, is our instruction manual, and it serves as a mighty good pattern.

Somebody is probably saying, “All of that sounds good, but saying it does not make it so.” You have heard that comment made about a lot of things. And in most instances that is true, but this is one instance, that—over a period of time—if saying it does not make it so, it does make it more so.

God has blessed you to have her, and she is the most precious thing in all the world to you. Why should you feel intimidated to tell her early and often how much she means to you. And the most important thing is this: the more you explain to her how much she means to you—the more you realize that fact for yourself. Perhaps, that is the most important point of all. We are all so prone to forget. The better job you do of convincing her, the better job you do of convincing yourself.

What a great benefit God has provided for us in the marriage union. What a beautiful thing it is when two people come together, and love each other, when they live together as husband and wife, and raise children, and grow old together.

For years, I have heard people talk about something called *the empty nest syndrome*. My wife and I are learning all about that. And I will tell you it is great. We raised four children, and we love every one of them. We are sure those four children are the most special people in the world.

Somebody will surely say, “Now, Harold Hunt, don’t you think you are just a little prejudiced.” Of course, I am prejudiced. They are my children, and I am supposed to be prejudiced.

One of them lives next door. Another lives across town. One lives just across the highway. And the other lives in Birmingham. We don’t get to see her and the grandchildren as often as we do the others.

About two years ago, our youngest daughter, and her husband, moved right next door. She was born after we moved here, and she tells us she had wanted to own that house all her life. The man who lived there became very old, and finally died. She called his son the morning after the funeral, before he could get to the real estate broker, to ask if he would sell the house to her. After he agreed to sell her the house, she started jockeying for the price. She wanted the house, but she wanted it at a rock bottom price. But, anyway, they got a good buy, and they moved next door.

She and her husband explained that since my wife and I were *getting on in years*, they wanted to be next door, so that if one or the other of us got down, and could not get up, they would be close by to help. I don’t think we are quite that feeble yet, But, I suppose it is good to have somebody looking out ahead.

Anyway, most of them live fairly close, and they all call or come by on a very frequent basis. We love for them to come by and visit. But, they have their own homes, and after they finish their visit, it is alright for them to go on home. *The empty nest syndrome?* Well, yes, we are experiencing it, and it is great. We are enjoying the company of each other. Granted, we have learned to stay out of each other's way. She spends most of her time, puttering around downstairs, and I spend my days upstairs, buried in a pile of books.

There is something very comforting, something very beautiful, for two people to enjoy growing old together. The children are grown. Generally, the house is paid for. There are not as many responsibilities as there have been in the past. There are not as many debts. Often, the only debt is a car payment. Most of the really big problems, outside of death and dying, are behind them. And those two people can just enjoy the company of each other.

Recently, I had somebody to tell me that it was just a natural consequence, as two people grew older, for them to begin to drift apart. But that is not right. That is not the way it is supposed to be, and it is not the way it has to be. There is no reason two people cannot become closer and closer as every year passes.

My wife is not nearly as young as she was that first time I saw her forty-three years ago. But her smile does as much for me as it did that first day, when all the bells rang, and all the light flashed.

In the Song of Solomon the husband, not only kept telling his wife how much he loved her, he kept telling her how pretty she was. "Thou art beautiful, O my love as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem..." ([Song 6:4](#)).

Do you get the idea, that no sight in all of nature had the effect on him the sight of his wife did? "Thou art beautiful, O my love as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem..." I don't know how pretty those two cities may have been. But this man, obviously, thought these were two enormously beautiful cities. But, as beautiful as they were, they could not compare with the sight of his wife. In spite of the sin all around us, we live in a beautiful world. In Knoxville, every April, the garden clubs put on a program called the Dogwood Arts Festival. They line out nature trails through the most exclusive parts of the city. Some of the streets are lined with huge mansions, and beautiful gardens. You can drive through those sections, and see the azaleas, and the dogwoods, and the lilacs, and the little pink bushes, and the little white bushes, and you can just, *Ooh* and *Ah*, to your hearts delight.

I enjoy living here in the mountains. I like to travel. I was out in flat country yesterday. I drove almost four hundred miles each way, there and back, yesterday. I like to go, but I like to come back home. When I get out in flat country, it kind of feels like sitting on a stool with no back on it. I know I

don't lean back against the Smoky Mountains, but when I get where I cannot see the mountains, it feels like I am sitting on a stool.

I like to drive through the mountains. I don't often get up in the mountains. I get too busy to take the time. I suppose I am like just about everybody else. Most everybody seems to think he is the busiest person around. That is one of the reasons I enjoy having a visiting preacher. If he stays more than one night, I generally take him to the mountains between the two services. I am not likely to do much except visit with him during the day, anyway, and that lets us experience some of the natural beauty of the land, and at the same time we can visit, and talk about the good things of the Lord. I have lived here all my life, but I have never ceased to wonder at the beauty, and the majesty of these mountains.

I was driving along the interstate, yesterday morning, way before daylight. It was dark as could be, and even driving along in an automobile, the stars were especially bright. Stars are always brighter, the farther you are from the city lights. Yesterday morning, Venus, the morning star, was just blazing. On a cold, clear, moonless night, especially out in the country, the stars are a beauty to behold.

I like to go to the ocean, when the wind is up, and the waves are high. It is an awesome sight when those huge breakers come rushing in to shore. In spite of all the sin there is in the world, this is still a beautiful world.

But having said all of that, there is nothing in all of God's creation that compares to the feeling that rushes over me, when my wife smiles at me. Awesome as the rest of creation is, it does not have anything to compare. When she smiles at me, all the rest of God's creation just has to stand aside. Somebody may say, "Now, Harold Hunt, aren't you just a little prejudiced?" No, no, I am not a little prejudiced. I am eaten up with it. That is my point, don't you see? We don't have to wait for the lights to flash. We don't have to wait for the bells to ring. It is our job to make to make it happen.

All of that brings me to this: the human mind is a peculiar thing. Thoughts do not usually travel alone; more often they travel in pairs. We associate things in our minds. One thought causes you to think of another. Some things, and some people, just naturally trigger good thoughts, and warm feelings. Others trigger unpleasant thoughts.

If some person has been especially unfair with us, we have trouble thinking about that person without having unpleasant feelings. Sometimes those feelings can be very strong, and sometimes they stay with us for years to come. There may be some person, about whom you have such unpleasant memo-ries that you have a very negative reaction any time you hear his name, or see his face. His very presence makes you uneasy.

That same principle works between husbands and wives. If you become petty, and spiteful with each other, there is a good chance that, when she thinks of you—consciously or subconsciously—the thought that comes to mind will be some unresolved hurt. Those hurt feelings have a way of feeding on each other. Negative thoughts generate negative feelings, and those feelings generate more negative thoughts. We begin a downward spiral that goes on and on, and poisons what could have been a sweet and tender relationship. Positive thoughts work the same way. Positive thoughts generate warm and positive feelings. And those feelings generate more of the same kind of thoughts.

This is why it becomes such a powerful force for husbands and wives to be constantly reminding each other, and themselves, how much they mean to each other. The mind is rarely ever idle. It is either generating and feeding on good thoughts, or it is generating and feeding on bad thoughts. It is a good idea for husbands and wives to be ever so careful, and so determined to remind each other of their special love, and their special relationship, that anytime the one thinks of the other that is the thought that instinctively comes to mind.

It is when you have so often reminded yourself of that fact, that you cannot think of her without thinking of that special love you have for her, without thinking of all she means to you. You remember all the little kindnesses, all the sacrifices, all the unquestioned devotion. The very thought of her, or the sight of her face, brings that special feeling you have learned to associate with her. Then is when the lights, and the bells, and the skyrocketers become a constantly more real part of your experience.

It is then that your marriage begins to most resemble the union between Christ and his bride the church.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
I Have Set Before You Life And Death

I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH

"See, I have set before thee this day, life and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply, and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away and worship other gods, and serve them, I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that **I have set before**

you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live,” [De 30:15-19](#).

The majority opinion in religious circles is that every person comes into this world with a responsibility, either to choose eternal life, and live in heaven, or to reject God, to reject eternal life and to suffer in all eternity. And those who advocate that notion are convinced they have Bible proof for their doctrine. I have heard people say that every denomination can prove their doctrine, if you will just allow them to select their own proof texts. That is not true. The only thing you can prove by the Bible is the truth. The Bible is one harmonious fabric throughout. If there is one verse in the Bible that teaches eternal heaven is conditioned on our choice, you will not find one verse that denies it. On the other hand, if you find one verse in the Bible that teaches our home in eternal heaven is based on the sovereign grace of God, you will not find one verse in the Bible to deny that.

The Bible is in agreement with itself. We cannot go through the Bible and pick out what we want, and reject all the other. I want it all. Solomon said, “Buy the truth and sell it not,” [Pr 23:23](#). I am not willing to surrender so much as one verse to those who advocate error.

But the objector says, “Now, wait a minute, Harold Hunt; you have contradicted yourself. You started out with a text that teaches our doctrine; listen to what it says. ‘See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.’” He says, “If that is not plain enough, verse nineteen says ‘I call heaven and earth to record against you this day that **I have set before you life and death**, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.’”

At first glance, those verses do seem to teach the doctrine of salvation by man’s free will. Our carnal minds are much more conditioned to accept error than they are to accept truth. And if we are not careful, we will read into a passage something it does not say.

The best way to understand the Bible is, first off, don’t argue with the Book. Let it say what it says.

The Bible does not require nearly as much interpreting as most people imagine it does. Every now and then I hear somebody make a statement that sounds very good. Error can sometimes sound very much like the truth.

Somebody says, “I always interpret the Bible literally.” That sounds good, doesn’t it? “I always interpret the Bible literally.”

The fact is that you cannot *interpret* any document *literally*. Somebody says, “Now, wait a minute, Harold Hunt. What kind of statement is that?” But do you see? You either *interpret* something, or else you take it *literally*; you cannot do both. If you interpret anything, you are not taking it literally.

There are some passages that must be interpreted. The types, shadows, figures, symbols, parables, and some of the prophecies, must be interpreted in order to understand what is being said.

For instance, the metaphors of the Bible must be interpreted. The Bible refers to Christ as *that Rock*. “For they drank of that spiritual *Rock* that followed them: and that *Rock* was Christ,” [1Co 10:4](#). The word *rock* is a metaphor; it needs to be interpreted. The Lord is not a stone; he is represented by a stone. He is like a stone; he is solid and enduring.

There is some of the Bible that must be interpreted; but there is not much.

With most of it, you should just let it say what it says.

And in this text that is all you have to do. It does not take a lot of interpreting to see what he is saying. Just keep reading. It will explain itself.

Verse fifteen, “And the Lord, thy God, shall bless thee **in the land** whither thou goest to possess it.” He is not talking about gaining a home in heaven; he is talking about life or death **in the land---the land of Canaan**.

But lest we might have missed it, in [De 30:18](#) he says, “I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days **upon the land**.” He wants to make sure we get the point. He is talking about life in the land of Canaan. He is not talking about life in eternal heaven.

“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life that both thou and thy seed may live. That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him for he is thy life and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell **in the land** which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” [De 30:19-20](#).

He says the same thing three times in rapid succession, and if somebody does get it by the third time, there is not much need to say it the fourth time.

Very often, we preachers repeat ourselves. If I repeat myself, it is an indication that I probably forgot my place. I repeat myself trying to remember where I was, and where I was headed. But God never loses his place. If he repeats himself, he repeats himself for our benefit.

He repeats himself, because we might have missed it the first time. He repeats himself, generally, in slightly different words, because he knows the tendency of the sinful heart of man to gainsay and twist the Scriptures. He knows there are those who will look at a verse and say, “Well, that does not mean exactly what it says; here is what it really means,” and they twist it to fit their own point of view.

But there is often another verse that says the same thing in slightly different words. I call that *the gotcha text*. A person figures out a way to dodge one text, but when he has dodged it, all of a sudden, here comes another verse,

from another direction, and it catches him. By twisting the first text, he places himself squarely in the cross-hairs of *the gotcha text*.

This text has absolutely nothing to do with eternal heaven. It has everything to do with the land of Canaan. It has to do with the inheritance of Israel, in the land of promise.

I think I have said enough to demonstrate that this text does not belong to those people who teach that eternal heaven is conditioned on your works. They can twist it all they want to, but it will never fit their system.

But, on the other hand, very often we deal with this text, and others like it. We prove that it does not belong to those who teach error. And when we are satisfied we have proved our point, we leave it alone.

This text does not teach what the majority of religious people think it does, but it does teach something. And I would like for us to spend the rest of this little booklet looking at what it does teach.

What it does teach is very unsettling. Isaiah said, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins,” [Isa 40:1](#).

The gospel message is a comforting message, but there are some parts of Bible truth that scare the living daylights out of me. I fear that sometimes we preachers only preach about the comforting parts, because when we preach on the warnings of the Bible, people get upset at us. But the Lord’s preaching often upsets people. God did not call us to rock people to sleep.

In Israel of old the people told the prophets, “Speak unto us smooth things; prophesy deceits,” [Isa 30:10](#). They would much rather hear the promises than the warnings. Even today, we preachers spend too much time speaking *smooth things*.

What this text does teach can be very unsettling. I believe God’s people need to be stirred up---stirred up about those things we do wrong. We need to caution God’s children about how we suffer, when we experience the chastening rod of God.

Paul said, “**It is a fearful thing** to fall into the hands of the living God,” [Heb 10:31](#). “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom,” [Ps 111:10](#), and if the warnings of God do not scare you, they ought to.

To get the background of our text we need to go back to [De 27](#) “And Moses with the elders of the children of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day,” vs 1. God was going to lead them into the land of Canaan. They would receive the land as a free gift, but if they expected to continue to enjoy the benefits of the land, there were some commandments they would have to obey.

"Therefore it shall be that when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set these stones which I command you this day in Mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster....And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly," [De 30:4,8](#).

"And Moses charged the people the same day saying, "These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim **to bless the people** when ye come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. And these shall stand upon Mount Ebal **to curse**, Reuben, and Gad, and Asher, and Zabulun, and Dan, and Naphtali," [De 30:11-13](#). If Israel obeyed God, while they were in the land of Canaan, they would enjoy great *blessing*, blessing such as no nation had ever enjoyed. But if they refused and rebelled, there was a *curse* waiting for them. They would suffer as no nation ever suffered.

In [De 28](#), we read the blessings that were promised. When Israel obeyed the commandments of God, they were the most blessed of all people. But when they transgressed, they were some of the most miserable of all people. Listen to the list of blessings. These are the ways God said Israel would be blessed, if they did what he commanded them to do.

"Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field," [De 28:3](#). That pretty well covers the territory, doesn't it? In the city, in the field, wherever they happened to be, God would shower blessings on them.

"Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, and the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep; blessed shall be thy basket and thy store; blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest; the Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face; they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways." [De 28:4-7](#). That fairly well covers the ground. You are going to be blessed in the city; and you are going to be blessed in the field. Your crops are going to prosper. Your herds and your flocks will increase. Your enemies will flee from you. Every way you go, and every where to turn, you are going to experience the blessing of the Lord.

They were a blessed people. Do you remember when they first sent the spies to spy out the land? When the spies returned, among other things, they brought back a cluster of grapes carried by two men on a pole ([Nu 13:23](#)). Canaan was a fruitful land. Oh, the blessing God showers on his people, when we do those things he has commanded us to do.

"And it shall come to pass that if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to do all his commandments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day, that **all these curses shall come upon thee**, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the

fruit of thy land. And the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out, [De 28:15-19](#).

The word *cursed* is a strong word, isn't it? It is an even stronger word when God uses it. Men curse each other all the time, and all it does is reveal the mood somebody is in, and it reveals his manner of expressing himself. But when God pronounces a curse, that is something else again. In this text God pronounces a curse on those who despise and neglect his law.

There are some things in the Bible that scare the life out of me. One of the scariest passages in the Bible is [Mt 18:6](#). The Lord says, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Let me ask you; did you ever hear anybody say, "That man would be better off dead." Sure you have. Imagine that God might say that about you.

That is what he said. "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned (stone cold dead) in the depth of the sea."

I have never lost so much sleep over anything, as I have lost over that verse. I have lain awake, staring at the ceiling, fearful that I might have said something, or done something, that injured one of the Lord's little ones. The penalty is frightening.

Any time you have an inclination to strike out at somebody, it would be a good idea to quote that verse before you say anything. The Lord said you would be better off with a millstone around your neck, lying on the bottom of the sea, than to injure one of his little ones.

"Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out," [De 28:19](#).

Salvation is by grace, but that does not change the fact that God has given us some guidelines as to how we ought to live, how we ought to conduct ourselves, here in this life.

The heart of the Law of Moses is expressed in the Ten Commandments. Did you ever notice that he did not say a thing about the Ten Suggestions? Those are not suggestions.

Even in our gospel day we can get confused about that. Did you ever notice the way we conduct our services? We sing; we pray; we preach; and then we give the *invitation*. I don't recall the Lord ever *inviting* anybody to be baptized. If it is an invitation, you have the option to decline. There is no option to decline. If you have a hope in Christ Jesus, God has commanded you to be repent and be baptized, and it is not an invitation; it is a commandment.

"And all the people that heard him, and the publicans *justified God*, being baptized with the baptism of John," [Lu 7:29](#). That does not mean they *caused* God to be just; rather they *declared* him to be just. They declared that God is just in all he says and does. He is just in all he requires of us. He is just in requiring us to be baptized.

"The publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized by him."

The Lord drew a clear, and distinct, boundary line between gospel obedience and disobedience. And he showed that water baptism is that line. Those who obey God, those who justify God, are those who are baptized in water, and those who refuse to follow the Lord in baptism reject the counsel of God against themselves.

What does it mean when it says they "rejected the counsel of God against themselves?"

Let me illustrate it this way. Some time or other you might have started to say something to somebody, and he knew what you were about to say. He had heard it before. And he tells you, "Don't say it; I don't want to hear it." Let me ask you. What did he just do? **He rejected your counsel**, didn't he? He told you, "Don't say it; I don't want to hear it."

It is amazing how simple this book gets, if you just let it say what it says.

Don't argue with it; just let it say what it says.

"The publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."

They rejected God's counsel. In effect, they told God, "Don't say it; I don't want to hear it."

When God tells us to repent and be baptized, he is not giving an invitation. That is a commandment. God gave the very best heaven had for my redemption and yours. There is nothing you can do to earn it. But God requires that we express our gratitude, not to gain heaven, not in order to become his child, but in order to enjoy that life of obedience, and blessing, that is available to us in this life.

Back to Deuteronomy. In chapter twenty-eight, verse twenty, he begins to specify exactly what he is talking about. He gives us the details. These would be the consequences if Israel failed to obey God's commands.

He has already told them, "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store." Your flocks, your crops, and your herds, will all be under the curse.

"The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and **until thou**

perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me,” [De 28:20](#).

What does that word *perish* mean? Does it mean they would go around, perhaps, with a headache all the time? They would have a backache, an upset stomach, and just walk around in a fog? That is not what he is talking about. That is not what he means when he says they would *perish*.

Perish? That means stone cold dead, six feet under. Stone cold dead in the grave.

I know there are a lot of people, who have the idea you are not going to die until *your time* comes. You are not going to die a moment before, and you are not going to live a moment longer. The Bible does not teach that, and I don't believe it.

Every now and then, you may run into somebody, who has some idea of what our people believe, and he may tell you, “I agree with you Primitive Baptists on one thing; you are not going to die until your time comes; and when your time comes, you are out of here.”

It is strange that the one thing they pick to agree with Primitive Baptists about is something we do not believe.

Some time ago, I had the funeral of a man who was killed in a car wreck. He was not a religious man. In fact, he had no interest at all in religion. But I was the pastor of the church in the commun-ity, and they called on me to preach his funeral. He had been out on Saturday night, visiting the local drinking establishments. That was his custom. But anyway, he had drunk more alcohol than he could handle. It impaired his judgment, and he went blazing off down the road; he missed a curve, and hit a tree, and was killed instantly.

Let me ask you. Do you believe it just came his time to die, or do you believe if he had been at home with his family, behaving himself, he might have woke up the next morning in his own bed, alive and well? I don't believe God predestinated that he would die that night, any more than I believe he predestinated that he would visit all those drinking establishments.

No, the scriptures tell us, “Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days,” [Ps 55:23](#). Again, he says, “Why shouldest thou die before thy time?” [Ec 7:17](#). A person can shorten his days by the way he behaves himself. God told Israel that some of them would die because of their rebellion.

In [De 28:21](#), “The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee until he have consumed thee off the land,” [De 28:21](#). Disease means that somebody is sick; *pestilence* means a lot people, or maybe, most everybody is sick. That happened to Israel from time to time.

“The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with a sword, and with blasting, and with mildew, and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. And

thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron," [De 28:22-23](#).

This word *brass* is one of those words that need interpreting. It does not mean the heavens will one day be made out of metal. It means there will not be any rain. You do not get rain out of brazen heavens.

He goes on to say, "The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder, and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee until thou be destroyed," [De 28:24](#).

We are very well blessed in America in a material way. When our nation was established in the late 1700's, one of the very first things the Founding Fathers did was to prohibit interstate tariffs. That provided free trade between the various states. That has been a great benefit to America. If there is drought in one area, free trade between the states has helped to take care of us. The plenty in one area offsets the shortage in another.

But we still see what can happen from time to time, and in some areas. There is a terrible drought at this time in Texas. I feel sorry for those people with all the hot weather, and no rain. Their crops are failing, and some of their wells are going dry. The ground is so dry, the experts tell us that if it started raining today, and rained for months, it would still be years before the ground itself can be healed.

In a limited way, God gives us demonstrations of what he can do over a much broader area, when he chooses to. Our nation has such great capacity. Our technology can accomplish things that stagger the imagination, but it has its limits. The western states have been on fire for weeks, and they cannot put out the fires. If we can build rocket ships, and computers, and microwaves, you would think we could put out fires. We have been putting out fires, since the dawn of time. But simple jobs become impossible, when they become as big as those fires are.

America is much more vulnerable than we have ever imagined we are. The Y2K crisis came and passed, and it did not amount to anything. But it certainly could have. The arguments people made about what was going to happen did not happen, but the possibility was there. How vulnerable we are here in America. Our heavens could become *brass*, and our rain could become *powder* and *dust*.

It did happen to Israel on a frequent basis. They suffered God's wrath when they rebelled.

"The Lord shall smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed," [De 28:27](#).

Egypt is in Africa. The *botch of Egypt* was a disease of Africa.

About nineteen years ago there was another ailment that came out of Africa--- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Nobody ever says the whole name anymore. We just call it A.I.D.S. So far, there is no cure.

In some states, you can be prosecuted for stating publicly that A.I.D.S. is God's judgment on that immoral segment of society. It is called a *hate crime*. Well, we don't have that law in Tennessee, and I am going to tell you that A.I.D.S. is God's judgment on that immoral segment of society. He said he would do it, and he has done exactly what he said he would do.

I feel sorry for the way those people are suffering. I feel sorry for anybody, when they suffer the wrath of God, but it does not change the fact that God did say he was going to do exactly what he has done.

"Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst and in nakedness, and in want of all things, and he shall put the yoke of iron upon thy neck until he have destroyed thee," [De 28:47-48](#).

He told Israel they were going to serve somebody. Either they would serve God in the land, or they would serve the adversary outside the land.

God gave the land of Canaan to Israel as a free gift. He can do that. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," [Ps 24:1](#). It belongs to him, and he can give it to whoever he wants to have it. They did not pay anything for it. He divided the land to them by lot. Every family got his own plot of ground.

He commanded them to work six days, and set aside the seventh day as a Sabbath of rest. He commanded them, more than that, that they should work six years, and rest the seventh year. That seventh year was to be a *sabbatic* year. That is where we got the word *sabbatical*, an extended leave from your employment. God told them to allow the land to lie fallow the seventh year. They should not put out any crops.

The next question was: "What are we going to live on the seventh year?" God promised that he would cause the land to bring forth double the sixth year.

They would not need to work the seventh year. How could he do that? He is God; he can do anything he wants to do.

He promised, "Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years," [Le 25:21](#).

He promised that, every time seven times seven years passed (that is forty-nine years), they could take off the fiftieth year as well. The land would bring forth three times as much the forty-eighth year. They would not have to work the forty-ninth year nor the fiftieth.

"And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty

and nine years,” [Le 25:8](#). Every time seven sabbatic years passed, they were to celebrate the *Jubilee*.

“Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the *jubilee* to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month, on the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land, And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a *jubilee* unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family,” [Le 25:9-10](#).

Jubilee is the Hebrew word for a ram’s horn. On the day of atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, of the fiftieth year they were to blow on the ram’s horn, and “proclaim liberty throughout all the land.” Every bondman was to be set free, and all property was to be returned to its original owners. If anybody had been sold into slavery, he was to be set free on that day. If anybody had sold his ancestral home, or if, maybe, his grandfather had sold it, he was to get it back. They were to have total land reform every fifty years. The law also provided that the closer they got to the year of Jubilee, the less they could charge for the land, because they would have to give it back before long.

The Lord said if the land did not enjoy its Sabbaths while they were in the land, it would enjoy its Sabbaths while they were gone. Well, what happened? At the end of the first sixth years, they figured they were a year ahead; the land had produced double that year. They intended to stay ahead; so they went ahead and worked the land the seventh year.

They thought they could outsmart the Lord. There is no record that Israel ever observed the sabbatic year. That was the reason they were carried away into bondage. The land did enjoy its Sabbaths while they were in Babylon ([2Ch 36:21](#)).

At the end of fifty years, they figured that if they had bought the property, it was theirs to keep. You have heard the expression: “Possession is nine tenths of the law.” They figured that if they had paid for the land, and they were in possession of it, they might as well keep it. And they did keep it, until God sent Nebuchadnezzar to carry them all away into Babylon. Then they lost it all. You cannot outsmart the Lord.

Every fifty years they were to have total land reform. What an economic benefit that would have been for the entire nation. The rich could have never oppressed the poor. Every Israelite, no matter how poor, would have his own farm on which he could earn a livelihood for himself and his family.

The rich could accumulate all the property they wanted, and keep it forever, so long as they accumulated the property inside a walled city. The Law of the Jubilee did not apply to property inside walled cities ([Le 25:30](#)). They did not have to give that property back. But, outside the cities, all the farm land was

to be redistributed every fifty years. So far as their economy was concerned, every fifty years, the entire nation would get a fresh start.

No nation has ever had a system so calculated to protect both the rich and the poor. There was no limit to how rich any person could become, so long as he accumulated his property inside the city. But no class of people could ever become rich in such manner that they could prevent their hard working neighbors from earning their livelihood by the own labors.

What happened? They ignored God's law. God said that if they would not serve him in the land, they would serve somebody else outside the land. If the land did not enjoy its Sabbaths while they were in the land, it would enjoy its Sabbaths when they were gone." If they did not set the captive free, and return the land in the year of Jubilee, they would themselves become captives, and others would live on their lands.

God sent an entire train of eastern conquerors. Pul the king of Assyria came, and then Tiglath-Pilezer, and Shalmaneser, and Sennacherib, and finally, Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar was the last. He carried the last of Israel away to Babylon. Babylon was what we call Iraq today. They stayed there seventy years. God told them how long they would stay before they left ([Jer 25:11](#); [29:10](#)). At the end of seventy years God sent Zerubbabel to lead them home again.

But the point is simply this: Because they would not allow the land to enjoy its Sabbaths the way God commanded, the land enjoyed its Sabbaths while they were gone. Because they would not serve God, they found themselves in bondage, serving their enemies. You cannot rob God. You cannot hold out on God.

But there is more. "Thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee in the siege and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee," [De 28:53](#).

At first sight, that sounds like cannibalism." Let's back up and read it again. "And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, **the flesh of thy sons, and of thy daughters**, which the Lord thy God hath given thee." [De 28:56](#) goes on, "The tender and delicate woman among you which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness; her eye shall be evil against the husband of her bosom, and for her son, and for her daughter, and toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children, which she shall bear, for **she shall eat them** for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates."

What is he talking about? This is one of those verses that do not need any interpreting. It means exactly what it sounds like it means. He was talking

about a time when Israel would be reduced to such distress they would resort to cannibalism.

Bear in mind that he is not talking about natives on some remote island in the South Pacific. He is not talking about some tribe in the heart of Africa. He is talking about a highly educated people, who had enjoyed the benefit of the Law of Moses for fifteen hundred years. He is talking about Jewish people in the city of Jerusalem, practicing cannibalism.

In the year 70 A.D. the Roman general Vespasian invaded the land of Palestine. He was called back to Rome, and became the next emperor of the Roman Empire. He left his son Titus in charge. Titus besieged the city of Jerusalem from April til September of the year 70 A.D. The people in the city were starving. Finally, some of them began to eat their own children.

Even then, it was not a general practice. There were only a few instances of it; but it did happen.

The cannibals of the South Pacific, and the cannibals of Africa, and the Aztecs of Central America killed their enemies in battle, and ate them. Cannibalism in Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. was worse. In the siege of Jerusalem, the Jews ate their own children.

After five months, the city of Jerusalem fell; the Jewish people who survived were sold into slavery.

In these last several verses of [De 28](#), we have the history of the Jewish people for the last two thousand years. God can do that. All is one eternal now with him; he can write history in advance as well as he can after the fact. It is a very concise history of what has happened to them; but concise as it is, it is very clear and to the point.

"And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other," [De 28:64](#). Jewish historians call that scattering, the *diapsora*. For two thousand years now, the Jewish people have been scattered to the four winds.

"And there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among all these nations, thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest. And the Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind," [De 28:64-65](#).

That is so true to their history for the last two thousand years that comment is hardly necessary. For two thousand they have been scattered among the gentiles. They have found *no ease*; their foot has found no *rest*. What they have found has been "a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind."

There can be no question that the Jewish people are, even today, suffering the consequence of their own rejection of God. But that does not give anybody else the right to pitch in and try to help the Lord to punish them.

In the year 1348, when the Black Death spread all over Europe, one third of the population of Europe died. The plague destroyed the entire economy of the Western World. That was used as an excuse to kill Jews and run them out of the land. They were run out of England about the same time. The Spanish ran them out of Spain in 1492, the same year Columbus came to America. We all know the way they suffered in Germany and Poland in the thirties and forties. That has been the pattern for two thousand years. No people have ever suffered the way the Jewish people have suffered.

Let me make one point. It is one thing to make the objective statement that the Jews have suffered the chastening rod of God. When the Lord was crucified, they cried out, "His blood be on us, and on our children," [Mt 27:25](#). There can be no doubt that God granted that request. It is one thing to talk about that as an objective fact. It is something entirely different to talk as if we would like to pitch in and help the Lord to chastise them.

God told them the consequences, and it did happen. I read about the way they have suffered, and I learn from it, but I gain no joy in seeing the way they have suffered. We should be very careful lest we glory in the suffering of others.

"And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life," [De 28:66](#). There has never been a people to whom this passage applies the way it has applied to the Jewish people for the last two thousand years.

"In the morning thou shalt say, 'Would God it were evening; and at evening thou shalt say, Would God it were morning, for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear and the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships by the way whereof I spake unto thee. Thou shalt see it no more again, and there thou shalt be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you,'" [De 28:67-68](#).

Those Jews who survived the siege of Jerusalem were sold into slavery, and scattered all over the Roman Empire. That is how *the diaspora*, the scattering, began.

First it says, "Ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen." That indicates that some of them were successfully sold as slaves. But then it goes on to say, "No man shall buy you." That is no contradiction. Some of them were sold, and others could not be sold. After the fall of Jerusalem, the slave market was so glutted with Jewish slaves, that sometimes there was nobody willing to bid.

That was in the year 70 A.D. I do not know what the price of a Jewish slave was in that year, but I do know what the price was 60 years later. Jerusalem fell the second time in 130 A.D. In that year the price of a Jewish slave was a little less than the price of a plow horse. Think about that; if somebody bought a plow horse, and a Jewish slave to work the horse, he would pay more for the horse than he did for the slave. But, sometimes, they did not bring even that much. They could always sell the horse, but sometimes the slave could not be sold for any price. It is hard to imagine anything more humiliating than for a man to be valued less than an animal. Truly, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," [Heb 10:31](#).

I have said all of that to get to this. How do you think all of this applies to believers in this day?

Do you believe that in this gospel day it is easier for gentiles to get away with sin than it was for the Jews in that day? Do you believe God is more tolerant of sin today? Do you believe he has mellowed in these last days?

Sometimes, grandparents will let the grandchildren get away with things that would have gotten their children's backsides dusted. Very often a parent says, "If I send those kids to Momma's house, she lets them get away with things she would have set me on fire for. She can keep those kids for one day, and it takes me a week to bring them back under control."

Do you think God is that way? Do you think God has mellowed in these last days?

Don't you believe it. Paul dealt with this very question. Listen to what he said in [Heb 10](#), "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' Law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. **Of how much sorer punishment** suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace," [Heb 10:26-29](#).

To paraphrase it, Paul is saying, "Don't think you are going to get off as light as those Jews did."

It may sound strange to talk about not getting off *as light as the Jews did* after we have been talking about all the horrific suffering they have experienced; but is exactly what the Bible teaches. Listen to what it says.

"**Of how much sorer punishment** suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. For we know him that hath said, "Vengeance

belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord, and again, **The Lord shall judge his people,**” [Heb 10:29-30](#).

This is not talking about eternal judgment; this is talking about judging *his people* right here and now. “It is a fearful to fall into the hands of the living God,” [Heb 10:31](#).

Who is that talking about? Is he talking about the wicked who are going to suffer eternally? No. He has already explained it. He says, “**The Lord shall judge his people.**” This is talking about God dealing with his people here in this life.

In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord said, “Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat, because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it, [Mt 7:13-14](#)”

This is not talking about eternal damnation, but it is talking about some kind of *destruction*. And when God calls something *destruction*, and tells us, this destruction is in store for somebody---this side of the grave---we do well to take notice.

On the cross the Lord took care of everything on the other side of the grave. But on this side of the grave, he says, “This *destruction* is waiting for you, if you continue to walk the road to destruction.”

“Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat,” [Mt 7:13](#).

There are a lot of people who will tell you the child of God cannot make shipwreck of his life. Don’t you believe it. Every one of us knows children of God who have done just that.

At this point I am inclined to give specific examples of friends of mine who have made shipwreck of their lives. They have followed that broad road, and they have brought destruction on themselves. But I fear that if I become too explicit in describing their experiences, it will be too easy for others to recognize the individuals I am talking about, and I certainly do not want to embarrass anybody. They have suffered enough; I do not want to add further embarrassment.

Most of you could furnish examples of your own. Most of us have friends, who, we are convinced, are children of God. We have worshiped with them in church. We have seen evidence of the Spirit of God in their lives. We have seen them rejoice under the power of the Spirit. Nobody could convince us they are not children of God. And yet they have made shipwreck of their lives. How very often a child of God becomes careless and unconcerned about spiritual things. Perhaps, he is not doing anything that would get him in trouble, or even embarrass him. He is just not as spiritual as he once was. He becomes more concerned with material things than he is about his own

spiritual well being. Then he begins to allow little transgressions to creep into his life.

Solomon said, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil our vines, for our vines have tender grapes," [Song 2:15](#). At the outset he has no trouble with the most grievous offences. He would never consider doing anything that would jeopardize his reputation. But those little foxes grow up. Little offences give way to worse transgressions. Before long he begins to cover things up, until he begins to do things he would never have considered before.

Any of you can finish the story. We all know somebody who has lost his home in the church. Perhaps, his wife finds out about his conduct, and she puts him in the street. She takes his home, his business, his bank account. He loses his home, his income, his security. One thing leads to another. Before long he is destitute. Sometimes, when a person begins to trifle with sin, it does not take long to go from comparative affluence to being a virtual derelict. How often we have seen somebody lose a profitable business, a beautiful home, a loving family, all because of his own misconduct.

He gets in distress, emotionally, physically, and financially. His health fails. His judgment failed when he began to experiment with sin; but it gets worse. His friends begin to wonder if he is losing his mind. I could give examples, with which some of you are well acquainted. They have lost everything worth having. But, again, I do not want to embarrass anybody.

In the text we quoted before, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, which leadeth unto destruction, and many there be that go in thereat," [Mt 7:13](#). How very many of the children of God we have watched go through that broad gate of destruction.

"**Of how much sorer punishment** suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord, and again, **The Lord shall judge his people,**" [Heb 10:29-30](#).

When the Lord said, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing" ([De 30:19](#)), he was not talking about eternal life and eternal death, he was not warning against eternal damnation, but he was warning against the dreadful suffering the Jewish people have suffered for almost two thousand years now. **And he was talking about the living death** many of his people are experiencing in this day.

Indeed, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" ([Heb 10:27](#)).

IN THE BEGINNING GOD

In [Ge 1](#), we read, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” An old philosopher made the observation that that verse, the very first verse in the Bible, *approaches the sublime*. The philosopher got it almost right. That verse does not approach the sublime; it is sublime.

I sit and read this book, and I tremble at the majesty of it. I stand amazed at the majesty of the language of this book, the majesty of its expressions, its symbols, its metaphors.

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken,” [Isa 1:2](#). What other book would dare use such language? It would be ludicrous in any other book, than **that one book written by God himself**.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” I suppose I preach on that text as often as I do any text in the Bible. And I expect I will preach on it more often in the future, than I ever have in the past.

It doesn't bother me near as much as it used to, that I preach on some texts over and over. For one thing, I learned long ago that I am not bright enough to come up with a new text, and a new subject, every time I go into the pulpit. For another, I believe there are some subjects, and some passages, that need to be preached on over and over. This verse is one of them.

For a long time now, we have been told that we are all an accident. We just somehow evolved. Millions of years ago, our ancestors started out as a little, tiny something on the order of an amoeba. Then, they evolved into something more like a salamander. Before long, they crawled out on dry land and turned into monkeys. Finally, our distant ancestors became what we are now. Just look how far we have come, and can you imagine what we are going to be in ages to come?

It seems that I remember somebody else preaching that same doctrine long before Charles Darwin ever saw the light of day. That ancient evolutionist promised his students, “Ye shall be as gods,” [Ge 3:5](#). When Charles Darwin published his ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES in 1859, he just gave a little more information on how we were supposed to go about it.

By the way, you might be interested to know that the original title of that book was THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES and *the Preservation of the Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*. Darwin, Nietzsche, and those other early evolutionists believed the lighter races were so much more highly evolved than the darker races, and the darker races so poorly evolved that the darker races were still closer to animals than they were to humans. Darwin and his friends went on to teach that the darker races were so different to full humans, that the darker races ought not be allowed to reproduce. Later, they

taught that the darker races ought not be allowed to survive. They ought to be exterminated to make room for the *superior races*.

Adolph Hitler was an ardent admirer of Friedrich Nietzsche and Charles Darwin. That aspect of the evolution doctrine became virtually the state religion of Germany during the 1930's and early '40's. Ideas do have consequences. Nazism is simply what evolution becomes when it is made into state policy.

Life did not evolve from any lower form of life, but you can be sure **the doctrine of evolution has evolved**. That aspect of the doctrine has had to be laid aside. Darwin is virtually worshiped as the Messiah of evolution, but nobody would dare teach Darwin's form of evolution in the schools of today. That doctrine has evolved, but it has not disappeared, by any means. It has simply adapted itself to the times.

We are told we are part of a grand accident. We evolved. We might have evolved into horses, or birds, or roach bugs. As it happened, we evolved into human beings.

In school, our little ones are taught that doctrine over and over, and it is drilled into our own minds on such a daily basis, that it, sometimes, becomes a part of our thinking, without our realizing it. It creeps into our language almost undetected. If we are not mighty careful we find ourselves using expressions such as, "Man is *the only animal that.....*" **That is pure evolution**, and yet it is a rare person who has never used the expression--- usually without realizing what he has said. That doctrine is like water dripping on a rock; it has its effect even on those who are the most sound in the faith. In its very first verse, the Bible comes directly to the point. It sweeps that doctrine aside. **Where did this universe come from? God created it.** "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

In the first chapter, God refutes the doctrine, and in the third chapter, he tells us where the doctrine came from, and who its first advocate was.

Sometimes I like to preach on just the first four words of that verse. **In the beginning God.** I am not really fond of the word *theology*. That sounds too much like biology, and zoology, and paleontology. It makes it sound like Bible truth is simply another of man's *...ologies*. I prefer the simple expression *Bible truth*. No doubt, that is just another of my prejudices. We all have our prejudices, and that is one of mine.

But if you don't mind the word, I will tell you there is **an entire system of theology** in those four words---*In the beginning God*.

When you come to think about it, that sums up our entire system of doctrine doesn't it? God gave the entire system in just four words. I wrestle with a subject for an hour, and, sometimes, never get much of anything said.

God says it all in four words. **The rest of the Bible is commentary.** The rest of the Bible explains those four words---*in the beginning God*.

In the beginning of what? In the beginning of everything that had a beginning. Not everything had a beginning. God did not have a beginning. Rather, he is the beginning. He always has been. He always will be. He is the eternal one. Everything is *one eternal now* with him. In the beginning of the natural creation there was God.

In the beginning of the spiritual creation, there is God. All the time I was growing up, I was told, "God wants to save you; he is trying to save you; he is doing the best he can to save everybody he can. He would save a lot more if he could just get better financed, if he could get better organized, if he could get more assistance. If we would just pitch in and help him, he would save more people than he ever has."

And then there was always that old challenge, "God wants to save you, but you will have to take the first step." I am sure you have heard that one. God knew somebody would come along with that notion long before anybody ever thought of it, and he nipped that doctrine in the bud before it got started.

Does man have to take the first step? No, no, no, a thousand times, no. The very first verse in the Bible tells us it is, "**In the beginning God.**" That was the first false doctrine God dealt with.

So far as our home in eternal heaven is concerned, he takes the first step, the last step, and all the steps in between.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, he tells us, "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me," [Isa 63:3](#). I have no idea how many steps it takes to tread a winepress, but no matter how many steps that is, he took them all---there was nobody with him.

He is the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. I don't know what somebody else may think, but **to me that sounds like he is all of it.**

I like an expression I borrowed from a godly, old black preacher out in Texas. The good brother tells it right most of the time. Some of you have heard his tapes; we have passed them around often enough. He said, "God stood on nothing, because there was nothing to stand on. He reached out into nowhere, because there was nowhere to reach. And he laid his hand on nothing, because there was nothing to lay his hand on. And he took nothing, and out of that nothing he made everything there is." I get very nearly on shouting ground every time I hear that old brother come over that.

If evolutionists can look at the majesty of this universe, and believe it's just an accident, I am not going to say they are a bunch of idiots, but they must think we are, if they think God's prayerful, obedient children are going to swallow that doctrine.

There are probably more people, nowadays, claiming to be atheists than there ever have been in the history of the world. I am not sure whether there are any real atheists. There is an old saying, "There are no atheists in foxholes." Even an atheist prays, when he is in immediate danger. He may insist he is an atheist five minutes before, and five minutes after; but when he is facing immediate danger, it is very likely he will pray.

Somebody wrote a book recently entitled THE ATHEIST'S SYNDROME. At least, to the best of my memory, that was the title. I did not read the entire book, but I did read enough to get the gist of it. The contention of the book was that there is a clear connection between atheism and insanity. He argued that no truly sane person can be an atheist---other than on a superficial level. He argued that any truly sane person who thinks he is an atheist believes that way, only because he has never taken the time to think it through.

I think he was probably right. I appreciate anybody who confirms my prejudices. I don't see how any sane person could ever look at this universe and imagine it is all an accident.

If by *atheist*, you mean somebody who believes there is no god of any kind anywhere in the world, by definition, there are not, and cannot be, any true atheists.

There are simply people who believe in a different kind of god than you and I do. The universe itself prevents any sane person from being an atheist. This universe is very nearly infinite, very nearly boundless. It is not infinite; only God is infinite, but the universe is very nearly so. It reflects infinite wisdom in the design and construction of it. It reflects infinite power in the construction and preservation of it.

You can be sure that whatever has infinite wisdom, whatever has infinite power, whatever is eternal, is God. If the universe created itself, and that is what the evolutionists want us to believe, then the universe must have infinite wisdom and power. And if that is true, the universe must be God. That doctrine is called *pantheism*. That is the generic name for the old pagan religion called *Gaia*. That was the doctrine Paul was talking about, when he referred to those who "worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator," [Ro 1:25](#). They could not tell the difference between the Creator and his creation. But that doctrine is not true; God is the one and only Creator.

The universe came about somehow. Either God created it, or somebody else created it, or it is eternal---it created itself. Those are the only three options available.

The evolutionist believes the universe was produced by the properties, and energies, and forces, inherent in the universe.

That is, they believe the universe produced itself. Bear in mind that whoever, or whatever, produced the universe, of necessity, had to have infinite power

and wisdom. If the universe was produced by the properties, energies, and forces inherent in the universe, those properties, energies, and forces must, of necessity, have infinite power and wisdom.

So the evolutionist attributes the universe, the very earth under our feet, with having virtually infinite power, and wisdom. Bear in mind that the earth is made up of a little water, but mostly rock and dirt. And it is this earth the evolutionist would have us believe evolved itself into all we see around us today. They believe the earth, and all the rest of the universe, for that matter, created itself.

Now we are getting to the real difference between the Bible-believing child of God and the evolutionist. The Bible-believing child of God believes in the almighty, creative power of God. **The evolutionist believes in the almighty creative power of rocks and dirt.** And they have the audacity to call us fanatics.

We hear a lot about the ecology, nowadays. Environmentalists have ever so much to say about how the ecology is so perfectly in balance, how every aspect of the ecology has its own particular place, its own little niche to fill. They tell us if we get the ecology out of balance---if something is removed from its place--- it just messes up the entire scheme of things.

I wonder who they think put the ecology in such balance in the first place?

Who put our own bodies in such balance, that if some little part of it gets out of balance we are in so much trouble?

I had a friend several years ago, who died because the copper in his system got out of balance. I never hear much about copper in our system. I hear a lot about iron deficiency, and other kinds of deficiencies, but I rarely hear about copper deficiency. But somehow or other, the very tiny amount of copper in his system got out of balance, and it killed him.

God put these bodies of ours in balance when he created Adam. But the evolutionist would have us believe it is just an accident that every trace element in our system happens to be perfectly balanced with every other trace element.

God has given us all kinds of evidence of what he has done. The very complexity of the universe is its own evidence.

One of the grandest proofs of the depravity and blindness of the human heart is the fact that scientific men are no more religious than most of them are.

They ought to be. Scientists ought to be the most religious people walking this planet.

Studying the wonders of the universe as they do, why do more of them not believe in the power and the majesty of God? Why is that? It is because of the blindness of the human heart.

I remember, when I was in school, we studied the various kinds of rock. Among all the others, we studied sedimentary rock. By definition, sedimentary rock is rock settled out of water. They talked about a time, millions and millions of years ago, when the earth was covered with water. They love to use those big figures. They know if they use those big figures, there are not going to be any eyewitnesses still around to contradict what they say. So they can make up just about anything they want to. But, anyway, they told us there was a time when, for millions of years, this entire continent was under water. They explained that during those millions of years ever so much sediment settled out of water. That is what sediment is; it is stuff that has settled out of a liquid. They told us the result was the sedimentary rock we see all around us. Somehow, they didn't seem to realize they had just described the Genesis Flood. Anyway, they were sure those waters could not have been the Genesis Flood, because they were sure the Genesis Flood is only a myth. Besides, their waters covered the earth millions of years ago, and nobody claims it has been that long since the flood of Noah's day.

"There are none so blind as those who will not see."

I know next to nothing about hydraulics, or geology, but anybody with enough sense to come in out of the rain knows that if you stir up a mess of dirt and rocks in water, it is going to settle out in fairly short order. It does not take millions of years. But these evolutionists are sure it really did take millions of years for all that mess to settle out and make sedimentary rock. Also, bear in mind that those layers of sedimentary rock are sometimes hundreds, or even thousands, of feet thick. In order for there to be that much material gathered up in the water, the water had to be moving with a lot of force, and it had to continue to move with that same force for millions of years. **They cannot tell us what kept the water moving with that kind of force for so long a time.** After all, they tell us it took millions of years for all those layers of rock to form; so the water must have been in motion all during that time.

But, that thought seems never to have occurred to them, and if you ask one of them about it, all of a sudden he goes blind and dumb.

Then one day, as a little boy, I realized the Bible told us exactly how and when all the sedimentary rock came about. That is some (just some) of the evidence God has left us of the Genesis flood. The waters were not disturbed for millions of years; they were disturbed for forty days, and forty nights ([Ge 7:12](#)). And it did not take millions of years for the sediment to settle; it took part of one year, from the six hundredth to the six hundred and first year of Noah's life ([Ge 7:11](#); [8:13](#)).

The evolutionist tells us there never could have been such a flood as the Bible describes. They tell us that if you could wring out every drop of moisture in the atmosphere, you could only cause a *world-wide* flood somewhat less than knee deep.

There can be no question. Meteorologists have equipment capable of measuring the water content of the atmosphere accurately enough to make that statement, and we can be sure they are telling it right. All the water vapor on earth is insufficient to cause a knee deep world-wide flood.

Then the evolutionist wants to know, “Does that fact not bother you?” No, of course not, why should it? That is just one more of those instances where they think they know what we believe better than we do. They forget that the Bible talks about the waters coming down; it does not say a word about the waters going back up again. Those waters that came down were “the waters which were above the firmament (the atmosphere)” we read about in Genesis chapter one. Before the flood they were up there, now they are down here.

If you would like to see the waters of the Genesis Flood, it is a very simple matter. From any point in the United States, you can get in your automobile, and drive east, west, or south, and eventually you will come to the waters of the Genesis Flood. We call them the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and the Gulf of Mexico. Those, along with the other oceans of the world, are where the waters of the flood came to rest.

In [Ps 104](#), beginning at [Ps 104:5](#), we read, “Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. Thou coveredst it (the earth) with a deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.” **That’s talking about the Genesis Flood.**

“The waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains they go down by the valleys,” [Ps 104:6-8](#). Where did they go? He goes on to tell us, “...unto the place where thou hast founded for them.”

Where did the waters of the flood go? **The Bible does not say one word about the waters of the flood evaporating.** That is simply a ruse others have used to discredit the Bible. The Bible says clearly enough that the waters came down. It says nothing at all about their going back up.

The text reads, “They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys **unto the place which thou hast founded for them.**” The language could not be clearer; God *founded* (prepared) a place for the waters of the flood. Then at his *rebuke*, at the *voice* of his *thunder* they *hasted* (hurried) to the place he prepared for them.

He goes on to say that after the waters of the flood came to rest in the place he *founded for them*, “Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth,” [Ps 104:9](#). **He founded a place them;**

he rebuked them; they *hasted* to that place; then he ordered them to stay put. With all that information provided by God himself, it does not take a rocket scientist to discover where the waters of the flood went.

If you want to know where the waters went, just find out where all the water is. It is a simple matter to see that **the oceans of the world are the very waters that covered the earth in Noah's day.**

But, how did they go from covering the earth to filling the oceans of the world? Again, the text tells us. "At the voice of thy thunder they *hasted* away....unto *the place thou hast founded for them,*" [Ps 104:7-8](#). God *founded* a place (prepared a place) for the waters; he simply increased the capacity of the oceans to receive those waters, and at his rebuke they *hasted* to that place. Notice he says, "At the *voice of thy thunder* they *hasted* away" [Ps 104:7](#). We cannot begin to imagine what it must have been like **when God thundered in the heavens, dropped the bottoms of the oceans,** and the waters of the flood rushed to the place he had founded for them.

More than that, can you imagine how those waters must have sloshed back and forth until God finally "set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth," [Ps 104:8](#).

To give just one more proof text about that day when God commanded those mighty waves to stay put, in Job we read, "Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb.....And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and **here shall they proud waves be stayed,**" [Job 38:8,10-11](#).

Can you imagine what great gashes (canyons, if you will) those waters cut in the earth, when they were sloshing back and forth, before God finally commanded them to stay put.

To give just one illustration, the Colorado River, as wild and rugged as it is, does not carry enough water to cut a canyon a mile deep, five miles wide, and two hundred miles long---**but the Pacific Ocean does, and it did.** I don't want to offend anybody, but anybody who can believe the Colorado River cut the Grand Canyon is not the brightest person to come down the road.

But they tell us, "It took millions of years." That might explain how the Grand Canyon got so deep, but it can never explain how it got so wide. Did it, perhaps, work like some sort of giant lathe, moving back and forth, from right to left, then left to right, so it could make such a wide cut? It is amazing what bizarre explanations evolutionists can come up with, trying to prop up their ridiculous theories.

When God dropped the bottoms of the oceans, **all that displaced material had to go somewhere. Where did it go?** God has provided us with an entire world full of evidence as to where all that displaced material went, and that

expression, *an entire world full*, is not a figure of speech. The world is literally full of the evidence.

Bear in mind that sedimentary rock is rock settled out of water. Wherever you go, in the mountainous areas of this country, you can see those layers upon layers of sedimentary rock. Each layer is different from the layer above, and the layer below it. That is because, when those sedimentary rock layers were forming, the waters of the flood were still sloshing back and forth. They would slosh in one direction, and they would deposit the material they gathered in that direction. They would slosh in the other direction, and deposit a different kind of material they had gathered in that direction, until finally, according to Job, God said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," [Job 38:11](#). After those waters had done their work, God commanded them to stay put in the place he had *founded for them* ([Ps 104:8](#)).

Also bear in mind that sediment goes down; it settles on the floor; it does not settle on the wall. Depending on the surface on which it is accumulating, it settles in a fairly even pattern. It does not settle at steep angles, and it does not settle in long, wavy, undulating patterns, like corrugated roofing. But, when we look at those layers of sedimentary rock in the mountains, that is exactly what we do see. The layers of sedimentary rock are in every pattern imaginable. Some of it is in smooth, level layers, but more often than not, it is at some kind of an angle. Sometimes the layers are almost vertical; sometimes they are in long, wavy patterns; and sometimes they are all out of joint. Sometimes they look, for all the world, **like a giant quilt somebody has pushed from one side until it is all crumpled and folded**. And there is the answer to our question. After all that rock had formed, while it was still somewhat soft, God *thundered* in the heavens, his mighty hand dropped the bottoms of the oceans to *found a place* for the waters to *haste away* to, and that same mighty hand that dropped the bottoms of the oceans, pushed aside all that soft, pliable rock, like a gigantic quilt, to *found a place* for the waters of the flood.

Then, all over this planet, he laid bare his mighty arm in exposing that sedimentary rock, so that no matter where we may go, before long, we come face to face with undeniable evidence of what he did.

In some places so much material was pushed aside to make room for the waters, the displaced material was pushed up into lofty mountains. It is in the mountains those layers of sedimentary rock take on such strange patterns. And it is in those mountains that we see the clearest evidence they have been pushed from somewhere--pushed aside to make room for the waters of the Genesis Flood.

"That in all things he might have the preeminence," [Col 1:18](#).

"Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," [Re 1:11](#).

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Jacob The Supplanter

JACOB THE SUPPLANTER

Jacob is a figure of every heaven born soul. He is a figure of what we are by nature, and he is figure of what God has made us by his grace. He is a reflection of every one of us in all our joys and sorrows, in all our strengths and weaknesses. He represents what is commendable about us, and he represents all that is shameful and repugnant.

We cannot help but appreciate the simplicity of the Bible. One of the ways by which the Bible teaches us is by figures--by characters or events that illustrate the lesson. That is one of the simplest of all methods of teaching. The character simply acts out the lesson.

In the first moments of his life Jacob demonstrated that he was a sinner—a sinner by birth and a sinner by practice. The first thing the Bible tells us about Jacob is that as soon as he was born, to the limit of his ability, he attacked his brother Esau. [Ge 25:24-26](#), "And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob." A newborn baby is limited in his ability to attack anybody, but to the limit of his ability, Jacob attacked his brother—he grabbed him by the heel. That assault, such as it was, was a preview of the way Jacob would spend most of his life, tricking and cheating his brother.

Jacob's grabbing Esau by the heel as soon as he was born was an indication of the carnal nature we were all born with. It is not that we were not born innocent and only later turned into sinners. We were born with that sinful nature, and as soon as we had the opportunity we proved that we were sinners. It was the first day of school and the first grade teacher was letting each child tell something about himself, so they could get better acquainted. One little girl said, "We have a new baby at our house—but it is turning into a boy."

Well, babies do not turn into little boys, and kittens do not turn into cats, and pups do not turn into dogs, and little babies do not turn into sinners. We were born sinners. Our sin was bred in the bone. It is part of our nature. Sin is as surely the natural condition of the sinner as water is the natural environment for a fish. The sinner feels to be entirely at home in his sin.

We should not get the idea that every character, and every event, in the Bible has a symbolic significance. Very often a well meaning Bible student will just wear himself out trying to find the symbolic lesson in some character who does not teach any symbolic lesson at all. If there is a symbolic lesson

involved, it seems to me that the Bible usually makes it fairly clear that we are to look for that lesson. Sometimes the passage simply tells us what the person said or what he did, and what the consequence was. That is the full lesson, and we wear ourselves out if we look for something more.

That applies to any passage we might read. There is an old saying, “When the obvious sense makes common sense, seek no other sense.” To me that makes good sense. Very often a young preacher will come to me with a question about some text. I read the verse, and it seems to be about as plain as it needs to be. It is a simple, straightforward statement of fact. The verse simply says what it means, and means what it says. He wants to know, “Is there not more than that?” But it seems to me that the verse teaches a simple lesson in simple language. We do not need to interpret it, nor explain it; just read it and believe it. In fact, we can get in all kinds of trouble trying to make a verse say more than it says.

I am convinced that the Bible is usually about as simple as we let it be. There are mysteries in the Bible that have humbled the most brilliant minds that have ever lived. If we go through the Bible looking for deep dark mysteries, we will discover mysteries we will never unravel. But if we go through the Bible looking for simple lessons, we will discover an abundance of simple lessons to feed and instruct us.

It has been said that the Bible is a stream in which a lamb may wade, or an elephant may swim—in different places. That is true, but it is also true that when we go through the Bible looking for simple lessons, some of the most profound lessons become much more simple. And when we go through the Bible looking for some profound lesson, even the simple lessons become harder to understand.

It is fairly clear that Jacob is a symbolic character. The lessons are spread all across the page. When we read his life and his struggles, we constantly come face to face with ourselves. He looks far too much like all of us not to be a figure of us, a symbol of all we are, both by nature and by the grace of God. In his very first experience, Jacob demonstrated that he is a sinner. As soon as he was born, to the best of his ability, he attacked his brother; he grabbed him by the heel. And he spent the rest of his life mistreating his brother, and taking advantage of him. Jacob came into this world a sinner, and at the first opportunity, he demonstrated his sinful nature.

There is a popular notion that we came into the world as innocent little babies, and then after twelve years or so, we finally learn to be sinners. We are told that about age twelve children “learn to know right from wrong.” Others say that happens about age seven. I do not know where anybody ever got that idea; it does not make any kind of sense. If tiny children do not already know something about the difference between right and wrong, you are wasting

your time to correct them when they do wrong. You can be sure that if you do not correct a child until he is twelve years old, or even seven years old, you are wasting your time to start then. The battle is already over; you have lost him.

I have heard it said that if you want to know the truth, you should ask a child, but that is not entirely true. A child will tell you the truth, if he is not afraid of the truth. But if he is afraid of the truth, there is a good chance that he will tell the most bodacious lies to get away from the truth. You may come into the room, and your three year old is standing there with a crayon in his hand. There are crayon marks all over the wall. You ask him who made the marks, and there is a good chance he has no idea who did it. It may be that somebody from down the street came in and marked all over the wall and left.

[Ps 58:3](#), “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born speaking lies.” That is about as clear as it can be. Children come into this world knowing how to lie; they have to be taught to tell the truth. If I say that children know how to lie before they learn how to talk, I am sure that somebody will think I am exaggerating, but that is exactly what the verse says. They “go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.”

Let me prove that. One of the great benefits God provided for babies is the ability to cry in order to get attention when they are in need. It is hard to imagine the problems that might result if babies could not cry when they need to. On the other hand, every one of us knows what we mean by the expression, “That baby is just spoiled.” We mean that the baby has learned how to get attention by crying—pretending to be in need—when there is not a thing wrong. He does not know how to talk; but he does know how to lie in order to get his way. “They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.” He does not know how to talk, but he does know how to lie.

Selfishness is one of those characteristics we inherited from Adam. It was one of the characteristics of his rebellion against his Maker. Adam wanted for himself the honor and majesty that belonged only to God. The serpent promised him, “Ye shall be as gods” ([Ge 3:5](#)). Adam took the bait; he wanted what did not belong to him; he sinned, and he passed to all of his offspring that selfish nature that characterized his sin.

Every person descended from Adam possesses the nature of Adam. By his own willful act Adam became selfish; he acted selfishly; that selfishness became a part of his nature, and he passed that nature to all mankind. No sooner does the brand new baby manifest any kind of disposition, than he demonstrates that he inherited a selfish nature. He proves how selfish he is of his mother’s time and attention. No matter how busy she may be, and no matter what else she may need to do, he wants her to see about him, and he wants her to see about him now.

That disposition does not change as he gets older. You can set a little two year old baby in the middle of the floor among all his toys. He is just old enough to sit up and handle his toys. He really only needs two toys, one for each hand, but he has toys all around him. He has not even noticed some of them. Now you set another two year old next to him, and watch what happens. The new baby picks up one of the first baby's toys, and the fireworks start. The first baby was not playing with that toy, but he does not intend for anybody else to pick it up. We did not learn to be selfish. We were born that way. That selfish nature was bred in the bone. It is as much a part of our nature as our fingers and toes.

If those two babies are within reach of each other, as little as they are, there is some chance the first baby will hit the other baby on the head with anything he may have in his hand. Not only did we come into this world with a selfish nature; we were born knowing how to hit. Children have to be taught how to get along; they already know how to fight. As they get older, they learn better and more effective ways of fighting, but from the very outset, they are willing to hit anybody who does not please them.

Again, Jacob is a figure of every heaven born soul. He is a figure of what we are by nature, and he is a figure of what God has made us by his grace. In his grabbing his brother by the heel as soon as he was born, he represents that sinful and corrupt nature we all inherited from Adam, and which we began to manifest just as early in life as Jacob did.

[Ge 25:27-34](#), “And the boys grew: and Esau was a mighty hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage and lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his; birthright.”

This is the next thing we read about Jacob; he cheated his brother out of his birthright. Jacob was a wheeler dealer. He was a con-man, a trickster. The name *Jacob* means supplanter. According to Webster *supplant* means “to supercede or replace (another) especially by force, cunning, etc.” He was not the sort of person you wanted to do business with, and if you did do business with him, you should always count your change. There is a covetous nature in every person born of Adam. Adam coveted that honor which belonged only to

God; that covetousness became a part of his nature, and he passed that nature on to every one of his posterity.

Esau was *a man of the field*; he enjoyed hunting. On this occasion he stayed with the hunt too long. By the time he got home, he was so exhausted and hungry, he thought he was dying. He knew his brother Jacob was a good cook, so he asked him to feed him. [Ge 25:29](#) tells us that “Jacob sod pottage, and Esau came from the field.” That seems to indicate that the food was already prepared, but Jacob was in no mood to share it with his brother. He had, no doubt, been waiting for this opportunity. He intended to take his brother’s birthright, if he could; now he had the opportunity.

Jacob and Esau were twins. We have always heard how close and affectionate twins are, and, no doubt, that is true, but bear in mind that Jacob was a sinner, and he was acting out that carnal nature every sinner has. This was his twin brother, but he could starve to death for all Jacob cared--unless he agreed to sell his birthright. In order that we might learn from him, God suffered Jacob to demonstrate what we all are by nature. Esau thought he was dying, but Jacob would not feed him— not until he got what he wanted. Esau was not innocent in the matter. [Ge 25:34](#) tells us that he *despised his birthright*; but I am not on Esau’s case; right now, I am looking at Jacob.

It is easy for us to look at this despicable act and be disgusted with Jacob. It is easy for us to square our shoulders, throw out our chest and allow, “I will never do any such thing as that.” But you do not know that. I don’t know that. None of us knows what we might do if the situation presented itself.

Sometimes somebody uses the expression, “If I know my own heart.....” Let me tell you: you don’t. The prophet said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” [Jer 17:9](#).

We are all sinners by nature and sinners by practice. We inherited a sinful, corrupt nature from Adam, and that nature affects all we say and do. None of us is nearly so righteous as we would like to think we are.

The next thing the Bible tells us about Jacob is that he stole his brother’s blessing. There were both a birthright and a blessing that belonged to the firstborn child in the family. Jacob swindled Esau out of his birthright. I doubt anybody would claim that Jacob made a fair trade with Esau in the matter of the birthright.. They did make a deal, but Jacob took advantage of Esau’s distress, to say the least. But when their father Isaac thought he was dying, Jacob saw the opportunity to take the blessing that belonged to Esau. He did not bother to make a deal; he simply stole the blessing.

“And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said, Behold here I am. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death, Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver

and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; and make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.” [Ge 27:1-4](#). Isaac thought he was close to death. As it happened, he lived, at least, another twenty years. But anyway, he thought he was close to death, and it was time for him to pronounce his blessing on his first born son Esau.

“And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may bless thee before the Lord before my death. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth: And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death,” [Ge 27:5-10](#). Not only was Jacob a sinner; his mother was a sinner as well. Every person born of Adam is a sinner. Rebekah was a sinner as surely as all the rest of us are. Just as Jacob had waited for the opportunity to defraud his brother out of the birthright; Rebekah had patiently waited for the opportunity to assist Jacob in stealing the blessing.

“Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,” [Ro 5:12](#).

“And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son: And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob,” [Ge 27:11-17](#). At the first Jacob did not seem interested in the plot; but we should not get the wrong idea. He was perfectly willing to steal the blessing; he just did not want to get caught. As soon as he saw how they could pull it off, he was more than willing.

Now, bear in mind that it is very unlikely Rebekah could have prepared those skins for Jacob to wear on his hands and neck in the very little time it took to kill and prepare that meal. In order for those skins to fit well enough to convince Isaac, Rebekah must have spent weeks, or even months getting them ready. And notice that the “goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau” was already “with her in the house.” I would not be surprised if Esau had been

wondering for days what happened to that garment. Rebekah was truly a sinner as surely as Jacob was—and a conniving sinner at that.

“And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me. And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau’s hands: so he blessed him. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am,” [Ge 27:18-24](#).

I have always heard that you can spot a liar—a liar can never look you in the eye. But that is not entirely right. That only applies to amateur liars. I have met a few liars in my time who could look you squarely in the eye, put on their most honest face, and lie through their teeth. Jacob was that kind of liar. He had this lying business down to an art. He could lie to his old blind daddy, get caught, lie again, get caught again, and just keep on lying until his father believed him. Jacob truly was a sinner—a sinner saved by grace, but a sinner after all.

Years later, in Padan-aram, Jacob bargained with Laban for the hand of Rachel, his younger daughter. He worked seven years for Rachel, but on the wedding night, it was her sister Leah whom Laban delivered to Jacob. Jacob deceived his blind father, and pretended to be his brother Esau. In the dark of that wedding night, Leah pretended to be her sister Rachel. You do reap what you sow. Jacob deceived Isaac, and Leah deceived Jacob. If you mistreat other people; other people will mistreat you. The people who mistreat you will not likely be the same people you mistreated, but the principle holds; you do reap what you sow.

As you might imagine, when Esau learned what had happened, he was upset, and he decided that the best thing he could do was to do away with Jacob.

“And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? For he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright: and, behold now he hath taken away my blessing.....And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob,” [Ge 27:36,41](#).

Rebekah should not have been surprised at Esau’s reaction. He had every right to be upset. She called Jacob and advised him that it would be a good idea for him to leave the country for awhile. “And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger

son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; and tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away," [Ge 27:42-44](#).

Jacob was a fraud; he was a liar and a thief. He had cheated his brother and stolen from him, and he lied to his father, but before he left for Padan-aram, his father Isaac called him to his bedside and pronounced his blessing on him. "And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham," [Ge 28:1-4](#).

Let me ask you: do you believe Isaac blessed Jacob, because he had been such an obedient son? No, of course not. He blessed Jacob in spite of all he was and all he had done. Any blessing he pronounced on Jacob was entirely unmerited on his part. Not only was Jacob a figure of all we are by nature he is a figure of all God has done for us by his grace.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast," [Eph 2:8-9](#).

"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which have spoken to thee of," [Ge 28:10-15](#)

We cannot imagine a more awesome experience. Here was this rebellious sinner lying down to sleep in the middle of the wilderness, with nothing more than a rock for his pillow. He was, no doubt, miles from any other human being, and there, all alone in the world, the very God of heaven appears to him and makes him this long list of great promises. He shows him a vision of a

ladder reaching all the way to heaven itself; he identifies himself as the God of Abraham and Isaac; he promises to give him that entire country for an everlasting inheritance; at a time when he did not have a wife, he promised him that his offspring would be as the very dust of the earth and that they would spread out to the four winds; he promises him that he will be with him and keep him anywhere he goes, and that he will not leave him until he has done everything he promised. And all of that was not from another man such as himself, but from the Almighty himself. It would not hurt to go back and read the text again, and try to imagine a more mind boggling experience. This was the pinnacle of Jacob's experience. This was the high point in his life. This was the moment he remembered, thought on, and savored as long as he lived. Just before he died in Egypt many years later, he called Joseph to his bedside and told him, "God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me. And he said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give thee this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession," [Ge 48:3-4](#). Jacob had his ups and downs; he lived a long and chequered life. But at that moment, in the very shadow of death, he remembered the day long before when God came to him.

Jacob was a symbol of the child of God in this experience as he was in all the others. Compare his experience with the most common notion in the religious world today. Religious types run the length and breadth of the land telling people, "God wants to save you, but you will have to take the first step;" "God wants to save you, but you will have to meet him half way." I would like for one of them to show how Jacob fits that formula. Here was Jacob, a rebellious sinner. He had defrauded his brother of his birthright; he had stolen his blessing; he had deceived his poor old blind daddy, and now he was running away from the scene of the crime. The only thought on his mind was running as fast as he could, and as far as he could, to escape the consequence of his sins. He was as repugnant as the rest of Adam's sinful race. He did not deserve saving, and yet God came to him and saved him by his grace.

God only has one way of saving sinners. The way he saved Jacob is the way he saves every sinner. If you think you deserved saving more than Jacob did, it is because you have never been able to see yourself as the sinner we all are. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first," [Ge 28:16-19](#).

Then realizing who it was that had appeared to him, Jacob made, perhaps, the most heart felt promise he had ever made. Listen to his language: “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee,” [Ge 28:20-22](#).

It has been almost fifty years since I first read those words, and ever so many times during those years I have marveled at the sweet and precious promise Jacob made to his Lord on that day. What a commitment that old sinner made to his Lord.

But, wait—things are not always what they seem. Finally, after all those years, I read those words one more time, and I realized that Jacob was not saying what I thought he was saying at all. It was, no doubt, the most heartfelt promise he had ever made, and he was, no doubt, as sincere as he had ever been. But the promise was not nearly so commendable I thought it was. Read it again. “IF the Lord will be with me, and [IF] he will keep me in this way that I go, and [IF] he will give me bread to eat, and [IF he will give me] raiment to put on, and [IF he will] bring me again to my father’s house in peace; THEN shall the Lord be my God.”

Jacob was trying to strike a deal with the Lord.

Jacob, the supplanter, Jacob the con-artist, Jacob the wheeler dealer, was trying to bargain with the Lord. He was saying, “You can be my Lord--but first you will have to come to terms. First we have to agree on what I am going to get out of this arrangement.”

This was the highest point in Jacob’s life. He would never be closer to the Lord than this, and yet, at that very time he still had that same old carnal nature, that same weakness of the flesh he had always had.

At this point in his life Jacob was a very clear illustration of David’s statement, “Verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity,” [Ps 39:5](#). Notice that he is not talking about some men; it is *every man*. It is not at his worst state, but *at his best state*. And he is not somewhat vain; he is rather *altogether vanity*. There is no way human language can make this statement any more strongly than these words say it; and because language cannot say it any more forcefully, he simply underscores the entire statement with a *verily*. We are all of us like Jacob of old; either we are saved by the sovereign, unmerited grace of God, or we are not saved at all. Not one of us could stand justified before God on our own merit.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

[Mt 22:35-40](#), “Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” The Lord says everything hangs on these two commandments. Now, if these two commandments support everything else, it certainly behooves us that we learn what these two commandments are all about. And, for that matter, if everything hangs on this, it will not do much good to learn anything else, if we miss this.

But he did not stop there. In the Sermon on the Mount he said, “But I say unto you, **love your enemies**, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you,” [Mt 5:44](#). And in his letter to the Romans Paul says, “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head,” [Ro 14:20](#).

It is easy enough to love those who love you. It is easy enough to love your wife and children. It is easy to love your friends, and those who do good things for you, but loving your enemies is something else again. How do you love those who do you harm? How do you love those who cast out your name as evil? How do you love those who want to see you suffer?

There can be no mistake; that is what he said. Not only did he instruct us to love God, and to love our neighbor; he instructed us to love our enemies. He went on to instruct us to feed him if he is hungry, and to give him drink if he is thirsty. Those are the Lord's instructions, but how do we do it?

If you ask any professing Christian if he loves his enemies, there is a good chance that he will say he does, or that he does the best he can to love them. Sometimes he will say that he loves his enemies, but some of them are mighty hard to love. And, sometimes, if you find somebody who is more honest than most, he will tell you that there are a few people, he has tried to love, but he just has not been able to do it.

You will probably get more hedging, and dodging the issue, on this question than you will on any other question you will ever ask. You will get more exceptions, more explanations, more qualified answers, on this question than on just about any other question.

The fact is that it is a very rare person, who really does love his enemies, no matter how hard he may try to convince you otherwise.

In this little booklet I want to show you that, not only is the commandment to love our enemies a reasonable commandment (the Lord has never given us

any unreasonable requirements), but it is also much easier than most of us have ever imagined. When we better understand the matter, it becomes not only a duty to be performed, and a worthy goal to pursue; it becomes our delight to love our enemies (if we have been blessed to have any), and we can learn to appreciate them, even when they try to do us harm. When we better understand the matter, we realize that there are benefits we often receive at the hands of our most bitter enemies, that we could never have received from our friends.

In this command to love our enemies the Lord provides us with the most powerful, and the most effective, weapon we will ever have. It absolutely revolutionizes warfare, so far as the personal conflicts of this life are concerned. It simply blows the enemy away, and at the same time, it lays the only sure ground for a lasting peace.

In August of 1945, the United States introduced a weapon that revolutionized warfare. We were at war with Japan. The world had never seen such a war as the Second World War was. Virtually the entire world was at war. The United States and the Allies were winning the war, but they still had a long way to go. Japan was losing, but it would not be an easy matter to invade Japan, and clear out the opposition. With strong pockets of resistance here and there, the war could have gone on for a long time, and thousands more lives would be lost.

Then on August 6, the United States dropped a bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, that just blew the enemy away. A few days later they dropped another bomb on Nagasaki, and the war rapidly came to a close.

Albert Einstein worked out the basic formula: $E=MC^2$; energy equals mass times the square of the speed of light. He convinced President Roosevelt the bomb would work. Enrico Fermi, Edward Teller, Ernest Orlando Lawrence, Robert Oppenheimer, and the other Oak Ridge scientists worked out the practical application, and the United States produced a bomb such as the world had never seen. There was nothing that could stand before it. It just blew the enemy away.

Einstein and those other scientists did not come up with any new form of energy. That formula, and that energy, were locked in the nucleus of the Uranium 235 atom from the first day of creation. Those scientists just learned how to turn it loose. The power had been there all along.

When the Lord answered that Jewish lawyer in the twenty-second chapter of Matthew, he did not introduce some new principle. That principle was at the very heart of the old Law Service. We find essentially the same language in Deuteronomy, chapter six. But it is much older than that; it is bound up in the very nature of God himself. [1Jo 4:7-8](#), “Beloved, let us love one another; for

love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for **God is love.**”

God is love, and it is his sovereign good pleasure to love even his enemies.

[Ro 5:8-10](#), “But **God commendeth his love toward us**, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, **when we were enemies**, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

God loved us when we were his enemies, and he commands us to love those who are our enemies. It is his delight to love his enemies, and when we understand the truth aright, it becomes—not our duty—but our delight to love our enemies.

In many ways, love for your enemies (if it is genuine love) is very much like the atomic bomb. There had never been a weapon such as that. It literally blew the enemy away. Nobody could stand before it. Love for your enemies does that. In the conflicts of life, it is a weapon like no other. It blows the enemy away. Nobody can stand before the power of genuine love. It is our failure to understand this one simple principle that has crippled most of us in our dealings with conflict in our lives.

Love for your enemies is the ultimate weapon. As irresistible as it is, it is very different than any other weapon. It is irresistible in its force, and it strips the adversary of his defenses, but it does not do him any lasting harm, and it provides the only sure basis for peace.

I know that some, perhaps most, of those reading these lines are thinking this idea might work in theory, but in actual practice, it is a different matter; loving your enemies is not nearly so easy a matter as you say it is. Some of you are thinking, “Harold Hunt, if you knew what that rascal did to me, you would not be so glib to talk about loving your enemies,” or, “Harold Hunt, you don’t know how my life has been; you don’t know how I have been mistreated. If you had been mistreated the way I have, you would hold a grudge too.” But I want to show you that it does work. God would never have given the commandment, if it did not work. And, not only does it work; but properly understood, it becomes one of the most valuable lessons of your life. Some of you are, no doubt, saying, the way the disciples did in [Joh 6](#), “This is a hard saying; who can hear it.” But it is not a hard saying; it is a lesson fully in line with the influence of the Spirit of God that lives in your hearts.

There is an insurance company, which for several years now has been running a commercial on television advising people to “Simplify your life.” They think it will simplify your life, if you will just buy your life insurance from them. I am not sure they are right, but they think they are. At least, they want you to think they are right. But whether it will simplify your life to buy your

life insurance from that company or not, it certainly will simplify your life if you can learn to follow the Lord more closely, and keep his commandments more faithfully.

Loving your enemies is not hard. If you want to know something that is really hard, just try to get even with your enemy—and stay on good terms with the Lord at the same time. If you want to tackle a hard job, that is a hard job. James tells us that “a double minded man is unstable in all his way,” [Jas 1:8](#). He is unstable because he is trying to do two things at once. And if ever anybody was double minded, it is the man who is trying to get even with his enemy, and still get along with the Lord. You just cannot do it.

When I was growing up, my father was the pastor of a church in a little mountain community in Western North Carolina. I used to go with him to fill his appointments. One Sunday we went home with an old couple for lunch. The old brother told us about some experiences he had back during *hard times*. Now he was not talking about the Great Depression. This was in the fifties, and the brother was old at that time. He was talking about the way things were in those mountains in the early part of this century, before industrialization came to that area.

At that time people in the mountains depended on wild game to supply their table. He told about one day when he went hunting for wild turkeys. He only had one bullet, but he was a crack shot, and he was sure that if he saw a turkey, one bullet would be enough. As luck would have it, he spotted two turkeys. In those days, bringing home two turkeys was a real treat. But he just had one bullet. The old man insisted that he really was a crack shot, and he was sure that if he could get those two turkeys lined up just right, he could bring both of them down with one bullet. He told how he kept edging around, trying to find just the right spot, where he would have those turkeys lined up just right. He told how very quiet he was, and how very carefully he placed his feet so he would not make a sound. He did not want to scare the turkeys. He finally found a spot where he had those two turkeys lined up just right—and he shot off the heads of both those turkeys with one bullet. That old man had a reputation for telling the truth, and I had been taught to respect my elders, but to be honest about it—I really did not believe him. It has been almost fifty years now since the old brother told that story, but try as I may, I still cannot believe he shot off both those turkeys’ heads with one bullet.

But to get back to the subject, if you think it is unlikely that somebody could shoot off the heads of two wild turkeys with the same bullet, that is not nearly as hard as trying to get even with your enemy, and get along with the Lord at the same time. You can be sure that you could kill turkeys two at a time all

day long much more easily than you could stay on good terms with the Lord at the same time you are figuring a way to do harm to your enemy.

It is really no problem to love your enemy. The hard part is getting your own heart right. If you can straighten out your own thinking, your enemy will not be a problem. If we will spend our time and energy in working on our own prejudices, and our own hangups, by the time we get that problem fairly well solved, we will discover that we do not really have a problem with the person who might have been trying to do us harm.

David said, "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them," [Ps 119:165](#). It is hard to offend somebody whose mind is firmly anchored in Christ. In fact, this verse says you cannot do it. We only have time for one battle at a time, and if we will fight the battle of getting our own thinking straight, we will not need to fight the other battle. It will simplify your life.

It is no accident that the word *mad* is a synonym for *angry*, and it is also a synonym for *insane*. The providence of God was involved in the formation of languages. For the most part, there is a very solid foundation under the form and structure of the various languages.

When we refer to a *madman*, we are not generally talking about an angry person. We are talking about somebody who is insane. When a person gets angry, he goes more than a little insane. Anger blinds our judgment, and makes us think things we would not have thought if we were in a calmer frame of mind. When we become angry with somebody, it is easy to think much more harshly of them than we should. It is easy to think their motives are much worse than they really are.

For several years, when I was working in the insurance business, I had a district manager who was an expert at handling people. His ability to handle people (and to manipulate them some of the time) allowed him to retire a quite wealthy person. One of his working slogans said, "We are all crazy some of the time; the trick is not to be crazy at the same time as the other person." He was probably right. I am convinced that the only two entirely sane men who ever lived were the first Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ. I am convinced that a touch of insanity has infected all of mankind ever since the sin of Adam. It just affects some people more strongly than it does others. And it affects us more at some times than it does at other times. Sin has put our hearts and minds out of balance, and it is seen to one degree or another in everything we do.

Most of our conflict with other people is the result of the fact that we are not thinking straight. Most of our trouble is in our own minds. We are in trouble, because we think we are in trouble. We are injured by the other person, because we think we have been injured. Most of the time, if our own thinking

was right, we would not be offended in the first place. This is what David meant in the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm. “Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them,” [Ps 119:165](#).

Mark Twain said a lot that will not do to repeat. But he was a brilliant man, and when he told it right, he could hit the nail on the head. Mark Twain used to say, “My life has been one long series of great tragedies, most of which never happened.” Very few of us have ever had as much trouble as we think we have. We just have a tendency to walk around under a cloud, expecting the sky to fall—and it never does. Things are usually not nearly as bad as we think they are. As a general rule, things are bad, because we think they are. Somebody has said there are three ages of man. At age twenty, he does not care what anybody thinks about him. At age forty he does care what people think about him. And at age sixty he discovers that nobody is thinking about him. As a general rule, there are not nearly as many people on our case as we think there are. Other people have problems of their own. It is unlikely they are thinking about you in the first place. And if they are, it is unlikely that you have been injured nearly as much as you think you have.

Most of the time, when we suffer, our misery is the result of our thinking. We suffer because we think we are suffering. We are injured because we think we have been injured. If we could get our thinking straight, our misery would disappear, and our attitude toward our enemy would entirely change.

I believe that just a few illustrations will demonstrate that fact. One of the worst problems any person could experience is to starve for lack of food. Starvation is synonymous with great distress. We read about pitiful situations in places like Ethiopia, and Somalia, and Bosnia, where people are literally starving to death, and our feelings are deeply stirred. But it is also a fact that millions of people here in America are starving. Untold numbers of people right here in my home town go to bed hungry every night, and get up hungry every morning. They go through the day hungry, and much of their thought is about food they cannot have. But as hungry as they are, there is no government agency that is making any effort to do anything about it.

There is no agency that can help, because these people have money sufficient to buy all the food they need. There is food in the refrigerator, but they do not eat it. Their problem is not in any inability to acquire the necessary food.

Their problem is that they are concerned about their weight. They have decided that they have to lose weight, and they deny themselves food in order to do it. I am not trying to be funny; the point is simply this: their hunger pains are just as real as the hunger pains of the person who is not able to acquire the necessary food.

But while their hunger pains are just as real, it would be a mistake to think they suffer in the same way those people do, who are not able to get the food

they need. Their suffering is diminished, because they know they could have the food any time they make up their minds they want it. They do not suffer the mental anguish those people do, who know that they cannot have the food, no matter how much they may want it. I do not, in any way, want to minimize the suffering those people experience who are going without food. Those of us who have never been in that condition cannot begin to imagine the way those poor people must suffer, knowing that they are not able to acquire the food they need.

But the point is still the same. There are people in our own country, who are depriving themselves of food, without any appreciable anguish, because in their own minds they know they can have the food any time they want it. The primary difference is in their minds, and how they think about it.

But consider another example. Suppose your worst enemy were to sneak up behind you, and just blindside you. He hauls off and knocks the living daylights out of you, and while he has you off balance, he continues you whip up on you. He leaves you all dirty and bloody, and perhaps, he even inflicts an injury that bothers you as long as you live. Very few of us have ever had any such experience, but if we did, we would think that, of all people, we had been sorely mistreated. We would probably have mean thoughts toward that person as long as we live, and it is unlikely that he could ever do anything to regain our confidence.

But again, the problem is more in our perception of the problem than it is in the reality of what happened. Every Saturday at this time of year eighty to one hundred thousand people gather here in Knoxville for the express purpose of watching twenty-two men spend the afternoon whipping up on each other. Those twenty-two men maul each other mercilessly, because they cannot agree about who is going to have possession of a little football, and they cannot agree on which way they are going to run with it. All afternoon they push, and shove, and grab each other. And all the while, that entire crowd jumps up and down and hollers like a bunch of heathens.

And you can be sure that half the men in the stands would give a month's wages, if they could be down there on the field taking part in the affair. It is unlikely that your worst enemy will ever manhandle you the way those men manhandle each other. Some of them will receive injuries that will plague them as long as they live. If our worst enemy treated us like that, we would feel that we had been sorely mistreated, but those men feel to be highly honored to be part of the game.

Again, the suffering we experience is largely in our own minds. It depends, for the most part, on the way we look at it. The pain those football players experience is no less real than it would be if it was some enemy who sneaked

up behind one of them and began to beat up on him, but the one is cause for offence, while the other is counted to be routine and expected.

In this connection we cannot fail to remember the day when Peter and some others were arrested and beaten, because they had been preaching in the Lord's name, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name," [Ac 5:41](#).

Consider just one more example. When we hear that somebody has been casting out our name as evil, it causes us great distress. Nobody enjoys having his good name slandered. And when somebody says something bad about us, we have a tendency to say something just as bad about him. But, no matter how harshly you may have been judged by somebody else, he has probably not said anything about you that is worse than you have (in the privacy of your own mind) said about yourself. I cannot imagine that anybody has ever been so disgusted with me as I have often been with myself. I cannot imagine that anybody has ever judged me more severely than I have judged myself. Why should I feel so mistreated, when others judge me in the same manner that I have judged myself?

We should take some comfort when others criticize. The Lord placed a great woe on the man every man speaks well of. The fact that others criticize you when you do well is nothing more than the faithful child of God should expect. And if they criticize you because you have done wrong, you have nobody to blame but yourself. [1Pe 2:20](#), "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

I enjoy reading the book of Job. Job is the oldest book in the Bible, and for that matter, the oldest book in the world. There is sufficient internal evidence in the book of Job to indicate that it was probably written about three or four generations after Abraham's day. And it was probably written some time before Moses' day. At least, it was written before the Law of Moses became commonly known. Job and his friends never once quoted the Law of Moses. It is obvious those men were well informed people, and as widely read as they were, if the Law of Moses had yet been given, or if it had been around for any time, those men would have quoted from it.

For the most part, the book of Job is a transcript of a long running conversation between Job and his friends. And in listening to them talk, we discover that they talked about exactly the same things we talk about today. They talked about sin and salvation. They talked about redemption, and regeneration, and resurrection. And more than that, they talked about their troubles.

In chapter fourteen, we read, "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble," [Job 14:1](#). That theme runs all through the book. They spent

much of their time talking about their troubles. Things have not changed much. Four thousand years have passed since that day, and people still like to talk about their troubles.

But talking about your troubles is about the most unprofitable activity you can engage in. You can count on it that if you tell somebody your troubles, you will discover that he is sure he has a worse problem than you have. And if he does not have a worse problem than you have, there was a time when used to have a worse problem. And if there never was a time when he had a worse problem than you have, he knows somebody who did. He will top you, even if he has to borrow something from somebody else to do it. It is kind of like the old saying, "The first liar does not stand a chance."

Somebody has said, "If you must talk about your troubles, don't burden your friends, tell your worst enemy; he would love to hear it." He may not even want to talk to you, but if you will send word that you want to tell him how badly things are going with you, he will probably find time for you. He might even cancel something else to listen to you.

There are lessons you will learn in adversity that you will never learn in any other way. There are lessons to be learned in the furnace of affliction, that you cannot learn when things are going well, and the sun is shining on your way. There is a little rhyme I learned a long time ago. It went something like this:

I walked a mile with Pleasure,
She chattered all the way,
But not a thing I learned from her,
For all she had to say.
I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And not a word said she,
But, Oh, the things I learned from her,
When Sorrow walked with me.

Most of us have experienced times when it seemed that our entire world was falling apart, times when it seemed that everything we had ever worked for was coming to nothing. No doubt, you have experienced times, that every night, when you went to bed, you lay awake for two hours or more. Your problems were pressing down on you so heavily that all you could do was lie there and stare at the ceiling in a cold sweat. You were terrified at the prospect of what appeared to be coming your way. Sometime in the night you would finally fall asleep, only to wake up long before time to get up, just as tired as you were when you lay down, and just as terrified at your situation. Perhaps, this went on for weeks, or even months.

It would be foolish for anybody to try to convince you that was a good time in your life. It was not. You have never been so miserable. It was an absolute nightmare. No doubt, there were some times of great blessing even then.

There were times in the midst of your troubles, when the Lord seemed to be so very near, and you would not take anything for those moments. But, on the whole, it was a miserable time.

But miserable as you were, deliverance did finally come. In one way or another, the Lord brought you through. Perhaps, he delivered you in a way you would never have imagined, but he did deliver you. The Lord has promised that he will never forsake us, and over and over again, he has proven that he is faithful to his promise. [1Co 1:10](#), “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.”

There is nothing that can convince us that God will deliver us the way we are convinced by the fact that he has always delivered us in the past. We can preach that he will deliver us, because we have read his promises, but until we have experienced that deliverance, we can never believe it in the way that we believe it after deliverance does come. And the more distressing the problem we face, and the longer we languish under that problem, and the more desperate our situation, the more keenly we appreciate deliverance when it does come. The sweeter the deliverance is to us, and the more precious the memory of how God has delivered us.

When I was a boy, everybody in our community went barefoot from the time it got warm enough in the spring until it turned cold in the fall. Except for Sundays, we just did not wear shoes in the summer. When you go barefoot all summer, there are plenty of times when you stub your toe, and sometimes you stub it really hard. And you could be sure that if you stubbed your toe really hard, one of your little buddies was going to assure you, “That will feel good, when it quits hurting.” When anybody told me that, I always wanted to hit him, but I was always the smallest kid on the block, and when you are the smallest kid around, you learn to be selective about who you hit.

But I can tell you that in this matter of God's delivering us from the problems of this life, it really does “feel good when it quits hurting.” It feels good when deliverance finally does come.

There is nothing—absolutely nothing—that strengthens our faith, the way it is strengthened by deliverance from great adversity. That person who comes through the darkest valley receives a benefit he could not have received in any other way, and he receives blessing that others, who have never been there, can never know.

One of the most encouraging stories in the Bible is the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. We usually refer to them as the Three Hebrew Children. The King of Babylon had erected a huge, vulgar, idol in the plain of Dura ([Da 3:1](#)). The idol was *three-score cubits* tall and *six cubits* wide. That is about ninety feet tall and nine feet wide. The text calls it an *image of gold*, gold plated, no doubt. That idol, covered with highly polished gold, must have

glistened in the sun. It was a sight to inspire the heart of any superstitious pagan. Judging from the nature of the religion of Babylon, it would have inspired him with some of the most vulgar, degrading thoughts, but it inspired him, nonetheless.

The king made a decree that at the sound of all kinds of music, everybody should bow down and “worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up,” ([Da 3:5](#)). And that “whosoever falleth not down and worshipeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.” But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refused to bow, and somebody told the king. The king commanded that the men be brought to him. He wanted to know why they had not bowed down and worshiped his image, and he told them they were about to be thrown into the furnace. He wanted to know if their God was able to deliver them from the fire. They told him, “We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up,” ([Da 3:16-18](#)). They were not sure whether God would deliver them from the fire, but they had no intention of bowing to the king's image.

The king commanded them to “heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated” ([Da 3:19](#)), and the three men were thrown in the fire. The fire was so hot that it killed the men who threw them in. But when the king looked in the furnace, the text says that he was *astonied*, and he said, “Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?.....Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God,” ([Da 3:24-25](#)).

The inside of that furnace had to be fairly small. In order to gold plate the image they had just erected, they needed a furnace to melt the gold, and the inside of the furnace had to be small enough to concentrate the heat. In order to concentrate the heat that much, it is surprising that the inside of the furnace was large enough to contain the men, much less to give them enough room to walk around, but the text does say that they were “walking in the midst of the fire.”

The point is this: these men were walking in the midst of the fire—and more than that—they were walking with their Lord. They had never in all their lives walked so closely with their Lord as they were walking with him at that very moment. They were in the fire, but they were in the fire with the Lord. If a closer walk with the Lord is the greatest treasure in all the world to you—if walking more closely with the Lord means more to you than life itself—then being in the fire is a small price to pay. Why should we object to being in the fire, if it is in the fire that we find the one treasure we have

searched for all our lives. If it is in the fire that we find our greatest fulfillment, why should we feel any kind of resentment toward those who put us there. After all, though the people who threw us in the fire may, in every other respect, be our most bitter enemies, why should we feel any kind of animosity toward them. They have helped us find what we had never been able to find without their help. Why should we not, in a very real way, feel a sense of gratitude toward them that we do not have toward other people. Why should loving our enemies not be a very easy and natural thing, when we realize what they have done for us?

Those men were walking with the Lord—and they were free. They “fell down bound into the midst of the fire,” but when the king looked in, they were loose and walking around. There is no way you can bind those whom the Lord has set free. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,” [Joh 8:36](#). They had never been more free in their lives than they were at that time.

On that dark night, when Paul and Silas were singing and praying at midnight in a Philippian jail, the jailer had “made their feet fast in the stocks” ([Ac 16:24](#)), but they were free. It was only their feet that were bound, and God took care of that. But even when their feet were still bound, they were free. Those fetters did not in the least hinder them from worshiping God. You cannot bind those whom God has set free.

For that matter, the magistrate who put them in jail actually helped them. The jailer needed to hear what Paul and Silas had to say, and the brand new church at Philippi needed the jailer and his family as members. The magistrate just put Paul and Silas in a situation where everything came together. What gospel preacher would not be willing to suffer somewhat, and to spend the night in jail, if the church could receive such a boost?

But back to the three men in the furnace, they received the greatest of all benefits, but it was mighty hard on those men who threw them in.

It is a dangerous thing to mistreat the Lord's little ones. It was mighty hard on those men who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the furnace. In fact, it was downright fatal. How very often we have seen people destroy themselves by trying to destroy others.

How very careful we ought to be in our dealings with others, and we need to realize that principle works both ways. It is a dangerous matter to injure others, but it is also dangerous to injure those who injure us. It is only natural to strike out at those who strike out at us. If they hurt us, we want to hurt them.

It is very natural—and very foolish. God has never given us permission to hurt people, just because they hurt us. It does not make any difference that

they might have been in the wrong. God still does not give us permission to injure others, just because we are convinced that they are in the wrong. There can be no doubt that King Saul was in the wrong, when he and his army went all over the country looking for David and his little band. He intended to find him and kill him, if he could. David had not done him any wrong, and even if he had, that would not have given Saul the right to hunt him and try to destroy him.

David had opportunities of his own to destroy Saul. At Engedi David and his men were hiding in a cave. Saul's army passed by, and Saul went in the cave "to cover his feet,"

[1Sa 24:3](#)). David's men wanted to kill Saul. It was the perfect opportunity, but David refused. He had another opportunity in the Wilderness of Ziph. Abishai begged for permission to kill Saul. If David would not do it, Abishai would be glad to do it for him. But, again, David refused. He said, "The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed," [1Sa 26:11](#). He was perfectly willing to leave the matter in the Lord's hand. He said, "As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish," ([1Sa 26:10](#)).

Saul was in the wrong. He wanted to kill David. He had hunted him all over the country, but he was God's anointed. God had appointed him as king over his people Israel, and David would not lay his hand on him.

Saul was clearly a child of God. When God chose him to be king, he was a very humble man. We are told that he was little in his own sight ([1Sa 15:17](#)). We are told that God gave him a another heart ([1Sa 10:9](#)), and that he was turned into another man ([1Sa 10:6](#)), and that he prophesied ([1Sa 10:10](#)).

Those are not the sort of things the Bible says about the wicked. He made shipwreck of his life, but it is clear enough that he was a child of God. No matter how bitterly we may be opposed by our enemy, it is very possible that he may a child of God. He may be our brother in Christ, and it behooves us to be very careful in our dealings with him.

Not only may that person who has done you harm be your brother in Christ, he may be entirely sincere in his opposition to you. The fact that he is in the wrong does not mean that he is being malicious, or that his motives are necessarily wrong. He may be just as sincere as you are. He may believe that in his opposition to you he is being a strong and stalwart defender of the right.

[Ac 13:50](#), "But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts." Who would deny that Paul and Barnabas were faithful servants of the Lord, and they were doing their best to serve him? Who would deny that they had suffered unjustly? But among those who persecuted Paul and Barnabas were a number of *devout and honorable*

women, along with *the chief men of the city*. These were honest and good people, and yet they were convinced that it was their duty to oppose these men of God, and to drive them out of their country.

The Jews who opposed Paul and Barnabas persuaded these people that Paul and Barnabas were up to no good, and they needed to be stopped. These people were wrong, but they were sincerely wrong. How very often that is the case. Good and honorable people become confused, and wind up opposing the right. And how very careful we ought to be in our reacting to those who oppose us. They may very well be just as sincere as we are. In reacting to those who oppose us we may find ourselves fighting against good and humble children of God, who believe from the depths of their hearts that they are doing right. And if we are not very careful, we may find ourselves injuring one of the Lord's little ones.

The Lord pronounced a terrible woe on any person who would offend one of his little ones. [Mt 18:6](#), "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." A few times in my life I have heard somebody make the comment that some person "would be better off dead." That is a harsh comment, to say the least. But in this passage that is what the Lord says. If a person has a millstone hanged about his neck, and he is drowned in the depth of the sea, he is dead. The Lord says a person would be better off dead than to offend one of his little ones.

It is hard to imagine anything more terrifying than for the Lord to say you would be better off dead. I would certainly hate for the Lord to say that about me. How very careful we ought to be in the conflicts we experience from time to time. We might be in the right—at the outset—and yet in the course of events we oppose those who oppose us. We strike out at those who strike out at us, and we offend some little child of God, who simply thought that by opposing us he was taking a stand for the right.

The Lord commands us to love our enemies, and that is just what he means. It is more than our duty to love our enemies; it is our privilege and our delight to do so. In spite of all of the almost unbearable grief our enemies sometimes lay on us, it is a fact that, by their very meanness and bitterness toward us, they sometimes put us in a situation that we are able to experience a closeness with our Lord that we have never experienced at any other time, and in any other way. As strange as it may seem, our enemies sometimes do us the greatest of all favors at the very time they were trying to do us the greatest harm. And for that we can and should appreciate them.

But while God has called us and instructed us to be kind, and forgiving, and loving, he has not called us to be foolish. We are commanded to love our enemies; we are not commanded to trust them. The fact that we may love our

enemy does not mean that we would walk in front of him on a dark night. We do live in the real world, and the instructions God has given us are for the real world. Not everybody we deal with is interested in our welfare. We are commanded to watch as well as pray. Love your enemy, forgive him, and pray for him—but keep your eye on him. There are those who would very willingly do us harm, and we are not under any obligation to put ourselves at their mercy.

We said at the outset that in this commandment to love our enemies the Lord has given us a weapon that revolutionizes warfare, so far as our day to day conflicts are concerned. A willingness, and even an eagerness, to love your enemies is a weapon that just blows the enemy away. He does not know how to respond. I see a little wall motto from time to time, which says, “Love your enemy; it will drive him crazy.” He tries to do you harm, and he expects you to respond in just as malicious a way as he has dealt with you. But you sincerely love him in return—and he does not know what to do.

This principle only works if you are sincere. If your love for your adversary is only a show, it will backfire on you, and it ought to. To pretend to love somebody, when you secretly want to see him suffer, is hypocrisy, and it will bear its own fruit. In the end it will be shown for what it really is.

I never cease to be amazed at the Bible, and the instructions it gives us about how to go about living our lives. Those instructions are valid for every day and age. They are valid for every situation we will ever encounter. They are the only guide for us to follow, and in this command to love our enemies, it is the most effective course to follow. It leaves the enemy bewildered. He cannot figure out how to respond, and if he ever does get his own heart right, it lays out the only sure ground for peace.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Melchizedek King Of Salem

Melchizedek King of Salem

There is probably no other Old Testament character, whose identity has left more people guessing than Melchizedek. Who was he? Where did he come from? What is his place in the grand scheme of things?

Melchizedek is a mysterious character, who appears once on the pages of history, and then disappears. The one single historical reference to Melchizedek is in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. [Ge 14:18-20](#), “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand, and he gave him tithes of all.”

In [Ps 110](#), David points back to Melchizedek, and prophesies that Christ will be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. [Ps 110:4](#), “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” What does he mean by *the order of Melchizedek*? David does not say.

Paul mentions him several times in the Hebrew letter.

[Heb 5:6](#), “As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” [Heb 5:10](#), “Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.”

[Heb 6:20](#), “Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” [Heb 7:1-7](#), “For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him. To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace. Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham. But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.” [Heb 7:10-11](#), “For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?” [Heb 7:15](#), “And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest.” [Heb 7:17](#), For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” [Heb 7:21](#), “(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek:)”

The name appears eleven times in the Bible. In seven out of those eleven times, the name appears in the expression *the order of Melchizedek*. Who was Melchizedek? Where did he come from? What is his significance? What is meant by the expression *the order of Melchizedek*?

So far as the identity of Melchizedek is concerned, the classical theologians totally fail us. Most of them think he was some obscure Canaanite (Hamitic) prince, who lived in the region of Judea. That was John Gill’s opinion. The

commentaries of Matthew Poole and Jamieson-Fausset-Brown take the same position. Matthew Henry and John Calvin talk about the subject, and mention several different theories, but neither of them ventures to present any opinion of his own. They had no idea who he was.

The one thing that seems to convince those theologians that Melchizedek was a Canaanite prince is that he lived in an area which is most commonly associated with the descendants of Canaan. He was surrounded by Canaanites, so he must be a Canaanite, or so the argument goes. But the argument does not hold. There can be no question that much of that land was associated with the Canaanites, but that does not apply to the entire region. Much of that region was also occupied by the descendants of Eber, the grandson of Shem. Eber was not a Canaanite, nor any other kind of Hamite. He was Semitic, a descendent of Shem. In Genesis chapter forty, when Joseph in an Egyptian prison was stating his plight to the butler and the baker, he told them, “For indeed I was stolen away out of **the land of the Hebrews**” [Ge 40:15](#).

Notice that he did not say I was stolen out of the land of the Canaanites. Now bear in mind that at this time the descendants of Abraham had not yet come into possession of the land. At that time the entire family of Jacob consisted of only seventy people ([Ge 46:27](#)). There were far too few of them to possess that entire land, or to give it their name.

Canaan was one of the sons of Ham; he was Hamitic. The word *Hebrew* indicates a descendant of Eber, the great-grandson of Shem; he was Semitic, not Hamitic.

That raises the question; who was Eber? For eight generations Eber was the only descendant of Shem who outlived him. His name became the name most commonly attached to the descendants of Shem. There were obviously enough of Shem’s Hebrew descendants living in that region for it to be commonly called *the land of the Hebrews*.

More than that, the one central theme with regard to Melchizedek is that Christ was made “a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” How can we imagine that the Lord of Glory was made a priest after the *order* of some obscure Hamitic prince, who appeared once on the pages of history, and then vanished, never to be heard from again? How could some unknown Canaanite be such a clear figure of Christ that Paul spends so much time expounding on that connection, and yet we know nothing about him? If Christ was made a priest forever after the order of some Canaanite prince, what was that order? What was there about him that made him such a clear type of the Messiah? Gill and the others cannot produce their evidence.

Also, the descendants of Canaan were under a special curse. [Ge 9:25](#), “And he said, **cursed be Canaan**: a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.”

That curse fell, not on Canaan alone, but on all his descendants. Would God

choose a member of that race, which was cursed above their brethren, as a figure of Christ? No, rather, the Lord, whose very name is *Blessed* ([Mr 14:61](#)), came to redeem us from under the curse. He did not fashion his priesthood after the ministry of one who was himself under a curse.

Listen to the language of Paul, and see if it sounds like he was talking about some obscure person. “Now consider **how great** this man was, unto whom **even the patriarch Abraham** gave the tenth of the spoils,” [Heb 7:4](#). Paul marvels at the greatness of this man, and tells us that *even the Patriarch Abraham* deferred to him and gave him tithes. That kind of homage is not usually given to some unknown, insignificant individual. Melchizedek was obviously a very prominent person, whose greatness, and whose claim to preeminence was readily recognized by Abraham.

Else, why would Abraham give him tithes? Why should it not have been the other way around? Why should Melchizedek not have rather given tithes to Abraham? Melchizedek did not give tithes to Abraham because **Melchizedek was the greater of the two**. Paul makes that plain enough.

[Heb 7:6-7](#), “But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises, and without all contradiction **the less is blessed of the better**.” Abraham is the father of the nation of Israel. He is one of the most illustrious characters in all of the Old Testament, and by far one of the most notable characters in all of human history. There is no way we can imagine that Abraham received blessing from some obscure Canaanite prince, and that in so doing “the less was blessed of the better.” We cannot imagine that some obscure Canaanite prince was superior to Abraham.

I hope to show that, not only was Melchizedek a very prominent figure, whose importance was readily recognized by Abraham, but that Melchizedek was, at that time, probably the most widely known, and the most influential person in the world. There was no reason anybody should challenge his authority, nor that Abraham should question his right to receive tithes.

I do not like to keep people guessing; so before we go any farther, let me say that I am firmly convinced **Melchizedek was another name for Noah’s middle son Shem**. I hope to present those reasons which convince me that Shem and Melchizedek were the same person. If those arguments do not convince you, I hope you will not feel hard at me for being as firmly convinced as I am in the matter.

Shem was one of Noah’s three sons. It was by those three men, and their sons, that the world was repopulated after the flood. Every human being in the world is a descendant of one or the other of those three men. So Shem stands alone as the ancestor of one of the three grand divisions of the human race. I hope to show that he was one of the most prominent characters in the history

of the world, and one of the most prominent figures in the lineage of the Messiah.

Shem was Abraham's great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather. Notice that he was his seven times (count them) great-grandfather. If we add those seven times to the forty two generations from Abraham to Christ ([Mt 1:17](#)), we have forty nine generations. If seven is a significant number, forty nine—seven times seven—must be somewhat more significant.

I hope to show that Shem and Melchizedek were the same person, that Shem was a figure of Christ, and that his ministry resembled, or prefigured, the ministry of Christ as clearly as the type can ever resemble the antitype. And I hope to show that he was a figure of Christ in ways that no other person ever was or could be.

But, if Melchizedek and Shem were the same person, why does it call him Melchizedek? Why does it not just call him Shem? For whatever the reason, many of the characters in the Bible were called by more than one name. Jacob was often called Israel. Several times he was called Jeshurun ([De 32:15](#); [33:5,26](#); [Isa 15:9](#)). Gideon was sometimes called Jerubbaal (Jud. 6:32); sometimes he was Jerubbesheth ([2Sa 11:21](#)). It would be hard to count all the characters in the Bible who had more than one name.

Melchizedek was the king of Salem. That was probably his kingly name. The suffix *-zedek* is also found in the name of Adonizedek ([Jos 10:1](#)), the king of Jerusalem. We will notice later that Jerusalem and Salem were the same city. When we find two kings of **the same city** having **the same suffix** in their name, it indicates that the suffix might very well have been part of their royal title.

When we read the description Paul gives of Melchizedek, it is easy to get the idea that he could not be talking about any human who ever lived, neither Shem nor anybody else. Paul says that he was “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually,” [Heb 7:3](#). How could any man fit all of those characteristics?

Quite a few Bible students have decided that Paul could not be talking about any mere mortal, and that Melchizedek was simply another name for the Lord himself. But that idea only looks like it solves the problem. First, the text says that Melchizedek was “made like unto the Son of God.” It does not make a lot of sense to say that somebody was like himself. That expression shows that Melchizedek was not the Lord—he was only like the Lord. Second, the Lord did have a mother. Mary was the mother of his human nature, and the Bible often refers to her as his mother ([Joh 2:1,5](#); [19:25](#), etc), and in both his divine nature and his human nature God is his Father ([Joh 20:17](#)).

Also, if Melchizedek was simply another name for the Lord, and the Lord is “a priest after the order of Melchizedek,” then the priesthood of the Lord is the pattern after which the priesthood of the Lord is fashioned. It does not any kind of sense to say that a person is patterned after himself. No, Melchizedek was not the Lord, but he was like the Lord.

If you will bear with me, I hope to show that Shem is unique in all of history, and that those seven expressions do describe him. He is the only man in human history who fits the description given, and it is uncanny how very well he does fit.

The key to the question is in [Heb 7:15](#), “And it is yet far more evident: for that after **the similitude of Melchizedek** there ariseth another priest.” The key word is *similitude*. Similitude indicates appearance or likeness. Christ is a priest after the similitude—after the likeness—of Melchizedek. The priesthood of the Lord is not the priesthood of Melchizedek; but it is like it. There is a clear similitude or resemblance.

We are dealing with a type, and it is the purpose of a type to resemble the antitype. When the text says that Melchizedek was “without father, without mother,” and so on, it is not saying that he absolutely did not have a father or mother. No one who ever lived was absolutely without parents, but within the limits of the type, **Melchizedek clearly resembled one who did not have a father or a mother**. He resembled one without beginning of days, or end of life, and so on. When we accept the key provided by the text itself, and apply that key to the person of Shem, the problem resolves itself.

Shem appeared to be without father, and without mother. He appeared to be without descent, without beginning of days, or end of life. He appeared to have a perpetual, unchangeable priesthood. And he had those appearances as no other person ever did. I believe that all of this will become clear as we go along, and I believe that it will become clear that the type does fit the antitype. Those of you who have read our little booklet on *The Sixteen Ancestors of All Mankind* are already acquainted with the argument I am about to present, but a lot of you have either not read it, or perhaps you have forgotten most of it, so I hope you will pardon me if I simply quote verbatim from that material.

“Before the flood men lived to be very old. If you will look at [Ge 5](#), you will discover that it was not at all uncommon for somebody to live to be almost a thousand years old. Adam lived to be nine hundred and thirty years old ([Ge 5:5](#)). Methuselah lived to be nine hundred and sixty nine ([Ge 5:27](#)), and Noah lived to be nine hundred and fifty ([Ge 9:29](#)). But all of that changed after the flood. For the next several generations they still lived to be very old by our standards, but the life expectancy of each generation dropped rapidly. Genesis chapter eleven gives the ages of the first several generations after the flood. If those life spans, which are listed, are typical of those which are not listed, and

we have no reason to believe they were any different, then, one strange fact becomes evident: for the next eight generations after the flood, the life expectancy of each generation was falling so rapidly, that it was the rule, rather than the exception, for the parents to outlive their children. And not only that, it was the rule for the grandparents to outlive their grandchildren, and for the great-grandparents to outlive their great-grandchildren, and so on. That went on for eight generations or more.”

“Let us take just a moment to see how that worked out. [Ge 11](#) records that “Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood” ([Ge 11:10](#)). He lived “after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years” ([Ge 11:11](#)). So Arphaxad died 502 years (2 years plus 500 years) after the flood. “Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah” ([Ge 11:12](#)) 37 years (2 years plus 35 years) after the flood. Salah lived another 403 years ([Ge 11:15](#)). So he died 440 years after the flood (2 years plus 35 years plus 403 years). Notice that he died 62 years before his father. The eleventh chapter of Genesis has all the numbers. You can work out the arithmetic for yourselves, but here is a listing of the date of death of each of the patriarchs up until the time of Abraham.”

“Shem died 502 years after the flood.
Arphaxad died 440 years after the flood.
Salah died 470 years after the flood.
Eber died 531 years after the flood.
Peleg died 340 years after the flood.
Serug died 393 years after the flood.
Nahor died 241 years after the flood.
Terah died 426 years after the flood.
Abraham died 527 years after the flood.”

“Except for Eber, Shem outlived all his descendants for the next eight generations. Abraham was the first to outlive Shem, and he only outlived him by 25 years.”

Now consider, if you will, the significance of all that. Shem outlived his children, his grandchildren, his great-grand-children, his great-great-grandchildren, and so on down to his great-great-great-great-great-great-grandchildren. The text only lists one exception. That was his great-grandson Eber. Except for Eber, so far as the record shows, Shem outlived all his descendants until we get all the way down to his seven times great-grandson Abraham.

One of the characteristics of Melchizedek was that he had no end of life. Shem was not immortal. He did finally die. The type and the antitype never agree in every detail; else the type would be the antitype. They only look alike. But even though Shem was not immortal, he must have appeared to his

descendants to be immortal. When an aged man stands all alone at the head of all his descendants, at the head of his extended family, **with eight generations entirely missing** between himself and his descendants, he certainly has an appearance of immortality. It looks for all the world like he is never going to die. Bearing in mind that we are dealing with similitude—dealing with appearances—Shem exactly fits the description of one who had no end of life.

Another characteristic of Melchizedek was that he had no beginning of days. Here again, Shem fits the description. Shem had no beginning of days---not in this world, anyway. Shem had his beginning in another world. He was born in the world before the flood. The Bible consistently refers to the world before the flood as another world (*spared not the old world* [2Pe 2:5](#), *the world that then was* [2Pe 3:6](#)). So Shem had no beginning of days—in this world. He had his beginning in another world, and he came (through the flood) from that world to this world. Again, Shem fits the description of Melchizedek, and he stands as a type of the Lord, who truly had no beginning of days, and who came to this world from another world. [Joh 3:13](#), “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.”

At the time Melchizedek met Abraham (and it is especially at that juncture that he stands as a type of Christ) he was *without father and without mother*. All of Shem's ancestors died, either in the flood, or prior to it. His grandparents were dead: his great-grandparents were dead; all his aunts and uncles were dead. He outlived his father by one hundred and fifty years ([Ge 9:6,29](#); [11:10-11](#)). So at the time he met Abraham, his father, and no doubt his mother, were dead.

Get the picture. Here is the man who stood at the head of a mighty family, which constituted the third part of the human race. And yet he stood all alone in the world. At the time he met Abraham, all his ancestors, including his father and mother were long since dead. His descendants for the next eight generations were dead. More than any other person in recorded history, he had the appearance of one with neither ancestors nor descendants.

Paul goes on to say that he was “made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually” ([Heb 7:3](#)). He was like the Son of God in any number of ways, but the one thing Paul has most in mind is his perpetual priesthood. In Shem’s day the only established priesthood was the priesthood of the head of the house. The Mosaic Law and the Levitical Priesthood did not come along for another four hundred years. The Old Testament prophets did not appear on the scene for still another four hundred years. The gospel ministry would not arrive for two thousand years. The responsibility for religious instruction rested on the father as the head of the family.

Shem was the head of his immediate family, and he stood as the head over their families. Bear in mind that the extended family of Shem (they were all his descendants) constituted the third part of the human race. Considering the long lives and the large families of that day, Shem was possibly the spiritual leader of millions of descendants.

Shem was the spiritual leader of his descendants, and in some sense, he was the spiritual leader, even of those other two families, the Japhethites, and the Hamites as well. He was their leader to the extent they had a spiritual leader. Neither Japheth nor Ham were able to give the dependable lead Shem provided. The Bible makes it clear enough that the responsibility of leadership rested on Shem, so far as the true worship of God was concerned. [Ge 9:25-27](#), “And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, **blesed be the Lord God of Shem**, and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and **he shall dwell in the tents of Shem**; and Canaan shall be his servant.”

It is obvious that in spiritual matters, Shem was the best known and the most influential man in the world. In that, he was clearly a type of the Lord. God has never left himself without a witness. When there were only three people in the world, God sent a witness, a prophet. Read [Mt 23:29-35](#). In that passage the Lord complains about those who shed the blood of the prophets “from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias.” The text clearly implies that Abel was a prophet. Enoch, *the seventh from Adam*, prophesied ([Jude 1:14](#)). Notice that number seven again. [Ps 105:9-10,15](#) shows that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all prophets. God has always had a witness. He has always provided for some kind of religious instruction. In Shem’s day that responsibility rested on the head of the house. Living so long as he did, he stood as the head of the family for eight full generations. His children were born; they lived, and died, and all the while, he was the only priest they knew. His grandchildren were born; they lived and died, and they knew no other priest. That went on for eight generations, and for all that time, for all they could tell, there was never going to be another priest. It appeared that the priesthood of Shem would go on forever.

We are repeatedly told that Christ was “a priest for ever after the *order* of Melchizedek.” According to Webster *order* has to do with *arrangement* or *succession*. To all appearance, Shem was never going to have a successor. It appeared that he was going to go on forever. Again the type fits the antitype. The Lord Jesus Christ is our one and only high priest. He has no successors. His priesthood will never end.

Shem was the type; Christ is the antitype. For eight generations Shem appeared to his family to have a perpetual priesthood. He prefigured Christ who truly does have the one and only perpetual priesthood. The Levitical

priests were very different to Melchizedek. Theirs was a different *order*; they had successors. They lived out their normal lifespans; they died, and they were replaced. But the priesthood of Shem appeared to go on forever. He had *the appearance* of which Christ has *the reality*. [Heb 7:23-26](#), “And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing **he ever liveth** to make intercession for them.”

The last thing we need to notice is that Melchizedek was *king of Salem*. Again, in this he is a clear type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salem is the old name for Jerusalem. David refers to Jerusalem and calls it Salem in [Ps 76:2](#), “In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion.” Sometimes *Zion* referred to the entire *old city* of Jerusalem; sometimes it referred to a hill in Jerusalem. Either way, it has reference to Jerusalem. So Jerusalem, or *Salem*, was the capital of the kingdom of Melchizedek, and it was the capital of the kingdom of David, and it is also one of the names of the New Testament church.

Melchizedek, with his apparently perpetual priesthood, reigning in that very ancient Jerusalem prefigured the Lord Jesus Christ with his truly perpetual priesthood reigning in that New Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all ([Ga 4:26](#)). When David claimed Jerusalem as his capital, he was simply reclaiming that old capital which had been the center of the government of Melchizedek many centuries before. And when the New Testament writers refer to the church as the *new Jerusalem*, the *holy Jerusalem*, or the *heavenly Jerusalem* ([Heb 12:22](#); [Re 3:12](#); [21:2,10](#)), they connect the New Testament Church with both of those two Old Testament types, Melchizedek and David.

[Ps 110:4](#), “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Not By Works Of Righteousness

NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

What is the ultimate cause of our salvation? Are we saved wholly and solely by the grace of God, or is there some cause in us that merits salvation? Does God save those who deserve to be saved, or does he save those who really ought to burn in the flames of eternal damnation.

Most of us know too much about ourselves, and our own track record, to think we could expect to be saved for heaven, based solely on our own merit. We have failed too often; our record is too faulty. If one transgression was sufficient to condemn Adam and all his posterity to eternal damnation, then

surely none of us could hope to look to our own record as the basis of any claim on God and his goodness. The carnal pride of man is such that we would like to find something in ourselves that merits salvation, and at some moment, we might actually think we have some claim on God, but after we have thought about the matter, and after we have considered even a few of our transgressions, we have to admit that it is not so.

The main point of contention between those who truly believe the Bible and others has to do with that one question: Are we saved wholly and solely by the grace of God, or is there some cause in us that merits salvation? Most any Christian will admit that salvation is by grace. The Bible states that fact too clearly for anybody to deny it, but what does the Bible mean when it talks about salvation by grace?

Actually, the question revolves around the nature and attributes of God. Much of the confusion about the Bible would be resolved if we could only acknowledge what the righteousness of God requires. Most people have an entirely inadequate idea of what God is like, and what his righteousness requires. Somehow, the majority of religious people seem to have gotten the idea that all God requires of them is a good average. They seem to have the idea that what God requires is that we do good more often than we do bad—if our good outweighs our bad, then we will be alright.

One of the earliest recollections I have is of one day when I was very small. My grandmother took me on her knee, and began to explain to me what God expected of me. My grandmother was one of the finest people who ever lived. I suppose most folks believe that about their grandmother, but my grandmother was—she was one of the finest of all people. And she was a very religious person. She was confused about religion, but she was sure that what she had been taught was right, and she was very devoted to it.

She explained to me that there was a day coming, when I would stand before God in judgment, and I would be confronted by everything I had ever done. She explained that there would be a mighty pair of scales, and all of my good works would be placed on one side of the scales, and all of my bad works would be placed on the other side of the scales. Whichever outweighed the other would determine where I would spend eternity. If I had more good works than I had bad works, I would spend eternity with God in heaven, and if I had more bad works than I had good works, I would suffer eternal woe and misery.

Well, to a little three or four old boy that sounded reasonable enough, and I am sure that my grandmother was sure she was arguing God's case for him. She was trying to encourage me to build up a dependable record of good works.

What my grandmother did not realize was that she was pleading for a very low standard, and she was allowing that standard was sufficient to gain a home in eternal heaven. It is amazing how people can fail to realize what they are saying in matters of religion. Do you see? Without having the slightest idea of what she was saying, my grandmother was arguing that all God requires of us is a good average--all he requires is that our good outweighs our bad.

That was not what she meant to say at all. She did not believe any such thing. She was a highly moral person, and she had no idea of what she was saying. She had been taught that in order to gain eternal heaven, we must produce more good works than bad works, and if our good outweighs our bad, we will be good candidates for heaven. She did not realize that if that was right, all God requires is a good average.

Why, the law of the land is not that lenient. Suppose a person is arrested for some crime, and his attorney tries to argue for a good average, do you suppose the jury is going to be impressed? It does not matter that there are more banks he did not rob than there are banks which he did rob. They are only interested in the one bank he did rob. They are not interested in all the people he did not kill, they are only interested in the one person he did kill.

In its own way, the law of the land demands absolute perfection, and it will not accept anything less. You may not think the law of the land demands absolute perfection, but it does. The law does not deal with every moral infraction of which you may be guilty. For instance, it is wrong for you to think mean and spiteful thoughts about your neighbor, but the law of the land does not deal with mean and spiteful thoughts. It is wrong for you to entertain base and lustful thoughts about your neighbor's wife, but the law does not deal with base and lustful thoughts.

But while the law does not deal with every sinful deed of which you may be guilty, with regard to those offenses with which it does deal, the law demands absolute perfection. The law does not forbid you to think mean and spiteful thoughts about your neighbor, but it does forbid you to take a club and hit him over the head. It forbids you to take a club and hit so much as one person. In that regard, the law of the land demands absolute perfection, and it will accept nothing less. It does not forbid you to think base and lustful thoughts about your neighbor's wife, but it does forbid you to give free reign to those thoughts and assault your neighbor's wife. Again, in that regard, the law demands absolute perfection. It does not really matter that you may have repressed your impulses more often than not, one offense is sufficient to bring you into conflict with the law.

The law of God is different from the law of the land in that it forbids every transgression of every kind. The law of the land demands perfection with

regard to those offenses with which it deals. The law of God demands perfection with regard to every transgression. It will not tolerate so much as one sin, and just as surely as one act of murder will bring on you the full force of the law of the land, were it not for the grace of God, one hateful thought would bring on you the full force of the law of God, and that one offense would be sufficient to doom you to eternal damnation.

As plausible as it may sound at first, the argument that our home in heaven depends on whether our good deeds outweigh our bad deeds would not even satisfy a court of law in our day, and it certainly will not satisfy the justice of God. The only thing that will satisfy divine justice is the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. If the absolute righteousness, the absolute perfection, of the Lord Jesus Christ has not been imputed to our account, we will never see eternal heaven.

If you stand before God in eternal judgment with so much as one sin charged to your account, you can never stand justified before him, and you cannot expect to spend eternity in heaven with him. The one sin of Adam was sufficient to condemn the entire race of mankind, and one sin on your part is enough to separate you from God for all eternity. A good average will not do. If your sins—all of your sins—have not been charged against the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and if the pure and spotless righteousness of the Lord Jesus has not been credited to your account, eternal damnation will be your doom.

The main reason people sometimes get the idea they can be justified before God by their own works is that they do not have the slightest idea of what the righteousness of God requires. They have no idea of how righteous God is, and they have no idea of what the righteousness of God requires of them. The Bible is filled with statements about what the righteousness of God requires, but it seems that most people have failed to notice.

[Job 25:4-5](#) is just one example. “How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not: Yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.”

The stars are the purest things in all of creation, and yet, this text says that even the stars are not pure in his sight. Consider for a moment how pure the stars are. Heat is the universal purifying agent. The stars are the hottest things in the universe, and they must, of necessity, be the purest things in the universe.

About two years ago, several people on the West Coast became sick from eating contaminated meat. One little boy died. The meat was contaminated with something called E Coli bacteria. The authorities advised people that if they would start cooking all meats at a higher temperature, the bacteria would

be killed. To that extent the meat would be purified; the bacteria would be killed.

A few weeks later, the water system of Milwaukee, Wisconsin became contaminated. Again, people began to get sick. The authorities advised people to boil their drinking water. The heat would kill the bacteria. Sufficient heat does have a purifying effect.

In refining silver, the ore is heated to a high enough temperature to melt the silver. The impurities rise to the surface and they are skimmed off. That process is repeated over and over until no more impurities can be removed. The Bible talked about that. [Ps 12:6](#), “The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

Heat has always been relied on as the universal purifier, but none of those examples even remotely compares to the purity of the stars. The stars are the hottest things in all of creation. As hot as they are, the stars are so pure that our minds cannot even imagine how pure they are. They are pure beyond our comprehension.

Astronomers estimate the temperature of the stars in the tens of thousands, or even the millions, of degrees. They tell us the stars are so hot that even the metals in the stars, the iron and so on, are in a gaseous state. Iron melts at 2785 degrees, and it boils at 4755 degrees. It literally vaporizes (it becomes a gas) at 4755 degrees. Those of us who never deal with such high temperatures have difficulty thinking of iron in a gaseous state, but it does vaporize if you get it hot enough. Astronomers tell us that every particle of iron in the stars is in a gaseous state.

As any substance is heated, the tiny little electrons that spin around the nucleus of the atoms of that substance begin to spin faster and faster and faster. The hotter the material becomes, the faster the electrons spin. And the faster they go, the more they spin off and break away from any other atom that may have attached itself to that atom. When the material becomes so hot, every atom breaks away from every other atom. Finally, every atom stands alone. Every atom is free from every contaminating atom. The substance is as pure as anything in nature can be.

That is how hot the stars are, and that is how pure they are, but listen to what the text says, “How, then, can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; Yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.” There is no way anything in nature can be made any more pure than the stars, and yet not even the stars are pure in God’s sight.

Those of you, who think you can get to heaven on your good average, have never realized how righteous God is, and what righteousness he requires of us. If the stars are not pure in his sight, do you suppose that with all your

impure thoughts and impure deeds, you could ever stand justified before God based on your own merit?

The only thing that will satisfy God is absolute perfection, and the only source of absolute perfection is the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The only way you will ever stand justified before God is for God to look at you and see, not your track record, but to look at you and see the righteousness of his Son credited to your account.

If we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that our record is too faulty, and our sins are too many, for us to ever expect to be justified before God by our works. If our judgment is based on our works, we will be lost world without end.

It is obvious that none of us in this day could be justified by our own works, but what about the saints we read about in the Bible? Were they not such men that they could have been justified by works? They were so faithful, and they performed such notable deeds, you would think that, perhaps, some of them might have earned some kind of merit with God. During the remainder of this booklet we will look at some of those men. We will look at Adam and Noah, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses and David, and the apostle Peter. I believe we can demonstrate that if salvation is not wholly and solely by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, that not even those men could ever live in eternal heaven. If salvation is not by grace, not even the most eminent saints could be saved.

You can be sure that if none of those men of God could be saved, based on their own merit, there is none of us, sinners that we are, who would stand a chance. If not even the stars are pure in his sight, you can be sure that you and I could never qualify.

The justice of God requires absolute perfection. Unless we have always, at all times, and in every instance, refrained from every transgression, no matter how insignificant we may think that transgression may have been, we can never expect to be justified before God by our own works.

There is nobody, outside of the Lord Jesus Christ, who fits that description. There is nobody who has always done exactly what was right, and in our hearts we know that to be a fact. That is why those people, who claim they expect to be justified before God by their works, invariably fear death so much more than those who are trusting only in the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. No matter how they may protest to the contrary, in their hearts they know they could never stand before God justified on the basis of their own merit, and because of that, they usually come to the hour of death terrified.

Both by precept and by example the Bible teaches that our salvation for eternal heaven is based solely on the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. It

is a simple matter to produce a long list of proof texts proving that salvation is by grace.

[Eph 2:8-9](#), “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”

[Tit 3:4-5](#), “But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

[2Ti 1:9](#), “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

The first text says that our salvation is not *of* works; the next text says that it is not *by* works; and the third text says that it is not *according to* our works. God knew there would be those who would try to evade the clear teaching of the Bible, especially on the subject of salvation by grace. So he moved the apostle to say the same thing three different ways. He cut off every avenue of escape for those who would deny the simple fact that salvation is by grace and grace alone. It is not based on any merit of our own.

We will not multiply proof texts to show that the Bible teaches salvation by grace. It is clear enough that salvation by grace is the doctrine of the Bible. It is safe to say that every person, who claims to believe the Bible, acknowledges that the Bible teaches salvation by grace. They disagree vigorously about what is actually meant by that expression, but all will agree that salvation by grace is the doctrine of the Bible. In this little booklet we are interested in showing what that expression means, and in showing that the Bible teaches that doctrine by example as well as by precept.

The Bible records the lives of the most eminent saints, and the Bible record of their lives shows that not even those men could be justified before God by their own works. The Bible is very faithful to provide a clear and accurate account of its characters. It records their faults as faithfully as it records their virtues, and the Bible account leaves us without a doubt: unless salvation is by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, there will nobody be saved.

Consider with us, if you will, some of those characters and see if you can find one that could have been saved by his own good works.

If there was ever anybody who had an opportunity to be justified by works, Adam did. There was nothing wrong with Adam as God created him. God created him *able to stand, but liable to fall*. He did not have to do what he did. His sin was willful and deliberate. In his original creation Adam did not have the sinful nature, that inborn appetite for sin, that you and I have. He sinned against light and knowledge. He could have kept God’s commandments. He did not have the positive bias toward sin that has dominated the heart and

mind of every person who has been born since his day. And still he sinned. Consider his case.

Except for the Lord Jesus Christ, Adam was the brightest man who ever lived. One hundred rocket scientists all rolled into one could not have equaled the genius of Adam. Does the Bible say that? Well, no, it does not say that in so many words, but it does demonstrate it. God gave a simple demonstration of how smart Adam was.

[Ge 2:19](#), “And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” Think about that. Adam gave names to every living creature on earth. Nobody knows for sure how many different species of living creature there are, because scientists cannot agree on what actually constitutes a species. A lot of scientists claim there are over 300,000 different species. The smallest estimate I have ever seen says there are over 17,000. Suppose the smaller number is correct. Suppose there are only 17,000 different species. That still means that Adam came up with over 17,000 names for the different living creatures.

That is a monumental task, just to come up with that many different names. Just think of the difficulty of even coming up with that many different combinations of sounds. If you and I were trying to do that, it would not be long until we would have exhausted all our ideas, and we would have a baboon, a bowboon, and a booboon. All our names would begin to sound alike; we could never keep them separated.

Not only did he come up with all the necessary names, he came up with appropriate names. The names stuck. The text says, “Whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” Whatever name Adam came up with actually became the name of that living creature. “That was the name thereof;” that was what people called it. We have trouble naming churches and making the names stick. There are churches all over the land that have one official name, and another name by which most people know it, and in some cases not many people even know the proper name of that church; it is so commonly called by another name. If the name Adam provided had not been suitable to the creature to which he attached it, eventually people would have begun to call it by a different name, but the names stuck.

Not only did Adam come up with thousands of appropriate names for all the different living creatures, he remembered what he had called them. He remembered the names—all those thousands of names—and he remembered which animal each name identified. Most of us have trouble meeting three or four people at a time and keeping the names straight. Adam could keep thousands of names straight the first time.

Let me ask you: did you ever study a foreign language in school? No doubt, many of you have. What was the hardest part of learning the language? Building a vocabulary, right? That is the most difficult part, and the most important. For that matter, if you can build a sufficient vocabulary, you can manage to get by with very little of grammar. If you know enough words in any language, you can string words together, in some fashion, and the other person can usually puzzle out what you are trying to say.

Suppose somebody is learning a foreign language, and he goes to the local Waldenbooks, or Barnes and Nobles, or some other bookstore, and buys a dual language dictionary, perhaps a Spanish-English, or a French-English dictionary. The larger dual language dictionaries usually have about 15,000 entries from each language. That is about the same number as the smallest estimate of the number of different kinds of living creatures in the world. Suppose he sits down, reads the dictionary, and lays it on the shelf. He will never need to consult it again, because he has already read it; he knows the foreign language equivalent of all the words listed.

Do you know anybody who could do that? No, of course not. To learn that many different foreign language words you have to drill, drill, and drill for years. There is nobody on earth who could sit down, read the dictionary, and remember all the words he had read. But Adam could. Adam remembered what he had named every creature. If he had not remembered, who could have told him?

Not only could Adam have remembered every entry in the dictionary, he could have first written the book, and then he could have remembered what he had written. That is essentially what he did in giving names to every living creature. There is nobody today who could even come close to that.

We hear a lot nowadays about the great power of our subconscious mind. We are told that we only use about 3 per cent, or maybe 10 per cent, of our total brain power. I have no doubt that is right. Our brains do not function at full capacity. But the thing those people do not tell you—because they probably do not know—is that when Adam sinned, he blew most of the circuits. Our brains do not function the way Adam's brain did. Our brains have been crippled by Adam's sin, and all the cultivation, and all the education, and all the self-help courses in the world will never put it back.

There are those who will tell you that the serpent tricked Adam into doing what he did. But you can be sure the serpent did not trick Adam. The devil is smarter than you and I are, but Adam was too bright for the devil to outsmart him. God knew somebody would come along with that notion. That is why he moved Paul to say, "Adam was not deceived (he was not tricked), but the woman being deceived was in the transgression," [1Ti 2:14](#). Adam knew exactly what he was doing. Adam knew God was telling the truth, and the

serpent was lying, but he acted as if it was the other way around. He acted as God was lying, and the serpent was telling the truth.

The serpent began by saying, “Yea, hath God said....” He challenged the honesty of God. Satan has been a liar from the beginning; he is the Father of Lies. [Joh 8:44](#), “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

When Adam partook of the forbidden fruit, he acted as if the serpent, the father of lies, was telling the truth, and God, the very embodiment of truth, was lying. Let me ask you: do you believe that anybody who makes God out to be a liar, and more than that, who acts as if God is a worse liar than the devil himself, can expect to get to heaven by his own righteousness?

Let me tell you: if salvation for heaven is by works, Adam will never make it. Bible makes it clear enough that Adam was a child of God. The skins God provided as a covering for the nakedness of Adam and Eve were symbolic of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, the lamb slain for the sins of his people. The symbolic lesson is that Adam’s sins were atoned for by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and that he is clothed with his imputed righteousness. Adam was a child of God, and we shall see him in heaven one day, but it will not be by his own righteousness. Based on his righteousness he would never make it.

What about Noah? Was Noah such a character that he deserved to be saved? Was his life so attuned to the will of God, that he had some claim on God. Did God owe it to Noah to save him?

Noah lived in what was probably the most wicked age of the world. No matter how wicked men may be, as they grow older, they generally begin to calm down somewhat. The thought of dying seems to have a sobering effect. In Noah's day people lived to be close to a thousand years old. Considering that fact, and considering that Noah was born when the earth was just a little over a thousand years old, it is a mathematical fact, that during Noah's day most everybody who had ever lived was still living.

Very few people had ever died. In an age when death seemed to be only a remote possibility, we cannot imagine how wicked people must have been. The Bible tells us, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,” [Ge 6:5](#). Think about that. He says their thoughts were *only evil*. They did not think about anything else, and more than that, they thought about it *continually*. They thought about nothing but evil, and they thought about it continually.

In verse eleven he tells us, “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.” There was nowhere to hide. The earth was *filled with violence*. The entire earth was a Lebanon, or a Bosnia, or a Somalia. As wicked as the world is today, it is not that bad yet. We are getting there, but we are not there yet.

But in the midst of that wicked generation, there was, at least, one righteous man. Verses 9, and 10, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God.” In that wicked age this one righteous man *walked with God*.

God determined to destroy the entire world, and all the wickedness in it, but he chose Noah to be the one man through whose family he would preserve the human race. All of mankind would perish except Noah and his family, and it would be that family who would repopulate the new world. No other person on the planet was so honored as Noah was. After God had swept the world clean by the waters of the flood, Noah would stand at the head of the entire family of man. Except for his daughters-in-law, every person on earth, from that day forward, would be a descendent of Noah. No other person on earth was so honored and so blessed as he was.

After the flood we are told that “Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard. And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him,” [Ge 9:20-23](#).

Notice that Noah woke from his wine and “saw what his younger son had *done* unto him.” Ham did more than look. Those people have been around for a long time, and their conduct had always been repulsive to decent, moral people.

Noah was blessed as no other man on earth was blessed. He was honored as no other man on earth was honored. When the world was literally filled with violence and wickedness, Noah walked with God. Later, when the earth had been swept clean of all the sin and violence, you would think it would have been easier for him to live a godly life. Instead, Noah sinned. He planted a vineyard, and made wine, and got stinking, stumbling, falling down, passed out, stark naked, drunk.

If salvation is by works, Noah will never make it. A good average will not do. The law of God demands perfection, and Noah was certainly not perfect. Noah was a child of God. There can be no doubt; “Noah found grace in the

eyes of the Lord.” Noah will be in heaven, but he will not be there because of his own righteousness; he will be there because he was a subject of grace. He will be there because of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

What about Abraham? If there is anybody in the Bible that we might expect to have earned a home in heaven, it is Abraham. He is the father of the people of Israel, and one of the most notable characters in all of human history. We call him the Father of the Faithful. We are amazed at his great faith. Who could forget Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah? In Genesis, chapter twenty-two, we read that God told Abraham, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Abraham did not hesitate. He rose early the next morning and started on his way.

I have to confess that there is a lot I do not understand about what transpired on the mountain that day, but God knew exactly what he was doing. He knew exactly the way this matter was going to work out, and he knew what Abraham’s response would be. He declares “the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,”

[Isa 46:10](#). God is never surprised. He knows exactly what lies ahead.

Abraham did not. He did not know how far this matter would go, but he was convinced that he and the boy would go up on the mountain, and he was convinced that he and the boy would come back down again. When he got to the mountain, he told the servant to stay at the foot of the mountain, and he said, “I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.” He did not say, “The lad and I will go yonder and worship, and I will come again to you.” He fully expected that Isaac would come back down off the mountain with him. Paul says that he accounted that “God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure,” [Heb 11:19](#). Abraham was convinced that God would raise him up, even from the ashes, if the matter went that far.

Sometimes I hear somebody use the expression, “If I know my own heart.”

Let me tell you; you don’t. None of us entirely understands his own heart.

Jeremiah said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it,” [Jer 17:9](#). I gave up long ago trying to figure out other people; I don’t entirely understand myself. There is ever so much I do not understand about myself. I do not always understand why I am the way I am, nor why I do the way I do. But as little as I understand myself, I am sure that I know myself well enough to know that I could never do what Abraham did. My wife and I have four children, and I cannot tell you how much I love those children; they mean more than life to me. I have one son, and he is a

very special person to me. There is no way I could take my son up on that mountain the way Abraham did with Isaac. I am sure there is no way I could ever be so submissive as Abraham was. His faithfulness is more than I can understand.

If that was all the Bible told us about Abraham, we might get the idea that Abraham could have been saved by works. Such faith is more than we could expect from any father. But there is more. The Bible is the most accurate of all books. It is more faithful to the facts than any other book that has ever been written. The Bible does not hide the faults of its characters. It tells about their strengths, and it tells about their weaknesses. And they did have weaknesses, even the best of them.

God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham, but he had no sooner arrived in the land than he passed right on through. There was a famine in the land, and Abraham went to Egypt. In Genesis chapter twelve, we read, “And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai, his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon; therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife, and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister; that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.” The providence of God took care of Sarai. He did not allow the matter to go as far as it might have.

Abraham did not entirely lie in the matter. In [Ge 20](#) he explained that Sarai was “the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife.” What he told was half true, but I had rather anybody would tell me a whole lie, than a half truth any day. It is easier to spot a whole lie.

Pharaoh was a much more honorable man than Abraham gave him credit for being. When he discovered what Abraham had done, he told him, “Now, therefore, behold thy wife, take her and go thy way.” Think about that.

Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, was run out of Egypt for lying.

And, more than that, after he left Egypt and arrived in the land of the Philistines, he did the same thing all over again. You would think he would have learned. He placed his wife at risk in Egypt, and then he repeated the same thing with Abimelech, the Philistine king ([Ge 20](#)). And again, the king, who had every right to be offended with Abraham, instead, very graciously restored him his wife.

Later, we learn that Isaac did the same thing with regard to his wife, Rebecca ([Ge 26:6-11](#)). He obviously learned it from his father.

I am sure I could not do what Abraham did at Mount Moriah with regard to Isaac, but I am also sure that I could not do what he did in Egypt with regard to his wife. Before I would place my wife at risk the way Abraham did Sarai, I am sure I would insist that we just sit down in the desert and starve. I cannot imagine that we could ever get in such distress that I would place my wife in such peril as Abraham did Sarai. It is hard to think of anything more despicable than what Abraham asked of Sarai, and to consider that he might actually go through with it is more than we can imagine.

The simple point is that if salvation is by works, Abraham will never make it. We are running out of people to be saved by works. If Adam and Noah and Abraham and Isaac could not be saved by works, is there anybody who could? We cannot escape the conclusion that if salvation is not by the sovereign, unmerited grace of God, nobody will be saved.

What about Jacob? He was Abraham's grandson. When we speak about the origin of the people of Israel, we generally speak of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. His name means *supplanter*, but God honored him by changing his name to Israel, which means *a prince with God*. We still refer to the people of God as *Spiritual Israel*, and we refer to *National Israel*. His name has been emblazoned across the pages of history as few names ever have. Could Jacob have been saved by works? I don't think so.

The very first thing the Bible records about Jacob is that he attacked his brother. A newborn baby is very limited in his ability to attack anybody, but to the best of his ability, as soon as he was born, Jacob attacked his twin brother Esau. "His hand took hold on Esau's heel," [Ge 25:26](#). If you think I am misinterpreting that action, read the remainder of the Genesis account of the relationship between Jacob and Esau, and see if that entire relationship is not marked by Jacob's mistreatment of his brother.

The name *Jacob* means *supplanter*; it signifies a con-man, a con-artist, a trickster. The name fit. Jacob could not be trusted. He was the sort of man you did not do business with if you could get around it, and if you did trade with him, you made sure to count your change.

Jacob was a homebody; *a plain man dwelling in tents*; he was his mother's favorite. He stayed at home and learned to cook, while his brother Esau was an outdoorsman, a hunter ([Ge 25:27-30](#)). Esau was the favorite of his father Isaac. One day, Esau had been out hunting, and he obviously stayed too long. He enjoyed hunting and he stayed out until he was so hungry he thought he was going to die. When he finally made it back home, he asked Jacob to "Feed me, I pray thee with that same red pottage, for I am faint," ([Ge 25:30](#)). We are always hearing about the close relationship between twins, and no doubt, what we have heard is generally true, but Jacob was not at all interested in helping his twin brother. Instead, he asked Esau to sell him his birthright.

Esau was the oldest son of Isaac, and the birthright properly belonged to him. In that day there was a great emphasis placed on being the oldest son in the family. There was no greater possession than that birthright, and the oldest son would not readily give it up. How could he relinquish his place as the firstborn in the family, the head of the family? But Jacob would not feed him, unless he agreed to sell his birthright. It did not matter that Esau appeared to be at the point of dying, and that he actually thought he was dying. Esau was his twin brother, but Jacob would not raise his hand to help him; he wanted the birthright. He was a *supplanter*, a con-man, a trickster. He wanted that birthright, and he would use fair means or foul to get it.

In effect, he told his brother, “You can starve for all I care, I will not feed you, unless you sell me your birthright.” This was his twin brother who thought he was dying, but Jacob would not raise his hand to help him. Esau was vulnerable, and Jacob intended to take advantage of the situation. Esau agreed to sell the birthright. He said, “Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?” ([Ge 25:32](#)).

Esau was not innocent in the matter; [Ge 25:34](#) says that Esau *despised his birthright*. But I am not on Esau's case; right now we are looking at Jacob. The name Jacob means *supplanter*. The name fit; Jacob defrauded his brother out of his birthright. It does not matter that Esau failed to place the value he should have placed on the birthright. That did not diminish the guilt of Jacob. Jacob was clearly unfair in his dealings with his twin brother.

Jacob's chicanery did not stop there. Years later, when their father thought he was dying, Isaac sent Esau into the field to “make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die,” [Ge 27:4](#). It was the custom for the father, the patriarch of the family, to pronounce a blessing on the firstborn son just before his death. The blessing belonged to Esau, and Isaac thought the time had come to bestow that blessing.

Their mother Rebekah heard what Isaac said to Esau. She called Jacob and suggested that he pretend to be Esau, and take the blessing that belonged to his brother ([Ge 27:6-10](#)). At first Jacob was not anxious to make the effort. He said, “Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing,” ([Ge 27:11-12](#)). But Rebekah would not be outdone. She provided Jacob with “skins of the kids of goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck,” ([Ge 27:16](#)). In his dying state, Isaac could feel of Jacob and not detect the difference.

It is not reasonable to think that Rebekah had time to prepare those skins during the short time that she also prepared a meal for Isaac, and still help Jacob to go in to his father before Esau could return. She had obviously been

waiting, and preparing for that opportunity for some time. As soon as Jacob saw how the trick could work, he was more than willing to make the effort. He wanted his brother's blessing all along; he just did not want to get caught. He took "the savoury meat and the bread which she had prepared," and went in to his father, and told him, "I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me," ([Ge 27:17,19](#)). His father was skeptical; he wanted to know, "How is it that thou has found it so quickly, my son?" ([Ge 27:20](#)). Jacob just kept on lying. He said, "Because the Lord thy God hath brought it to me." Jacob was a con-artist; it did not bother him to lie to his old blind daddy.

Isaac said, "Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not," ([Ge 27:21](#)). Jacob allowed his father to feel of him to see if he was really Esau. Isaac said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau," and he asked him again, "Art thou my very son Esau?" Jacob assured him that he was.

I have heard it said that you can always spot a liar; a liar cannot look you in the face. But that is not right; that only applies to amateur liars. I have known some liars, who could put on their most honest face, look you squarely in the eye, and lie through their teeth. Jacob was that kind of liar. He had this matter of lying down to an art. He could lie to his old blind daddy, get caught, and lie again, and get caught again, and just keep on lying until his daddy finally believed him.

He could do all of that in order to steal his brother's blessing. He defrauded his brother out of his birthright; then he stole his blessing. I am sure nobody would argue that his deal with Esau with regard to the birthright was fair. If anybody ever took advantage of the vulnerable situation of somebody else, Jacob took advantage of Esau. But, at least, they did make a deal. Esau contributed to his own downfall in the matter of the birthright. But, when it came to the blessing, Jacob did not bother to make any kind of deal; he just deceived his daddy, and stole the birthright.

The point is that, if salvation is by works, Jacob will never make it. Nobody who lies, and cheats, and steals, the way Jacob did could ever expect to be justified by works. He was one of the most blessed of all characters. He was clearly a child of God. God changed his name to Israel, which means *prince with God*. His name is firmly fixed on the pages of history as few names have ever been. To this day the Jewish people call themselves by his name. We refer to the people of God as *spiritual Israel*. But the record is clear enough: if salvation is by works, Jacob will be lost world without end.

So much for Jacob, what about Moses? It was by the hand of Moses that God gave Israel the best system of law any nation ever possessed. We like to talk about the insufficiency of the Law of Moses, and the Law certainly was

insufficient to get anybody home to eternal heaven. But, the Law was never intended to save anybody for heaven, in the first place. There have been those who tried to use the Law as an instrument of salvation, but God never intended it for that purpose.

The Law was totally insufficient as a means of saving souls from Hell, but it was entirely sufficient for the purpose for which God intended it. The Law was intended as a system of government for a particular people at a particular time, and it was perfectly suited to that purpose. It was also intended as a system of worship for a particular people at a particular time, and it was perfectly suited for that purpose.

For the purpose for which it was intended, the Law of Moses was the best system of law ever possessed by any nation. How can I wax so bold as to make such a statement? For this reason: God was its author, and you can be sure that whatever God does is the best.

But while Moses was blessed to deliver the system of law that has ever since born his name, not even Moses could be saved by works. Moses was a murderer. He killed a man. [Ex 2:11-12](#), “And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.”

I know somebody may try to justify Moses by claiming that this was a case of justifiable homicide. He saw an Egyptian mistreating one of his Hebrew kinsmen, and he flew into a rage and killed him. If it was not justifiable homicide, it must, at least, have been something less than cold-blooded, first-degree murder. There must have been some justification for what he did. But was there any justification? Did Moses fly into a rage, and act on the spur of the moment? No, he did not. Go back and read the text again. Notice that in verse eleven there were three people present. There were Moses, and the Hebrew slave, and the Egyptian, who was smiting the Hebrew. But notice that in [Ex 2:12](#) Moses *looked this way and that way*, and only when he had made certain (or at least he thought he had made certain) there was nobody looking, then *he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand*.

An interval of time had passed. There were only two people present in [Ex 2:12](#) when Moses committed the crime. Moses had plenty of time to consider the matter. He had time to plan what he was going to do, and wait for the best opportunity, and then put his plan into action. Given those facts, any third string lawyer could prove premeditation.

Not only could Moses not gain heaven by works. If his case had been brought to trial, he would have been hard pressed to stay out of the penitentiary.

Let us look at just two more examples. The Bible is very careful to record its characters just as they were. And just as they were, they demonstrated very clearly that not even the most eminent saints could have been saved by works. David is the foremost Old Testament figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is such a clear type of the Lord that it is not always clear whether we are reading about David, the son of Jesse, or the Greater David, the Son of God. He is such a clear figure of Christ that, on at least one occasion, he is referred to as *the Messiah*. [2Sa 23:1](#) refers to him as *the anointed* of the God of Israel. In the original language, the word that is translated *anointed* is *mashiyach* (Messiah), and it is one of the titles of the Lord. It is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word *christos* (Christ), and of the English word *anointed*. The Holy Spirit was making it entirely clear that he was a type of the Lord. But David was far from being innocent. David arranged to have Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba killed in order, hopefully, to conceal his own transgression.

Joab, and the armies of Israel were besieging Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonite nation. David remained at home in Jerusalem ([2Sa 11:1](#)). He was walking on the roof of his house; (in that arid land houses had flat roofs) and he saw Bathsheba washing herself. That does not speak very well for her; she should have been more careful. David sent for her; they sinned, and Bathsheba sent word that she was *with child* ([2Sa 11:5](#)). David had Joab to place Uriah in the place where he knew he would be killed in battle. David was one of the most highly blessed of all characters. The Bible describes him as a man after God's own heart. He was a man who loved God, and feared God. Most of the time he tried very hard to do the right thing, but no man who commits adultery, and arranges for the murder of the husband of his lover could ever expect to gain heaven based on his own goodness. If salvation is not wholly and solely by the sovereign grace of God, David will never make it.

The facts are no different with the apostles. The apostles were honest and good men. They were such men as God was willing to entrust with the gospel. They were such men as God was willing to use in the first planting of the church. But they were just as surely sinners, and just as surely in need of a Savior as anybody else. Without the grace of God not one of them would ever see heaven.

We will look at just one of them. Peter was as close to the Lord as anyone ever was. John thought of himself as the Lord's favorite, and he often referred to himself as the apostle whom the Lord loved. But even though he was, no doubt, entirely sincere in that conviction, he was no closer to the Lord than Peter was. But as close as Peter was to the Lord, and in spite of the great

personal affection the Lord had for him, not even Peter could have been saved by works. Peter is like the rest of us; his faults are not hard to find.

For one thing, Peter always had something to say, whether he knew what he was talking about or not. He did not always know what was going on, but that did not usually stop him from talking. In [Mt 17](#), we read, “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.”

That was not what he needed to say. Jesus Christ is Lord. He is due all our devotion. We do not need separate tabernacles for any of the saints, not for Moses, nor Elijah, nor anybody else. Peter would have done well to listen, and that is exactly what God told him. Listen to [Mt 17:5](#). “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

Think of that. God interrupted him before he could finish what he was saying, and told him he needed to listen: “Hear ye him.” In other words, “Peter, this is not a time to talk; this is a time to listen.” Consider anybody so determined to put in his two cents worth, that God speaks from heaven to let him know that he needs to shut up and listen. And more than that, he lets him know that we do not need three tabernacles. It is Jesus, and Jesus alone, who is God’s *beloved son*, and all the honor belongs to him. No doubt, Peter was entirely sincere in the matter, but he was far too quick to speak.

Peter was very much like a child. A child wants to do whatever he sees anybody else do. In [Mt 14](#), the disciples were in a ship “in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves for the wind was contrary.” We are told that “in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.” They thought he was a ghost. No doubt, there had been sailors who had drowned in that lake, and they thought the lake was haunted. They believed in ghosts back then too.

“But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.” Peter had absolutely no need to walk on the water; he just saw the Lord walking on the water, and, like a child, he wanted to try it. His impetuosity got him in trouble on that occasion too, but you already know the rest of the story.

Peter had a terrible temper. He had such a temper that when he got all riled up, you did not want to be within his reach. You probably remember the night when they came to arrest the Lord. “Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.....Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear,” [Joh 18:3,10](#). I never have believed that was exactly what Peter intended to do. The man dodged. Peter meant to take off his head. He did have a violent temper. In all fairness to Peter, we need to remember that he had promised the Lord that very night that he was willing to die with him, and that is exactly what he thought he was about to do. [Mt 26:34-35](#), “Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.” When Peter said that, he meant it. He was ready to die with the Lord.

When Peter saw that crowd, he thought the time had come. Peter had no idea he was a match for that entire crowd. When he waded in with his sword swinging, he thought he would very soon fall; he would very soon be dead. How could one man stand against that entire mob. But, before he fell, he intended to take as many of them with him as he could. He would die with his Lord, but he would not die quietly.

But no matter how we may explain his actions, the fact remains; he was impetuous; and it was very common for him to speak, or act, without thinking. Sometimes his quick temper was a danger to those around him. More than that, it appears that before the Lord called him, he had a foul mouth. The Lord had told him, “This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice,” [Mt 26:34](#). Peter did not think that was right, but it was. Later that night he was challenged three times, and after the third time we read, “Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man,” ([Mt 26:74](#)). Let me ask you, do you believe cursing and swearing was a brand new experience to Peter that night, or do you believe it was probably an old habit that just came back on him. I am personally convinced that it was an old habit, a habit he had learned to control after he came in contact with the Lord.

I never read that account without calling to mind a story I heard several years ago. I am told that it is a true story. There was a man who had a terrible problem with profanity. It seemed that he could not talk without cursing. It was just a part of his vocabulary. After awhile, somebody invited him to attend church, and he did. He began to attend on a regular basis. Attending church, and hearing the gospel preached in power can have an effect on our lives. He cleaned up his conduct; he cleaned up his language, and finally he asked for a home in the church. He was received, and baptized, and for

several years he was a faithful member of the church. Then one night in a rather heated conference meeting he rose to his feet to state his opinion on some subject they were considering, and in the heat of the moment, he lapsed back into his old habit. He came out with some expressions that just shocked that little congregation. No sooner than he had said it, he realized what he had said, and he just dropped down on the seat. He buried his face in his hands, and cried like a whipped child. His weeping shook the pew where he was sitting. Nobody said a word. The entire congregation just sat there, all wide-eyed and slack-jawed. Nobody knew what to say.

When he finally regained his composure, he rose to his feet. His voice was trembling and breaking. He said, "Brethren, you all know what happened. I would not have done it for the world, but what is done is done. Brethren, you know your duty, you must do your duty." He sat back down.

That little church had a wise old pastor. He said, "The brother is right, we do know our duty," and he said, "Brethren, I have seen enough repentance to satisfy me; I will entertain a motion to accept the brother's acknowledgment." It appears that is what happened to Peter on that terrible night. But, no matter how we may explain it; the fact remains: nobody who curses and swears, and denies he even knows the Lord could ever expect to be saved by works. Nobody who tries to kill another human being, no matter how convinced he may be that his actions are right, could expect to gain heaven by his own merit.

Brethren, we are running out of possibilities of anybody who might be saved by his own merit. If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could not be saved by works; if Adam, and Noah, and Moses, and David would not be saved by works; if none of the apostles and prophets could be saved by works, is there anybody who could? No, brethren, the facts are clear; if salvation is not by the sovereign, unmerited grace of God, then nobody will be saved. If God only saves those who deserve to be saved, heaven will be empty.

But we can all thank God that salvation is not based on our accomplishments. Our hope of eternal heaven is based wholly and solely on the grace of God, as it is revealed in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Zechariah said that on that grand day,

"He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it," [Zec 4:7](#). When we stand before him, we will not say, "Works, works, works." We will not boast of our track record, but rather our cry will be, "Grace, grace, grace; thanks be unto God for his abounding grace."

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Pray Without Ceasing

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

In his letter to the Thessalonians Paul instructed them to “pray without ceasing” [1Th 5:17](#). Over the years we have heard that verse explained any number of times, and almost without exception, it is explained that the verse does not mean exactly what it says. Well, it is obvious that the Lord does not intend for us to go around all day with our hands folded under our chin and our eyes cast heavenward; and he does not intend for us to go around all the time mumbling under our breath. There is really no benefit in long, repetitious prayers.

[Mt 6:7](#), “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

But we are not so interested in what the verse does not teach as we are in learning what it does teach. The verse does mean what it says. Think about this. We are all a reactionary people. We go through every day reacting to situations. Suppose you are driving nails, and after awhile, the inevitable happens. You hit your thumb with the hammer. What do you do? You may come out with some expression that you ought not to even think, much less say out loud. I hope that is not your reaction; but it does happen. Or you may dance around, holding your thumb, saying, "Ooheee, ohaaa." Or you may jump around, making strange faces and goggle eyes. But one way or another, you are going to react. You cannot help but react.

Suppose you hear that somebody has said something really mean about you. How do you react? You may react by saying something just as mean about him. Or you may just groan down inside, or you may walk around steaming for awhile. Suppose you have just been very disappointed; a very special project of yours has fallen apart, and there is no way to put it back together. How are you going to react? Do you see? We go through every day reacting to situations.

Instead of coming out with some expression that you ought not to use, or saying something mean about your friend, or walking around, all cast down and disappointed—suppose you pray. Suppose that in the privacy of your mind, you instinctively beg God to give you strength for the moment.

But you may think, “Harold Hunt, you do not know how my life has been going. With all the disappointment there is in my life, and as many times as I have been insulted and injured, if I pray every time I whack my thumb, or every time I stub my toe, or every time I am disappointed, or I hear that somebody is trying to do me some harm, why I would not get anything done but pray.”

Now you are beginning to get the point. Prayer ought to be as natural as breathing to the child of God. Prayer ought to be our natural response to every situation. We do not need to go around mumbling under our breath every moment of the day; but every situation that calls for any decision, or requires

any determination, or any strength of character ought to prompt to us to pray. We do not even have to think to breathe; it is so natural that we breathe without thinking. Prayer ought to be just that instinctive. Prayer ought to be such a part of our makeup that we are constantly ready to pray. We should be ready to pray every time a difficult task comes to our attention, or anything goes wrong, or every time a personal conflict presents itself.

We ought to begin our day with prayer, and close it with prayer. Most of us do not bound out of bed at the very moment the alarm goes off. Most of us lie there for a moment. You may lie there for two or three minutes, or you may lie there for a long time; but how you occupy that time will have a great effect on how you deal with the day. Suppose that during that time when you are not entirely awake, and you are not entirely asleep, you spend the time in prayer. You are facing a difficult day; whether you realize it or not, you need the Lord's assistance. If you do not realize how desperately you need the Lord's help to face the problems of that day, then that is the very thing you need to pray about. You need to pray that God would help you with your insensitivity to your own spiritual need. Suppose you spend that time, as you drift between sleep and waking up, talking to the Lord about the prospect of that day. Do you suppose you might get along with folks on the job better if you spent that time asking the Lord for grace to do just that? Do you think you might go through the day, ever more alert for the need and the opportunity to pray, if you spent those first few moments of the day in quiet prayer?

Do you ever have trouble sleeping? Suppose you closed every day with prayer. When you lay your head on the pillow, and pull the covers up to your chin, and expect to go to sleep in a few moments, suppose you then spend the remainder of your day in prayer. You don't know how long it is going to be before you go to sleep. Perhaps you have been having trouble sleeping. Some nights you lie there until way in the night. Every once in a while, you toss and turn almost all night. It seems you are always able to go to sleep just about time to get up; but it is too late then. Suppose that you make a practice of always spending that time in prayer. If you go to sleep right away, you will not have time to finish. If you do not go to sleep, you will have more time to talk with the Lord than you have had in a long time. And even if you do not sleep, it will be time very well spent. You are not likely to become nearly so bothered about not sleeping, if you are enjoying that time of communion with the Lord.

But after a few nights of closing the day with prayer—talking to the Lord till you go to sleep, no matter how long that takes—you will probably find that you never do finish. You will probably find that you are going to sleep sooner, and sleeping better than you have in a long time. It is probably a good idea to begin by thanking the Lord for all the things he has already done for

you. Most of us are so ungrateful; it behooves us to take some time to thank the Lord for what he has done. The first few nights, you may not find as many things to thank the Lord for as you will during the nights that follow. After you have thanked the Lord for the many things he has already done, it is a good idea to ask him for the things you feel that you still need. But after a few nights, you will probably find that you never get that far; you fall asleep before you finish thanking him for the blessings you have already received. If you have a job, or at least an income sufficient to supply your needs, you ought to thank the Lord for it. There are people who are not so well blessed. Do you love your country? Thank the Lord for it. Our nation is not able to take all the people who would like to live here; and it is heart-rending to see telecasts of some of those pitiful people who want so desperately to come here. Do you have a wife and children that love you? Thank the Lord for them. It is hard to be contrary with your wife at breakfast, if you went to sleep the night before thanking the Lord that he blessed you to find her. Do you have a home to live in? Thank the Lord for it. In this time of recession a lot of people are losing their jobs, and losing some very comfortable homes. Some of them are going from living very comfortably to wondering how they are going to survive. Do you have sufficient food, or the money to buy it? Thank the Lord. I always thank the Lord for my food. I don't always pray out loud; but I do take the time to thank the Lord. I have seen some times when my financial situation was very shaky, times when I really did not know how I was going to get by. I can tell you that beans and potatoes taste better, when I take a moment to consider what it would be like, if I did not have them, and did not have money to buy them. I do not know what your experience might be; but I can tell you that when I close my day with prayer, I almost never can stay awake long enough to finish thanking the Lord for what he has already done for me. I have to wait until the next morning to pick up where I left off. Sometimes I wake up in the night, and I finish then; but even then I usually go back to sleep before I can finish.

If you have the idea that prayer is a task to be performed, perhaps, once a day, and then for about three or four minutes—you have never realized how important prayer really is. You need to start your day with prayer, and finish it with prayer—and to be constantly on the alert for the need, and the opportunity, to pray at every moment of the day. “Pray without ceasing.” Our attitude toward prayer, and our attitude toward Bible reading ought to be very much the same. “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,” [Ps 1:1-2](#). It is obvious that you cannot be consciously thinking about the scriptures all the time. There are times that you

need to think about other things. If you are driving down the interstate, it is a good idea to have your mind on what you are doing. You can get yourself, and other people, in some mighty dangerous situations if you are thinking about everything but driving. If you are on the operating table in some hospital, you would like to think the mind of the surgeon is on what he is doing.

But read the text again: “And in his law doth he meditate day and night.” It does mean what it says. It is a dangerous practice to explain away the clear statement of any text of scripture.

We cannot spend every moment of the day reading our Bibles; but all of us have abundantly more time for the Bible than most of us have ever used—or even imagined that we have. Think about this for a moment. God so created the solar system that the earth rotates on its axis once in every twenty-four hours. That is to say that our days are twenty-four hours long, and we always find some way to occupy those twenty-four hours. We may use the time gainfully, or we may squander the time; but we spend the time in some manner. Most of us seem to think that we are just about the busiest person in town. We never seem to have time to do all we need to do. Somebody is forever telling me, “I just don't have time to read the Bible; I wish I did, but I don't.” Imagine what might have happened if God had so ordered the natural creation that our days were only twenty-three and one half hours long. Do you imagine the human race might have somehow survived; or do you believe that we would have all expired, because we just cannot get along on a twenty-three and a half hour day? I believe that, somehow, we would have found a way to get along, don't you?

Do you believe you would be able to get through the day if you took the first thirty minutes of each day for your Bible, or do you believe that after a few days your world would just come to a screeching halt, because you cannot get along on a twenty-three and a half hour day? Do you think your day might even go much better, because you spent the first thirty minutes, quietly with the Lord. Do you think you might get along better with the people on the job, because that first thirty minutes put you in a better frame of mind to face the day. Do you think the job might go better, and you would not have to do some of your tasks over. A lot of time on the job is spent in redoing things that we should have done differently in the first place. If we did not have to do so many things over, we could save a lot of time. Do you not think that if you were able to face the day in a better frame of mind, that there might not be so many of those repeat jobs.

Not only would we all manage to survive if we spent that first thirty minutes with our Bibles, we all have little bits of time scattered through the day that we could spend with our Bibles—if we really wanted to. We very often make

the comment, "If God cannot have first place in our lives, he will not settle for second place." That statement is true; but it is also true that in this matter of reading our Bible, God will accept and bless the time that we use, regardless if it is our leftover time. God will accept and bless your Throwaway time. Our lives are just filled with "throwaway time," time that we cannot profitably spend in any other way.

Did you ever have a doctor's appointment for 2:30, and the doctor did not see you until 4:00? Were you just a little annoyed that he made you wait? Did you think that if he was not going to see you until 4:00, it would probably have been a good idea to set the appointment for 4:00 to start with? Were you, perhaps, not in an especially good humor when you finally did see him? Suppose that as soon as you got to the doctor's office you got out the New Testament you carry in your pocket and began to read. You are going to read until you are called for. You might have more time to read your Bible that day than you have had in a long time. Do you have the idea that you might be in a better frame of mind to talk to him, when he finally does call for you? Nobody likes to be kept waiting; but the best way to minimize the stress is to occupy the time profitably; and there is no better way to do that than by reading your Bible.

But it is possible that you do not carry a pocket New Testament with you. There are a lot of people who don't. I cannot understand why they do not; but it is a fact. There are a lot of people, who, for some reason, do not carry a New Testament with them. If you don't, that is one habit you need to start. You would never think about going to town without your wallet. A pocket New Testament does not take up any more space than a wallet does, and there is no end to the benefit it can be to you to always have a New Testament with you. You never know when you are going to come across some of this "throwaway time" we are talking about; but there is one thing you can be sure of: your life is just filled with it; and if you will just use that time to read your Bible, you will spend more time with the Bible than most people do.

Did any of you husbands ever have to stop at the grocery store for "just for a moment?" Your wife tells you she just needs to "pick up two or three things; it won't take but a minute;" but it has already been almost thirty minutes, and she is not back yet. When she finally does show up, she is pushing a grocery cart full of groceries. Is it, perhaps, a good idea for her to just get in the car and sit down—without bothering to make any explanation? Can she sense from your expression that you are not in a particularly good humor. Suppose that, when she first got out of the car, you got out your New Testament and started to read. You could even have a Bible in the dash of the car. Do you think that it might be safer for her to speak to you when she does get back, if you have spent that thirty minutes quietly with the Lord?

When you wives go to the hairdressers, how do you spend your time? Perhaps, you catch up on the neighborhood gossip; but you should have that finished by the time you get under the dryer. You cannot hear anything when the dryer is going. Do you, maybe, read some of the magazines they have laying around? If the content of those magazines is anything like the covers would suggest, you might read things in there that would embarrass you. Or, at least, it ought to. Again, do you not think that your time would be better spent, if you would read your Bible, while the dryer is going? But perhaps, it would embarrass you to read your Bible in public. It should not; but it would embarrass some people. Do you remember that the Lord said that if you are ashamed of him before men, he will be ashamed of you before his Father. That is not talking about being ashamed of any of his children on that grand day when we all stand before him in judgment; but it is saying that if you are ashamed of him at 11:30 on Saturday morning, he will be ashamed of you at 10:30 on Sunday morning. Did you ever wonder why you do not enjoy the church service as much as you used to? That may be the reason.

Most of the people who become acquainted with the church do so because of the recommendation of a satisfied member. If somebody saw you reading your Bible in such a public place as the beauty shop, do you not think that it might pique their curiosity? Do you think it might make them wonder what there is about your religion that makes you enjoy the Bible so much that you read it at every opportunity? Or do you think that if you are ashamed to be seen reading your Bible others might get the idea that your religion is not really important to you? We are living in a very wicked age. In some ways, there has never been another age like it. I know that people in very nearly every age have believed that their age was the most wicked age that ever was. But if a person is even slightly acquainted with the facts of history, he must admit that there have been other ages in which wickedness was more rampant than it is in this day. Baal worship was a very wicked kind of religion. Ritual murder (human sacrifice), and ritual fornication were the very heart of the worship of Baal. There was a time when National Israel was given over to that wicked religion.

[Isa 57:5](#), “Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks.”

[Eze 16:20-21](#), “Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter? That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them?” That is not the situation in America today. Even that is going in secret among some of the Satanic cults; but it is not public practice. At some times in the

history of ancient Israel and the nations around them, that was public practice.

When Christ was born, Herod heard that one had been born “the king of the Jews,” and he ordered every baby under two years old to be killed. There are a lot of things wrong in our government today; but our government could not get away with anything like that, not even if it wanted to. Christians are not being rounded up and slaughtered by the hundreds the way they were during the days of persecution.

But while all that is true, there are some ways in which this age is different than any other. There has never been an age in the history of the world in which it was possible for the mind-manipulators to pipe immorality into our living rooms the way it is being done by television today. Our people are spending enormous amounts of time watching television, and the content of those programs is steadily becoming more immoral. Our minds are steadily becoming conditioned to accept immorality.

Several years ago I was selling life insurance on a “debit.” An insurance debit is an arrangement where you make your rounds every so often picking up premiums. One day I had stopped to pick up the premium from an old couple, and the television was on. I don’t remember what the program was, but the scene must have been somewhat less than edifying, and the old lady said, “Mr. Hunt, what do you think of television?” Well, I was not inclined to go into their homes volunteering my opinions. I was there to sell insurance, and I did not want to impose on them; but she asked. And since she asked, I told her. She said, “I agree with you; there are things on television that are not fit for children to watch.” Well, that just hit me like a bucket of ice water. I said, “Tell me, if those programs are not fit for children to watch, are they really fit for you and me to watch?” She said, “Oh, Mr. Hunt, folks our age are not as impressionable as little children are.” Well, she was about thirty years older than I was, but she was putting me in her age category.

I agreed that folks “our age” were not as impressionable as we once were, and we were not as likely to go out and imitate what we saw on television as young folks are; but I said, “I will tell you what I would like for you to do. Some time when one of those programs come on that are ‘not fit for children to watch,’ you go ahead and watch it all the way through, and when it is over I want you to get your Bible and read it for a little while. And next month, when I come by, I want you to tell me how you felt reading your Bible, after you had been watching that mess.” She said, “I see what you mean.”

The immoral segment of society has never in the history of the world had such ready access to our minds as they have had since the introduction of television. You can be sure that the most immoral people in our nation are

using television for the very purpose of conditioning people to immorality. They are immoral, and they want others to be immoral.

The downward slide of television is no accident; it is part of a pattern. In 1932, Aldous Huxley wrote a book entitled *Brave New World*. In that book he envisioned an age when the mind-manipulators would use immoral programming on television to condition people to immorality. In 1932 very few people had even heard of television, much less seen it; but Aldous Huxley knew exactly how it would be used.

It is worth noting that Aldous Huxley was the brother of Julian Huxley, the father of Neo-Darwinism, the most prominent form of the theory of evolution. He was also the grandson of Thomas Huxley. One hundred years ago Thomas Huxley was the bulldog for Charles Darwin, the founder of the modern theory of evolution. There is no other notion that has caused such havoc in America as the theory of evolution has. Our schools teach our children that God is not our creator—that we are simply the products of blind chance. It is no wonder our younger generation has gotten the idea that if God is not their creator, they are not answerable to God, nor to anybody else for their conduct. Most of the problems in America would not have gotten so bad as they are if that unscientific, and unprovable notion was not being drilled into the minds of our younger generation.

But God will not allow the adversary to get an unbearable advantage over the people of God. I have no doubt that it was in the providence of God that, at the very time television began to gain such a hold on America, cassette tape recorders came on the scene. We are vexed with the wickedness of this age; and the mind-manipulators of this world are doing everything they can to use modern technology to help them in their assault on our minds and on the morals of our country. With radio, and television, and recorded music, we are faced with a constant barrage of immoral sounds and ideas. But we can use the technology of this age to our advantage.

Sometimes I hear somebody say that he would like to have lived in some other age. I would not want to live in any age that did not have cassette tape recorders. You may not place as great a value on your tape recorder as I do on mine; but if I could not get a replacement, there is no price that I would take for my tape recorder. When a little boy begins to grow up he begins to set his goals. I was just like any other little boy. I could not wait to get old enough to get a job; I wanted to have an independent income. I needed that income so I could get my own car. But after those two things I wanted to find somebody who could figure out a way to hook up enough car batteries to run one of those old tape recorders. Back in those days we did not have cassette recorders. We had those old 30 and 40 pound back breakers. I imagined it would take an entire trunk load of batteries to run the recorder. I never

imagined the time would come when we could carry a tape recorder in our pocket, and it would run for hours on two AA batteries. I just wanted some way to set one of those old reel to reel recorders in the passenger seat so it could read to me as I drove down the highway.

I bought one of the first battery powered tape recorders that was sold in Maryville. Royal Jewelers had an ad in the Sunday paper, and I could not wait to get there on Monday morning. That was a long time before they invented the cassette. The first battery powered tape recorders were still reel to reel. Every time the tape ran out you had to stop the car and rethread the tape. I only had it a few weeks until somebody took it out of my car. But they did not steal the mike, and in those days you could not go to Radio Shack to buy a replacement mike. So the only thing he could do with the recorder was sit and listen to me read the Bible to him. I thought it served him right.

I have worn out a lot of tape recorders during these last thirty years.

Sometimes I listen to sermons; more often I listen to the Bible on tape. I realize that much of the time I am not learning anything. Sometimes it runs, and I don't pay any attention. But whether I learn anything from the tape or not, it always accomplishes one thing. During the time I am listening to those tapes, I am not listening to the radio. Anything that will keep you from listening to some of the music that is being played now on the radio has to be an advantage. It has been over twenty years since I have listened to music on the radio. Recently I read about the music awards that had been given out the night before. I did not recognize the name of any song that won an award. I did not recognize the name of most of the entertainers, except that I had seen their names in the paper. I felt good about that.

I have very little first hand knowledge about what is being sung on the radio today; but if it is as bad as it was twenty years ago, when I quit listening, it is bad enough. From what I read in the newspapers, it has not gotten any better. There was an old Scottish patriot, who is quoted as saying, "If you will let me write your music, I don't care who writes your laws, I will rule your country." That statement is more accurate than most people have ever realized. Those songs you go through the day humming to yourself have an impact on your life. If you go through the day humming *Amazing Grace*, and *How Firm a Foundation*, it will have an effect; and if you go through the day humming some song you heard over the local rock-and-roll station, it will also have an effect. The morals of our people, and especially the morals of our young people, are being shaped by the music they listen to.

Much of the time, when you listen, you do not think you are learning, but you really are, after all. Much of the time, when I listen to those New Testament tapes, there is more that is registering than I realize. When I was a little boy I used to hear a Pepsi commercial on the radio. It went, "Pepsi Cola hits the

spot, twelve full ounces that's a lot, twice as much for a nickel too, Pepsi Cola's the drink for you." How long has it been since you could buy a Pepsi for a nickel? That is how long it has been since I heard that commercial. I did not make any effort to memorize that commercial. I had no need to memorize it; but I memorized it nonetheless, and I am sure that as long as I live and have my right mind, I will likely be able to quote it. Do you remember, "Super Suds, Super Suds, lots more suds from Super Suds?" It has probably been forty years since they ran that commercial, but some of you who are reading these lines can remember it. If you listen to the radio very much, at some time you have probably found yourself humming the tune to some commercial for a product that you would not have considered buying or using. You had no use for the product, but constantly hearing the commercial fixed the tune in your mind. We need to be careful what we listen to.

We are constantly bombarding our minds with something; it behooves us that we bombard it with better things. Most people keep the radio or the television going the majority of the time. If you get in the car, if the radio is not turned on, you probably turn it on. The music you listen to will have an effect on you. You will likely not go out and imitate the things you hear about in those songs; but it will diminish your interest in spiritual things, to say the least. You can buy the New Testament on cassette tapes for anywhere from twenty to fifty dollars, depending on where and when you buy it. Usually it will be narrated by an Englishman by the name of Alexander Scourby. He is very articulate; he can pronounce those proper names that most people have trouble with; and he is very easy to listen to. When you are riding to work every morning, you would do much better to listen to him reading the Bible than you will listening to most of what is on the radio.

If it does not accomplish anything more than to keep you from hearing what is on the radio, that would be a benefit; but it will do much more. Moses said, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew," [De 32:2](#). The scriptures are like a gentle rain. They generally do their work slowly and gently, even when you are not aware.

Most people seem to keep the radio on "for the racket." At least, that is what they tell me. If you have to listen to something, you would do well to provide yourself with something better than the music on the radio.

Your mind is generally active. Some small part of the time you may not be thinking about anything; but that is not usually the case. The adversary has a more ready access to you through your thoughts than he does in any other way. If he can, he will induce you to think filthy, unclean thoughts. Every person has an old carnal nature, and if he can, the adversary will use that old carnal nature to stir up unclean thoughts, and unclean feelings in your mind.

He has no more effective way to do that than to have you constantly listening to music written and performed by vile, perverted, sinful performers. But not every person is as susceptible to unclean thoughts as others are. Every person has a carnal nature, just as surely as everybody else does; but that carnal nature does not work exactly the same in every person. Not every person is as plagued by unclean thoughts as the next person. There are those who have, for the most part, brought that problem under control; and others were never bothered with it in the first place, that is, not to the same degree. But if Satan cannot attack you in that way, he will attack you in some other way. If he cannot entice you to think unclean thoughts, he very well may be able to stir up mean, spiteful feelings in your mind. Perhaps he will direct your mind to some person who has not done you right. You have been mistreated, and you begin to ponder the thought. You begin to recall all the times that person has taken advantage of you, and you may consider how you ought to respond. That hurt, and perhaps, just a little malice, begins to prey on your mind. Sometimes, when you think on it, the offence begins to grow, and the more you think about it, the more offended you become. It does not do you any good to think about it; you just become more annoyed with the situation. You would do so much better to feed your mind with better things. Perhaps the adversary fails on both those points. Not everybody is plagued with unclean thoughts; and not everybody has a problem with malice. If he fails on both of those points, he may direct his attention to your greed. There is more greed in the world than most of us imagine. Much of what the world calls success is really greed. The bookstores are filled with books on how to be a "success." Most of those books are simply manuals on how to satisfy your greed, how to acquire and maintain more and more of material things, how to gain more attention, or more prestige, than your colleagues. Driving down the highway listening to the New Testament on tape might stir you up to realize that gaining a closer relationship with your maker is a more profitable goal than figuring out a way to gain that expensive toy you have had your eye on.

But if you do not have any great problem with lust, or malice, or greed, that does not mean the adversary is going to give up. He will very likely attack you through your pride. Satan will take the high road, if the low road is blocked. If he cannot get you to gratify the low and base instincts of the flesh, he will begin to tell you what a fine person you are. He will try to convince you that you have done such a good job in all those categories that you must stand head and shoulders above your friends. He will brag on you, and get you to brag on yourself, until you are convinced that you really are doing a very good job. You are a good citizen. You are a credit to your community. You are probably the most devoted member of your church. If everybody in

the church was trying as hard as you are, the church would be in much better shape. You are really alarmed that you cannot get other people to come up to your standards. Pride may not have destroyed as many lives as lust, and malice, and greed; but it has done its share of damage; and as surely as you feed and cultivate your pride, you will cripple yourself in your service toward God.

Your mind is constantly active; if you are not thinking about one thing, you will be thinking about something else. And if the adversary cannot attack you one way, he will attack you another way. He will use your very thoughts as a weapon against you. If you are going to bombard your mind with some kind of sound most of the time, you need to find the very best sound. Find something that will stir up better thoughts.

Most of our people have cassette recorders, and a lot of them are using them to record their church services. Your day might go better if you spent some of the day listening to those tapes while you work. If you do not have the tapes you need, our people have several good tape services, which offer a wide variety of tapes by good able preachers. Our people are blessed with some very able preachers. I believe this generation is blessed with some of the most able preachers our people have ever had, and their tapes are readily available. Acquiring those tapes will represent some of the smartest money you will ever spend. The ministry is a great benefit to the Lord's people, and we would do well to spend more time in listening to what they have to say.

If you need to listen to music, there are any number of music cassettes available. That music will stir you up to better thoughts. Unless your work goes more smoothly than mine ever did, you need the Lord's constant assistance to guide you through the day. There are all sorts of problems, and sometimes, personal conflicts, that arise on the job. If you listen to good music, and spend some time in prayer, as you drive to work each morning, your day is very likely to go much better than it will if you bombard your mind with other things.

Most of us watch entirely too much television. We can make ever so many good resolutions, but most of us still watch television more than we need to. And it goes without saying that most television programming is not a benefit to our spiritual well being. The content of most programs becomes more immoral and more unacceptable every year. But I am convinced there can be an advantage, even to television. I don't believe that it is any accident that at the very time television is becoming such a detriment, camcorders have become so readily available. If we are going to watch television, and most of us will, we should, at least, provide ourselves with something better to watch than commercial programming. A VCR costs about as much as a cheap television; a video player is even cheaper; and a camcorder costs about as

much as a console television. Most of our homes have a console television; so most of us could afford a camcorder, if we really want it.

If we are going to watch television anyway, we would do well to videotape some of our meetings, and when we need to lean back and relax, we could watch that. I have noticed that I sometimes enjoy the videotape every bit as much as I enjoyed the sermon at the meeting. Sometimes at our special meetings we are so tired before some of the last preachers are called on, that we cannot really enjoy what they have to say. But, later, when we are able to relax at home and watch the service, we are more rested, our mind is more alert, and we may get more out of the sermon than we did before. I have watched some of those tapes over and over again, and I enjoy them every time.

Videotapes are very inexpensive; you can buy them for anywhere from three to five dollars each, and you can usually get two sermons on each tape. That is a mighty small price to pay for the benefit received. If individual families do not want to spend the money for a camcorder, it would not hurt for the church to make arrangements to make the videotapes available. It would certainly benefit the members—and the church.

I used to wonder how those preachers ever found time to read their Bible in the long ago, when they had to earn their livelihood working in the fields from before daylight until after dark. We have it mighty easy today compared to the way they had to live. It is much easier for most of us to earn a living than it was in ages past.

One day I was talking to an old brother who raised his family on a tiny farm, all the time that he was pastoring churches, and I asked him how he ever found time for his Bible. He said, “I just took my Bible to the field. I couldn’t plow all day without taking a break every now and then, and I would have my Bible at the end of the row. While I rested, I would read my Bible, and then I would pray and think about what I had read until I took another break.” That brother was spending more time studying his Bible than most preachers who have a comfortable study and all the time in the world for reading. It did not take a lot of concentration to follow a plow, and all the time he was plowing he was praying and thinking about what he had just read. It is no wonder that when he got to church he was anxious to tell what he had learned.

When Paul instructs us to “pray without ceasing,” and when David says that the blessed person meditates in God’s law “day and night,” it is not nearly so unreasonable a thought as we might think. Our minds are engaged in some manner almost every waking hour. We are constantly thinking about something; and for the most part, especially in this electronic age, we are constantly bombarding our minds with all sorts of sounds, and all sorts of suggestions. We could make a practice of going to sleep every night praying,

and praying during the night when we wake up and have difficulty going back to sleep, and during that waking up time every morning. We could spend the first thirty minutes every morning reading our Bible. We might have to get up thirty minutes earlier; but after awhile we would probably start going to bed a little earlier. We could use our waiting time for reading, and we could replace commercial radio and television with tapes of preaching, and Bible reading, and good, inspiring religious songs. It is possible for us to constantly feed our minds on better things, and indeed, meditate on his law “day and night.” It is possible for us to pray whenever we are faced with the need for prayer; and if we are in the spiritual condition we ought to be in, that will be most of the time that our minds are not necessarily occupied with other things.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Predestinated Unto The Adoption

Predestinated Unto The Adoption

[Eph 1:3-5](#), “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 that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having PREDESTINATED US UNTO THE ADOPTION of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”

I cannot think of a subject which I had more difficulty understanding than I had with the subject of adoption. But there is probably not a simpler subject in the Bible. The problem that arose in my mind, and the problem that bothers most people, is simply this: If we are born of the Spirit of God, why is it necessary for us to be adopted? My wife and I have four natural born children, and the thought of adopting those children has never entered our minds. Can you imagine how people would react if I told them that we were thinking about adopting those children? The Bible does teach that we are born of the Spirit of God, and it does also teach that we are adopted. But, why are both necessary?

Most of the difficulty in understanding the adoption stems from the fact that very few Bible readers have ever realized all that is involved in adoption. It is a much broader subject than most Bible readers have ever imagined. Outside of the subject of God himself, the subject of adoption is probably the broadest subject in the Bible. The adoption began in eternity past; it will be concluded in eternity to come; and it involves everything God does for his children in between.

Regeneration, or being born again, is just one part of the adoption process. Regeneration is one of the things that make God’s adoption of his children

different from any other adoption that has ever taken place. But, I am getting ahead of myself. We will get to that later.

What is adoption, anyway? What does it signify for a child to be adopted?

Adoption simply means the legal act of taking of a child out of one family and putting that child into another family. We are by nature the children of Adam.

We are all descendants of our great-great-great-granddaddy Adam.

Every human being is descended from Adam. He is a member of the family of Adam. We are all descended from a single ancestor. We are all members of the one huge family of Adam.

I have noticed that if a person has kinfolks who are rich or famous, very often, it will conveniently come up in his conversation that he has some famous kinfolks. Well, I can tell you that you and I have some mighty famous kinfolks. Do you remember old King Pharaoh, who had all the little Jewish babies drowned? That was a distant cousin of yours and mine. He was a very, very distant cousin; but he was kinfolks. We are all related in Adam. Do you remember King Herod, who had all the little babies from two years old and under killed. He was kinfolks. And Adolph Hitler? He was a distant cousin. You and I came out of a mighty rough family.

We are all partakers of the same nature—all partakers of the sin of Adam—all descended from Adam. But, by grace, we are all taken out of that family and made members of God's family. That is what adoption is all about. It is God's taking us out of Adam's family, and placing us in his family.

Let me ask you: what is the first act of any adoption? After you have determined to adopt a child, the very first act of adoption is the choice of the child to be adopted. Can you imagine that my wife and I might decide to adopt a child, and we put a notice in the paper: "To whom it may concern, Harold and Doris Hunt intend to adopt a child. Anybody interested in being adopted, please be at the Blount County Court House next Tuesday morning at 9:00 o'clock." That is not the way it is done. We do not send out a general call for anybody, who might want to be adopted.

The first act of the adoption is the choice, the election, of the child to be adopted.

It is no accident that what God does for his children is called adoption. The very first thing we do when we adopt a child is to choose the child to be adopted. And Paul tells us that is exactly what God did. [Eph 1:4-5](#), "According as HE HATH CHOSEN US in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having PREDESTINATED US UNTO THE ADOPTION of children by Jesus Christ unto himself." Adoption is the huge framework within which the rest of our salvation fits. Election, the choice of the child, is the first act of adoption.

Involved in any adoption there is some legal work that must be taken care of. You cannot just spot some attractive little boy walking along the road and decide, "I think I will adopt that child." You cannot just pull over to the side of the road and invite him into your car and go on your way. That is not the way it is done; you can get in big trouble that way. There is legal work that has to be taken care of. There may be natural parents whose claim has to be satisfied.

Two of the most unhappy people I think I ever knew were two people in my home town, who took a little boy to raise without bothering to adopt him legally. His mother did not care anything about him. She did not care much about herself, and she gave the little boy to that couple to raise. They were very poor people. They could barely provide for themselves. But they provided the little boy a place in their home. They showered him with their love, and they provided him with everything they were able to provide. But after awhile, his mother changed her way, and she changed her mind about the little boy, and one day she came to get him. That old couple would have just as soon have had their right arm cut off as to give that little fellow up, but the legal work had never been taken care of. The claim of the natural parent had to be satisfied, and when she came to get the little boy, all they could do was to give him up.

There was a legal claim to be satisfied, and that is what the Lord was doing on the cross of Calvary. He was taking care of the legal work of our adoption. Isaiah said, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," [Isa 53:11](#). Every attribute of God will be satisfied in the salvation of his people. The love of God will be satisfied, because everybody God loves will be there. The grace of God will be satisfied, because every subject of grace will be there. And the justice of God will be satisfied, because every sin will have been paid for—atoned for.

God does not sacrifice justice in order to be merciful. I hear folks preach as if God says to Justice, "Now Justice, you be still; Justice, don't you say a word. Justice, I am going to save this child, and there is nothing you can do about it." God does not hogtie Justice in order to be merciful. The justice of God is satisfied in the salvation of his people.

Suppose you go blazing down the interstate doing ninety miles an hour, and after awhile, the patrolman catches you and pulls you over and writes you a ticket. Then you go before the judge, and you say, "Judge, I don't know why I did that; I don't make a habit of driving that way. I never have driven that fast before, and Judge, I promise you, if you let me off this time, I will never do that again." The judge may tear up the ticket and say, "That is alright. Don't you worry; I will take care of it." That is mercy, but there is not a trace of justice in it.

I hear people preach as if that is the way God saves people, as if God simply says, "Don't you worry about it. That is alright. I am going to take care of it." But God is not a softhearted old judge, sitting out there somewhere fixing speeding tickets.

The justice of God will be satisfied in the salvation of his people. There is no chance that on that final day the Justice of God will step forward and say, "That child is mine; he owes a sin debt to me; I have a claim against him; I demand what is mine." There is no chance of that, because the Justice of God will be satisfied in the salvation of his people.

An adoption is not free; there is some expense involved. That is where redemption comes in. Paul talked about that in the Galatian letter. "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," [Ga 4:4-5](#). To redeem means to buy back, to pay the purchase price. Redemption was the purchase price of adoption. And that is what the Lord did on the cross. He paid the price of our redemption, the expense of our adoption.

"For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's," [1Co 6:20](#). He bought us; he paid for us; he paid the redemption price, and he is going to have what he paid for. Sometimes you and I pay a price, and we do not get full value for our purchase price. But you can be sure that God is going to have what he paid for. God will have with him in glory every one he redeemed and paid for on the cross.

The purchase price which the Lord paid on the cross of Calvary was the most expensive transaction this old world has ever known. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," [1Pe 1:18-19](#).

When God created this old world, it did not tax his energies in the least. I used to think God rested on the seventh day, because he was tired. He did not rest on the Sabbath day, because he was tired; he rested, because he was through. He had created all the worlds he intended to create. God could have created ten million worlds like this and never taxed his energies in the least.

When God created this world, he only created so much gold and silver. There is no more gold and silver today than there was the day he created it. But God could have created ten million worlds like this, if he had wanted to, and he could have made every mountain on every world of gold. And he could have given ten million solid gold mountains for my redemption and yours, and that would have been a small price to pay, compared to the price he did pay for our redemption. That would have been a bargain basement price. That would

have been pocket change, compared to the price he did pay. He gave the very best heaven had for our redemption. He gave his only Son.

When you and I adopt a child, we are somewhat limited in what we are able to do for that child. We give him our name. We give him a place in our home.

We shower him with our love, and we do everything we conceivably can for him. But there are some things we cannot do. We cannot give him the color of our eyes. We cannot give him the color of our hair, the shape of our nose, the cut of our chin, the sound of our voice.

It is in the nature of children to look like and to sound like their natural parents. I have three daughters, and to some degree or another, they all sound like my wife on the telephone. Sometimes, when I call home, if I know the girls are all there, I have to ask who I am talking to.

That used to be very confusing to one of my sons-in-law, before he became my son-in-law. One day he called to talk to my daughter, and my wife answered the phone.

He said, “Hi, whatcha doin’?”

And my wife said, “Watchin' television.”

Somewhat later in the conversation he said, “Just exactly who is it I am talkin’ to?”

It is in the nature of children to look like—to walk like—and to sound like their natural parents, and in our old carnal nature, we took like, and walk like, and sound like our great-great-granddaddy Adam. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” [Joh 3:6](#).

You and I cannot give an adopted child our physical characteristics. We cannot make him look like us, and walk and talk the way we do. But God is not limited in the way we are. And right here is where the new birth comes in. The new birth is one part of the adoption. He came “to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,” [Ga 4:5](#). Because we are sons by choice, we are made sons by birth.

We cannot make that adopted child to look like us. He was born of his natural parents, and it is his nature to look like his natural parents. But God adopts his children, who were born of Adam, and he borns them again to look like him.

We are made “partakers of the divine nature,” [1Pe 1:4](#), and in spirit we look like our heavenly Father. We look like our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

In [Heb 1](#), Paul described the Lord in this way: “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows,” [Heb 1:9](#). And in the Sermon on the Mount the Lord described his children: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled,” [Mt 5:6](#). Do you

notice the family resemblance? Did you ever see somebody, who, even if nobody told you, you knew that he had to be such and such a person's son? He was either his son or his brother; he looked just like him.

It is in the tendency of God's children to look alike. I am not talking about the color of their eyes, nor the cut of their chin. I am talking about those characteristics which show up in their lives as the result of the Spirit of God living in their hearts. I am talking about that love for God, and for the things of God, which is characteristic of every member of the family of God. I am talking about the expression on their face, when you talk to them about the good things of the Lord. Did you ever notice, when you are talking to somebody about the Lord and his goodness, their face may begin to take on color, and sometimes, their eyes begin to fill and run over, and every now and then, their chin begins to tremble. I see a family resemblance there, don't you?

There have been a lot of people, down through the years, who have tried to paint pictures of the Lord. They do not know what he looked like. I know those pictures do not look like the Lord, because, for one thing, they all show him with long hair, and my Bible says, "Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him,"

[1Co 11:14](#). He would never have worn his hair long, and then later inspired Paul to say long hair was a shame to a man. Some of those pictures show him with bare feet. I don't believe the Lord went around barefoot. John said that his "shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose," [Joh 1:27](#). So he wore shoes. The pictures I have seen don't look particularly Jewish. According to the flesh, he was "made of the seed of David," [Ro 1:3](#). "According to the flesh" he was a Jew. Those pictures I have seen look noticeably Caucasian. In his physical appearance the Lord was so typically Jewish, and his appearance was so normal, compared to the Jews of his day, that he could stand before a crowd and preach to them for a long time, and, when, finally, his voice fell silent, he could walk back through the crowd, and they would not know who he was. He looked that much like everybody else.

But I believe we can know a little about what he looked like. I find a verse in Second Corinthians which reads: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," [1Co 3:18](#). This text teaches that those who behold the glory of the Lord are literally changed into the image of the Lord. What does that mean? It means that those who love the Lord, and consistently look to him for guidance, begin to take on his characteristics. Once in awhile it happens in nature. You may have seen it. It does not happen often. But once in awhile it happens that when two people are married so long, for many years heart answers to heart, until finally, in their old days,

face answers to face. I was away on a trip some time ago, and the folks my wife and I stayed with looked very much alike. My wife can be a little skeptical at times, but even my wife noticed it. After we left, my wife commented about “how much they look alike.” Once in a while it happens in nature. For years and years heart answers to heart, until, finally, in their old days, face answers to face.

But, while it only happens once in awhile in nature, it happens, as the rule, in our service toward God. The more you follow your Lord, the more you endeavor to serve him, the more you listen to him, and walk in his precepts, the more you look like him.

I don't know a lot about his physical characteristics, but I believe I do know this about him. I believe that when he stood and preached the gospel of his grace, the expression on his face was that same expression I can see in the faces of his children, when they are intently listening and being fed on the gospel message. I believe that expression is the very expression I will see on the face of my Lord on that good morning, when I see him on that eternal day.

God is not limited as you and I are. We cannot give our adopted children the color of our eyes, nor the cut of our chin. We cannot make them look like us. But in regeneration God makes his children to begin to resemble him. They are made “partakers of the divine nature.” They are still human, still mortal, still sinners of Adam's race, but the Spirit of God living in their hearts has its effect, and more and more, they resemble the family of God.

Every adoption generates some paperwork. If the adoption is legal and binding, there will be documents to prove it. This adoption generated some papers. Our adoption is not recorded with paper and ink; it is written on the tables of our heart. We are taught in our hearts to know that we are the children of God. “Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit,” [1Co 5:5](#). Those of you who have been involved in real estate could teach me more than I have ever imagined about the principle of earnest money. Earnest money is given in advance of the actual transaction as a kind of pledge to bind the bargain. It is an advance payment, which indicates that you intend to carry through with the deal. God's Spirit in the hearts of his children bears witness that he intends to carry through with his promise. It is evidence that he intends to carry the recipient of that Spirit home to live with him in glory.

Can you imagine a little boy in an orphanage? He is lonely. The people who run the place do the best they can to take care of him, but that is not like having parents to take him in their arms and love him as their own. And can you imagine that one day he hears he has been adopted by the richest, the kindest, the most gentle man in that town, and the adoption papers are on file

in the front office? Do you have an idea that while he is waiting, every now and then, he would like to go to the office, and look at the adoption papers, and to see that his name is written there? And don't you think he would appreciate it if somebody would show him the papers? That is what I am trying to do with this little booklet. I hope you can get just a glimpse of the adoption papers. "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit"—a pledge that seals the bargain.

If you feel the Spirit of God stirring in your heart that is the earnest of your inheritance. That is your evidence that you are a heaven-bought, heaven-bound child of God. From your vantage point, that is the paperwork of your adoption. From God's vantage point Job says, "Also now, behold my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high," [Job 16:19](#). Paul says, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his," [1Ti 2:15](#). That is talking about the firm and sure decrees of God, written in the halls of eternity, but right now, we are looking at the evidence of the adoption as it is written in the heart of God's children, and we will save the other aspect of the question for another time.

In [Ro 8](#), Paul says, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," [Ro 8:15](#). The very first words children learn to say are Mama or Papa, or perhaps Da-da. I have never entirely figured out whether children learn to say Mama and Papa first, because we teach them to say that, or whether it is just natural for them to learn to make those sounds early, so ages ago parents learned to call themselves that. I don't know, and I am not going to worry about it, but this is another way in which our heavenly Father is like our natural parents. God delights to hear us acknowledge him as our Father, and because of that, he has "given us the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." *Abba* is the Hebrew expression for father. It is a very simple sound, very much like Papa or Da-da. How simple a thing to say. It is so simple that a little child can say it—Abba, Father.

[Ro 8:23](#), "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." In the old days the Jews had a feast called the Feast of the Firstfruits. That meant that the full crop was coming after awhile. That is what it means when we feel the Spirit of God stirring in our hearts. Those are the firstfruits, the firstfruits of the Spirit. The full crop is coming after awhile. The firstfruits of the Spirit are the firstfruits of the adoption. It indicates that the climax of the adoption, the final act of the adoption, is coming after awhile.

I have heard it said that we do not know anything at all about what heaven is going to be like. I believe we can know something about it. I believe it is going to be a whole lot of what we get just a little of down here. These are the firstfruits. The last fruits are like the firstfruits. There is just a lot more of it. If you have ever had the first taste of apple pie, you have a pretty good idea of what the rest of the pie is going to be like. And if you have ever felt God's Spirit moving in your heart, you have a good idea of what heaven is going to be like.

Some folks have gotten the idea from [Ro 8:23](#), the adoption will not take place until the resurrection. But, no, the resurrection is when the adoption will finally be complete. It has been going on all along. It started a long time ago. It started in eternity past when God determined upon the adoption. The first act of the adoption was when he chose his family in Christ Jesus in eternity past. Then he did all the legal work that was necessary for our adoption in sending his son to suffer and die on the cross, and to satisfy every just claim of the law. He paid the price of our redemption. Then he sent his Spirit into our hearts in the work of regeneration.

Now we are waiting—waiting for the final act of adoption. I am enjoying the wait. I used to say I would like to live to be ninety years old, and preach twice a day until then. But I don't think I could quite stand up to that. I have tried preaching twice every day, and that is more than I can handle. I would not mind to live to be ninety years old, and preach once a day. I am enjoying the wait. Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," [Php 1:21](#). I am not in any hurry to leave this old world.

But the older I get, and the closer I get to the end of my journey, the more I think about that day, when my heavenly Father will come for me. The last of adoption is when the adopting father comes and gets his little child, and takes him to live with him in that big house on the hill. I am looking forward, with fond anticipation, to that good day, when the final act of adoption will come, and we will be forever at home with the Lord.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt

The English Baptists And Their Confessions Of Faith

The ENGLISH BAPTISTS and their CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

Baptists have never been fond of creeds, declarations of synods, and confessions of faith. They have always believed, "The Bible is the Word of God and the *only rule* of faith and practice." Our articles of faith say that.

We read passages such as [Re 22:18](#), "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." We understand that to mean the Bible is all we need. We do not need man-made creeds and

confessions of faith to supplement it, or back it up. The Bible can stand on its own.

And yet, in the 1600's, the Baptists in England issued a spate of confessions of faith. How are we to look at those confessions? That is the question we will consider in this little study.

We are often told, "The London Confession represents what Baptists have always believed. Any departure from that *standard* is a departure from Baptist doctrine." But is that true? Did that document represent what all Baptists in England believed at that time, or did it represent what some of them believed? Was it precisely what they believed, or was it a close approximation of their doctrine? Did those men intend for that document to be a standard for all time, or was it simply an explanation put forth to answer the slanderous charges that were being made against them?

Generally, when people talk about the London Confession, they mean the Second London Confession of 1689. But why the second confession; why not the First London Confession of 1644? They are not the same. If it is a departure from the faith not to venerate the Second London Confession, why was it not a departure for them to discard the First London Confession?

Or why either London Confession; why not the confession of 1611? You say that was a General Baptist confession. You are right; it was, but what about the Midland Confession of 1655, or the Somerset Confession of 1656? Those were Particular Baptist Confessions, and they were different from the London Confession of 1689.

There were two kinds of Baptists putting out confessions at that time. They were the Arminian General Baptists and the Calvinistic Particular Baptists. The Generals began in 1608, and the Particulars began in 1633. They had both grown out of the Protestant *Independents*, and they insisted they were good Protestants. The *Independents* had earlier broken with the Church of England, who had themselves broken from the Roman Catholic Church. In the preface to the Second London Confession the Particular Baptists stated their purpose to be (1) to demonstrate their devotion to *that wholesome Protestant doctrine*, and (2) to demonstrate that they were as good Protestants as the Presbyterians, the Independents, or the Church of England.

And there were the old-order Anabaptists, who had been in England since apostolic times. They had never been connected with Rome, nor with her Protestant daughters. They were still present in substantial numbers, when the Generals and Particulars began. The last old-order Anabaptist to be burned at the stake in England was Edward Wightman in 1611. It is through these old-order Anabaptists the Primitive Baptists trace our lineage.

The Protestants made the most scurrilous charges against the Anabaptists. Without first investigating the matter, the Generals and Particulars accepted those charges at face value, and repeated them. They bristled at being called *Anabaptists*.

On the other hand, the old-order Anabaptists were always suspicious of the new *reformed Baptists*, who had so recently broken with the Protestants. They thought they had not been sufficiently reformed—they brought too many Protestant corruptions with them. When they talked about the new reformed Baptists, they sound, for all the world, like Primitive Baptists of this day talking about New-School Baptists. Persecution forced all three kinds of Baptists into the same camp, and to the best of their ability they worked together, but they were never entirely agreed. It was not possible the Generals and Particulars would ever agree with each other, or with the old-order Anabaptists.

The Particulars put out the two London confessions. Suppose we were to put together a confession of what Baptists believe in our day. Who would we call on to put it together? How would it read? Who could put together a confession of faith which Southern (Missionary) Baptists and Primitives could agree to? If the Freewill Baptists could accept it, do you imagine the Landmark Baptists would be satisfied?

But I am told the English Baptists were more in agreement in the 1600's than we are today. Where did anybody get that idea? When was the entire Baptist family ever in agreement? They were not entirely in agreement in the apostle's day. Why do you think Paul wrote all those epistles? Sometimes he dealt with false doctrine; sometimes he dealt with false practice. In most of them, he called on them to change their ways. If the Baptists were not fully in agreement in the apostles' day, and we are not entirely in agreement in this day, why should we believe they were in agreement in the 1600's?

If the Baptists were going to put out a confession of faith, how did it happen that they adopted a Presbyterian confession? The London Confession of 1689 is simply the Presbyterian Westminster Confession of 1646 with a few critical changes to make it acceptable to Baptists. The preface to the confession states that they concluded to “retain the same order,” “without any variation in the terms,” and to use “the very same words,” as the Westminster Confession. Why would they do that? Why did they not come up with a distinctly Baptist confession?

Someone has ventured to say they had been persecuted for so long they compromised their principles in order to gain relief. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

You may differ with the wording of the London Confession. You may insist that on some points it does not square with the plain teaching of the Bible. You may insist that it is more Protestant than Baptist, but no person who has spent any amount of time studying the conditions that gave rise to the London Confession could, even for a moment, imagine those men compromised their principles. A careful study of the lives and experience of the men who adopted that confession proves beyond all question that no more noble, no more godly, no more faithful, group of men ever lived.

The Roman Catholic Church in England lost its power to persecute with the death of Queen Mary in 1558. The Church of England gave up on burning Baptists in 1611, with the burning of Edward Wightman. They realized they were doing the Baptists' work for them. Submitting to be burned alive, rather than deny what they believed, was the most eloquent sermon anyone could possibly preach. The authorities finally realized that the public spectacle of burning Baptists for their faith only gained converts for the Baptists. But putting an end to burning them did not end, or really diminish, their persecution.

The General Baptists came along in 1608, and the first Particular Baptist church was formed in 1633. From that time until William of Orange came to the throne in 1689, the Baptists suffered as brutal treatment in England as any body of people who ever lived.

They no longer burned them at the stake, but they would arrest preachers, take them through a farce of a trial, and lock them up to starve and freeze in filthy jails, while their families starved and froze at home. Often, in order to have a roof over their heads, their wives and children would join them in jail, and they would freeze and starve together. The principle was *out of sight, out of mind*. The spectacle of a public burning, and the sympathy it provoked, were avoided. The preacher was prevented from doing his work, and those who were connected with him were sufficiently warned.

Thomas Delaune and his wife, and both their children, starved and finally died in prison. He was one of literally thousands who suffered in just that way. These were men who could have gained their freedom— if they would only agree to compromise their principles. They refused, and, by the thousands, they died for it. John Bunyan spent twelve years in Bedford jail. His suffering was made more unbearable, because he was separated from his little blind daughter, who was especially dear to him. He was still in prison when she died. I cannot help but feel a lump in my throat when I think of how he must have felt to know he could not be with her, especially at that moment. John Bunyan could have gained his freedom at any time, if he would only agree to quit preaching. His answer was always that if they released him today, he would preach again tomorrow. Those were not the kind of men who compromise their most fundamental beliefs. Sometimes, with the approval of the authorities, the mob would storm into churches, drag the preacher out of the pulpit, and with swords and clubs waving, they would beat the congregation mercilessly, even women “great with child.” They would lead the preacher off to the judge, who would threaten to see to it the preacher was hanged, and impose a large fine. But, if they let him go, he would often be found preaching in the same pulpit that night, only to have the same thing happen all over again.

Parliament imposed a scale of fines and penalties on dissenting preachers and their hearers, with a lesser fine for the first penalty, a greater fine for the second, and an even greater fine for the third offense. There were different fines for the preacher, and the hearers, and the owners of the property where they met.

One third of the fine went to the informer who turned them in. An entire industry of informers resulted, with some of the most depraved and unprincipled individuals becoming wealthy on the proceeds of auctions held to raise money to pay the fines. The bishops and Establishment preachers would often attend the auctions to pick up bargains from the misery of their victims.

With informers constantly on the prowl, they would often meet in the woods, sometimes before daylight, or late in the night. They would make a point of waiting till near the time of service before they announced the place, and they would assemble and disperse from different directions. They would have guards posted to sound the alarm, if they heard somebody coming. One poor boy tried to sound the alarm, but his leather britches were frozen to the ground. By the time he broke loose, it was too late.

They no longer burnt preachers at the stake, but they did hang, draw and quarter them. *Drawing and quartering* meant that after they hanged him, they would cut his body in four parts (quarters), drag it through the town, and put the body parts on display. They would often chop off his head, mount it on a pike, and display it in front of his church.

John James was one of the preachers *hanged, drawn, and quartered.*” After he was hanged, his body was butchered like an animal, and dragged through town on a sled, to be displayed on the city gates, and his head was placed on a pole across from his church. It is impossible to imagine the feelings of his little church to see their pastor’s head so abused. Ivimy gives the account. “His quarters were taken back to Newgate, on the sledge which carried him to the gallows and were afterwards placed on the city gates, and his head was set upon a pole opposite the meeting-house.” (*Ivimy’s History, vol. 1, ppg. 227*).

They would often strip a family of everything they had in the world, and leave them penniless and homeless. They were just as vicious with those who assisted them in their distress. One man was fined, because he shed a tear, when he saw a Baptist preacher beaten almost to death with a whip.

On numerous occasions, when an entire community had become Baptists, they would devastate the entire community. The authorities would strip them of their personal property, their little cash, and the very tools of their trade. They were often left destitute without the means to earn a livelihood.

No one who has studied the available material could imagine those men compromised under pressure.

We are treading on sacred ground, and however much we may differ with some expressions in the London Confession, it behooves us to be very careful about criticizing those who adopted it. Those Particular Baptists who adopted the London Confession were as honest, as determined, and as faithful as anyone who ever graced the earth. If they signed their names to it, you can be sure they believed what they signed.

In spite of their resistance to confessions of faith, early in the 1600's, the Baptists did begin to draw up confessions. They intended for those confessions to act as a

defense mechanism against the heinous accusations that were being leveled against them. They were put forth to deal with a serious present need, and for that reason, if for no other, we should not be overly harsh with them for doing so. We must keep it always in mind that those confessions were never meant to be *official standards* or *supplements to the Bible*. The Protestants make that claim for their confessions; the Baptists do not.

The General Baptist John Smyth put out his confession in 1611. It set the tone for the Baptist confessions that were to follow. The preface states that “they are forced against their whole minds to publish it, for the clearing of their innocency in such things.” (*Crosby’s History, vol. 2, pg. a2 preface*). Notice that he says they were *forced* to do it; the danger of the times demanded it.

No one living today has suffered the way they did. None of us have known the anguish of freezing and starving in a filthy jail, knowing that our wives and tiny children are freezing and starving at home—if they even have a home. We cannot imagine how it must have torn the heart out of a poor Baptist preacher to know it was his preaching that was bringing misery on those who were so dear to him. So if those good brethren sometimes used poor judgment, it still behooves us that we be very careful how we talk about them.

The Particular Baptists put out their first confession in 1644. They were never entirely satisfied with it, but they kept fine tuning it, and they issued new editions in 1645, 1646, 1651, 1652, and 1653. Their confessions were a benefit in that they helped to clear up many of the slanderous charges being made against them. Those outside the Baptist ranks were surprised they did not contain the wild notions that had been charged against them. Some were so surprised, they denied that they was a true representation of what Baptists believed, but acting on the confession, on March 4, 1647, Parliament gave a favorable response, and granted legal toleration to the Baptists.

That confessions would continue to be in use for awhile, but by the time the Second London Confession was first adopted in 1677, copies of that first London Confession were almost impossible to find, and very few Baptists knew anything about it. By his own admission, Benjamin Keach, who signed the Second London Confession, had never heard of it. It seems that if they had intended for the confession to be a *standard of orthodoxy*, their leaders would, at least, have been aware of its existence.

Keach actually began his ministry as an Arminian General Baptist, and was well received by them. Few men had more impact on the English Baptists of his day than he did. He was still a General Baptist when he was put in the pillory, and pelted with rotten fruit and bad eggs, while his books were burned before his face. He was converted to Calvinism by Hansard Knollys and William Kiffin after persecution forced him to move to London in 1668. So, regardless of how sincere and devout he was, he was still a new convert when he signed the first draft of the Second London Confession put forth in 1677.

Even after he converted, he never ceased to be in sympathy with the Arminian General Baptists, and believed the two groups should be able to minimize their Arminian/Calvinist differences and come together as one people.

The General Baptists followed with their Orthodox Creed in 1678. The influence of Keach is obvious. The title they adopted for the confession was: *An Orthodox Creed or a protestant confession of faith; being an essay to unite and confirm all true protestants*. Notice that their intention was to unite and confirm all true Protestants. Both the Generals and the Particulars thought of the Baptists as another kind of Protestants, and they wanted to unite the Baptists under the Protestant banner.

In spite of the *denying Arminianism* expression in the preface to the Second London Confession, with so many Arminians among the Particulars, and so many Calvinists among the Generals, it is obvious that many of their leaders did not consider the Arminian/Calvinist difference as a great obstacle to union.

The Generals and Particulars put out a steady stream of confessions for well over a hundred years. They could never come up with a confession they could agree on.

No sooner would one confession be advanced, than another group of churches would adopt a different confession. They would generally avow their agreement with the former confession, but they did not agree enough to allow it to stand without putting forth their own alternative.

There was John Smyth's General Baptist Confession in 1609, and Thomas Helwysse's General Baptist Confession in 1611, and the Particular Baptists' First London Confession first put out 1644, and revised in 1645, 1646, 1651, 1652, and 1653, and the Midland Confession in 1655, and the Somerset Confession of 1656, and the Standard Confession in 1660, and the Orthodox Confession in 1678, and the Second London Confession put out by the Particular Baptists in 1677, 1678, 1688, and 1689, and Keach's Goat Yard Confession in 1697, and John Gill's Goat Yard Confession in 1729. None of them were entirely right, and none of them were entirely wrong, and none of them entirely agreed with any of the others.

With so many confessions being tried and rejected, it is hard to imagine that any of them were divinely inspired. With so many efforts made, if God was the author of any of them, you would think they would have found one confession they could live with.

What the Particular Baptists finally did was to adopt the Presbyterian Westminster Confession, make such strategic changes as were necessary to make it acceptable to Baptists, and adopt it as their own. They were more successful with that modified Presbyterian confession than they had been with any of their Baptist confessions. There were any number of reasons for that.

For one thing, the Westminster Confession had a distinct air of authority about it. It had been drafted by the Westminster Assembly which was, without question, the most august assembly of Protestant Bible scholars ever assembled at any one

time and place. With both the Generals and the Particulars protesting so loudly that they were simply another kind of Protestants, they could not help but be impressed by the Westminster Confession.

It was hard for the Presbyterians to object to the new Baptist confession, seeing that, except for a few subjects such as baptism, church government, and submission to the secular authorities, it was an almost verbatim copy of their own.

The Baptists were very explicit in pointing out that they had simply copied the Westminster Confession. In their preface they point out that they “retained the same order,” that they used “words concurrent with the former,” “Without any variation in the terms,” that they used “the very same words,” and that their “faith and doctrine is the same with theirs.”

Even that might have been a benefit, if they had changed somewhat more than they did. As it happened, they retained far more than they rejected, and most of the problems that have afflicted the Baptists from that day til this are traceable to notions the Baptists copied from the Presbyterian Westminster Confession.

Even though the Second London Confession was more widely accepted than others had been, it fell far short of universal acceptance. The people in that day had less confidence in it than many in later generations have had.

Those who today place such great value on the London Confession seem not to realize how vigorously it was resisted, and how little it was appreciated in its own day. Until John Gill appeared on the scene, Benjamin Keach towered above the Baptists of that entire century. He was one of the most prolific Baptist writers of any age. John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* has endured in a way which no other human production ever has; but in their own day, Keach’s *War With the Devil* was fully as successful as *Pilgrim’s Progress*. His contemporaries predicted that *War With the Devil* would still be reprinted until the end of time. It did continue to be republished for over one hundred years.

Keach was one of the main forces behind the Second London Confession, but after only eight years even he rejected the confession. Benjamin Keach became pastor of the Goat Yard Church, later served by John Gill. It is not entirely clear whether he was not able to hold his church to the confession, and they demanded a better confession, or whether Keach was himself dissatisfied, and wanted to produce a confession more to his liking. George Ella relates that in 1697 they replaced it with “a shortened, less specific, though still highly evangelical version.” (*George Ella’s, John Gill, pg. 35*). So within eight years of its adoption, not even this great signatory of the London Confession subscribed to his own work.

John Gill was called as the pastor of the same Goat Yard Church in 1719. He rejected the London Confession out of hand. He wanted nothing to do with either the London Confession of 1689, or the substitute confession issued by his own church in 1697. He drew up his own confession of faith, and the Goat Yard Church entered that confession in their church book in 1729. The church

continued to use Gill's confession until well into the 1800's. (*George Ella*, pg. 69)

There are those, today, who are so totally unaware of the confusing array of confessions produced at that time, that they seem to imagine the Baptists received the Second London Confession as some kind of oracular pronouncement. But even though many of the greatest leaders of that day rejected the London Confession, it persisted, and today, it is the only Baptist confession most people know anything about.

That Second London Confession owes most of its success to its similarity to the Westminster Confession. Pedobaptists though they were, those who made up the Westminster Assembly were some of the most brilliant scholars ever gathered in one place. They were master wordsmiths, and they knew how to present their points of view. There was more sophistry than sagacity in many of their arguments; but they were fully in command of the language, and they always had a proof text they could apply, rightly or wrongly, to their arguments.

More than that, the Generals and Particulars of that day are not alone in arguing that Baptists are just another kind of Protestants. There have always been those like Israel in the old days, who wanted a king, so they could be like other nations. Other nations had a king; so Israel wanted a king. God was their king, but they wanted a king they could see, one who would lead them into battle, and fight for them.

God has given us the Bible as our one rule of faith and practice. We do not need any *supplements* to the Bible, any *secondary authorities*. But for some, the Bible has never been enough. Other people have their creeds, and confessions of faith, and there will always be those who want whatever others have. It is ironic that those whose favorite motto is *sola scriptura* (scripture only) are the most determined not to settle for the Bible as their *only* rule of faith and practice.

Not only did the London Confession not succeed in uniting the Baptists of that day. The next thirty years (1689 til 1719) saw some of the fiercest infighting the Baptists have ever known.

Keach's Goat Yard Confession of 1697 denied that baptism and the Lord's Supper were the only ordinances of the Lord's church. Keach was sure hymn singing, and laying on of hands after baptism were also church ordinances. If a person was not willing to have hands laid on him after baptism, he could not be a member of Keach's church. That was a hobby of his during his entire ministry. History has been kind to Keach, but his own people were not so gentle. With his domineering personality and fiery temper, he saw to it those principles were included in his new confession. The aged Hansard Knollys sided with Keach against William Kiffin and Isaac Marlow. Keach, Kiffin, and Knollys all signed the Confession, but the ink was hardly dry on the confession before those three giants were engaged in an unholy war. No doubt, personalities became involved, and neither side would budge. The battle became so hot it tore Keach's Goat Yard Church and the other London churches to pieces.

Benjamin Keach was himself one source of the heterodoxy of the time. Not only was he willing divide churches over the question of whether hymn singing, and laying on of hands were church ordinances, his sacramental views regarding baptism and the Lord's Supper were closer to the Presbyterian than they were to the Baptist view. In his *Types and Metaphors*, pg. 639, he says, "There is a mystical conveyance or communication of all Christ's blessed merits to our souls through faith held forth thereby, and in glorious manner received, in the right participation of it." Baptists have always believed the Lord's Supper is a figure of what Christ did for us. The bread and wine are emblems. We do not believe they actually convey "Christ's blessed merits to our souls." They are symbols of God's grace; they are not *means of grace*. Keach was a long way from Baptist doctrine on that point.

Another problem that vexed the Baptists during the thirty years after the adoption of the London Confession was the usurping of church authority by the *coffee-house fraternals*. In his zeal to unite the Arminian General Baptists and the Calvinistic Particular Baptists, Keach and his colleagues organized groups of preachers called *fraternals* which met at coffee-houses in London.

George Ella records, "The difficulties found in adopting a common creed prevented the Particular Baptist church and their General Baptist brethren from enjoying true fellowship with one another, but a number of pastors believed that if they could only persuade their fellow office-bearers from the various Baptist churches to meet in fellowship, eventually some form of church unity could be worked out. The venue chosen for these minister's fraternals of clubs, sometimes meeting within the denomination, sometimes together, were not the Baptist chapels, but the many coffee-houses springing up at the time in London and other major towns. These coffee-house fraternals of special approved pastors (club members determined who could join them, not the churches) gradually became the true governing bodies of both the General and Particular Baptists in the years between 1697 and 1720 when Gill succeeded Benjamin Keach's son-in-law Benjamin Stinton as pastor of Goat yard. Their unifying aim was made clear right from the start as, when the Hanover Coffee House club was founded by Keach and like-minded brethren, it was done so with the recorded determination to seek union with the General Baptists" (*Ella*, pg. 35).

So, the two goals of these *fraternals* were (1) to unite the Arminian General and the Calvinistic Particular Baptists, and (2) to regulate the churches. They were self-perpetuating; they determined who could belong to their number. They operated outside the churches, and exerted authority over the churches. They decided grievances within churches, and between churches. They decided who could be ordained, and they provided the presbytery. They provided the Baptists with a functioning hierarchy.

The Baptists had complained bitterly against the Anglican episcopacy, but there is no discernible difference between the Anglican episcopacy and these Baptist

coffee-house fraternals. Unscriptural though they were, they exercised authority over the Baptist churches until John Gill brought them to their knees in 1720. Not only were the next thirty years after 1689 a time of vicious infighting among the Baptists, it was a time of serious doctrinal departure. According to George Ella, “John Gale, the pastor at Paul’s Alley....was considered by many Baptists as the theologian of the movement, chiefly because of his writings on baptism.” (*Ella. pg 67*). Til this day, Gale is quoted as the Baptist authority from that age on the subject of baptism. But in spite of the fact that Gale is still thought of a Baptist authority, Ella goes on to point out that, “Gale, besides rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, rejected almost all Reformed doctrines, including justification by faith. Soon Gale, like his co-pastor Burroughs and successor Foster, became an out and out Socinian who preached mere rational and humanistic moralism.” (*Ella, pg 68*). Such skepticism and unbelief were rampant among the upper echelon of the Particular and General Baptists of that age. Matthew Caffyn was another leading Baptist preacher of that day who questioned the doctrine of the Trinity. Eventually, largely through his influence, almost the entire body of General Baptists went off into Unitarianism.

With such men as John Gale, and Matthew Caffyn exerting influence over them, it is questionable whether the English Baptists would have withstood the storm, if it had not been for John Gill, and his stalwart stand for the doctrine. Gill’s contemporary, John Ryland “was convinced that God had specially chosen Gill to lead the Particular Baptists out of oblivion and doctrinal disunity” “He goes on to say, ‘Much of the credit for this unswerving allegiance to the doctrine of scripture, under God, must be attributed to John Gill, known affectionately as Dr. Voluminous.’” (*Ella, pg. 20*).

There are any number of points on which most Baptists of today would disagree with Gill. Not many pre-millennialists, would accept Gill’s views on the millenium. Early in his ministry he believed the gospel was a *means* in regeneration. He later changed his mind about that. He was as fallible as any other mortal, and he changed his mind from time to time, but he did what the London Confession was totally unable to do. He did more to stabilize the English Baptists than any other man of his day.

Persecution had driven the three kinds of Baptists into the same camp, but persecution largely ended with the coronation of William of Orange, and the Act of Toleration in 1689. By that time they were not so much divided up into General, Particular, and old-order Anabaptist churches, as there were three mindsets intertwined in the same churches. Beginning in 1689, the three kinds of Baptists were free to worship openly, and to openly make war on each other. Gill was called as pastor of the Goat Yard Church in 1719, and for the next fifty years, his towering influence held the warring factions together. But the Generals, the Particulars, and the old-order Baptists were so fundamentally different, it was impossible they could stay together. Soon after Gill died in 1771, the skirmishes

broke into open warfare, and the Baptists spent forty years, from 1792 til 1832, warring against each other, and coming to an ultimate division.

The Baptists have never been infallible. They were certainly not infallible in 1689. The most ironic thing about the entire conflict over the London Confession is that so many people look to one of the most confused, and unstable, periods in Baptist history for a *standard* of Baptist orthodoxy.

For all its faults, the London Confession is a grand old monument, and for those who do not examine it too closely it has an air of respectability. After all, it has been around for over three hundred years.

Any number of efforts have been made to rehabilitate it. In 1787, the Separate and Regular Baptists in America tried to do what Keach and his coffee-house friends tried to do for the Arminian General Baptists and the Calvinistic Particulars. They tried to find a basis on which to come together as one people, and they chose the London Confession as their platform. But they did it with the understanding that *nobody was required to believe all of it*. That was the result of their trying to compromise with the Arminians in their ranks. Again, any collection of Arminians and predestinarians, trying to work out a doctrinal compromise, is a poor place to look for Baptist infallibility.

Their effort did not work. In 1787, the Separates and Regulars did come together; but, beginning in 1792, they again separated, this time as New School and Old School, or Missionary and Primitive Baptists. In 1796, Benjamin Randall organized the most Arminian of them as Freewill Baptists. Two hundred years of conflict accomplished very little. Their new conflict lasted from 1792 until 1832, and after forty years of open warfare, they wound up essentially where the Generals, Particulars, and old-order Baptists had been two hundred years before. Only this time they were called Old-School, New School, and Freewill Baptists. They had chosen the wrong foundation, and the merger would not hold. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus,” [1Co 3:11](#). Christ revealed in his word is the only sure foundation; no confession of faith is an acceptable substitute.

Again, in 1900, the Primitive Baptists were about to split three ways. A large and representative body of capable Primitive Baptist preachers came together at Fulton, Kentucky. The Primitive Baptists were in crisis, and they intended to fend off a division if they could.

Like the Regulars and Separates one hundred years before, they tried to use the London Confession as a rallying point. They reaffirmed what they could accept; they explained away what they could not accept; and they looked aside, and walked past what they could not explain away.

They did everything that could be done to rehabilitate a fundamentally flawed document—and they failed. They had hardly done their work before the Primitive Baptists split into Absoluters, Progressives, and Old-Liners.

The elders who assembled at Fulton, Kentucky in 1900, were some of the brightest and best Bible scholars the Lord’s church has ever known—in any age.

For doctrinal insight, and spiritual understanding, some of those men could more than hold their own against anyone two thousand years of church history has to offer. If those men could not patch up the London Confession, and make it a rallying point for unity, it cannot be done.

In the light of all the efforts that have been made over the last three hundred years to establish, or rehabilitate, the London Confession, we need to acknowledge once and for all that, “The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, and *the only rule* of faith and practice.”

The Bible is enough; we need no other standard.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
The Everlasting Covenant

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

If you were to ask one hundred of the most religious people you know, “Do you believe in salvation by grace?” what do you believe their answer would be? Do you have an idea that almost every one of them would agree that salvation is by grace? Suppose you were to ask that same one hundred people, “What do you believe about THE COVENANT OF GRACE? What do you believe about the everlasting covenant?” What do you suppose their answer would be? Do you think you might get a lot of blank expressions?

Almost everybody claims to believe in salvation by grace, but you can never understand very much about salvation by grace, if do not know something about the covenant of grace. Trying to understand salvation by grace without knowing something about the covenant of grace is like trying to figure out the mysteries of an automobile without first discovering there is an engine under the hood that makes it go.

The covenant of grace, or the everlasting covenant, is the driving force behind salvation by grace.

By the same token, you will never understand much about the covenant of grace unless you know what a covenant is. Webster defines a covenant as “a binding agreement between two or more individuals or parties to do or keep from doing a specified thing.”

Let me ask you: if you wanted to refer to a covenant, but you could not call it a covenant, what would you call it? Now bear in mind that a covenant is “a binding agreement between two or more individuals or parties to do or keep from doing a specified thing.” What would you call that? I would call that a contract, wouldn't you? I do not feel entirely comfortable referring to it as a contract. That sounds so commercial, but that is exactly what it is. This covenant is a binding agreement; God has bound himself by his own word to do all that is involved in this everlasting covenant. God cannot lie, and as surely as God has promised to do anything, you can be sure that he will do all

he has promised to do. No agreement that has ever been made between men is so firm, and sure, and binding as this agreement, this covenant between God the Father and God the Son. The salvation of untold millions of the children of God is the most important matter that has ever transpired in this world, and you can be sure that God has provided the most firm and sure foundation for their salvation.

The promises of God are much more sure and dependable than most religious people have ever imagined them to be. For that matter, they are absolutely sure, and absolutely dependable. God will do all he has promised to do. The majority of people seem to have a strange view of God and his promises. They seem to imagine that God's promises are changeable and tenuous, that they are conditioned on so many propositions and possibilities that we can never know for sure what he is going to do. But God is not fickle and changeable. Listen to what he said to Isaiah, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, AND I WILL DO ALL MY PLEASURE" ([Isa 46:9-10](#)). If God has purposed to do anything, he will do it.

This failure to realize that God is faithful to his promises has left people with an uneasiness about their own salvation, and the salvation of others. Because they do not believe they can be sure about God and his promises, they are uneasy about the salvation of sinners, and that uneasiness leads them into some of the most unreasonable notions.

When I was just a boy, I attended a seminar on *soul winning*. We were taught the importance of soul winning, and we were instructed on how to approach people we hoped to convert. The instructor was very careful to point out the importance of personal grooming. She told us how very important it was that our clothes be clean, that our shoes be shined, and that we had brushed our teeth and used a mouthwash. After all, it would be a terrible thing if our bad breath might so offend the person we were trying to talk to that he would not listen to us. This might be the only chance that he would ever have to hear the gospel message, and would it not be a terrible thing if he missed this one and only chance to hear the gospel and repent and be born again?

I tried to believe the lessons I was being taught, but it seemed so strange to think that some poor sinner might burn in the flames of eternal damnation—because I had forgotten to brush my teeth and use a mouthwash. There is no end to the strange conclusions that people reach, when they forget that God is faithful to all his promises.

On the next few pages I want to look at some of the very simple lessons the Bible teaches us about this grand covenant. And these lessons are simple. This

is one of the most fascinating things about the Bible. I have discovered that if you go through the Bible looking for simple lessons, the Bible is just filled with very simple lessons that you and I can understand. On the other hand, if you go through the Bible looking for deep, dark mysteries, the Bible is just filled with mysteries that no man on earth can entirely unravel. I have discovered that it makes this job of preaching a lot easier if we spend our time looking for the simple lessons. It is easier for the preacher to explain simple lessons, and it is easier for the congregation to understand. And there is another lesson I have learned. Sometimes those very simple lessons explain some of the most profound truths. For that matter, I am convinced that, if our minds are able to understand the lesson in the first place, the lesson can generally be explained in very simple language. (Admittedly, there some questions, such as some of the how's and why's of the Bible that we cannot begin to unravel.)

The first lesson the Bible teaches us about this covenant—this binding agreement—is that **MAN IS NOT A PARTY TO THIS COVENANT**. This is a point most religious people have failed to realize. If they could learn this one fact, it would eliminate very much of the confusion that presently plagues the religious world. We who have a hope in Christ Jesus are the beneficiaries of this covenant, but we are not parties to it. We did not make the covenant; rather the covenant was made on our behalf.

Listen to what the Bible says. [2Sa 23:5](#), “Although my house be not so with God; YET HATH HE MADE WITH ME AN EVERLASTING COVENANT, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.” The chapter begins by saying “these be the last words of David.” This is David speaking, and in this text David personifies the Lord. He speaks as if it is the Lord speaking. Lest there should be any doubt that David is here personifying the Lord, in verse one, the Holy Spirit refers to David as “the ANOINTED of the God of Jacob.” In the original language the word that is translated *anointed* is the Hebrew word *Messiah*. *Messiah* is one of the titles of Jesus Christ. He was the expected Messiah. *Messiah* (Mashiyach) in the Hebrew, and *Christ* (Christos) in the Greek are the same word, and they mean *anointed*. So to remove all doubt as to whether David personified the Lord, **THE SPIRIT LITERALLY CALLS HIM THE MESSIAH**. David was “anointed of the God of Jacob” in a different way than Christ was, but he was anointed in such a way as to represent Christ Jesus. David the son of Jesse represented the Greater David, the son of God. This covenant, this binding agreement, was made between the Father and the Son on behalf of his people. God the Father and God the Son entered into a binding agreement with each other with regard to the salvation of his people. In a few minutes we will see just how binding that agreement is.

The next lesson we notice about this covenant is that it is “AN EVERLASTING COVENANT;” it has no expiry date. “Yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant.” Most of our agreements have an expiration date, and sometimes that can be a problem. Almost one hundred years ago the United States finished building the Panama Canal. The French tried to build it and failed, and then the United States took over and finished the job. We took out a hundred year lease on the canal. We made a mistake. With individuals a hundred years is a very long time, but with nations one hundred years is not very long. Several years ago we gave the canal back to Panama. That looked like a mistake at the time, but our lease was running out anyway. But this covenant, this binding agreement, will never run out; it has no expiry date. The love of God for his people is not so fickle, and tenuous, and changeable, as some people have imagined it to be. If God ever loved you, he will always love you. He is an unchangeable God, and his love is as unchangeable as he is. Jeremiah said, “The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an EVERLASTING LOVE; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” The love we have for our own children is only a faint illustration of the love God has for his children. I learned long ago that there is nothing my children could ever do that would cause me to quit loving them. They have not always pleased me. Sometimes I have been very upset with one or another of them, but it seems to have been at those times when I was the most displeased that I was the most fully aware that there was nothing any one of them could ever do that would cause me to cease loving them. No doubt, you have had the same experience, but you can be sure that as unwavering and as unconditional as your love is for your children, your love is very fickle compared to the constancy of God’s everlasting love for his own. The love of God is one of the attributes of God, and his love is as unchangeable as he is.

The next lesson the Bible teaches us about this covenant is that it is comprehensive. It leaves nothing to chance. It is “ordered in all things and sure.” “Although my house be not so with God; yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ORDERED IN ALL THINGS AND SURE.”

God's salvation of his people is not such a stopgap, plan-as-you-go, back up and start again, arrangement as some people seem to imagine. God knows exactly what he is doing, and he knew what he was going to do before he ever started.

Keep it always in mind that a covenant is “a binding agreement between two or more individuals or parties to do or keep from doing a specified thing.” God the Father entered into an agreement with his Son with regard to the salvation of his people, and this agreement fixed and secured every provision that was necessary for the salvation of his people.

Suppose you were about to build a new house. You have found a contractor willing to do the work, and he is having the contract drawn up. One day he brings the contract for you to sign. You think it might be a good idea to read the contract before you sign it, and here is the way it reads: “We agree to build a right nice house, on a fair sized lot, somewhere south of town; we agree to start before very long, and to charge a reasonable amount for our services.” Would you sign the contract? No, of course not. I believe that before I entered into any kind of contract I would want every detail spelled out in very clear language. Do you believe that God would enter into any such agreement with regard to the salvation of his people? The salvation of untold millions of poor sinners from eternal damnation is the most important matter that man knows anything about, and you can be sure that God would never leave any part of that work to chance. God knows exactly what he is doing. God the Father and God the Son agreed on every aspect of this grand work before he ever called this world into existence.

Paul referred to this great work as a will or testament. [Heb 9:16-17](#), “For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.” It is in the nature of wills that wills name names, and this will, this testament, names every one of the heirs of promise. It is a very poorly drawn will that fails to name the beneficiaries of the will.

The greatest benefit of time and eternity is salvation from sin by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and God would not engage in that great work without knowing exactly what he was doing, and who was going to be benefitted by it. Before God ever created the universe he chose his people; he recorded their names in his book, and he determined all that he was going to do on their behalf. [Re 13:8](#), “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” The lamb was not slain from the foundation of the world; that happened at Calvary. He says that their names were written in his book “from the foundation of the world.” [Eph 1:4](#), “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

It is a foolish person who starts any work without some notion of what the outcome is going to be. God knew exactly what the outcome was going to be before he began; he knew who he was sending his Son to die for, and who he was going to save. He suffered and died for all those whom the Father gave him in the covenant of grace, and he will save everyone he died for.

If the redeemed family was chosen out of the race of mankind, it follows that not all of mankind was so chosen and redeemed. Lest anybody might get the idea that some injustice was done to those who were not chosen, we need to

remember that the elect family of God was not chosen out of a race of kind, innocent people who were in every way deserving of the kindness of God. The entire race of mankind is by nature dead in trespasses and sins. Fallen man is by his very nature a wicked, depraved sinner, who lusts and pants after sin. He is totally alienated to all good, and totally inclined to all evil. In actual practice no man is as evil as he might be, but it is only because of the restraining power of God that he does not act out in actual practice the corruption that is in his own heart. If it was not for the restraining power of God, every man would be proven to be the depraved sinner he is. The earth would become a slaughterhouse, and there would be no place any person could hide from the danger raging all around him. Perhaps the most fundamental mistake of modern religion is the failure to realize how desperately sinful man is, and how desperately he stands in need of a Saviour. [Ge 6:5](#), “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that EVERY IMAGINATION of the thoughts of his heart was ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY.” [Jer 17:9](#), “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” [Ro 3:10-18](#), “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.” In this text Paul is not describing what some men have become, but what all men are by nature.

If all men were left to themselves, there is no man who would choose God and righteousness. When Paul said there is “none that seeketh after God,” he was describing the condition of every man who is devoid of the Spirit of God. If we encounter any man who is seeking after God, we have found one who is already born of the Spirit.

Those who object to the doctrine of election, and wish that God had never made any such choice are really wishing that all men might perish eternally. If God had never chosen any man to salvation, and determined to do all things necessary to bring him home to eternal heaven, there would never have been the first person saved. If sinful man was left to himself, there is no man who would have repented of sin, no man who would have believed the gospel, no man who would have had the love of God in his heart. Those are all the outworking of the Spirit of God implanted in the heart in the work of regeneration.

This covenant is “ordered in all things and sure.” It is ordered and sure in that it names every person who will ever benefit from its provisions. It binds every face in secret. We are not able to look on God’s book, and read the names recorded there; but God knows them every one. [2Ti 2:19](#), “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, THE LORD KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS.”

Not only is this covenant “ordered in all things,” it is also sure to be fulfilled. “Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and SURE.” God is sure to do all he has purposed to do. Sometimes it happens that somebody enters into an agreement he does not intend to fulfill. Not every man can be depended on to do as he says. But you can be sure that God will do all he has promised to do. It is so certain that God will do all he has purposed to do that he CONFIRMS IT WITH AN OATH. It is not necessary for God to swear that he will fulfill his promise; a simple statement is enough. It is not possible for God to lie, but FOR OUR BENEFIT God confirms his promise with an oath. [Isa 14:24,27](#), “The Lord of hosts hath SWORN, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.....For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back.”

Consider for a moment, if you will, how firm and secure this covenant is. It is a binding agreement between God the Father and God the Son. It is “ordered in all things.” There is not one consideration that is not completely provided for. God is so determined that every item of the agreement will be fulfilled that he confirms with an oath that he will do everything he has purposed to do. It is impossible to imagine anything more dependable than this covenant is.

In [Ps 89](#) David talks about this covenant. He is still referring to the Greater David, the Son of God. [Ps 89:3](#), “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant.” Again, notice that this covenant was made with David—with the greater David the Son of God. The language of this chapter is too clear to be misunderstood. Throughout the entire chapter he is talking about this covenant God the Father made with his Son. This covenant was not made with his people; it was made with his Son on behalf of his people.

There is no possibility that the Lord Jesus Christ will not be able to do what he has promised to do. In [Ps 89:19](#), “I have laid help upon ONE THAT IS MIGHTY.” There are those who agree to do what they do not have the ability to perform. But the parties to this covenant have the power to do what they have agreed to do. There are those who talk about God as if he was a whimpering, whining, begging, pleading, trying and failing God, who tries to

do ever so many things he is not able to do; but that is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible speaks and it is done; he commands and it stands fast ([Ps 33:9](#)). He would never have entered into this agreement if he was not able to perform it. God is not so foolish as to promise what he cannot do. This covenant, and the benefits of it, are not based on the goodness of men, nor on their own personal righteousness; they are based wholly and solely on the mercy of God. The entire [Ps 89](#) deals with this covenant. [Ps 89:1](#), “I will sing of the MERCIES of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known my faithfulness to all generations.” The first thing this chapter tells us about this covenant is that it is rooted in the mercy of God. There are those who think they can earn their way into heaven by their own accomplishments, but they have never seen themselves for the sinners they are, nor God for the righteous judge he is. No man who has seen himself for what he is could imagine that he could ever stand justified before God on the basis of his own merit.

Isaiah said, “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” When I was just a boy I remember hearing a preacher trying to preach on salvation by grace. He said, “I know that we are saved by grace, but when I stand before God in judgment, I hope I have enough good works to finish out the score.” I was just a boy, and I did not know much, and I still have a lot to learn—but I knew there was something wrong with that. Can you imagine somebody standing before God in judgment and saying, “Lord, I believe I have enough good works to finish out the score.” And can you imagine that God might ask him to produce any claim he thinks he might have on eternal heaven, and he drags out an old dirty handkerchief he has been carrying around for two weeks with a cold, and dangling that filthy handkerchief before the throne, and saying, “Lord, here is my claim on eternal heaven.” I know that is not a very pretty illustration, but that is the language the prophet uses. All of our righteousness is nothing more than *filthy rags* in the sight of a thrice holy God. Those who think they can work their way to heaven by their own merit have entirely too high an opinion of themselves. There is nothing about any of us to commend us to God. If we received what we justly deserve, there is none of us who would live with God in heaven. We are a lot like the old boy who was caught stealing chickens. The day of his trial arrived, and he could not sit still. He was pacing back and forth, up and down the corridors of the court house. His lawyer was trying to calm him down, and he said, “Just be patient; I will present your case; you will get justice.” The old boy said, “Yassuh, yassuh, I knows that, but, you see, it’s that justice I’s so worried about.”

Simple justice demands that every sinner who ever lived must suffer eternally as the just punishment for sin, and yet, it is the wonder of God's grace that the

same justice which, apart from the grace of God, demands our eternal punishment, now— because of God's grace—demands the eternal salvation of everyone Christ died for. The shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has made eternal satisfaction for the sins of all the redeemed. Our sins are put away; there is not a charge that can be made against any person for whom Christ died, so that God can be both just and the justifier of every child of grace ([Ro 3:26](#)). [Ro 3:14](#), “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.” God does not sacrifice justice in order to be merciful; he is both merciful and just in all he does.

Another lesson this chapter teaches us about this covenant is that it is grounded in the faithfulness of God. The ground of our hope is not our faithfulness to God, but rather his faithfulness to his own promises. [Ps 89:2](#), “For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; THY FAITHFULNESS shalt thou establish in the very heavens.” As faithless and unbelieving as most of us sometimes are (in spite of our best efforts to the contrary), if our salvation was based on our faithfulness, we would every one be lost world without end. That person who is looking to his own faithfulness to God as the ground of his hope of heaven, and has lost sight of God’s faithfulness to his promises has made a very poor trade.

It is amazing how simple the Bible becomes, when we just let it say what it says, without trying to read into it something that is not there. Most of the problems in studying the Bible are caused when people bring their own preconceived notions to the Bible, and try to make it say what they want it to say. Then the Bible does really become mysterious; it just will not say what men want it to say.

It is very encouraging that the most effective of all methods of Bible study is also the easiest and most natural of all methods. If the humble, faithful, prayerful child of God would study and benefit from his Bible, let him simply read the Bible, and believe it for what it says. Let him lay aside his own agenda; let him forget his own notions and prejudices, and accept God at his word. “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar,” [Ro 3:4](#).

Then it is amazing how simple the Bible becomes. Habakkuk said, “Write the vision, and MAKE IT PLAIN upon tables, that he may run that readeth,” [Hab 2:2](#). This book is as plain as it needs to be. The problem is not nearly so much that people cannot understand the Bible, as it is that they will not believe what they read. Isaiah said, “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein,” [Isa 35:8](#). Any humble, faithful, prayerful child of God can study it and understand it, if he will just let it say what it says. There will always be mysteries in the Bible

that he will never entirely unravel, but he will be able to understand enough of it to satisfy his spiritual need.

The covenant of grace is the most profound of all principles. It lies at the foundation of everything God has done on behalf of his people. It is the motive force behind our salvation. And yet, as profound and as fundamental as this principle is, the Bible presents it in such simple language that there is no reason any person should have any trouble at all in understanding it.

We have pointed out several times that this covenant is a binding agreement between the Father and the Son—that it is literally a contract between them to perform all the provisions of the covenant. You may have trouble reading contracts. At one time or another you may have tried to read one of your insurance policies, and with all the legal language, and with the special provisions and exceptions, you wound up about as confused as you were before you started. I spent twenty-four years in the insurance business, and if I learned anything about insurance, I learned that those companies do not really care whether you understand those policies or not. But whether you understand legal language or not, there is no reason that you should have any trouble understanding the provisions of this covenant. The provisions are clearly spelled out in the Bible.

Not only does the Bible tell us everything we need to know about this covenant, it literally allows us to listen in as the Father and the Son—in eternity past—agreed on all the provisions of the covenant.

The Bible is written in a different manner than any other book that has ever been written. For the most part, the Bible simply records the acts and the speeches of its characters without a lot of comment. It simply records what they said and what they did. Taken purely for its literary style, the Bible provides a kind of record that is **THE NEXT BEST THING TO BEING THERE**. The way the Bible is written, simply recording the acts and words of its characters, puts the reader in a position as if he was standing off to the side listening and watching what was going on. Reading the Bible in this manner—almost feeling as if we were there—leaves us feeling as if we are acquainted with the characters we read about. The language of the Bible is so free and natural, and its characters are so true to life, that the speeches and the scenes of the Bible literally come to life.

Not only are the historical portions of the Bible written in this manner, but when the Bible talks about this covenant of grace, in the very same manner, it allows us to listen to the Father as he speaks to the Son, and it allows us to listen to the Son as he replies to the Father. So far as words and revelation can do it, the Bible transports the reader all the way back to eternity past and allows us to listen in on the very covenant of grace itself. Think about that. In the verses that we will examine in just a few moments we will be literally

listening in on this covenant, this “counsel of peace” [Zec 6:13](#). If that does not excite you, it ought to—to think that we poor mortals can listen in on the very making of the covenant of grace—to think that we can listen as God the Father and God the Son devise all that is necessary to be done to bring about the salvation of the entire family of God.

We need to point out one thing more, before we launch on this very interesting, and very uplifting study. We pointed out earlier that a covenant is simply another name for a contract, and it is in the nature of contracts that we put them in writing. It is not always necessary that a contract be put in writing. We can make a verbal contract, before witnesses, and seal it with a handshake, and that agreement can be legally binding. God certainly did not need for this covenant to be put in writing in order to bind him to do all he had promised to do. God the Father and God the Son both knew exactly what they had agreed to; they are faithful to their word, and there was no possibility that either of them would forget, or that either of them would ignore any part of the agreement. **BUT GOD HAS PUT THIS COVENANT IN WRITING FOR OUR BENEFIT.**

While God knows everything that is in this agreement, you and I did not—not until God revealed it. It was for our benefit that God put this agreement in writing. It was not put in writing in order to bind him to the agreement; it was put in writing in order to inform us of the benefits that are ours because of it. We are not parties to the covenant, but we are the beneficiaries of it, and because we are the beneficiaries of it, God has revealed it to us.

God has given us the written record of this everlasting covenant in the Bible, but he has not given all of the record in any one place. He has given us bits and pieces scattered all through the Bible. In some places, such as the eighty-ninth Psalm, he gives us very long sections of it. In other places he gives us very brief portions. That is the Bible pattern. Isaiah said that the pattern is “precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line, **HERE A LITTLE, AND THERE A LITTLE,**” [Isa 28:10](#).

Let me point out that when we read the verses we will be examining during the next few pages, **WE WILL LITERALLY BE READING FROM THE DOCUMENT ITSELF.** I must say it again: if that does not excite you, it ought to. These are the very words of God. These are the actual words of the promise that God made to his Son, and the actual promise the Son made to his Father. God has preserved those very words for our benefit. This is the **ACTUAL TRANSCRIPT** of that “counsel of peace,” that took place between the Father and the Son in eternity past.

One more thing before we start: let me ask you, if you are reading a contract, what are the two words that you will likely find most often in that contract? The two words most often found in contracts are the words *will* and *shall*, are

they not? “The party of the first part agrees that he WILL do thus and so,” and “the party of the second part agrees that he WILL do thus and so.” Those are the most common expressions in contracts, and it is no different in this covenant, this binding agreement between the Father and his Son with regard to the salvation of his people.

When you are reading your Bible, if you come across the words *will* or *shall*, especially as it relates to what God has promised to do, it is very possible that you have found an excerpt from the covenant of grace. You are reading directly from the record. THE *WILL'S* AND *SHALL'S* OF GOD are some of the most exciting and the most reassuring passages in the Bible. If God has promised he will do something, you can be sure he will do it.

The very first thing the Bible tells us about the covenant of grace is in the second Psalm. The Father says to the Son, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession,” [Ps 2:8](#). Notice the word *shall*; we are reading directly from the document, from the written record of this covenant. Before God ever created the universe, the Father promised to give a people to his Son. Paul talked about the same thing in his letter to the Hebrews. “And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me,” [Heb 2:13](#). The very first provision of the covenant was that the Father promised to give a people to his Son. [Joh 6:39](#), “And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that OF ALL WHICH HE HATH GIVEN ME I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day.”

When I was just a boy I heard a man talking about his efforts at *soul-winning*. He allowed that when he stood before God in eternity, he hoped he could carry along at least one hundred people, whom he had “led to the Lord.” He hoped that on that grand day he would be able to present those people to the Lord and say, “Lord, here are all these people I have led to you.” Well, I knew there was something wrong with that. First off, to me it sounded a lot like bragging. I did not know that verse in Hebrews was in the Bible, but I knew the man's project just did not sound right. Do you see, it is not the job of poor mortal man to present the Lord with a people. That is too important a job to leave to sinful men. It would be the height of folly for God to leave anything so important as the eternal destiny of untold millions of poor sinners in the hands of other sinners. God took care of that in eternity past, and he took care of it in such a manner that not one of those whom the Father gave to the Son can ever be lost.

The Father promised to give the Son a people, and the Son promised to redeem them from their sins, to pay their sin debt, and to secure them a home in heaven. God is a righteous and holy God. He will not approve of sin, and he will not allow sin to stand in his presence. There is no way any sinner

could ever live with God in heaven, unless his sins had been removed, unless he could stand before God justified from his sins.

[Isa 53:10-11](#), “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou SHALT make his soul an offering for sin, he SHALL see his seed, he SHALL prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord SHALL prosper in his hand. He SHALL see of the travail of his soul, and SHALL be satisfied: by his knowledge SHALL my righteous servant justify many for he SHALL bear their iniquities.” Again notice the repeated use of the word *shall*. We are reading to you directly from the document, from the written record of that agreement between the Father and his Son.

I hope that I do not bother anyone by my excitement over this matter, but it is the most exciting thought in the world to me to think that, not only has God made this firm and binding agreement with his Son on behalf of his people, but that he has put it all in writing for our benefit, and that he has given us ACCESS TO THE VERY DOCUMENT itself, if we are only willing to read our Bibles and to search it out.

The *shall's* of this text tell us what the Son has promised to do—what he has bound himself to do—on behalf of his people. Apart from the grace of God every one of us is helpless to justify himself before God. Apart from his grace every last one of us would suffer the wrath of God in all eternity. We had no power to help ourselves, and in spite of our helplessness, and of the fact that none of us deserved any good thing from God, the Son of God stepped forward and agreed to do everything necessary to remove our sin, and to secure us a home in eternal heaven.

Notice first that God has promised to “make his soul an offering for sin.” [2Co 5:21](#), “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” God imputed our sin to his Son, charged our sin against his Son, in order that he might impute his righteousness to us. He carried our sins to the cross, and there on the cross he suffered the penalty that was rightly due us. On the cross the Lord suffered the penalty that was due us, in order that we might enjoy the blessedness that belonged to him. In eternity past he promised to do it; on the cross he did what he promised to do, and when he had accomplished all he had promised to do he cried out, “It is finished,” [Joh 19:30](#), and “he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

Isaiah went on to say, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” Every attribute of God is satisfied in the salvation of his people. God did not sacrifice justice in order to be merciful. God’s love is satisfied, because every one he loved is redeemed and atoned for by the suffering and death of his Son. His mercy and his grace are satisfied, because every subject of grace, every subject of mercy is redeemed; every one of them will be with

him in eternal heaven. And his justice is satisfied, because he has borne our sins; every sin has been paid for and removed by his suffering and death. Another quote from this covenant is found in [Mt 1](#). “And she SHALL bring forth a son, and thou SHALT call his name JESUS: for he SHALL save his people from their sins,” [Mt 1:21](#). I never will forget the first time that verse caught my attention. For years I had heard about God’s efforts to save sinners. I had heard how he needed help if he was going to save sinners, that he was doing the best he could, but without more assistance, that untold millions of those whom he wanted ever so much to save were going to suffer eternally. That was a disturbing prospect, to say the least, to think that God was doing the best he could, and still failing in the effort.

And then one day I read this verse, and it sounded like nothing I had ever heard before. It rang out with such confidence, such absolute certainty, that God was going to do exactly what he intended to do. It said in no uncertain terms, “He shall save his people from their sins.” There were no *if's*, no *and's*, no *but's*, no conditions of any kind. It was a clear and simple statement of fact. He came into this world with a work to do, and that work was to “save his people from their sins,” and this verse said that he was going to do what he came to do.

I had always heard that the sinner had to be saved in order to become one of his people. But this verse indicated that they were already his people, and that because they were his people, he came to save them. At that time I had never heard of the covenant of grace. I had never heard that, before the foundation of the world, God gave a people to his Son, and I had never heard that before God ever created the universe he had already determined to do all things necessary to save those very people whom he had given to his Son. I had never heard about the everlasting and unchangeable love God has for his people, and I had no idea that his love for his people was so firm and unshakeable that nothing could cause him to cease to love them, or to allow them to suffer eternally. [Jer 31:3](#), “The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with AN EVERLASTING LOVE: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

The Holy Spirit also has its part in this grand work. Man is by nature dead in trespasses and sins. He inherited a sinful nature from his first ancestor Adam, and that sinful nature is seen in everything he says and does. It is seen both in his actions and in his thoughts. The Bible evidence is abundant and clear.

[Ge 6:5](#), “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

[Jer 17:9](#), “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it.”

If he was left to himself, there is no man who would turn to God. Those who have the idea that they are persuading wicked sinners to repent of sin, and to learn to love the Lord are mistaken. Those who are dead in trespasses and sins cannot be taught by other men. Unless God performs a miracle of grace on the heart of the sinner, no man will ever be able to reach him with the gospel message. Those who believe they have taught someone to love the Lord were really dealing with somebody who had already been quickened by the Spirit of God. If God's Spirit had not already done its work, nothing they could say would have any effect.

The Holy Spirit is just as sure to do its work, and to quicken all those whom the Father gave to the Son, as the Son is to redeem them. God has never been unfaithful to any of his promises. [Ps 110:3](#), "Thy people SHALL be willing in the day of thy power." Here is another excerpt from that everlasting covenant. Just as surely as the Father chose his people, and the Son redeemed them, just that surely the Holy Spirit will quicken every one of the them, and make them willing. They are willing because the Spirit of God has made them willing. Again notice that there are no *if's*, no *and's*, no *but's*; it is the simple promise that they will be willing. In John chapter three, in that beautiful passage on the new birth, the Lord uses the awesome power of the wind to show how effective and how powerful the Spirit is in the work of regeneration. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

We are very often reminded of the awesome power of the wind. When the wind reaches hurricane force, it carries everything in its path. But the mightiest wind that ever blew is only the faintest reflection of the power of God. The Holy Spirit is God himself—God the Spirit—and just as surely as no human mind can comprehend the awesome power of God in the natural creation, no human mind can comprehend the awesome power of God's Spirit in the work of regeneration. God simply spoke and this entire universe became a reality, and God simply speaks and sinners are quickened by that same power. No man on earth can resist the powerful force of the wind, nor can he command the wind, and direct it to blow where he wants it to blow. And by the same token, God is sovereign; he sends the wind of his Spirit to blow where he chooses for it to blow, and quickens those whom he chooses to quicken.

God does not depend on us; he is not dependent on sinful men to teach other sinful men to know the Lord. We may teach those who are already born again what they ought to know about the Lord, and how they ought to live in order to please him, but the work of quickening those who are dead in sins, and bringing them into a personal relationship with God is the work of God

himself. And just as surely as God has never failed at anything he ever intended to do, he has never failed at this job either. Everyone whom he has chosen in his Son will be taught to know him in the work of regeneration.

[Heb 8:11](#), “And they SHALL NOT teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all SHALL know me, from the least to the greatest.”

Again notice the repetition of the word *shall*. We are reading to you directly from the covenant, and lest there should be any question in the mind of anybody that we are actually reading a word for word excerpt from that everlasting covenant, let us take the time to go back and read the entire passage.

[Heb 8:10-11](#), “For THIS IS THE COVENANT that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I WILL put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I WILL be to them a God, and they SHALL be to me a people. And they SHALL NOT teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all SHALL know me, from the least to the greatest.”

The Holy Spirit makes the passage as clear as it needs to be. If there is any doubt in the mind of anybody as to where this language comes from, he points out that, “This is the covenant.” God will do all he has promised to do. He has promised to quicken all of his redeemed by his Spirit, and he will be faithful to that promise. Just as surely as one was redeemed by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, at his own appointed time, God will send his Spirit into his heart and quicken him by his grace.

Men have far too high an opinion of themselves. They seem to think God depends on them, and he could not get his work done, if they do not pitch in and help him. They can wax ever so eloquent when they talk about the power of God in creation, and his power in the resurrection, but they seem to think God is helpless, or largely so, in the work of regeneration. They seem to think that if they do not help him, he will never get the job done. But God is not helpless; he will do all he has purposed to do.

[Isa 46:9-10](#), “Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying MY COUNSEL SHALL STAND, AND I WILL DO ALL MY PLEASURE.”

The question always arises: but what if the sinner does not do his part. The fact is that the sinner does not have a part; he is not a party to this covenant. It is the duty of the sinner to repent of sin, and to turn from it. It is his duty to believe the truth, and, to the best of his ability, to keep the commandments of God, and after he is born of the Spirit, he does have the ability to do all of those things. Before he is born again, he is dead in trespasses and sins, and he

does not have the ability nor the desire to obey God. After he is born again he has both the ability and the desire, but by then the work is already done; it is too late for him to assist in the matter of his salvation.

In the eighty-ninth Psalm David deals with this question in the very clearest language. “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes,” [Ps 89:30,32](#).

The language could not be any clearer. If the children of God transgress the commandments of God, they will suffer his chastening rod. God loves his own, and he chastises them when they sin.

[Heb 12:6-8](#), “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are bastards, and not sons.”

Every child of God can bear witness that God has been faithful to that promise. When we allow sin in our lives, God sends his chastening rod. It is a token of the love of God for his own that he chastises us when we sin. We can only imagine what a shambles we would make of our lives, if God allowed us to follow the lead of our old carnal nature, without chastising us, and bringing us to our knees in repentance before him.

The main theme in this [Ps 89](#) is the everlasting covenant. That theme runs all through the chapter, and that is what is under consideration in this passage. Notice how he continues, “Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. MY COVENANT WILL I NOT BREAK, nor alter the think that is gone out of my lips. ONCE HAVE I SWORN by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah,” ([Ps 89:33-37](#)).

The mercies of God for his people are based on his everlasting covenant—and if he does not break that covenant, it cannot be broken—he is the only party to the covenant. That covenant was made between God the Father and God the Son; man is not a party to it. The redeemed are the beneficiaries of it, but they are not parties to it. The eternal salvation of all the redeemed family is far too important a work to be put in the hands of sinful men.

The last provision of that covenant is found in the sixth chapter of John's gospel ([Joh 6](#)). “And this is THE FATHER’S WILL which hath sent me, that of ALL WHICH HE HATH GIVEN ME I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the WILL of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I WILL raise him up at the last day,” [Joh 6:39-40](#). Again notice his repeated

use of the word *will*. Those whom the Father gave the Son were those whom he gave to him in this everlasting covenant.

He is talking about the same thing in [1Th 4](#). “But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus WILL God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord SHALL NOT prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself SHALL descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ SHALL rise first: Then we which are alive and remain SHALL be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so SHALL we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words,” [1Th 4:13-18](#). The final act God has promised to perform on behalf of his redeemed is to raise them from the dead, and to carry them home to live with him eternally, and as surely as he will perform all of the other provisions of his promise he will perform this also.

The purpose and promise of God form one golden chain which began in eternity past and reaches all the way to eternity to come. God cannot lie; all his promises are sure. Whatever God purposed to do and promised to do, he will perform. [Ro 8:28-30](#), “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” [Eph 1:6](#), “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Others may be alarmed, but we do not need to be uneasy about the faithfulness of God. He will do all he has purposed to do. He has purposed to redeem all of his elect family, and to carry them home to live with him in heaven, and you can be sure that he will save every one of them without the loss of so much as one. “Wherefore comfort one another with these words,” [1Th 4:18](#).

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
The Final Judgment And A Burning Hell

THE FINAL JUDGMENT AND A BURNING HELL

[Mt 25:31-46](#), When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

[Mt 25:32](#) And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

[Mt 25:33](#) And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

[Mt 25:34](#) Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

[Mt 25:35](#) For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

[Mt 25:36](#) Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

[Mt 25:37](#) Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

[Mt 25:38](#) When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

[Mt 25:39](#) Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

[Mt 25:40](#) And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

[Mt 25:41](#) Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

[Mt 25:42](#) For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

[Mt 25:43](#) I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

[Mt 25:44](#) Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

[Mt 25:45](#) Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

[Mt 25:46](#) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Most Bible students I ever met, or read after, are agreed that these last sixteen verses of [Mt 25](#) deal with the final judgment. There are a few people who try to make something other than the final judgment out of this passage; but nothing else will fit. The language is too plain to be misunderstood.

There is a day coming when the Lord Jesus Christ will sit upon his throne in all his glory, and all mankind will be gathered before him to be judged “according to their works.” John said that in the Revelation. [Re 20:12](#), “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were

judged out of those things which were written in the books, *according to their works.*”

There may be some who panic at the thought of the righteous standing before God to be judged according to their works. The Bible teaches clearly enough that salvation is wholly and solely by grace; and they feel that it contradicts the doctrine of salvation by grace to say that we will be judged according to our works. If we are judged according to our works, does that not mean that we are saved by our works?

To say that we will be judged *according to our works*, does not mean that are saved by our works. The two may sound alike, but they are not in any sense the same thing.

The problem is that most people do not understand the meaning of the word *according*. If he had said that our judgment will be *based on our works*, that would have been an entirely different matter. Our salvation is not based on our works. That would have been *works salvation*, pure and simple. But while our judgment will not be based on our works, it will very definitely be *according to our works*, and we will notice in next few pages that the Bible brings out that fact very clearly.

The word *according* means, *in agreement with, in harmony with, in a manner consistent with*. That is exactly the way John used the word in the Revelation. In the next few pages we will show that the judgment of the saints will not be based on our works, but that the judgment of all mankind will very clearly be *according to their works*. Or to say it another way, the eternal destiny of the saints is reflected in the way they behave themselves in this life; and by the same token, the eternal destiny of the wicked is even more clearly reflected in the way they behave themselves in this life.

The Arminian world seems to think this text belongs to them, and they use it to scare their people into a public profession. But this text does not each anything resembling the Arminian doctrine. This passage does not give conditions that a person must meet in order to live in heaven. These verses rather give a description of those who will live in heaven. The Bible does not identify the children of God by any kind of label. It rather tells us what they look like; that is, it tells us how they behave. There is no label that could ever identify those who will live in heaven so unmistakably as these descriptions do.

Those who will live in heaven, someday, are those who are elected, and redeemed, and born again; and these verses describe the way elected, redeemed, and born again people behave. This is the way that every elected, redeemed, and born again person behaves. Some behave in this manner to one degree, and some to another; but every born again person behaves in this manner to one degree or another. With some children of God, their love and

compassion toward those around them is so evident that you cannot be in their presence more than a few minutes until you are aware of the fact. With others of his children, you must look more closely, if you are ever going to see it. But every born again person has the love of God in his heart; and if he loves God, he loves his fellow man, and he will fit the description of those whom the Lord says he will set on his right hand, and say, "Come ye blessed of my Father."

This passage describes those, who are born of the Spirit of God, and it describes them in the clearest way. It describes them by the love of God that lives in their hearts. If any person is kind and compassionate toward those around him, it is because he is a born again person. It is because the Spirit of God is in his heart. The wicked do not behave in that way.

If the Arminian could take this text away from those who believe in salvation by the sovereign grace of God, he still could not claim it for himself. He may think he can, but he cannot. No matter how he may explain this text, he cannot make it fit the Arminian mold. There are only three doctrines with regard to the way people are saved for heaven. Now, I know that you have probably heard that there are just two doctrines; but that is not right—there are three. One doctrine says that God is the one and only Savior, and he does not need any help. That is the doctrine of the Bible, and it is the doctrine of the Old Baptists.

Another doctrine says that God is the Savior, but that he does need help. We call that doctrine *Arminianism*. That is the doctrine of the majority of established religion.

The other doctrine says that man is his own savior, and that man does not need any help. That is the doctrine of salvation by works. It teaches salvation by works, and works alone. It teaches that man does not need God's help. We call that doctrine *Pelagianism*. Some folks call it *humanism*.

If this text is giving conditions you and I must meet in order to live in heaven some day, the Arminian still could not claim it for himself. The very best he could do is to claim it for the Pelagians—the works salvation people. The Arminian system teaches that the work of Christ on the cross has something to do with our eternal salvation. They have never figured out exactly what part the work of Christ plays in our salvation; and they are sure the work of Christ is not sufficient, all by itself, to take anybody to heaven. They are sure we must add something to the work of Christ, if that work is going to benefit us. They are sure we must add some amount of work on our part, some amount of faith on our part, some amount of good on our part, or else the work of Christ will never be sufficient. But while the Arminian is sure that the work of Christ is not sufficient, all by itself, to save anybody, he still believes that Christ

accomplished something on the cross. He believes that grace, and redemption, and blood atonement have some part in our salvation.

But, notice that this text does not say anything about the grace of God. It does not say anything about redemption. It does not even mention the work of Christ on the cross. Read the text as carefully as you will, and you will not find one mention of the sacrificial death of the Lord. Why is that? It is because this text is not giving an explanation of what gains us a home in heaven. It is rather giving a simple description of those who will live in heaven. Again, these are descriptions—not conditions.

So if this passage is giving conditions a person must meet in order to live in heaven, then, salvation is strictly a do-it-yourself project. It makes no mention of the work of Christ on behalf of his people in redemption. The Arminian system does not teach the truth of the Bible with regard to the way God saves his people, but they do believe that the Lord has something to do with our salvation. So if anybody wants these verses to give conditions for living in heaven, there is just no way that you can make them fit the Arminian mold. But why does this passage not make any mention of the redemptive work of the Lord? It does not mention what the Lord did on the cross, because it is not talking about what gains us a home in heaven. That is not the subject under consideration. It is rather giving a description of those who will live in heaven. Those who will live in heaven are an elected, redeemed, born again people, and this is a very clear description of redeemed, born again people. He describes them by their conduct. And this is the way every elected, redeemed, born again person behaves. Again, some behave in this manner to a small degree, and some behave in this manner to a greater degree; but every born again person behaves in this manner to one degree or another.

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," verses thirty-seven through forty. These verses do not need any explanation. I think that sometimes we spend too much time explaining things that are so plain that they do not need explaining. The Lord is not talking about what they did to him personally; he is talking about what they did to others around them.

Before we go any farther, I want to point out that this passage teaches the *sovereignty of God*, and it teaches *eternal personal election* as surely as any other passage in the Bibles does. This passage shows that those who will live in heaven are those who are *blessed* of the Father. That is what he says in

verse thirty-four, “Come *ye blessed of my Father*, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Let me ask you first, *when* were they so blessed of the Father? They were not blessed when they complied with conditions. They were not blessed when they decided to cooperate with God in the matter of their salvation. They were blessed *from the foundation of the world*. Read the verse again, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom *prepared for you from the foundation of the world*. That ought to be clear enough. There is no greater blessing anyone can imagine than to live with God and with all the saints in that eternal kingdom above. That is the blessing of all blessings. That is what salvation is all about; and it was prepared for these people *from the foundation of the world*.

And not only was it prepared for them; it was *reserved* for them. [1Pe 1:3-4](#), “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved* in heaven for you. This kingdom is an *inheritance*, and it is reserved for these very people, who are to be set on the Lord’s right hand.

An inheritance is not provided for a nameless, faceless mass of humanity. It is not provided for everybody in general, and nobody in particular. It is reserved for the heirs of the estate, for those who are named in the will. It is in the nature of wills that *wills name names*. Wills identify those who are the beneficiaries of the will.

Those who are set on the right are a blessed people, and they were blessed from the foundation of the world. This kingdom was prepared for them—for these exact same people—from the foundation of the world. And this inheritance was reserved for them from the foundation of the world. A reservation is always *particular* and *discriminating*. A reservation always includes the name of the person for whom the benefit is reserved. Anything less would not be a reservation. In this passage they are finally receiving that kingdom that was prepared for them, and reserved for them from the foundation of the world.

On that grand day, those who were blessed in eternity past will be separated from the rest of mankind, and they will be set on God's right hand. [Mt 25:32](#), “And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall *separate them* one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.”

And he will separate them in the exact same manner in which he chose them, and blessed them, and provided for them.

“And he shall separate them one from another.” The election of his people was personal, and this separation will be just as personal. He will “separate

them one from another,” “one from another,” and “one from another.” They were elected one by one, and one by one, and they will be separated one by one.

Language cannot be made any plainer than this passage makes it that these people were separated individually. And it is just as plain that he was talking to them individually when he said, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you (for you individuals) from the foundation of the world.” If that does not teach eternal personal election, I would like to know what it does teach. But it does teach election. We were elected one by one; we were blessed one by one; we were provided for one by one; and we will be separated one by one. [Joh 17:24](#), “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” That verse will be literally fulfilled on that day.

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal,” [Mt 25:41-46](#).

There are some folks, who deny that there is an eternal, burning hell. There are some in the denominational world, and there are even a few, who carry the Primitive Baptist name, who will not admit that the wicked are going to suffer eternally. But the Bible teaches it; our articles of faith teach it; and I am sure that it is so. Just as surely as the Bible teaches there is an eternal heaven, it also teaches that there is an eternal, burning hell. This passage binds the two up together, and teaches them together. I cannot think of two doctrines that are ever bound up together, and taught as one unit the way the doctrine of an eternal heaven, and the doctrine of an eternal hell are bound up together in this passage. And then, to emphasize the fact that the two doctrines form one inseparable unit, he draws them together in the final verse. “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.” There is an eternal heaven, and there is an eternal, burning hell, and the wicked are going to be in hell just as long as the righteous will be in heaven. The two doctrines stand or fall together.

Those who deny the existence of a burning hell will tell you that God is too loving, too kind, too tender hearted to ever send anybody to such a place as

that. But those who will tell you that have never seen the love of God for what it is; and they certainly have a strange view of the guilt of sin. Those who deny that there is such a place as hell have surely never taken the time to consider what a terrible thing sin is.

I cannot think of any doctrine that diminishes the guilt of sin any more than the *no-hell doctrine*. It is the great guilt of sin that requires such a place as hell. An eternal, burning hell is the proper punishment for sin, and the punishment exactly fits the offense. God would never have prepared such a place as hell, if any less punishment could have satisfied divine justice.

Those who deny that there is an eternal hell either do not believe in the depravity of man, or else they do not believe in the justice of God. They do not believe man is as wicked as the Bible says he is; they do not believe that sin is so bad that it requires any real punishment. As often as not the wicked get along better in this life than the righteous do, and if there is no place of eternal punishment, the wicked will never really suffer for their sins. Or else they do not believe God is just and righteous, and that he will punish every sin. There is no way anyone can advocate the no-hell doctrine without either denying that sin is really bad, or else denying that God is really good.

Several years ago there was a little girl murdered in a town just to the south of where I live. Her stepfather beat her to death. He sent her to the store, and she did not get back home as quickly as he thought she should, and he beat her.

And he beat her, and beat her, and beat her. He would rest for awhile, and he would beat her again. And he burned her all over with cigarettes. And he would take Tabasco (that is a kind of hot sauce) and he would mix it with a little water, and he would make her drink it. And he finally beat her to death.

Recently the newspapers carried the story of a man who abducted a young girl. He mistreated her terribly, and when he was finally through with her, he chopped off her arms. He literally cut off her arms, and left her to die. But she survived. She is still alive today—without any arms. They caught the man, and arrested him, and convicted him. He served some time in prison, and they released him. The last I heard, they had run him out of the state of Florida, because nobody wanted him living in their community. I don't blame them; I would not want anybody like that living in my community, either.

History is filled with characters like Adolph Hitler, who had six million Jews killed, because he did not like Jews, and Joseph Stalin, who had millions of his own people killed in order to establish his own regime, and King Herod, who had every little baby under two years old killed, because he was afraid one of them would grow up to become king, and Pharaoh, who had every little Jewish boy killed, and Jezebel, who had Naboth killed, because he would not sell his garden spot to her wicked husband Ahab. We read about the emperor Nero, who had Christians soaked in oil, and burned alive to illuminate his

gardens at night. It is not possible to take an objective look at the wickedness in the world around us without being convinced that there is a burning hell and there ought to be. Hell is the just and proper punishment for sin; and you can be sure the punishment fits the offense. The justice of a righteous, sin-avenging God demands that every sin be punished.

We cannot say it too clearly, nor too often. The *no-hell doctrine*, by its very nature, either denies that sin is evil, and that it deserves to be punished, or else it denies that God is righteous, and that he will punish every sin.

I am not going to tell you that every person who will wind up in hell is like those wicked men we have just described. God does not allow men to behave so wickedly as their old carnal nature would drive them to do. If God suffered man to carry out all the vile urgings of his carnal nature, none of us would survive the day. The world would become a slaughter house. But I am going to show what they are like. In this passage God gives us a very clear description of the wicked. In verses thirty-one through forty he gave a clear description of those who live in heaven. Now in verses forty-one through forty-six he gives an equally clear description of those who will suffer in hell.

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not," [Mt 25:41-43](#).

He was not talking about what these wicked people had done, or not done, to him personally. He was talking about the way they had treated others around them. "Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me," [Mt 25:44-45](#).

When he says, "I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat," he was not saying that he had an appetite, because it was mealtime. He was not talking about feeding somebody, simply because it was convenient. He was talking about a man who was starving; he was talking about somebody who could not feed himself. If a man can feed himself, he ought to. The Bible teaches that. [2Th 3:10](#), "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." That principle never changes—if a man will not work, he should not expect to eat.

One of the great problems in America today is the fact the government has thought, for the last fifty years, that if they will just set up enough social programs, they can repeal that principle. But it still remains true; if a man will

not work he should not expect to eat. But this was talking about a man who could not help himself.

This was talking about a man who was starving, and could not do anything about it. It is in this light that the Lord says, "I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink." Read the passage as carefully as you will. Those who were set on the left hand would not give a crust of bread to a starving man.

Now let me ask you, how many of those on the left were like that? Every last one of them. What he says to one, he says to all. He did not say, "Very few of you gave me anything to eat; very few of you gave me anything to drink." There was not so much as one person on the left who would give a crust of bread to a starving man.

Also, he did not say, "I was an hungred, and you did not give me much." He did not say, "I was an hungred, and you did not give me enough." The emphasis in that verse is on the word *no*. He says, "Ye gave me no meat," and, "Ye gave me no drink." There was not so much as one trace of the milk of human kindness in the heart of any person on the left. If you can find the first trace of compassion in any person in any person on the left, you can find more than I have ever been able to find.

If you find so much as one person, who has any concern at all for his fellow man, you will find him among those on the right. That is a characteristic of a born again person, and those who are born again are on the right.

He goes on to say, "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." I have tried to come up with some illustration to show what is meant by a *stranger*, and the best I can come up with is this. Imagine a man who has worked hard all of his life. He exerts every effort to support himself and his family, and he accomplishes that, but he has never been able to accumulate anything. Then one day he loses his job. The mill where he works has laid people off, and laid people off, until they finally close the mill, and go out of business. They put eight hundred people out of work, and that throws another eight hundred people out of work at other businesses. There are only ten thousand people living in that little town, and now sixteen hundred of them are out of work. There are no jobs to be had—not in that town.

He has some kinfolks about five hundred miles away, and he hears that he might be able to find a job there. So he loads up his family, and a few items that he thinks he just has to have in order to get along, and he starts out. He thought he had enough money to make the trip, but he goes about three hundred miles, and he has a blow out. He uses the last money he has to buy an old used tire, and he starts out again. But now he is out of money and out of gas. And the kids are hungry and crying. He does not have any money; he does not have any gas; and he does not know the first person within two hundred miles.

Ten dollars would buy enough gas to get him to his kinfolks. Another ten dollars would buy enough bread, and mayonnaise, and bologna, and soft drinks to feed his family. Now just suppose for a moment that he runs into one of these folks whom the Lord will one day set on his left hand. What do

you suppose his chances are? Do you suppose the man will help him? No, of course not. He is wasting his breath. There is not so much as one person on the left who would give a crust of bread to a starving man. That is what the text teaches. You will not find the slightest trace of compassion in any person whom the Lord sets on the left.

There is an eternal, burning hell. The wicked will fill that place up, and they will be there for all eternity. But you will not find so much as one person there, who has, or ever did have, the first trace of compassion for his fellow man.

But do the wicked never give anything to help those who are in need? Of course, it is true that the wicked do sometimes give to those in need; but they never do it for the purpose of helping anybody. He may do it for a vain show. He may do it to impress somebody. Or he may work on a job where the boss has decided that one hundred percent of his employees are going to contribute to a particular fund raising drive. So he does not have much choice. He gives, but he would be glad to take it back, if he could do it without too much inconvenience.

The wicked very often give to buy support, or to buy prestige, or to gain influence. They give to get their name in the paper, or to get their picture in the paper. They give "hoping to receive as much again," and that is not a gift. That is a purchase, and not a very commendable purchase, at that. The Lord said, "Ye gave me no meat." The wicked have no love for anybody; and they never give for the purpose of helping anybody.

There is a passage in 1 John that casts light on that. [1Jo 4:7-8](#), "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." These two verses make a clear distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who are born again, and those who are not born again. The text says that everyone that loves is born of God. I am sure that none of us has ever realized how very wicked *wicked* really is. Primitive Baptist preachers will say more about the depravity of man in a week than most preachers will say in a year. Most preachers just don't talk about man's depravity; they don't believe it.

But as much as we Primitive Baptist preachers have emphasized the doctrine of total depravity, we have never painted the picture as black as it really is. Man is, by nature, depraved beyond his comprehension, and we do not have the capacity to see ourselves as we really are.

I know that somebody is going to object that the meanest man in town may love his mother. He may love his wife and children. But, no, the wicked do not love anybody. The text says so. If you find any emotion in the wicked that resembles love, it only resembles love. It is not the real thing. It only has to do

with their close relationship to him. It is only because she is “MY mother,” “MY wife,” “MY children,” “MY cook,” “MY housekeeper,” “MY property.” He loves those people who are close to him only in the sense that he loves those things that are close to him and belong to him. He loves them in the sense that they benefit him. That is selfishness, and possessiveness, but it is not love. Selfishness sometimes becomes very protective, and it may look very much like love; but it is not love.

It has been said that there is a very fine line between love and hate. It has been said that love can turn into hate almost in an instant. But that is not true.

Selfishness can turn into hate in an instant, and possessiveness can turn into hate in an instant; but love is not so fickle as that. The problem is that something was passing for love that was not really love to start with.

The wicked do not love anybody. They do not love God, and they do not love anybody else. John made that clear enough. [1Jo 4:20](#). “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen.” A challenge is the strongest way to make a statement, and in the strongest possible way, John shows that those who do not love their brother do not love God. Those who will spend eternity in hell do not love God, and they do not love their fellow man.

Perhaps you have spent many a waking hour worrying about someone you love, for fear that he will spend eternity in that dreadful place. Well, someone you love may be there; but there will not be anybody there who loves you, because there will not be anybody there who loves anybody. The scriptures are plain enough; The wicked do not love anybody. “Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God,” [1Jo 4:7](#).

I have never met very many people like that, and I have an idea that probably no one reading these lines has ever met very many people who had absolutely no love for anybody. But I have met a few people who seemed to fit the description. No matter where you go, you will find a lot of good, decent, honest people; and you will find an occasional scoundrel.

I believe that the vast majority of the human race are children of God, and that they will be in heaven some day. John said, “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands,” [Re 7:9](#). God compares his family to the “stars of the sky,” and to the “sands of the sea.” With all the discoveries that astronomers have made, none of them have ever been able to count the stars of the sky. Their mathematics will not help them there. They have to admit that the heavenly bodies are a great number “which no man can number.”

The Bible refers to heaven as a large place. [Ps 18:19](#), “He brought me forth also into a large place.” Heaven is a large place intended to house a vast multitude of people. It never talks about hell that way. It refers to hell as “a lake,” or “a pit,” or “a lake of fire and brimstone”—a relatively small place. By its very definition, a pit is a small place. A pit may be deep, but it is very narrow. If it was very wide, it would not be a pit; it would be a valley. A lake is always fairly small. If it was very wide, it would be an ocean. God will have the victory—even in numbers.

There is one text that some people seem to think teaches that there will only be a few people in heaven. [Mt 7:13-14](#), “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” But that is not talking about eternal heaven. That is talking about finding that way of life and obedience that is to be had here in this life. But that is a subject for another time.

We have pointed out several times that there is an eternal burning hell, that the wicked will fill that place up, and they will be there for all eternity. We have also pointed out that there will not be anybody there that had any real love for anybody. But we should take the time to point out that, among all the other wicked, loveless people, there will be some wicked people, who were highly religious in this life. The Pharisees were the most religious people of their day. They wore their religion on their sleeve. They were proud of their religion; but they were the bitterest enemies of the Lord. As religious as they were, they did not manifest any real love for God, nor for his Son. And if there had been any question, the Lord removed all doubt. He told them, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it,” [Joh 8:44](#). You and I may be mistaken about somebody; but if the Lord says someone does not have the love of God in his heart, you can be sure that he is right. These highly religious people did not have the love of God in their hearts.

Not only does the *no-hell doctrine* diminish the guilt of sin, it diminishes the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is no hell, what was the Lord doing on the cross? What did he save us from? Why was any salvation necessary? Do the wicked just cease to exist at death? Is annihilation all the Lord saved us from? If all the Lord saved us from was annihilation, he did not save us from very much. There have been times in my life, when I would have gladly chosen annihilation, if that had been an option—if I could have just snapped my fingers, and Harold Hunt would never have been.

Annihilation is the fate that awaits every little puppy dog that ever lived. Now I know little boys believe there is a puppy dog heaven. There was a time, when I was very small, that I thought that might be the case. We can chalk it up to a child's sentimentality, that little boys believe they will see their pets again some day. But it is a more serious matter, when adults believe in a puppy dog hell—when they believe that the only fate that awaits the vilest sinner is the fate that awaits every little puppy dog.

Others have seen the consequence of preaching annihilation. They realize the doctrine of annihilation denies that sin is bad, and God is good. They know that if sin is bad, and God is just, there must be some kind of hell. So they preach there really is a hell, after all. They preach that the wicked in hell burn, and burn, and burn, and then, they finally burn up. They get just a little closer to the truth that the *no-heller*, but they cannot bring themselves to preach the Bible doctrine of an eternal hell.

If the wicked in hell burn, and burn, and then burn up, that still would not be too bad. If that is the case, there are a lot of good people, who suffer as much in this life as the wicked do in hell. I had a little brother who died in a fire, when he was eighteen years old. That was almost thirty years ago; but I still cannot allow myself to think about it. The memory is too painful; I cannot bear to think about it. If the wicked in hell finally burn up, my little brother suffered as much in this life as Adolph Hitler will suffer in eternity. Perhaps, he did not suffer as long; but according to that notion, he suffered in exactly the same manner. Adolph Hitler had six million Jews killed just to satisfy his hatred for Jews. I ask you, did Adolph Hitler's crime incur so little guilt that he will not suffer any more in eternity than that little boy did in this life?

Through the ages, a lot of good people have been burned alive, burned at the stake, rather than deny their faith in the Lord. If the wicked in hell burn, and burn, and then, finally burn up, God did not save them from anything, because they suffered in this life exactly what they would have suffered in eternity—if Christ had not even gone to the cross.

The *no-hell* doctrine affects some of the most fundamental doctrines of the Bible. It denies the guilt of sin; it denies the justice, the righteousness of God; and it denies the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before we go any farther, we need to remember that those who will live in heaven will be there, not because of any merit in themselves, but because of the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Had we received what we deserve, we would have suffered the torment of an eternal hell just as surely as anyone else ever will. We were all cut from the same bolt of cloth. [Eph 2:1-3](#), “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in

the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

There is, by nature, nothing about any of us that deserves saving. By nature, there is none of us that differs one whit from the vilest sinner that ever lived. If there is any difference about any of us, it is because God made a difference. It is because God, in his sovereign mercy, reached down to us when we did not deserve saving, and were not even interested in being saved, and he saved us. He quickened us from that state of death in sins, and he gave us life. He placed his Spirit in our hearts and gave us a love for him, and for those around us.

Those who love do so because they are a *blessed* people ([Mt 25:34](#)). Those who are filled with nothing but spite and envy, are so because they are a *cursed* people.” ([Mt 25:41](#)). But the blessing and the curse come from two entirely different sources. Those who are blessed are blessed “from the foundation of the world” ([Mt 25:34](#)). Their blessing comes from the sovereign love and mercy of God. But the passage makes no such statement about those on the left. They are not cursed from the foundation of the world. Their condition is not to be traced to the sovereignty of God. Their condition is to be traced to Adam, and to the sin and curse he brought on all mankind. The Bible nowhere gives any ground for charging the sin and suffering of man to the sovereignty of God.

We said at the outset that the judgment of the saints is not based on our works, but that the judgment of all mankind is “according to” our works. I believe the Lord makes that fact very clear in this passage. The judgment of both the righteous and the wicked is “according to” our works, that is, it is “in a manner consistent with” our works. It is “in harmony with” our works. That is exactly what the word *according* means. Not one person who loves God, or who loves his fellow man, will spend eternity in that dreadful place. If a person has love in his heart, he is a child of God. He is heaven-bought, heaven-born, and heaven-bound.

And not one person who will suffer in the flames of an eternal hell, ever had the slightest trace of love for anybody, not for God, nor for anybody else. The only nature he has is a carnal, depraved, spiteful nature. His works are “according to” his nature; and his judgment will be “according to” his works. The child of God has two natures. He has a new spiritual nature, but he still has the old carnal nature to contend with. Sometimes the old carnal nature motivates him, and he can still do mean and spiteful things. But if he is born of the Spirit of God, he has God's Spirit in his heart. That Spirit is a spirit of love, and that love will be manifest in the life of every person that has it—to one degree or another. To one degree or another his works will be “according

to” the love of God that lives in his heart, and his judgment will be “according to” those works. It will not, in any sense, be based on those works, but it will be “according to” his works—“in a manner consistent with” his works.

Let's pursue that thought one step farther. Suppose you have a neighbor who lives next door. He has lived there for years, and you would be glad if he would live there from now on. He is as good a neighbor as anybody could ask for. You get up one cold February morning, and your battery is dead. Your starter won't even make a sound. But that is no problem; your neighbor has some jumper cables, and he will be right there to help. He will stay with you till you get the car started, and, if necessary, he will follow you down the highway to make sure it does not die on you again—even if he knows that it is going to make him late for work, and his boss is going to give him a hard time.

One day in April the ground has thawed, and you back out in the yard. The ground is never so soft as it is just after it has been frozen solid, and it thaws out. The car mires down, and you are stuck. That neighbor will be right there, pushing to get you out. He may mire up over his shoe tops; but that doesn't matter. A little saddle soap and water will take care of that.

A house burns down across town. The family just manages to get out with the clothes on their backs. They lose everything they have. They lose their house, and their furniture, and their clothes, and even their week's groceries burn up. Somebody comes by making up money to help. He doesn't know those people. He did not even know there was anybody by that name living in that town. But that doesn't matter; he is going to help. He may have to wait until next week to pay his light bill, and pay a penalty then, because he gave them part of his light bill money. But there are little children without clothes, and food, and a place to sleep, and, of course, he is going to help.

But there is another side to the man. He never goes to church. He was not raised to go to church. It just never has been part of his experience. Every now and then, he will come out with a curse word; and sometimes, when the occasion is just right, he may string several curse words together in a very emphatic manner. And a few times you have smelled alcohol on his breath. Now suppose you ask the denominational preacher down the street about the man. “Preacher, you know the man; what if he dies tonight, what will his destiny be?” It may take a little while to get a straight answer from the preacher; but eventually he is very likely to tell you that if the man has never made a public profession of faith in Christ, he is lost world without end. If the man has not met the preacher's formula for becoming a child of God and gaining a home in heaven, the preacher is sure that he will spend eternity in hell.

Well there is an eternal, burning hell, and the wicked are going to fill that place up. They will be there for all eternity. They will be there in that flame just as long as the saints will be in heaven. [Mt 25:46](#), “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” There is not one iota of difference between the two. The same word that is translated *everlasting* is the word that is translated *eternal*. There is an eternal, burning hell, and the wicked will be there forever. But there is not one verse in the Bible that even implies that hell will be filled with good, honest, kind hearted people, who would give you the shirt off their back. Do you remember the verse that said, “Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it to me?” Do you remember where those people were found? If the man does not go to church, he ought to start. If he uses foul language, he ought to quit. If he does not read his Bible, he needs to get into the habit. If he does not understand it, he needs to pray that God would give him understanding. But if anybody believes that he is the sort of person the Lord was talking to when he said, “Depart from me ye cursed,” well, that is just not right. Eternal hell is the final destiny of the wicked; but the wicked are not kind, compassionate, and tender hearted. The dead will be judged “according to their works,” and according to his works this man looks more like a child of God than some church going people I have known. There is, indeed, a day coming when the Lord will come again in the clouds of glory; he will declare that time will be no more, and he will gather all nations before him. That final day will come; but far from being a day to dread, that should be our fondest hope. Paul says that we look “for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our` Savior Jesus Christ,” [Tit 2:13](#). We look forward with fond anticipation to that day. When he closed out the very last chapter in the Bible, the Lord told John, “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen,” [Re 22:20](#). And John's immediate response was, “Even so come Lord Jesus.”

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
The High Cost Of Abortion

THE HIGH COST OF ABORTION

“If my people which are called by name will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land,” [2Ch 7:14](#).

Nothing in my lifetime has seized the attention of the American people the way the events of September 11th have. Nothing has caused us so much alarm.

Nothing has ever caused such a wave of patriotism.

But in spite of all the alarm, we gain comfort in knowing that God still reigns on the throne. God is still in charge. Not a sparrow can fall to the ground without

him. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. No matter how the adversary may plot, and conspire, and connive, he can never go one step beyond where God suffers him to go.

God is not the cause of everything that happens in this world. I wouldn't have that doctrine for a minute, and I don't believe many of you would. I'm not going to blame any of my meanness on my Lord, and I'm not going to blame anybody else's meanness on him.

But God is still in charge. He does make things happen, and he does stop things from happening. Every evangelical, born again, child of God believes that, whether he knows he believes it or not. Sometimes, people believe more than they know they believe, and you can be sure that every born again child of God believes God intervenes in our lives.

From time to time, every heaven-born soul prays. Why would anybody pray, if he did not believe God intervenes in our lives. Why would he bother to pray, if he did not believe God makes things happen--if he did not believe he stops things from happening?

Very often it seems the adversary has the upper hand, but he can never go beyond the restraining power of God. In [2Ki 7](#), we read that Benhadad the king of Syria had the city of Samaria surrounded, but God delivered Samaria. How did he do it? God simply made a racket in the night. That's all it took. He just made a racket. The Syrians heard the noise; they said, "Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us," and they took off running for home as fast as they could go. The field was littered with clothes, and pots and pans, and anything they could do without. God does not have any trouble when he gets ready to put down the adversary.

There was a time when Sennacherib had the city of Jerusalem under siege. The city was in distress. But God dispatched an angel to the Assyrian camp, and during the night that angel dispatched 185 thousand Assyrians. When they got up the next morning, 185 thousand of their colleagues were dead on the ground. Sennacherib went home too. His sons killed him as he was worshiping in the house of his god Nisroch, and Esar-haddon his son became king in his stead. So much for Sennacherib.

In the late 16th century Spain was the richest nation in Europe. The Spanish *conquistadores* had plundered Central and South America of literally shiploads of gold. Their ships sometimes came into port listing from their load of gold. Spain had used that gold to build the Spanish Armada, at that time, the mightiest naval power on earth. Philip II the King of Spain was planning to invade England and put a Roman Catholic king on the throne. With the Catholic history of violence and persecution, that would have made an enormous difference in the history of the world--if it had been allowed to take place.

England later had a mighty navy of their own, but in 1588, their little ragtag navy was no match for the Spanish Armada. The English sent out every ship, every tugboat, and every fishing boat they could muster against the Spanish, and that

was clearly not going to be enough. But the God who rules the winds and the seas had the answer. He sent a mighty storm that blew the Spanish ships north all the way through the English Channel, and smashed them on the rocky coasts of Scotland and Ireland. Many of the Spanish sailors were never able to get back home to Spain. They, and their descendants, lived and died where they shipwrecked on the northern shores of the British Islands.

For years--before the revisionists did so much rewriting of history--historians called that storm the *Protestant Wind*. God has no trouble delivering, when he gets ready to deliver.

During the American Revolution, our little ragtag Continental Army took on the mightiest military power on Earth. We tend to think of our ancestors uniting behind George Washington and the Continental Army in their efforts to defeat the British, but it was not that way. The fact is that Americans were not at all united. Only about one-third of the people wanted to be independent of England. Another third wanted to stay with England, and the other third couldn't care less.

In one of the first battles of that war Washington's forces and the British lined up facing each other the way they fought in that day. But when the shooting started, Washington's Continentals soon realized the British were shooting at them, and they stood a good chance of getting killed. They threw down their guns and took to their heels. When George Washington saw his troops running like rabbits, he took off his hat, threw it on the ground, (with a few unprintable expressions) and wondered if that was the kind of men he was expected to use to win the war.

No doubt, those men were about as brave as most of us would have been under the same circumstances, but you can be sure America did not win its independence, because our soldiers were so much braver than the British soldiers. God intended to plant this nation here in America, and by his own providence he gave them the victory.

In those days they didn't have the mighty diesel powered ships we have today. Men can start up their big diesel engines; but it is God who controls the wind. Sometimes, the sailors of that day had to wait for the wind to blow in the right direction before they could leave port. For three months, at one critical point in the Revolution, the wind blew the wrong way. The British could not come to the aid of their forces in America. When the wind finally changed, it was too late. For days on end, during the Battle of Britain, Adolph Hitler sent his bombers over England. They blasted the city of London to smithereens. The R.A.F. had just enough planes to fight off one more raid. One more day, and Britain would be totally defenseless; the German air force would sweep the R.A.F. from the sky; and Germany could bomb any city in England at will. One more raid was all it would take, but he didn't send it. Adolph Hitler did not know how close he was to victory. God is the God of light, and he can give the light, or he can withhold it. He can keep the adversary in the dark any time he chooses to.

God is on the throne. I don't know what may be facing this nation. I don't know what misery we are going to go through, but I am sure the adversary will never

go one step beyond where God suffers him to go. But, considering the sins of this nation, it terrifies me to think how far God may suffer our enemies to go, before he finally calls them to a halt.

You can be sure God did not cause those wicked men, who brought down the World Trade Center, to do what they did. God is never the cause of sin. He would never give man a law, forbidding murder, and then coerce any man to commit murder. But you can be just as sure, that those men could not have done what they did, if God had not--for one brief moment--removed his protecting hand. It is because of the providential care of God that this world does not, at any moment, become a slaughterhouse. We cannot even imagine what this world would be like, if God did not, moment by moment, restrain the violence of the wicked. But, just as surely as God protects us and cares for us, he can just as easily deliver us over to judgment. God is longsuffering, but his longsuffering does not last forever; it does not insure that we will never suffer for our sins. Almost in an instant, nearly four thousand people were killed. We have watched the survivors telling their experiences on television, and it just tears your heart out. One woman told of how she was getting an email from her husband, when the email stopped, and she heard somebody in the office saying, "It just fell." Her husband was sending an email, declaring his deepest love for her, at the very instant the building fell, crushing him and thousands of others to death.

There has been a steady stream of stories very similar to that. Those experiences are, at the same time, the most heartwarming, and heartrending, we have ever heard. I cannot think of anything that has ever so touched the heart of Americans. You wonder how could anybody be so horribly wicked, so absolutely depraved, as to do what those men did. Norman Schwarzkov was on television telling how, in Desert Storm, his men placed their own lives at risk to avoid injuring innocent bystanders; but, he said, "These ***** went out of their way to hit the innocent." It is hard to imagine anybody so wicked, so depraved.

It reminds me of something one old elder used to say. The notion was circulating that there is no place of eternal torment for the wicked. That doctrine still bothers us from time to time. This old elder used to say, "I tell you right now, if there is not an eternal, burning hell, I'm in favor of getting one started."

When we consider the wickedness, the utter depravity, of anybody who would do what those men did, I think a lot of us would say, "If there is not an eternal hell, there ought to be." But there is a place of eternal torment. The wicked are going to fill that place up, and they will be there for all eternity.

There is nothing in my lifetime that has alarmed our American people the way the events since September 11th have, but I want us to look at this entire affair from another perspective.

Let me ask you this. How alarmed do you believe our people would be, if that same thing, or something very much like it, were to happen every day? Suppose it happened once a day, every day, week after week, and year after year. Do you believe we would ever get used to it? Or do you think we would be absolutely

horrified by it? Do you think we could ever get used to the thought of thousands of people being slaughtered on a daily basis?

The fact is that the heart of man is so blinded by sin, that people can get used to almost anything, depending on how it is presented. It depends to a very great extent on how the matter is presented by the news media.

In 1973 the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a decision, which said that if an expectant mother wanted to destroy her unborn baby, no state government had the right to interfere.

Since 1973, abortionists have destroyed about four thousand unborn babies--unborn human beings--every day.

On average, they have destroyed that number of babies every day, day after day, week after week, and year after year. They destroy more lives every day than were killed on the one day of September 11th. By now almost forty million babies have been aborted.

Americans take the slaughter of unborn babies in stride, at the same time we are outraged at what happened on September 11th. We have been brainwashed into thinking there is a difference.

They tell us the baby is not human; it is only a *fetus*. Of course it is a *fetus*; it is a soon-to-be-born *human fetus*.

God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," [Jer 1:5](#). God says that unborn *fetus* was Jeremiah, before it came forth out of the womb; it was not some indefinable something that might possibly someday become Jeremiah.

David said, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and sin did my mother conceive me," [Ps 51:5](#). He says his mother conceived him; she did not conceive something that might possibly someday become David. He was David from the very moment he was conceived.

But in 1973, in the Roe v Wade decision, our Supreme Court decided God was wrong. David's mother did not conceive him; she conceived something that might become David. God did not know Jeremiah before he was born; he knew something that might become Jeremiah.

In the first place, it is not the place of the Supreme Court, or any other court, to make law. That is the job of the legislative branch of government. It is the job of the courts to interpret the law. But in 1973 the Supreme Court of the United States took it upon themselves to make law. They laid down the law to the various states, and said every woman has the right to murder her unborn child, or have it murdered, and no state has the right to interfere.

It has been 28 years since Roe v Wade, and since that day, about the same number of children has been killed every day as those who were killed on September 11th.

About four thousand unborn babies, unborn human beings, are destroyed every day, and the news media talks as if anybody who is alarmed about it is part of some lunatic fringe.

America has let it happen. For almost three decades we have let it happen. After people became hardened to the thought of aborting babies, somebody came along with a process called *partial birth abortion*. In *partial birth abortion* the abortionist manipulates the baby so it is born feet first. It is delivered all but the head. Then the abortionist uses a scissors-like instrument to punch a hole in the back of the baby's head. A suction tube is passed through the hole; the baby's brains are vacuumed out; the skull is crushed; and the baby is delivered dead. It is hard to imagine anything more wicked, anything more uncivilized. That is something you might expect from cannibals and head-hunters, not here in civilized America.

Twice Congress has tried to outlaw the practice, and both times the President vetoed the ban. Those who tried to outlaw the practice could not find enough votes in the United States Senate to override the veto. It is distressing to know that our president, and more than one third of our Senators were convinced partial birth abortion is a good idea, and it ought to have the protection of the law.

I am appalled at the horrible depravity of those men who were willing to fly airliners into the World Trade Center. I am appalled at the depravity of Supreme Court Justices who would legalize the destruction of 40 million babies. And I am appalled at the depravity of United States Senators who advocate vacuuming the brains out of innocent babies.

I realize that many of our people have heard the abortion question debated, until they don't want to hear any more. Most people have made up their minds, and they had rather drop the subject. But you and I are going to pay the price for all those aborted babies. Our children and grandchildren are going to pay the price, and they are going to pay in ways few people seem to have imagined. At least, I never hear people talking about the high price this nation is already beginning to pay. Long ago, God said, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," [Ga 6:7](#). That statement is as true today as it was when it was first written. It is true for individuals, and it is true for nations. I want to look at just one problem abortion is already bringing on this nation. It is a problem whose dimensions our elected leaders seem totally unwilling to discuss.

We constantly hear people talk on television about the condition of Social Security. We are forever being told that Social Security is in trouble. They name various dates when the system will go broke. But I have never yet heard a news commentator who has the nerve to tell us why Social Security is going broke. It should not take a rocket scientist to figure it out; but they don't dare say it. For years we've heard the myth about the Social Security Trust Fund, about the *lock box* as they like to call it. The fact is, there never has been a *lock box*. Social

Security has always been a pass through system; present wage earners have always supported present retirees.

So why is Social Security is going broke? Since 1973, when the Supreme Court handed down the Roe v Wade Decision, Americans have aborted babies at the rate of 1.5 million per year. Or to say it another way, we have aborted *future wage earners* at the rate of some 1.5 million per year. We have done that for 28 years now. That adds up to more than 40 million people--40 million people who will never be in the work force. They will never pay into the Social Security system.

By this date, some 10 million of those 40 million people would be in the labor force earning wages, and paying taxes into Social Security. There can be no doubt that Social Security is in trouble; but there is nothing wrong with Social Security that another 10 million wage earners paying into the system would not solve.

That is the reason Social Security is going broke; and that is the reason it cannot be fixed.

Millions of wage earners retire out of the labor force--and start collecting checks--every year. And there are some 1.5 million wage earners who do not enter the work force to replace them. Those wage earners are dead. They will never be in the labor force. They will never pay into the system.

In another 20 years there will be 40 million wage earners missing from the labor force. Those 40 million people will never pay into the system. You cannot continue any system for long, if you constantly eliminate those people who pay the bills. Our abortionists seem never to have figured that out.

In 1935, when Social Security began, there were about 16 wage earners for every retiree. Today the figure a little better than 2 to 1. The number of retirees continues to rise, and the number of wage earners continues to shrink. At some point the burden becomes an unbearable load for the few people still working. But that is not the entire problem. About the same time there are not enough wage earners to support the system, there will also not be enough working people to support nursing homes either. Both require money; there has to be somebody working to pay the bills.

I know this is alarming, but I'm not going to say, "I don't want to alarm you." I do want to alarm you. I think that sometimes we preachers get the idea this matter of preaching is a popularity contest. I quit worrying a long time ago about being a popular preacher. I have learned I'm never going to be everybody's favorite preacher. I am not sure I will ever be anybody's favorite preacher. But God doesn't call preachers to run popularity contests. He calls us to preach the truth, and sometimes preaching the truth involves identifying sin and warning against it. But back to the subject at hand, there was a time when people had big families. When Social Security began, it was very common for families to have five or six children; some families had many more. Those children provided most of the *security* for their parents in their old days.

More than that, most people grew up, lived, and died within a few miles of where they were born. They were related to half the people in the community. They had parents, and children, and brothers, and sisters, and brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law, and uncles, and aunts, and nieces, and nephews, and cousins, in the neighborhood.

If anybody got in distress, they usually had enough kinfolks in the neighborhood to take care of them. Today, our families are much smaller, and they are scattered all over the country. Most of our people live in large cities and towns. We do not have the support system our parents' generation had. If we get in distress, we would be hard pressed to find help without looking to some government agency. And abortion is steadily crippling and destroying those agencies.

People are moving away to find work, and our families are scattered all over the country. Can you imagine the cataclysm that is going to face this country when Social Security really does get in trouble?

It is fairly certain there will always be Social Security. After all this time, Congress would not dare to eliminate those monthly checks. They just won't be big enough to buy anything. When inflation comes back, it will come back with a vengeance, and it will not take long for inflation to eat up those little checks. They will always let you retire, but they will keep pushing the retirement age back, until, before can start drawing a check, you will likely be too feeble to work anyway. By the time abortion has so crippled Social Security that it cannot do the job, and nursing homes are either full, or out of business, the social explosion that will rock this nation will make the World Trade Center bombing look like a firecracker.

We are already seeing another aspect of the problem. There are only three things the *social engineers* can do. One, they can lower Social Security benefits. Two, they can push back the retirement age. And three, they can throw open the borders, and invite immigrants to come in and take the jobs, earn the wages, and pay the taxes.

If Social Security is going to survive, in any form, somebody will have to fill the jobs, and pay the taxes. Those taxes will never be paid by those people who have been aborted.

In spite of all the protests to the contrary, our borders are already being quietly opened; immigrants are already fanning out across the nation.

As my wife and I were traveling a few weeks ago, I stopped to get some fruit for snacks. When I am traveling, if I don't keep fruit in the car, I eat other kinds of snacks I would probably do well not to eat. Anyway, as I left the store, I noticed a stack of Spanish language newspapers with a sign saying they were free. The paper is published by Hispanics for the Spanish speaking population of central Alabama.

I've always had a weakness for things that were free. So I picked up a copy, and while my wife was driving, I came across an article about the effect Mexican immigration is having on politics in America.

It pointed out that, at the present time, 1 out of every 20 people in America is either from Mexico, or born to Mexican parents. In 30 years, 1 out of every 8 people in America will be of Mexican origin, and by the year 2050, 1 in every 4 will be.

They still have babies after they come to America, and those babies --born on American soil--have American citizenship. It pointed out that in 25 years there will be enough Hispanics with American citizenship to control the *swing vote*, and decide large numbers of elections, especially, state and local elections.

The writer did not expect them to ever gain control of either national party, but he was sure they will control enough of the *swing vote* that both parties will have no choice but to go to them, hat in hand, and plead for their support.

Considering the hostility Hispanics have often had to endure, I wonder how much sympathy they will have toward our aging *Anglo* population, when they begin to have such power in politics. I wonder how anxious they will be to increase Social Security benefits to *keep up with inflation*. I wonder how anxious they will be to subsidize nursing homes.

Everybody I talk to tells me how hard Hispanics work at jobs others don't want. Employers tell me they are willing to work 10 or 12 hours a day--long after others have gone home. I wonder how much sympathy those hard working Hispanics are going to have for our aged *Anglos*, who are depending on them to help provide our Social Security checks.

We have every right to be alarmed at what happened September 11th in New York City. We have every right to feel the emotions we feel towards those utterly depraved men who did it.

We have the same right to be alarmed at those men in Washington who say it is good medical practice to vacuum the brain out of a nearly-born baby, crush it's skull, and deliver it dead.

I have just as strong feelings towards those Supreme Court Justices who paved the way for the cold-blooded murder of some 40 million innocent human beings. I keep hearing that September 11th was a wake-up call. It was. America has been going through a nightmare. I can't think of anything that has ever disturbed our sleep the way this has. But you have nightmares when you are asleep. We have been having a nightmare, but I fear that America is still asleep. It has been a wake-up call, but it looks like we've hit the snooze bar.

We are outraged about the World Trade Center. Americans have never experienced such a resurgence of patriotism as we have seen in the last three months. But, as a nation, we are still fast asleep about an even far worse tragedy that is still going. We are totally asleep to the enormous price our children and grandchildren are going to pay.

I hear people making all sorts of comments on television about September 11th, but I haven't yet heard those news reporters expressing the same alarm that essentially the same number of innocent human beings have been aborted

(murdered) every day for 28 years now. I'm appalled at the sheer hypocrisy of the American news media and the way they ignore news they ought to report.

We have every right to call up the National Guard and the Reserves. We have every right to strike out at those people who have struck out at our nation. But you cannot put enough Sky Marshals on airplanes. You cannot shoot off enough missiles. You cannot put enough men on the ground in Afghanistan to solve this problem.

No, the solution to America's problems is not at the end of a gun. If America solves this problem, we will solve it on our knees. And if we don't solve it on our knees, it will not be solved.

"If my people which are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land," [2Ch 7:14](#).

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
The Law Of Moses

The Law of Moses

[Heb 10:1-3](#) For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

[Le 25:9-10](#), Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof. We Primitive Baptist preachers preach very often on the insufficiency of the law, and that is what our first text is pointing up. The fact that Israel kept offering those sacrifices year after year indicated the last sacrifice did not get the job done. It did not "make the comers thereunto perfect." If the last sacrifice had removed their sins, there would have been no need to offer another sacrifice.

Sometimes we preachers repeat ourselves. Sometimes I repeat myself for emphasis. More often than not, when I repeat myself, it means I have lost my place, and I am treading water, trying to remember where I was, and where I was headed. But if God ever repeats himself, you can be sure he did not forget his place. He repeats himself for emphasis. In [Ps 89](#), God indicates the security of the believer, and he says the same thing four times in rapid succession. He did not lose his place. He repeated himself for emphasis. In [Ro 5](#), he says five times in five verses that we lost everything in Adam, and we

gained everything in the Lord Jesus Christ. He repeated himself for emphasis. He did not intend for us to miss the point.

For fifteen hundred years under the Law Service, God repeated himself for emphasis. Day after day, he continued to require Israel's priests to offer the daily sacrifice. The next day he required them to do it all over again. For fifteen hundred years he required the same sacrifices. There has never been any point emphasized so often and for so long. And the point was that the blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin. They could symbolize redemption from sin, but they could never take sin away. They could never satisfy the righteous indignation of God against sin.

We love to preach about the insufficiency of the law. Paul refers to it as the *weak and beggarly* elements of the law ([Ga 4:9](#)). But bear in mind, when we talk about the insufficiency of the law, we are talking about the insufficiency of the law to justify any man before God ([Ac 13:39](#)), the insufficiency of the law to deliver us from the wrath to come ([Ro 4:15](#)), the insufficiency of the law to produce spiritual life ([Ga 3:21](#)).

That is one side of the coin. The other side of the coin is that the law was entirely sufficient for the purpose for which it was intended. God did not make a mistake when he gave the law. The Law of Moses was never intended to produce children of God. It was never intended to deliver anybody from eternal damnation, nor to gain anybody a home in eternal heaven, but it law was entirely sufficient for the purpose for which it was intended.

The law of Moses was intended as a system of government for a particular people at a particular time, and it was entirely sufficient for that purpose. In that regard it was the best system of government any nation ever had. One reason we know it was the best is because it was God who gave it. He was the giver of the Law and the head of the government. No government men can put together could be better than that.

The Law, with its types and shadows and figures, was far inferior to the gospel and the New Testament church. The light shines far more brightly, and the truth is understood much more clearly in the gospel day. But the Law was a system of worship for a particular people at a particular time, and until it was fulfilled and done away by Christ, it was the best system of worship any nation had ever had.

Comparing the Law with the gentile religions of that day, is comparing light and darkness; it is comparing good and evil. The Gentile religions magnified the lusts of the flesh, and incorporated the basest immorality in their religious activities. The Law called on Israel to live lives of the strictest morality. Its feasts, sacrifices, and holy days, represented and fore-shadowed the spotless and pure Son of God, and the work he would do on behalf of his people. Israel never understood those symbols as well as the saints understand them today,

as they are explained in the light of the gospel. But they knew far more about God, his nature, and holiness than the Gentiles ever imagined. The Law provided a better system of preventative health care than any nation has known until this very day. The *kosher laws*, the laws with regard to what was clean or unclean, were given for the sake of the physical well-being of Israel. They would have been much healthier than other nations, if they had observed those *kosher laws*.

Ancient Israel did not know pork chops, and ham, and bacon, and sausage, are bad for high blood pressure. But God forbade them to eat pork ([Le 11:7](#)), and that ought to have been good enough. If they kept that provision of the Law, they were not as likely to die of a stroke.

There are ailments Jewish men do not have, because of circumcision. And because Jewish men are generally circumcised, there are diseases Jewish women do not have—unless, that is, they have been too friendly with a Gentile man. Even to this day Jewish people do not generally realize the medical consequences of circumcision; but they are reaping the benefits, nonetheless.

Modern science is only today catching up with a few of the medical principles of the law of Moses. Among many other things, the law of Moses provided that if you touched a dead body you were unclean ([Nu 19:16](#)). It took modern science thousands of years to learn that principle. Until just over a hundred years ago, the most dangerous place a sick person could be was in the hospital. The doctor would examine a sick person, and being too careless, or perhaps too lazy, to wash his hands he would examine the next person, and before long the next person had the same ailment as the first person.

Sometimes he would have the same ailment that killed the last person.

In Austria in the nineteenth century, there came along a doctor by the name of Ignatz Semmelweis. He had been studying the Old Testament, and based on his studies, he insisted doctors needed to wash their hands after they examined each patient. His fellow doctors appreciated his advice so much they ganged up on him, and ran him off from that hospital. But eventually he prevailed, and today doctors are very careful about washing their hands after examining patients, lest they spread disease among their patients. In this twenty first century doctors are only beginning to catch up with the medical wisdom of the Law of Moses.

The law was given as a penal system for the nation of Israel. As a system of law it provided penalties, and the penalty exactly fit the offense. God described the offence, and prescribed the penalty; so you can be sure the penalty fit the offence. The law required *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth* [Ex 21:22](#). That is bad policy when somebody takes it upon himself to

get revenge against his neighbor ([Mt 5:38](#)); but it was a perfectly sound principle when it was applied by the proper authorities.

If you hauled off and busted a man in the mouth, and knocked his tooth out, the law required that you submit to having somebody bust you in the mouth and knock your tooth out. The punishment exactly fit the offense. And it saved the expense and inconvenience of having you locked up, while your family was left to shift for themselves.

If you intentionally and maliciously knocked a man's eye out, your eye must be knocked out ([Ex 21:24](#)). If you injured a man so that he was not able to work, they did not put you in jail. You had to pay the expense of making him well, and you had to support him and his family until he was able to go back to work ([Ex 21:18-19](#)). If you murdered somebody, you paid with your life ([Ex 21:23](#)). The punishment exactly fit the offense. We could go down the entire list of offences and penalties, but the law was always the same; the punishment fit the offense.

Our laws have never been that just and that equal. I would not trade our American system of law for the system of law of any other nation on earth. But our system of law does not compare with the law God provided for Israel.

Again, the law was not sufficient to gain a home in heaven. But it was sufficient for governing that people. And if Israel had observed the provisions of the Law of Moses they would have been the wealthiest, the healthiest, the happiest, and the best cared for people on the face of the earth.

Their tax system was a beautiful arrangement; we should get off so easy. We would too, if we could weed out most of the socialism— oops —most of the social programs from our system. The Law required them to pay 10% of all they produced straight across the board ([Le 27:30](#)). Part of the support of the priesthood came from their receiving a part of the sacrifice as their portion ([Le 2:10](#)). But, for the most part, that 10% took care of everything. There are folks today who want to limit our income tax to a flat amount—a *flat tax*. But they still talk about a 17% flat tax, or something in that neighborhood. And that is just one kind of tax. We would still have a long list of other taxes.

Israel's taxes were much lighter.

The Law of Moses provided an economic system for a particular people at a particular time, and that economic system was the most nearly perfect man has ever known. I am not entirely sure it was not absolutely perfect; after all, God was its author. If there was any weakness in the law, as an economic system, the weakness was in its subjects, and not in the law itself. Men would not abide by the principles God provided.

I am not interested in changing our American economic system for the system of any other nation on earth. But as superior to other systems as ours is, it has

been imperfect from the very beginning. Every system on earth favors the rich over the poor, the privileged over the rest. Even at the outset there were men like Lord Shaftesbury and his colleagues, who owned most of North Carolina, and William Penn, who held the royal grant of Pennsylvania, and King Carter who owned a huge chunk of Virginia, and so on. They owned hundreds of thousands of acres, and other people had virtually nothing.

But America is still a place where men like Bill Gates can become absolutely rich. It is a place where Henry Ford, and John D Rockefeller, and Andrew Carnegie could start out with virtually nothing and became fabulously wealthy. So in spite of the inequities of our economic system, America still far surpasses the rest of the world.

But compared to the economic system God provided for Israel, ours is not even in the running. Let me give just a few points about the economic system God provided for Israel. We said a moment ago, God does not provide second best in anything. The Law of Moses was “not sufficient to make the comers thereunto perfect.” That is what our text says. But for the purpose for which it was intended it was totally sufficient.

To start at the beginning, when God brought Israel out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and into the land of Canaan, he divided the entire land of Canaan to Israel by lot ([Jos 13:7](#) etc.). Every man got a plot of land fully sufficient to support himself and his family. That was all any man really needed.

Everybody started out equal.

Along with the distribution of land God provided the law of the Sabbath. The two are connected. First, the law of the Sabbath provided that one day out of every seven was to be a day of rest ([Ex 20:8-11](#)). The Lord said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” [Mr 2:27](#). The Sabbath was intended to be a benefit; it was not intended to be a burden. It is a proven fact that any person is more efficient, and he can turn out more work in a six day week than he can in seven. You may think, “Now Harold Hunt, it does not make any sense to say you can turn out more work in six days than you can in seven,” but in the long run you can.

For that matter, if a person cannot make a living in six days, he might as well not try it in seven. You can work seven days a week for a little while, and turn out one sixth more work. But if you work seven days a week for very long, after awhile you will be so exhausted, you are never working at your full potential. Before long, you will turn out less work in seven days than you were in six. But if you take off one day every week to rest, you will come back refreshed and rejuvenated on Monday. At least for the first part of the week, you will have much greater potential to work than you would have otherwise.

The Sabbath Law was *a sign* between God and Israel ([Ex 31:17](#)). It is not binding on the Gentiles in the way it was binding on Israel. The fact that it was *a sign* to Israel indicates that it was *peculiar to Israel*. If it was binding on Gentiles, it would not have been a sign to Israel. But even though the law of the Sabbath is not binding on Gentiles, it is still to our benefit to set aside one day in seven for worship and rest. That was the first part of the Sabbath Law. The second part of the Sabbath Law said they should farm the land six years, and take the seventh year off ([Le 25:2-5](#)). That is where the word *sabbatical* came from. The question arises how were they going to live that seventh year if they did not put out a crop? But God is in charge; he gave the law; he knows how to take care of us if we abide by what he told us to do. He promised to cause the land to bring forth sufficient the sixth year to carry them through til the next crop. If a field had been producing 50 bushels, in the sixth year it would bring forth 100 bushels. The forty eighth year it would bring forth triple ([Le 25:20-22](#)), more about that later. They did not have to work the seventh year.

None of the most powerful labor organizers of a hundred years ago would have dared to ask for anything like that. Can you imagine the AFL-CIO going to the bargaining table, and saying, “We are not going back to work unless you agree to give us one year off out of every seven. John L. Lewis, Eugene V. Debs, and Walter Reuther, would never have dared to imply that an employer should give their labor union what God provided for Israel without being asked. He promised to make the crops produce double during the sixth year. They did not need to work the seventh year.

More than that, the Law provided that the seventh year every debt was wiped out ([De 15:1-2](#)), and, if you had been sold into slavery, the seventh year you got to go free ([De 15:12](#)). But somebody wants to know, if the Law was so great, how could it allow for slavery? First off, the law did not authorize slavery, but it did regulate it. Human nature being what it is, those with the ability to do so will always enslave others whenever they can. In Israel of old *if a person could not survive any other way*, he would sell himself into a form of temporary slavery. It was always a temporary arrangement, because the Law of the Sabbath decreed that at the end of seven years every slave must be set free. And recognizing that slavery does happen, the law regulated it. That was a compassionate arrangement compared to some of the forms of present day slavery. Consumer credit is the most common, and the most pernicious form of slavery. When they are young, ever so many people get head over heels in debt—and they are virtual slaves to their creditors for the rest of their lives.

For instance, the minimum payment on a credit card is usually 2% per month. That is all they want you to pay; the small payment is very seductive and very

effective. By the time they get you so far in debt you can only pay the minimum, they have raised your interest rate to something like 23.99%. That is mighty close to 2% per month. All you can do is pay, and pay, and pay. You are *maxed out*; so you cannot charge anything else. Your charges and fees exceed your minimum payment; so you cannot get out of debt. If you owe a credit card company so much you cannot possibly pay more than the minimum, up to the amount of that payment you are their property—their slave. That is only one of the many forms of modern day slavery.

In ancient Israel, every seven years, not only was every slave set free, every debt was cancelled, and the entire population got a fresh start.

We should have it so good. I did say this was the best economic system there has ever been. Every seven years they got the whole year off. They did not have to farm. In fact God told them not to farm. Debts were wiped out. And anybody in slavery was set free.

But it did not stop there. Every time seven of those Sabbatic years passed by (seven times seven is forty nine) God required them to take the next year, the fiftieth year, off too ([Le 25:8-11](#)). Well, what were they going to eat that fiftieth year? God promised that during the forty-eighth year he would make the land bring forth three times as much, and they would not have to work for two full years ([Le 25:20-22](#)). They could start back to work the fifty first year.

And more than that, he says that if they had sold their property, the fiftieth year they got it back—all of it ([Le 25:13](#)). On the tenth day of the seventh month of the fiftieth year, on the Day of Atonement, they were to sound the *Jubilee* ([Le 25:9-10](#)). By the way that is where that word *Jubilee* came from. He commanded them to sound the Jubilee, and “proclaim liberty throughout all the land.”

No doubt, you have heard that expression. That is the inscription on the base of the liberty bell in Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The Jubilee was a symbol of the gospel of grace. That is what the gospel is all about. We are proclaiming throughout all the land that Jesus Christ hath made us free. The Lord said in John chapter eight, “If the Son therefore shall make you free then are ye free indeed.”

When they went into the land of promise God divided the entire land to them by lot, and he provided that in the year of Jubilee, when they sounded that old ram’s horn all through the land, on that day, not only would every slave be made free, but all the land outside the cities would revert to its original owners. If you had sold a farm, you got it back. That caused real estate prices to fluctuate. The Bible said, this is the way it is supposed to be. If it is getting close to the year of Jubilee, you could not charge as much for the land, because the buyer had to give it back in the year of Jubilee ([Le 25:15-16](#)). If it

was going to be forty nine years, you could charge more. But he said, “The land shall not be sold forever, for the land is mine” ([Le 25:23](#)).

Every fiftieth years the original owners, or the heirs of the original owners got the land back. If you sold it, you got it back. If your daddy sold it, you got it back. If your great granddaddy sold it, you got it back. The Law of Moses provided for total land reform every fifty years. So every fifty years everybody goes back and gets a fresh start. There could not have been a more equal system than that was.

But wait a minute. Does that not discourage a person from trying to get ahead in the world? If he knew he had to give it all back at a particular time, what incentive did he have to accumulate anything? God made provision for that too. There was to be total land reform every fifty years—except in the cities. Inside the walled cities the law allowed the buyer to accumulate as much property as he was able to accumulate, and after allowing the original owner a year to redeem his property ([Le 25:29](#)), the new owner did not have to give it back.

In other words, he could accumulate all the property he was able to accumulate inside the city; he could become as rich as he was able to become, and he did not have to give any of it back. But outside the walled cities, every man started out equal every fifty years.

If a person was able to build and pay for a huge apartment house in a city, he could keep it in the Year of Jubilee. That is the place where you build apartment houses anyway—you do not build apartments in the country. Or if he could build several apartment houses in the city he could keep all of them. So on the one hand, it provided plenty of incentive to accumulate wealth, and also it provided total land reform every fifty years. There could never have been a more equitable arrangement.

The law took care of the poor; it took care of those we call the *middle class*; and it took care of the rich. There is nothing wrong with being rich. Most of us do not have that to look forward to; but many of the best known children of God have been very rich. Think of Abraham ([Ge 13:2](#)), and Job ([Job 1:3](#)), and Solomon ([1Ki 10:14-29](#)), and Joseph of Arimathea ([Mt 27:57-60](#)). Those were all children of God, and they were all very rich.

Any economic system must have a substantial number of rich people in order to function. If you need to buy any kind of supplies, you do not go to somebody who does not have the money to maintain an inventory. If you need a job you do not go to somebody as poor as you are and ask him for a job. If the Law had not allowed those with greater abilities to acquire wealth, the entire system would have broken down. On the other hand the law limited the ability of the rich and powerful to oppress the poor. Except for property

situated inside a walled city, the entire nation got a fresh start every fifty years.

It was the best economic system there has ever been. But there was one problem, and the problem was not with the law; the problem was with the people who were subject to that law.

You have heard the expression, “Possession is nine tenths of the law.” The rich and powerful got the idea, “I’ve got it; and I am going to keep it. If you want it, take it if you can.” So because they would not observe the Sabbath, especially that third part of the Sabbatic law—the Year of Jubilee—the land enjoyed its Sabbaths in their absence.

They refused to observe the Sabbath. They refused to allow the land to rest—to lie fallow the seventh year. And they refused to return the land to its original owners that fiftieth year. And because they would not observe the Sabbath, God removed them from the land. God warned that the land would enjoy its Sabbaths ([Le 26:34-35,43](#)). They would not allow the land to rest while they were in the land, so God caused the land to rest while they were out of the land. They would not give back what was not theirs to keep, so God took it all away.

He brought a succession of oriental kings with their armies against them. Nebuchadnezzar was the very last. He uprooted the entire nation, and carried them away to Babylon (that was the old name for Iraq). Then for 70 years the land enjoyed its Sabbaths while they were in exile in Babylon.

But it is not my intention to talk so much about what Israel threw away as it is to talk about what God provided. If Israel had taken advantage of the Law and the system of government it provided, they would have been the healthiest, the wealthiest, the happiest, and the best cared for people on the earth.

Think what it meant that Israel was to have total land reform every fifty years. In the original distribution of land every family received sufficient land to provide for their needs. There was no need for anybody to covet what belonged to somebody else. Everybody had enough. Even if, somebody lost his property, at some point in time, either he or his family got it all back. The entire nation got a fresh start every fifty years. There was no landed aristocracy with such holdings they could hold the rest of the people in perpetual bondage.

But alongside of all that, anybody with sufficient ability, and determination could accumulate all the property he was able to accumulate—inside the walled cities. There could be a wealthy minority who would be able to finance any large project the nation needed for its own welfare. They would always need somebody able fund huge projects and to manufacture such items as they could not raise on their farms. But none of that interfered with anybody

providing himself and his family with the necessities of life. Outside the cities they had total land reform.

The land was fertile. When the original twelve spies came back from spying out the land, two of them brought a cluster of grapes so large they carried it between them on a staff ([Nu 13:23](#)). It was a land with great natural defenses. There was the wilderness to the South, the desert to the East, the sea to the West, and the mountains to the North. God had provided everything they could possibly need.

More than that, think of what it meant for the land to be returned to its original owners every fifty years. If they had observed that provision, it meant there would be a total reshuffling of the population every fifty years.

Everybody who had moved away would come back home. They would all be back on *the old home place*. That meant that your nearest neighbors would be your brothers and sisters and their families. The next nearest would be your cousins and their families. Beyond them would be your next nearest kinfolks. Think of what that would have done for the social climate in Israel. People are naturally more concerned with the welfare of their families than they are of strangers. It meant that if somebody got in distress, he would be surrounded by his family. If you cannot feed yourself, you stand a much better chance if everybody living in sight of your house is a brother, sister, or cousin.

They did not have a Social Security Administration. They did not need it.

There is no real reason that as soon as a person reaches sixty five, he should quit working and start watching soap operas. When the parents got old, they were expected to continue to carry as much of their load as they were able to carry, for as long as they were able to carry it. It is not healthy to just sit down because you reach a certain age. Then when they were no longer able to take care of themselves, they were surrounded by those nearest and dearest to them. More than that, most of them had large families, fully able to see after their sick.

They did not need unemployment compensation for the same reason. There was no need to run their money through some government agency before it got back to them. Their money was not wasted on government bureaucrats. And as for Medicare, why go to the hospital to have the hospital staff to see after you, when you are totally surrounded by those who love you and are interested in your welfare.

Think what it would have meant to the moral climate of the nation if they had observed the Year of Jubilee. It is in human nature that people have more of a tendency to misbehave when they are farthest from those who know them. It would have had a restraining effect on their moral conduct to have their family living all around them.

But let me shift gears, and approach the Law from a different direction. As a system of worship the Law was far superior to the Gentile religions, but it was far inferior to the gospel day and the New Testament church.

The Law of Moses was a very complex, very complicated system. That was one reason they had so many lawyers. It was hard to keep everything sorted out. They had every kind of sacrifice imaginable. Some sacrifices had to be a male sheep ([Le 1:3](#)). Some a female ([Le 4:32](#)). With some it could be either one ([Le 3:1](#)). With some it had to be a goat ([Le 4:24](#)). With one sacrifice it had to be two goats ([Le 16:7](#)). Some sacrifices required a bullock ([Ex 29:10](#)). Some required two birds ([Le 14:4-7](#)).

Some were dried ears of corn dried by the fire ([Le 2:14](#)). One required meal baked in an oven ([Le 2:4](#)). Sometimes the sacrifice required meal baked in a pan ([Le 2:5](#)). Sometimes the meal was mixed with oil ([Le 2:5](#)). Sometimes they poured oil on top of the sacrifice ([Le 2:6](#)).

Sometimes the blood was applied to the tip of the right ear, and to the right thumb, and the great toe of the right foot ([Le 8:23](#)). Sometimes the blood was put on the four horns of the altar ([Le 4:7](#)). Sometimes they would pour out the blood at the base of the altar ([Le 4:7](#)). Some of the sacrifice was burned on the altar ([Le 1:9](#)). Some of the sacrifice was given to the priest for him to eat ([Le 2:10](#)); that was one of the ways they kept him up. And some of the sacrifice was carried outside the city and burned without the camp ([Le 4:21](#)).

It goes on and on for chapter after chapter. There were some things they could eat; some things they could not eat ([Le 11:1-23](#)). They could eat locusts (grasshoppers) ([Le 11:22](#)), but they could not eat pork chops ([Le 11:7](#)). The provisions and exclusions go on for a hundred pages or more.

In the New Testament day, there are only two ordinances: baptism ([Mt 28:19-20](#)), signifying the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and our death, burial, and resurrection with him, and the Lord's Supper ([Mt 26:26-30](#)), signifying that his broken body and shed blood are our spiritual meat and drink. And he has provided the example of footwashing ([Joh 13:1-17](#)), signifying his grand stoop of mercy, and the humble service he requires of us. Nothing could be simpler, clearer, or more effective.

The Law of Moses is not the law for America nor any other country. The oracles of God were given to Israel ([Ro 3:1-2](#)). They were not given to the Gentile nations. There were provisions of the Law that were not suited to any other nation. God never promised any other nation to divide their land to them by lot. He never promised any other nation to make the land bring forth twice as much every sixth year.

There are forces at work in America who would divorce this nation from our moral underpinnings. The Law of Moses is not the law for America, but the Founding Fathers of this nation were well acquainted with the Law of Israel,

and with Israel's God. And the moral principles that lay at the heart of Moses's law are the moral principles those Founding Fathers incorporated as the foundation of our government and our society. It is because of those underlying moral principles that our nation has stood all these years. And if our nation ever comes to ruin it will be because we have forsaken those principles.

That law said, "Thou shalt not kill." There are those who demand the right to kill their unborn babies. And it is the same people who are so insistent on their *right* to kill their own babies, who are so opposed to executing properly convicted mass murders. The law says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

There are those who want marriage to be no more than a convenience, if they even bother to get married. And it is the same people who think it is unimportant whether a man and woman get married, who insist on the *right* of a man to marry another man, or a woman to marry another woman.

The list goes on and on. The Law forbade sodomy, and there was a time when homosexuals were arrested. Now they are elected to the highest offices in the land. Israel abandoned God's law, and the entire nation was conquered, and carried into 70 years of slavery in Babylon (Iraq). America has largely abandoned God's law, and we are embroiled in a war in Babylon/Iraq. Could that portend worse things to come?

God told Israel, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" ([Isa 1:19-20](#)). For over two hundred years, America had eaten the good of the land, but that was during a time when God's law was honored and largely obeyed. Today, that law is being trampled under foot.

"If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked way, then will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and heal their land" ([2Ch 7:14](#)).

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
The Lord Is In His Holy Temple

THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE

[Hab 2:20](#), "But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."

No doubt, Habakkuk was talking about the temple at Jerusalem, when he said, "The Lord is in his holy temple." The temple at Jerusalem was his house, and that was the one place on earth, where God had promised to meet with his people. But there can also be no doubt that, by the spirit of prophecy, he was looking forward to the gospel day, and the assembly of the saints in this day.

Peter says, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,” [1Pe 2:5](#). The church is a different kind of building, a different kind of house. It is “a spiritual house, an holy priesthood.” And more than that: the church is the dwelling place of God himself.”

What a beautiful text that is in [Mt 18](#), “For where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.” That text is most often quoted as a reassurance to the children of God—when we meet in very small numbers—just “two or three” it says. And that thought is certainly in the verse. God is not bound to bless by many or by few. He can bless a small number as surely as he can bless a large crowd, and we would not minimize that aspect of the promise. How very often we have been reassured by that thought.

But, that is not the primary thought in the text. The main lesson has to do with the very nature of our assembly. Regardless of the size of the crowd, the single most important fact of our service toward God is that God personally meets with his people.

That is a fact we all know; we have made the statement a thousand times over. It is written on our memories, and we would never think to deny it, but how rarely does that fact really sink down into our hearts. When we meet in his name, the Almighty himself is one in our number.

In [Ge 28](#), we find Jacob asleep on a pillow of stone in a place called Luz. He was sleeping in the open field. He cheated his brother Esau out of his birthright; he stole his blessing, and Esau had determined that he was going to kill him. His mother Rebekah decided it would be a good time for him to flee for his life, and she suggested that he leave the country for awhile. He was on his way to Padan-Aram, to hide out with some of his mother’s kinfolks, till his brother Esau got in a better humor.

That night God appeared to him in a dream, and showed him a ladder set up on the earth. The top of it reached to heaven. The next morning when he woke up he said, “Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.” He went on to say, “How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

Imagine the thought: “Surely the Lord is in this place.” Jacob woke up to realize that he had been in the very presence of the Almighty. What a sobering thought. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.” How very often in the Lord’s house I look over the congregation—quote that verse to myself—and tremble at the thought. The very God of heaven is here in this place.

I cannot imagine a more awesome thought. The heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and yet, he condescends to meet with his people.

Astronomers boggle our minds talking about the vastness of the universe. The created universe is so large we cannot comprehend it. Miles and millions of miles are insufficient to describe it. They talk of distance in terms of *light years*. I have no idea how far a light year is. Oh, I know the formula. Light travels one hundred and eighty six thousand miles per second, and a light year is the distance light travels in a year; but that is a distance so great, that after I say it, I still cannot comprehend how far that is. But as vast as the universe is, it is still not big enough to contain God.

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.” I am sure that nearly every person who will ever read these lines can quote that text. That text is like a lot of others. We quote it, and quote it, and quote it, and we know what it says, and yet, somehow the full impact of it just passes us by. I think, sometimes, it does us well just to stop and listen to what it says. The Lord said, “Let these sayings sink down into your ears.”

Think about what that means. When God’s people meet in his name, the very Creator of the universe, condescends to meet with his children and to make his presence known.

Sometimes, somebody challenges one of our people, and wants to know, “What do you Primitive Baptists have for the young people?” Have you ever heard that question? Sure, you have. And they expect us to say, “Well, not anything especially.”

Oh, no, no, no. Let me tell you. There is only one reason anybody has ever asked that question.

The only reason anybody ever asked, “What do you have for the young people,” is because he has no idea what we have for the old folks. If he had any idea what we had for the old folks, he wouldn’t ask what we have for the young folks. We’ve got the exact same thing for the young folks we have for the old folks.

I tell you, it is offensive to our Maker for anybody to imply that is not enough.

“How dreadful is this place.” “Surely the Lord is in this place.” Think about it. In a simple building just like many others, God condescends to meet with his people. In a building made of brick, and two-by-fours, and floor joists, and rafters, and plaster, and wiring, roofing, and the like, God himself meets with us. There is no other place on earth like the assembly of the saints.

A lot of religious assemblies manage to gather a crowd on special Sundays by having a special, invited, celebrity guest. People come out on that Sunday just to see the invited guest. Well, we have in our assembly, the celebrity to end all celebrities, but he is not a guest. We are, rather, his guests. The house belongs to him. And, because it is his house, we are to be very reverent, very quiet

before him. “But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him,” [Hab 2:20](#).

But, when you use invited celebrities to draw a crowd, you have to keep inviting somebody different. No matter how famous a person may be, if he began to be there every Sunday, he would cease to draw the large crowd he drew that first time. But, not so with our Lord. So long as he meets with us, makes his presence manifest, and blesses his people, that is sufficient. And, how God does bless his people. He reaches down and picks up a little preacher boy and enables him to speak with an ability that is not his own. A God-called preacher almost never preaches on his own level. Did you ever think about it? If God blesses the preacher to preach, he lifts him up above himself, and he is able to speak with an ability that is not his own. And if God does not bless the preacher to preach, he cannot talk as well in the pulpit as he can out on the sidewalk. And, sometimes, God just shuts him up altogether. That can be mighty unnerving to the preacher. But, I would not want it any other way, would you? The scriptures say, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,” [Ps 66:18](#) . It takes more than a keen intellect, and a good memory for the preacher to preach. If his heart is not right with his Maker, the preacher is not likely to do much preaching. If the preacher becomes proud, and self-sufficient, the Lord is likely to leave him in the dark. I’m glad it’s that way. I’m glad God deals with preachers the way he does, even as unnerving as it is.

In the Song of Solomon the writer uses the sweet and tender relationship between a devoted husband and wife as an allegorical lesson to illustrate the spiritual relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ, and his bride, the church. If you do not read the Song of Solomon regularly and often, you are denying yourself one of the greatest benefits.

In that book the wife is forever talking about how very special her husband is to her. She cannot say enough good things about him. She is excited to catch just a glimpse of him. Along with many other things , she calls him, “the chiefest among ten thousand, [Song 5:10](#) . It thrills her very soul to see his face.

And on one occasion she says, “Behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice, [Song 2:9](#) . When you see somebody behind the lattice you don’t get a full view—just a glimpse. You and I have never had a full view of the Lord, just a glimpse. But that glimpse is worth all the world. I’d rather get just a fleeting glimpse of him than to be in the company of all the named celebrities this world has to offer, wouldn’t you?

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Think of what that means—to be in the very presence of God himself, and by faith to catch a glimpse of his face.

That is the one thing Adam in the Garden of Eden, and the children of Israel at the Tabernacle, and God’s children in the church, and God’s children in eternal heaven all have—in one way or the other—in common. That is the very presence of our Maker. In the very morning of time, God would come walking in the Garden in the cool of the day. Can you imagine what that must have been like? In his innocence, before sin separated him and his maker, Adam could talk with God face to face. He could enjoy the company of his Creator. But he sinned, and he lost that fellowship.

Over two thousand years later, God gave Israel the Law of Moses. One of the promises he made in that law, and, I believe, the central promise of that entire system, is found in [Ex 25:22](#), when God told Moses, “And there will I meet with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims.”

There had never been another building like the tabernacle. With all the gold, and all the silver, and all the precious wood, and cunning workmanship, it was a very expensive building. But it was not the gold, and silver, and brass, shittim wood, that made it so distinctive. The one thing that made that building different from any other building on earth was the fact that God said, “There will I meet with thee, from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims.” He had never made that promise about any other building. Then, two thousand years later, he made that same promise to his children in the church. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

There is coming a day, when the Lord will come again in the clouds of glory. He will declare that time shall be no more; he will speak the word, and he will raise our sleeping bodies out of the ground. He will bring our departed spirit with him, and raise our body out of the ground, and he will put them back together. I don’t know how he’s going to do that, but that is not part of my job description. I don’t need to know how to do it; he is not depending on me to help; he’s going to do that himself. Then he’s going to carry us away to be with him forever in the air.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are live and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord,” [1Th 4:16-17](#). That will be the great blessing of heaven—to be in the presence of God himself.

I was sitting in a restaurant one day overhearing some preachers. I knew who some of them were, but I wasn’t personally acquainted with any of them. I

don't think any of them knew who I was. But anyway, they were engaged in a profound discussion. They were discussing [1Co 2:9](#), "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

They discussed that verse, and kicked it back and forth, and back and forth, and then, in a burst of brilliance, one of them said, "You know, what it comes down to is that we don't know a thing in the world about what heaven is going to be like." I wasn't a part of that conversation and I didn't butt in, but I'd have given a nickel if they'd asked me for my input on that verse.

I acknowledge that there is a lot we do not know about that eternal city, but I wanted in the worst way to quote the next verse to them. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Paul said again, "Now we see as through a glass, darkly; but then face to face," [1Co 13:12](#). There is a world of difference between seeing through a glass darkly, and being blind.

We are not totally blind; we do see, even though it is "as through a glass darkly." There is a lot we do not know about heaven, but I believe there are some things we do know. I believe heaven is going to be a whole lot of what we get just a little of down here. I believe it will be a lot of what I can feel—about all I can stand to feel—in my heart at this very moment.

Paul the apostle said, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," [Heb 11:1](#). What we are hoping for is the manifest presence of God himself.

Faith is more than an inclination of our mind. It is the very "substance of things hoped for." It is that little part of heaven we are able to experience down here—ahead of the time. Faith is a little advance view of what is waiting after awhile.

"What do you Primitive Baptists have for the young folks?" When we do right, we have the same thing for the young folks we have for the old folks. When we do what we ought to do, we get a foretaste of heaven itself. That is why the church is so often referred to as the Kingdom of Heaven. The Lord's church, the Kingdom of Heaven, is the nearest thing to heaven that you and I will ever experience this side of heaven.

Why in the world could anybody want to know, "What do you have for the young folks? What do you have for the little people?" The same thing we have for the old folks.

Some people have the idea they need to tailor their message for the young people—get it down there where the young people can understand it. I believe the preacher should preach to the little people to start with, and if they can understand it, the old folks should not have any trouble.

But the fact is that the young folks are a lot smarter than we give them credit for. There are some ways in which we were a lot brighter when we were children than we ever have been since. I believe I can prove that to you. I am sure that every person reading these lines speaks English to one degree or another, or else you would not be reading the book. And you probably didn't have a lot of trouble learning the language. By the time you were five or six years old, you were fairly fluent.

Later in high school, some of you enrolled in Spanish, or French. Some of you older readers may have enrolled in Latin. You took the entire course; you passed mid-terms; you passed finals, and you may have taken it the second year. But, at this moment, you probably could not sit down, and read a book in that language to save your life.

Why was it so easy to learn English when you were three and four years old, but, years later, you never really got the hang of it, when you tried to learn a foreign language? I hope you will not get offended with me for saying so, but it is probably because, so far as an aptitude for learning languages is concerned, you were a lot brighter back then, when you were 4 or 5 years old than you ever have been since. And if you want to prove me wrong, why not start today to master a new language, and in two or three years from now you tell me, "Brother Hunt, I disproved that. I speak French, or Spanish, or Swahili, as well as I speak English, and it just took me two years to learn it. I learned it as easily as I learned English." It doesn't work that way. Those little fellows are a lot brighter than we give them credit for being.

Somebody says, "Brother Hunt, we need to tailor our message for them, because they have such a short attention span." Well, the old folks have a short attention span, a lot of the time, too. Sometimes, the old folks will be sitting in the congregation, looking the preacher in the eye, and planning what they are going to do on the job tomorrow, or reviewing what they did yesterday. That is no reflection of anybody; sometimes, we just have a problem listening.

A lot of the time when you think those little fellows are not listening, they are hearing more than you think they are. They do that at home. Sometimes, when they get out in public, they repeat what they heard at home. You did not think they heard, and you would prefer they did not repeat it, but they do. They are brighter than you may think, and they hear more than you think they do.

"What do you have for the young folks?" Same things we have for the old folks. We have a touch of heaven—we have the manifest presence of our Maker, when we do right, walk right, meet at God's house, and do what we ought to do. Who would dare suggest that is not enough?

We don't need any new projects. We don't need any new ideas imposed on the Lord's house. The thing we do need is to do better what we already know we ought to be doing.

God told Solomon, "If my people which are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked way, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin, and heal their land," [2Ch 7:14](#). That is the one thing we need more than anything else. That would solve our problems.

When God's people humble ourselves, and pray, and turn from all those things we have been doing wrong, and assemble at the Lord's house, mourning and grieving over our spiritual condition, and praying that God would look down and bless us, and send revival in Zion, God does bless his people.

Even then he takes his own time and blesses in his own way. You cannot hold God to your schedule. You cannot say, "Now, Lord, we have met the conditions, where is our blessing? Where is the revival?" It doesn't work that way.

You cannot hold God to a schedule, and you cannot hold him to a formula. You cannot tell him, "Lord, we have gone by the numbers: 1-2-3-4-5; we have met all the conditions; now, it is time for you to keep your end of the bargain." God sends revival, when we repent, and pray, and seek his face; but he sends revival in his own time and way.

God is sovereign in all he does. He is sovereign in his dealings with his people. He is sovereign in the way he deals with the church, and he is sovereign in the way he deals with the preacher.

Sometimes the preacher studies and prays and prepares, and he goes to the pulpit, and he preaches well enough. But, sometimes he studies and prays, and it seems that he's done everything he ought to do. He cannot think of anything he should have done that he did not do. But he goes to the pulpit, and there's no preaching in him. Not a bit. He just can't preach. Sometimes he can't even recite his lesson.

And sometimes, he goes to church, and he has not done what he should have done. He has not prayed as he should have. He has not studied as he should have. He is not in the proper frame of mind, and still the Lord blesses him to preach. There is no cut and dried formula. You cannot hold God to a formula. But, in his own due time, and in his own good way, he blesses his people.

"If my people, which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked way, then will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and heal their land." God is not at our beck and call. We cannot turn him on and off like a light switch, but when we repent, and pray, and turn from the error of our way, he does hear and bless.

We have the blessings of God's Spirit today, in a manner that they did not have it in the Old Testament day. That is not to say that they did not have the blessings of the spirit. God did bless them with his Spirit, but they did not have the blessings of the spirit, in the abundant manner, in which God's children have those blessings in the gospel day.

That's what the Lord meant when he said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter," [Joh 14:16](#). He has given the Spirit in a more abundant manner in this day, than he did in that day. They were born again in exactly the same way that we are today, but they did not have that more abundant witness of the Spirit.

Their worship, in that day, revolved around the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was a fairly small building. It was only 10 cubits (that is about 15 feet) wide. And it was 30 cubits long; that is about 45 feet long. Nobody knows exactly how long a cubit was, but it is generally agreed that a cubit was about 18 to 20 inches. It was divided into two parts. There was the outer part, the Holy Place, which was 10 cubits by 20 cubits; that's 15 x 30 feet. And, then, there was the Holy of Holies. It was 10 cubits, by 10 cubits, by 10 cubits.

It was in the Holy of Holies that God said, "And there will I meet with thee;" but we will get back to that.

The walls of the Tabernacle were made of huge boards, 1½ cubits wide and 10 cubits long. That is about 27 inches wide, and 15 feet long. That is a mighty big board. They were made of shittim wood, and they were gold-plated.

And it had a solid silver foundation made of huge blocks of silver. There were *two sockets* in each block of silver, and *two tenons* in the end of each board. The tenons fit into the silver sockets, and held those huge shittim wood boards upright and in place. The Bible doesn't tell how thick those boards were, but for them to be thick enough not to twist and buckle in the desert heat, they must have been fairly thick. A silver block, big enough to provide a foundation for a board 15 feet long, and 27 inches wide, is a mighty big block of silver.

The shittim wood boards stood upright in the silver sockets. There were huge golden rings in the shittim wood boards. And God commanded them to make long shafts, or rods, of gold plated shittim wood, to run through those rings and hold them in place.

The Tabernacle was constructed so they could put it up, and take it down, and move it from place to place.

Over the very end of the Tabernacle there was an opening, and it was covered with a huge drapery called a *veil*. It was 15 feet tall, and 15 feet wide. That was where the priests went into the Tabernacle. Between the Holy Place and

the Holy of Holies there was another *veil*. It separated between those two parts of the Tabernacle.

There were no windows in the Tabernacle; so there was no light that came in from the outside, except when they moved the veil back, just long enough to pass inside, and then it would close again. The only light in the Tabernacle was the light of the candlestick. There is a lesson in that. The Tabernacle was a figure of the church, and in the church, we do not need light from the outside world. We don't need the world's instruction. God's light is all the light we need.

Then, there was the seven pronged Candlestick. Seven is a complete number. It gave all the light they needed.

At the far end of the Holy Place was the *second veil*, and then beyond that *second veil* was the Holy of Holies. It was 15 feet wide, and 15 feet long, and 15 feet tall. Inside the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant. It was made of gold plated shittim wood, and covered with the solid gold Mercy Seat. The Cherubims were over the Mercy Seat.

It was at this point that God said, "AND THERE WILL I MEET WITH THEE, from above the mercy seat, from between the cherubims," [Ex 25:22](#). Only the priests could go into the Holy Place, and only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies.

In the courtyard, outside the building of the Tabernacle, there was the Laver. It was made of brass, and it provided a place for the priests to wash their hands and their feet.

Between the gate of the Tabernacle and the Laver, there was the huge brazen altar. It was 5 cubits, or 7½ feet long, and 7½ feet wide, and 4½ feet tall. At the dedication of the Tabernacle, God sent fire out from his presence in the Holy of Holies—from that spot above the Mercy Seat and between the Cherubims where he had promised to meet with Israel—and ignited the fire on the Brazen Altar. The fire consumed the offering. That fire was to be kept "ever burning upon the altar," [Le 6:18](#). They were never to let it go out. That was the fire they were to offer on the smaller Altar of Incense inside the Tabernacle.

The Altar of Incense was 1 cubit (about 18 inches) wide, and 1 cubit long, and twice that tall (about 36 inches tall). They were to offer on that altar, the fire God had ignited on the Brazen Altar outside.

But the Tabernacle had hardly been dedicated, when two of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu became complacent, or perhaps, they really became rebellious. Anyway, they got the idea that one fire was as good as another, and they brought strange fire into the Tabernacle. Bear in mind that the Altar of Incense stood right up against the Second Veil, and just beyond that veil is

the one spot on earth that God had promised, “And there will I meet with thee....”

These two sons of the high priest brought strange fire right into the very presence of God. Only the Second Veil, only this heavy drapery, separated between them and the presence of God. In open defiance of the commandment of God, they brought strange fire right up into the face of God, within just a few feet of the ark of the covenant, and they put that strange fire on his altar.

It was from behind that Second Veil that fire had proceeded to consume the sacrifice on the Brazen Altar outside. And, again, the same fire came from behind the same veil, from the presence of the Lord, and this time it consumed those two rebellious men on the spot. Anybody who, in open defiance of God, could bring strange fire into the Tabernacle—into the very presence of God himself—is just not afraid of God.

There is an expression that has become quite common in recent years. We often hear the expression, “in your face.” The expression indicates arrogance; it indicates disrespect; it indicates a lack of interest in getting along. The message it sends is, “There, I did it; now what are you going to do about it.” It is only a few verses before this incident that we read of God’s sending fire from behind that veil to consume the sacrifice on the Brazen Altar outside. Now, Nadab and Abihu bring strange fire and offer it on the Altar of Incense—just a few short feet from the very presence of God. It is as if they were saying to God, “There, we did it.....” They were very soon to discover what God would do about it. Fire came from just behind that veil and consumed them on the spot. God will not tolerate strange fire on his altar. Somebody wonders, “Why don’t you Primitive Baptists try this project? Why don’t you try that project? Why don’t you try something else.” The denominational world has a way of challenging our Primitive Baptist people as if we were, somehow, behind the times, because we are not interested in many of the activities that are so common in the religious world.

One of the reasons we don’t engage in those kinds of activities is that we are afraid to. In this age, the Lord’s church has that one place on earth where God has promised his people, “And there will I meet with thee.” Today, not even the second veil separates between God’s children and his manifest presence. When the Lord was dying on the cross, “He cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost, and, behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom,” [Mt 27:50-51](#).

Today, even the veil has been removed, and we assemble in the very presence of the Almighty; he is in our very midst. He says, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” With his

manifest presence in our very midst, we don't dare to bring strange fire and offer it on his altar.

There is an idea quite common in religious circles, that what is needed is to come up some new project, some new campaign, and you can breathe new life into your church.

If anyone has that idea, he is not afraid of God. That is what it comes down to. That's the only way I know to say it. He is just not afraid of God. I love him; I trust him; I believe him, but can I tell you right now; I am afraid of him.

I recall another time when the tabernacle and its furnishings had become separated. That happened very often during the time of the kings. At one point, the Ark of the Covenant was in the home of a man named Abinadab. The Lord had blessed the family of Abinadab, because of the presence of the ark in his home. Finally, David determined to bring the Ark of God from the home of Abinadab up to Jerusalem.

Uzzah and Ahio, the two sons of Abinadab, took on the job. They set the Ark on an ox-drawn cart, and they started on their way. God had provided a special way for the Ark to be moved from one place to another. He intended for the Ark to be handled very carefully—very reverently. There were huge gold rings in the corners of the ark, and there were long, gold plated, shittim wood staves to run through those rings. They could put those long staves on their shoulders, and they could move the Ark without actually touching it. Being made of those huge, gold plated boards of shittim wood, the Ark must have been enormously heavy, and it must have been hard on their shoulders. Later on, when they got around to moving the Ark the way God had instructed, every time they walked six paces, they would put it down. They would move the Ark 6 paces, put it down, and offer a sacrifice, move 6 more paces, put it down, and make another sacrifice. But Uzzah and Ahio found a better way.

Actually, Uzzah and Ahio had no business moving the Ark in the first place. That was the job of the Levites; nobody else was supposed to touch it. Ahiah and Uzzah were of the tribe of Judah. They didn't have any business moving it in any manner, either in a cart, or on their shoulders, or any other way. It was the place of the Levites to move the ark from one place to another. But these men of the tribe of Judah figured they could do just as good a job as the Levites could, regardless of God's commandment. So they put the Ark in a cart. Somebody is forever trying to put wheels under the Lord's church. It was too much drudgery to do it God's way. So they streamlined it; they made a cart; they put wheels under it, and they started jolting along on their way. But our plans never go as well as we expect them to. The oxen shook the cart.

“Uzzah put forth his hand to the Ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.” What Uzzah did seemed so innocent; he was concerned when the oxen shook the Ark, and he wanted to keep it from falling. But Uzzah was on shaky ground from the time he put the Ark of God on a cart. In our folly, we may not realize it at the time, but it is the height of arrogance for anyone to imagine he can improve on God’s work.

I am afraid to lay hands on God’s work. Uzzah should have known better. He and his brother had no business moving the Ark to start with, much less putting hands on it. But he did put his hands on it, “and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God,” [2Sa 6:7](#).

When people get the idea they can figure out new methods, new projects, and new programs, to help the Lord along, they really don’t trust the Lord to do what he has promised to do. God has promised to bless his people when we follow him, and he will be faithful to his promise. He always has been.

God promised, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked way, then will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and heal their land,” [2Ch 7:14](#).

That is what we need. We don’t need new projects, and new campaigns. The one thing we need more than anything else is to humble our selves before our Maker, turn from our rebellious ways, and pray. If the members of our churches all over the country would, from the very depths of our hearts, do what is required in that verse—in God’s own time—we would receive the revival we need.

It was the question of all those extra activities in the church, that, many years ago, when I was a teenager, started me looking for the Old Baptist Church. I didn’t know there was such a church in the world. I had never heard of it. But I remember looking around at some of the things involved in religion—Sunday Schools, Training Unions, Vacation Bible Schools and the like, and I wondered why could I not find anything in the Bible about Sunday Schools? Did the apostles have Sunday Schools? Did they have Training Unions? Vacation Bible schools? Church sponsored ball teams? Church sponsored Boy Scout Troops?

I wondered: if those activities are a benefit to the church, why did the apostles not have them?

And I remember—for one a brief moment—I thought, “I’m going to start me a church, and not have anything in it, except what I find in the New Testament.” I meant well. But that thought had a dull ring to it.

But, somebody might say, “Harold Hunt, what’s wrong with that: starting a church with nothing in it, except those things the Bible provides.” What was wrong with it is this: God did not call me to start a church. He set up his own

church, and he told me, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God.” He says, “I have a church in the world; you find my church.” It took me a while to find it, but, I believe it was by the providence of God that after awhile I did find it. But, do you see? It wasn’t my job to start a church. It was my job to find the Lord’s church.

Let me make one statement, before I say anything else. There’s nothing wrong with Boy Scout troops, and Little League ball teams, and most of those other activities churches get involved in. They just don’t have any business being connected with the church. Young people need recreation; they need Boy Scout troops, and ball teams, and the like, and anybody who has the aptitude, and the disposition to be involved in those kinds of activity can perform a great service to the young people in his area. But we misrepresent the church, and we mistreat those young people, when we pretend those kinds of activities have something to do with the Lord’s church.

And, we certainly mistreat them, when we substitute fun and games for the most profound, and uplifting experience that has ever been available to poor sinners of Adam’s race— when we substitute fun and games in the place of worshiping God, according to his instructions, and enjoying his manifest presence in our midst.

Somebody says, “But, Brother Hunt, don’t you know you can use fun and games to get young people interested in the church.” But, that is not right. The only thing you can use fun and games to get anybody interested in is fun and games. If you set up a program of fun and games, you will get people interested in fun and games. It just doesn’t work. Fun and games does not get people interested in the church. It rather directs them away from the church. It leads to them to believe the church is something totally different to what it really is.

It takes that grand experience of communion between God and his people, and makes it just another form of entertainment.

But, for the sake of argument, let’s suppose it did work. Suppose you can use fun and games to get somebody interested in the church. If you will stop and think, you will remember that in the business world, there are laws against that. It’s called *bait and switch*. Did you ever hear of it? Sure you have.

Sometimes a business will advertise one product, and deliver another. Some businesses have done that for years, and finally the various states legislatures passed laws against it.

That is what much of religion is all about. They promise fun and games--and deliver religion. So, even if it did work, you ought not to do it. You ought not to do anything in the church, that would be unethical if it was done in a business setting.

“How dreadful is this place....This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.....surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not,” [Ge 28:17,16](#). “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” [Mt 18:20](#).

For the God of heaven, to speak to such sinners as you and I are, and promise to actually meet with us, to make his presence manifestly felt among us, is the most awesome thought I can imagine. And for anybody to take that experience—which is the nearest thing to heaven, that you and I will ever experience this side of heaven—and equate it with fun and games is just not the thing God-fearing people ought to do. I cannot think of anything that so cheapens the Lord’s church the way that does.

Fun and games is not the thing we need. The thing we need is to seek God’s face, turn from the error of our way, quit those things we have been doing wrong, repent of our sins, and beg God for forgiveness—and expect the blessings of God’s Spirit in return.

The one thing there is the greatest need for, and the least evidence of, is for humble, heart-broken sinners to meet at God’s house, praising him, and especially, pleading with him for forgiveness, and for heart-felt blessing. Somebody may object that we do not have that great a need for repentance—we do not have such sin in our lives, that such repentance is necessary or appropriate. Anybody who thinks that way has simply become hardened to his own sin. He needs, first off, to beg God to soften his heart, which has become so hardened to sin, that he cannot see himself as the sinner that he is—and that we all are.

David said, “Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity,” [Ps 39:5](#) . Isaiah told us, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” [Isa 64:6](#) . Even with the best of us, our lives are tainted with sin; we fall far short of the goal. If we would enjoy the blessings of God, it behooves us that we spend our lives, confessing that we are sinners, undeserving of any good thing, and begging God for mercy.

It is a strange paradox, that those, who show the greatest evidence of repentance, are usually those, who seem to have the least need for it; and those, who show the least evidence of repentance, are usually those, who seem to have the greatest need for it.

The more closely we follow the Lord, the more keenly aware we are of our own sinful nature; and the more distant we are from him, the less we realize that we fall so far short of his righteous requirements.

Let all of us—sinners that we are—meet with one another, as humble, heart-broken beggars at God’s throne. Let us repent of our sins, and beg God for mercy. And let us see if God will not “open you the windows of heaven, and

pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it,”
[Mal 3:10](#).

“When I was in school, every now and then, the teacher would say, “Everybody just be quiet and listen.” Habakkuk tells us, “But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him,” [Hab 2:20](#). That is what the prophet is saying. He’s saying that God is in his holy temple, everybody should be quiet and just listen.

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him,” [Mt 17:1-5](#).

You talk about somebody getting his comeuppance. Peter seemed to always have something to say, whether he knew what he was talking about or not. But this time, God spoke from heaven, and told him that this was not a time to talk; this was a time to listen. When God speaks, it behooves us to listen.

“But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.” If you had a child who was making total shipwreck of his life, if he was behaving in a terrible manner, keeping bad company, and staying out to all hours of the night, what would you do?

Would you not stain your pillow every night, crying, begging, pleading with God? Would you not beg, “God, look down on that boy. Show him the error of her way; lead him to repentance, Lord.” Would you not go to sleep, night after night, praying that prayer?

By and large, our churches are not enjoying the attendance we were, just a few years ago. We are not having as many people to join the church. It is not at all uncommon to hear of a church closing its doors for good. For the most part, we are not enjoying as spiritual meetings as we once did. Of course, there are exceptions to that rule. There will always be pockets of blessings, but, by and large, our membership is not as large as it used to be, and we are not having as spiritual services as we once had.

That ought to be a cause of great concern to every one of us; but, I wonder, how many of us went to sleep last night, earnestly agonizing with God, earnestly praying that God would send repentance and revival in Zion. The prophet tells us that it was as soon as Zion travailed, that “she brought forth her children,” [Isa 66:8](#). God has not given up on his church; he is not going to

give up on his church. When we follow the God-given pattern, God hears our prayers, and he blesses his people.

If we would enjoy his manifest presence among us, let us follow his instructions. “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and heal their land.”

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
The Mother Of Our Lord

THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD

No two people ever enjoyed a closer, more tender, mother-and-child relationship than the Lord Jesus did with his mother Mary.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in human flesh. He is the very God of the universe. It was he who created all things by the word of his power, and who continues to maintain and uphold all things by that same power. Every plant, every flower, every star in the heavens, owes its existence to him. All things were created for him, and by him.

But while all that is true, we must never lose sight of the fact that he became man. He continued to be what he had always been; he continued to be God. And he took upon him what he had not previously had; he took on him a human nature. And in that human nature he enjoyed a special, and unique relationship with his mother.

Those who worship Mary are wrong. She was not the mother of his divine nature; she was not, as they say, *the mother of God*. In his divine nature he does not have a mother; he is self-existent and eternal. But she was the mother of his human nature. It is in that relationship that the Bible repeatedly refers to her as his mother.

It is wrong to worship Mary, and refer to her as *the mother of God*. Mary would be the very first to discourage any such language. But, while we would never, for a moment, consider worshipping Mary, we do revere her memory for who she was, and what she did for our Lord. No one ever did for our Lord what she did.

The Lord does not need us—none of us. He created the universe without our help, and he sustains it and upholds it without our assistance. If there was any job God could not do without our help, he would still be just as helpless, no matter how we might try to assist. Can you imagine any poor mortal trying to help God to hold the moon in its orbit, or turn the earth on its axis.

But there was a time when he needed his mother. He was conceived in her womb by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. She carried him, and delivered him after the usual nine months. She nursed him and fed him. She

cared for him and saw after him. She picked him up when he fell and barked his knees. She changed his diaper when he needed it. Bear in mind that, even though he was God manifest in human flesh, he was as fully human as any of us.

How very tender and gentle Mary must have been with the baby Jesus. How watchful she must have been all the time he was growing up. My heart is stirred when I think all she did for him.

In all of human literature there is no more tender and touching story than the story of the love of Mary for her son, and the love of the Lord Jesus for his mother. That love continued to be manifest until that final moment on the cross when he “bowed his head and gave up the ghost,” [Joh 19:30](#).

Luke tells about the day when the Lord revealed to Mary that she was to be the mother of her Lord. “And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women,” [Lu 1:26-28](#).

No other woman was ever so blessed as Mary was; no other woman was blessed to be the mother of our Lord. No other woman had the same relationship with him that she had.

He was conceived in her womb by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. She delivered him after the usual nine months. How very tender and gentle she must have been. She nursed him and fed him and cared for him. She picked him up when he needed attention, and she changed his diaper when he needed it. No one ever saw after him or cared for him in quite the way she did.

There is much to be learned from the relationship between Jesus and Mary, and there is also much to be learned from his relationship with the rest of his natural family—his natural brothers and sisters. Bear in mind that they were only his half-brothers and half-sisters. The Lord was virgin born; he had no full brothers and sisters.

But after the Lord was born, Mary and Joseph had several other children, conceived and born in the usual manner. He had four brothers: James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas ([Mt 13:55](#)), and we hear of *all* his sisters ([Mt 13:56](#)). *All* requires at least three; so there were, at least, seven other children in the family.

In his human nature the Lord grew up in that family, and he had the usual family relationship with them. That relationship was not always what you might expect it to have been.

At first glance, the Bible does not seem to tell us much about Mary’s husband, Joseph; but when go back and read again, we discover that the Bible provides

a wealth of information about him. The Bible just does not require as long to tell anything as we do. God can provide an abundance of instruction in a very few words.

Joseph was not the actual and physical father of our Lord; the Lord was virgin born. The Bible simply refers to him as “the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ,” [Mt 1:16](#).

But, even though Joseph was only legally, and not physically, the father of the Lord, still, in talking to Jesus, Mary refers to Joseph as *thy father* ([Lu 2:48](#)). He was due the respect, and Jesus gave him the respect, that was due a father. We read that Jesus “went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them,” to Mary and Joseph. Even though he is the very God of the universe, still, as he was growing up in his human nature, he was as obedient to his parents as any little boy ever was.

And even though James, and Joses, and Simon and Judas, were only the half-brothers of the Lord, the Bible refers to them as his *brethren* ([Joh 7:5](#); [Ga 1:19](#)), without always spelling out the way in which they were his brothers. God leaves it to us to do some digging on our own. And since the Bible refers to them simply as his brethren, without stopping to give a long detailed explanation, I think it is proper that we just go ahead and refer to them the way the Bible does.

God dispatched the angel Gabriel to Galilee to a virgin called Mary and announced to her, “Blessed art thou among women” [Lu 1:28](#). Mary was the most blessed of all women; no other woman was blessed to be the mother of our Lord. No other woman had that special mother-and-child relationship she had with her Lord. There were special, tender, moments she was blessed to have with him that no one else ever had— not in that way.

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, she lived in Nazareth. That was one of the worst of all cities. Nazareth had such a bad reputation that people had the idea that if you lived there you must be bad too. You remember that when Philip went to Nathaniel and told him he had found the Christ, Nathaniel’s immediate reply was, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” [Joh 1:46](#). In other words, “Is there anybody in Nazareth you and I would want to be associated with?”

But there was at least one virtuous woman—and one honorable man—in the city of Nazareth. Joseph was fully as honorable a person as Mary was. They were sinners of Adam’s race—sinners in need of a Savior—just as surely as we all are. But they were good and honorable people, as honorable as mortals ever are. God would send his Son into this sinful world to save his people from their sins; but he would provide a chaste and pure home environment in which for him to grow up. He would send him into a wicked and sinful world,

but he would not thrust him, as a tiny infant, into a vile and impure home. He would provide him with good and honorable parents.

“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his father David,” [Lu 1:30-32](#).

The angel announced to her that this holy thing that should be born of her would be *the Son of the Highest*, that it would be the Son of God, and he would occupy *the throne of his father David*.

Four thousand years before—on the very heels of the fall— God prophesied of the coming Messiah. He said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,” [Ge 3:15](#) . Now, that prophecy is ready to be fulfilled. God is always faithful to his word. The child Mary was to bring into the world was to be the very Son of God.

Can you imagine how this young Jewish maiden must have felt when this announcement was made? She wanted to know, “How can this be, seeing I know not a man?” How could she deliver a baby, when she had never been with a man? “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall overshadow thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,” [Lu 1:34-35](#).

That very first prophecy of the Messiah foretold that he would be virgin born, that he would be *the seed of the woman* ([Ge 3:15](#)). In the history of the world, every child that has ever been born has been the seed of the man—every child except this one. This child was the seed of the woman; he was virgin born.

It seemed the people had forgotten that the Messiah was to be virgin born, because virtually every expectant Jewish mother for hundreds of years had hoped that this next child of hers would be the expected Messiah. But the prophecy was clear enough, he would be *the seed of the woman*.

When Mary heard what the angel had to say, she did not argue. She said, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” ([Lu 1:38](#)). Consider how brave a statement this was. This placed Mary at great risk. She was espoused to Joseph, but this was not his child. How could she ever explain this to anybody? Most of all, how could she ever explain it to Joseph? Joseph knew this was not his child.

[Mt 1:18-19](#), “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise; When his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just

man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.”

Joseph was a good and honorable man. Perhaps, before he found Mary, he had almost despaired of ever finding a virtuous woman in the wicked city of Nazareth. It appeared there was no one in this immoral city he would want for his wife. Now he had found this sweet and pure and virtuous woman. They were espoused to be married, and he was looking forward to a long and happy life with her. He believed he had found as pure and innocent a person as there was anywhere in the world.

But now she has gone away into the hill country, and visited her cousin Elizabeth. She stayed with Elizabeth for three months, and when she comes back, Joseph discovers that she is with child. It appears that this girl he thought was the purest person he ever knew is not what he thought at all. Joseph must have been absolutely devastated.

Can you imagine the state of mind Joseph was in. How could anybody explain this to Joseph? How could Mary explain it to him? How could she explain it to anybody? The child was to be virgin born, but in the history of the world no child had ever been virgin born, and no child would ever be born that way again. How could she ever explain this, so that Joseph would understand?

When Mary submitted to the announcement of the angel, she placed everything at risk. All her hopes and plans for the future were in the balance. It certainly placed her marriage at risk.

When you can't help yourself, God can still help. When you can't help yourself, God comes to your rescue.

Mary was Joseph's espoused wife. There was some difference between a Jewish marriage and our present day marriages. A Jewish espousal somewhat corresponds to our present day engagements, but it was much stronger than that. After the espousal, the husband would go away for a time, prepare a home, perhaps build a house, and later come back to claim his bride. But even though the husband had not yet claimed his bride, he was referred to as her husband, and she was referred to as his wife. So the arrangement was much more formal, and binding, than modern engagements.

Joseph was a righteous man; he thought he had found a righteous person to be his wife. Now it looked like she was not at all what he thought. If Mary was as immoral as it was beginning to look like she was, there was no way he could marry her. But confused and bewildered as he was, he still loved her. He was more disappointed than he could ever tell, but he would not raise his hand to harm her.

He had every right to take action. If a man was espoused to be married to a woman, and he found her not to be a virgin, the law allowed him to bring her

to the door of her father's house, place the charge against her, and if the tokens of her virginity could not be provided, he could deliver her to the men of the city to be stoned ([De 22:20-21](#)). When Mary submitted to that announcement, she was placing herself in danger for her very life.

But there was no way Joseph would do any such thing. He was “not willing to make her a public example,” [Mt 1:19](#). He was *not willing*; he would have no part of it. He would not raise his hand to harm her.

He would not marry her, but, he would not *make her a public example*, either. He would instead *put her away privily*— quietly. He would end it all without saying anything to anybody. He was absolutely devastated, but he still loved her.

“But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost, [Mt 1:20](#). While he thought on these things? His entire world was in turmoil; it is unlikely he could think about anything else.

But at that very moment God sends an angel to let him know there is no other man involved. Mary is every bit as pure, every bit as innocent, as he ever imagined she was. Far from being an immoral, unprincipled person, she is the most blessed woman of all time.

“Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child,” [Mt 1:20-23](#).

God sent an angel to tell Joseph that, even though Mary is with child, she is still a virgin. She is just as pure as Joseph ever imagined she was. “Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife. And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son, and he called his name Jesus,” [Mt 1:23-25](#).

If ever anybody acted on simple child-like faith, Joseph did. All he had to go on was what Mary, and the angel, told him., and what they told him, was an absolutely preposterous story. Nothing like this had ever happened before, but he believed it. He believed that what Mary and the angel had told him was true, and he believed that this child was, indeed, to be God manifest in human flesh. Because he believed God—because he believed that this was the very truth of God himself—he claimed Mary to be his wife.

We are told that he “knew her not till she had brought forth her first born son” ([Mt 1:25](#)). They lived in the same home, under the same roof, but they did not avail themselves of the other benefits of marriage; they did not share the marriage bed. They were husband and wife; they had every moral right. There was nothing to prevent them from enjoying every benefit of the marriage union. But the prophecy had said the child would be *the seed of the woman*. He was to be virgin born; and they would respect that prophecy. What restraint they demonstrated; what strength of character. There was never a child born into a more healthy, moral family environment than was the Lord Jesus Christ.

In [Lu 2](#), we read that Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth. The time was drawing closer and closer when the child was to be born. But Micah had prophesied hundreds of years before that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting,” [Mic 5:2](#). The time kept drawing closer and closer. It looked like the Messiah was going to be born in the wrong city, and at that time Mary was in no condition to travel, not to Bethlehem, nor anywhere else. Then, from hundreds of miles away, the Roman Emperor issued a decree that “all the world should be taxed,” [Lu 2:1](#). More than that, he required that everyone should go to his original birthplace to pay his taxes.

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered,” [Lu 2:4-6](#).

I am sure you remember the story of how, that night, God sent “a multitude of the heavenly host” to a few shepherds out on a hillside to announce the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is fascinating to me that God passed by the religious leaders of that day. He passed by the priests, and the scribes, and the Levites. He passed by the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. He passed by the entire religious establishment, the aristocracy of that day. And he announced the birth of the Savior to a few shepherds out on a lonely hill side. This was the most momentous event in the history of the world, up until that time, and he broke the news to shepherds—ordinary laborers.

That tells us a lot about the nature of this kingdom he came to set up. In his kingdom, rank, and status, and privilege are unimportant. He would be scorned and rejected by the religious establishment, rejected by those who

should have been the first to recognize him. But these humble shepherds went immediately to “see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us” ([Lu 2:15](#)). The angel told them this child was “Christ the Lord,” and that he was born a Savior. He told them the news of his birth was “good tidings of great joy,” not just for a privileged few, but “for all people.” He was to bring peace on earth, and “good will toward men,” ([Lu 2:10-11,14](#)).

“And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child” ([Lu 2:17](#)). Others might scoff and ridicule, but these humble shepherds could not wait to tell the story.

“But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart,” [Lu 2:19](#). If there was ever any doubt in anybody’s mind; if there was ever any lingering doubt even in the mind of Joseph, there was never any doubt in the mind of Mary. This was the most special of all children.

It appears that Mary and Joseph stayed in Bethlehem for six weeks or more after the Lord was born. We read in [Lu 2:22](#), that, “When the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.” According to Leviticus chapter twelve, that was to take place when the child was six weeks old.

It was about five miles from Bethlehem to Jerusalem; it was closer to seventy miles to Nazareth. It is hard to imagine that, in her condition, having just given birth to a baby, Mary and Joseph would have traveled seventy miles to Nazareth, only to travel another seventy miles, when the child was six weeks old to present him to the Lord in the temple. It is unlikely they would have done that, considering they were very nearly in Jerusalem, when the child was born. Under the best of circumstances, travel was not easy in those days. It made more sense for them to stay in Bethlehem, until she was better able to travel, and after the child had been presented at the Temple.

It was when they took the Lord to be dedicated at the temple, that Simeon made that beautiful prophecy. “And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel,” [Lu 2:25-32](#).

It had only been six weeks since the Lord was born, six weeks since the shepherds came telling of the great display they had seen in the heavens. Mary still “kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart” ([Lu 2:19](#)). Now this venerable old saint holds her baby in his arms, and makes this profound statement. No wonder “Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him,” ([Lu 2:33](#)). How could these two humble, and God-fearing people take it all in?

How tenderly this little Jewish maiden must have handled the Christ child, when Simeon finally handed him back. How moved she must have been she looked down at his tiny face, and tried to realize how special he was.

But that was not all Simeon had to say. “And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed,” [Lu 2:34-35](#). It would be another thirty-three years before Mary understood the full import of that last expression. As she stood in Pilate’s Hall and saw her son presented to that murderous crowd. There can be no doubt that a sword did, indeed, pierce her very soul as she heard that crowd shouting, “Crucify him, crucify him,”—kill him, kill him.

He was born a Savior ([Lu 2:11](#)). He is our Savior, and he was Mary’s Savior, her creator, and her Lord. But, to Mary, so long as he was here on earth, in a human body, he would always be her little boy. She would always hold him in her heart. She would always remember him as he grew from a little boy. How that good woman must have suffered on that day.

As soon as they had performed all the law required of them, they returned to Nazareth. “And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth,” ([Lu 2:39](#)). It was his mission to fulfill the law on our behalf. He would fulfill every requirement of both the moral law and the ceremonial law. With regard to the ceremonial law, God provided Mary and Joseph to perform what he was not yet able—in his humanity—to do. They saw to it that he was circumcised on the eighth day ([Lu 2:21](#)), and presented at the Temple on the forty-first day ([Le 12:2-3](#); [Lu 2:22-39](#)). As soon as that was accomplished, they returned to Nazareth.

After they went back to Nazareth then, after a period of time there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him. Some people imagine that the wise men and the shepherd both came there that night. They didn’t do that. You can read the Bible, it is as clear as it can be. The shepherds found him wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. The wise found him in a house in Nazareth.

Let me prove it to you that they didn't come at the same time. You remember after he was presented at the temple they went back to Nazareth. According to [Le 12](#), this presentation at the Temple had to happen after the fortieth day, or at least on the fortieth day. As soon as the wise men left, that very night they left and went into Egypt. That had to be when he was at least six weeks old. The nativity scene, never did happen. The shepherds and the wise men came at two different times. The shepherds came at one time and the wise men came six weeks later and found him in a house.

Somebody says there is a contradiction. One says he was in a manger, one says he was in a house. The difference was that there were two different visits, at two different locations. But the point I am getting at is this: God was about to tell Joseph to take the young child and Mary, his mother and go into Egypt.. Did you ever notice how it always puts the child first? "Take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt; and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." [Mt 2:13](#). Joseph didn't have enough money to go to Egypt. Joseph was flat broke. Somebody says, Brother Hunt, how do you know that? Does the Bible say that? No it doesn't it, but it strongly implies it. The Bible cannot declare a mistake, it cannot imply a mistake. And it clearly implies that Joseph was flat broke. How do we know that? Do you remember that in [Lu 2](#), when he went into the temple to present the Lord to the Lord that he offered "a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons?" Go back to [Le 12](#) again and find out who was allowed to make that kind of offering. It had to be somebody who couldn't pay for a sheep. Somebody who did not have enough money, who absolutely could not pay for one sheep. Do you believe that a man as honorable as Joseph would have shortchanged the Lord? Joseph was flat broke.

Somebody says, Brother Hunt, why would a man be that broke? He had just gone to Bethlehem to pay his taxes. It was six weeks after tax day, do you see, they had cleaned him out. When he went to the Temple to present Jesus, he didn't have enough money to pay for one sheep. God was going to send him into Egypt.

Now we find out why those wise men were there. God was about to tell Joseph to move to Egypt. That is like God speaking to one of us and saying you have to move to Mexico, and you don't have any money. But God always has the remedy. Before God told Joseph what he had to do, he had already sent the wise men on their way with the necessary funds.

These were not pagan philosophers, these were Jewish doctors of the law, living in Babylon. These wise men had the money and the gifts Joseph needed, and God sent them on their way. I have an idea they had probably been on the way that entire six weeks. Did you notice they got there just in

time? Just before God told Joseph that night, he had to move, those wise men got there with gifts, gold and frankincense, and myrrh.

God had it timed just right. Joseph didn't have enough money to move on; these men had the money, God sent them on their way. Just as soon as they came and left enough gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, to finance Joseph's move into Egypt, God told him he had to go.

But think about it, in spite of that, what great faith it required on Joseph's part. God spoke to Joseph in the middle of the night. He says, "Joseph, you are going to have to move, you are going to have to relocate; they are going to seek this young child; they are going to try to kill him. You are going to have to leave here, you are going to have to move into Egypt." What did Joseph do? He left that night.

What an honorable man he was. What a faithful person he was. He took God at his word. When God told him he had to move, he didn't even wait until morning. What happened to his house in Nazareth, if he owned one? If he owned one he left it. What happened to the furniture? He left it. He left everything he had and left that very night for Egypt. "And was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son," [Mt 2:15](#).

But I want to look as quickly as we can at the relationship between Mary and the Lord Jesus Christ. This was God manifest in the flesh. But to Mary this was her little boy. The Lord Jesus Christ did not have an actual father on this earth, but he had an actual mother. She carried him for nine months, brought him into the world, nursed him, bathed him, and changed his diaper, when he needed it. He was verily man. She picked him up when he fell. She was his port in the storm. Finally the day came when the mob was after him. Put yourself for a moment in Mary's place, if you will, follow him around. Here is this crowd doing everything they can to do away with him.

Let's drop on down to the end of the story. Can you see him as they bring him out of Pilate's hall? There he is. This is her little boy. It doesn't matter if you are 80 years old, and your little boy [Isa 60](#) years old, he is still your little boy. Can you see Mary there in the crowd? This is her little boy. He is God manifest in the flesh but to Mary he is still her little boy. Simeon said to her, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also," [Lu 2:35](#).

Imagine yourself in Mary's place. Pilate says, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" [Mt 27:22](#). And the crowd cries out, "Crucify him, crucify him, kill him, kill him." What would that have done to you if you had been Mary? This is your little boy up there before that crowd; they have beaten him. Isaiah said he didn't even look like a man. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," [Isa](#)

[52:14](#). They had buffeted him, they had slapped him in the face until he didn't look like a man, they had plowed his back with whips, and there was her son there before that crowd and the crowd is crying out crucify him, crucify him. They took him to Calvary, and they crucified him. Mary followed him afar off. The disciples forsook him and fled. You know the women followed him afar off from Galilee, ministering unto him. Mary was at the foot of the cross. She was the very first one to go to the grave. "At the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn at the first day of the week came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre," [Mt 27:61](#). Simeon was right; a sword did pierce through her very soul.

The Lord had such a beautiful and close relationship with his mother. How she cared for him. That good woman had her hands full, she had at least eight children. The Lord was virgin born. Then she had at least seven more children born in the normal way. There were his brethren James, Joses, Simon, and Judas, and *all* his sisters. All has to be at least three. Those kids must have been just like stair steps.

But that good woman took care of him, she was his port in the storm, all the time he was growing up she watched over him. We have said many times that raising children is an education. It teaches you a lot about yourself. She never had any trouble out of Jesus.

The other boys picked at him. How do we know they picked at him? They picked at him after he was grown. In [Joh 7](#), even when the Jews were trying to kill him, they challenged him and said, Why don't you go up to Jerusalem if you are who you claim you are? If the things you are telling are the truth, why don't you go on up there. "For neither did his brethren believe on him," [Joh 7:5](#). If they picked on him when he grew up, surely they picked on him when he was little.

Look at it just for a moment from the vantage point of those children. Put yourself in the place of his brothers. They were just as good, or just as mean, as any other bunch of boys were. Let me ask you, did you, perhaps, when you were growing up have a brother that was better behaved than you were? Maybe a sister that was better behaved than you were? And it made it difficult for you, because the other person behaved better than you did. What if you had a brother who was perfect? And then as mean as you and I are, do you have an idea you might pick on him? Sure you would, and they did.

When all the others were picking on him, when he was increasing in wisdom, and stature and favor with God and man ([Lu 2:52](#)). There is not a person on earth that can entirely explain that text. How did he, if he was God manifest in the flesh, we can understand how increased in stature, we can understand something about he increased in favor with man, how did he increase in

wisdom and in favor with God? We can't explain that. There is not a person on earth that can entirely explain that.

But during that time she took care of him. What a close relationship she had with him, and he had with her. What great love he had for her. When he came to die, his mind was on his mother. Think about this relationship that has gone on now for thirty-three years. There at the marriage in Cana in Galilee, when she still thought she had a unique influence over him and he said to her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

That term 'woman' was not a term of disrespect. He used that same term in the most tender moment when he was speaking to her from the cross. She had followed him and there on the cross when our Lord was suffering and dying, in the very moment of his death, his mind was on his mother. In the very moment of his death, he was thinking about her. There she was at the foot of the cross, when the others milling around the cross were mocking him, making fun of him, quoting things he had said, and twisting them, saying all kinds of vile things about him, saying, He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him, for he said that I am the son of God. There was Mary. They could not run her off. That was her son hanging on the cross of Calvary. And there in his very dying hour the last thing he did outside of saying, "I thirst," the last thing he did was to make sure that his mother was taken care of.

As God he has all power in heaven and earth, but this was the man Christ Jesus who was suffering and dying. God does not die, cannot die. He became man for the purpose of dying. And the man Christ Jesus, there on the cross looking down at his mother, would not give up the ghost until he made arrangements for his mother. The most momentous event in the history of the world was the suffering and death of the lord Jesus Christ. But the Lord would not give up the ghost until he had seen to it that his mother was taken care of. He sees his mother at the foot of the cross. There was John at the foot of the cross. And he says to his mother, "Woman behold thy son!" And to John he says, "Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own house," [Joh 19:26-27](#). What a tender moment there was there when the Lord Jesus Christ would not give up the ghost until....until he had made arrangements for the care of his mother.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
The Sin Unto Death

THE SIN UNTO DEATH

[1Jo 5:16-17](#), "If any man see his brother sin a sin, which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death; THERE

IS A SIN UNTO DEATH; I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death.”

There is a balance of truth, and sometimes we can emphasize one aspect of truth to the neglect of another, equally important, aspect of truth, and we give people an entirely wrong impression. The Bible teaches very clearly---as clearly as language can make it---that the child of God is eternally secure in Him, and that there is nothing in this world that can separate him from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

In [Ro 8:35-39](#), Paul list all sorts of things---everything the mind can imagine--and shows that none of those things can separate the child of God from the love of God. There is no possibility that any child of God will lose what God has prepared for him in heaven. There is no possibility that anything will ever separate one of his from his love.

But it is possible, and it very often does happen, that a child of God loses everything that is worth having **THIS SIDE OF THE GRAVE**. He will not lose anything that is on the other side; but it is possible for the child of God to lose everything that is worth having in this life.

Sometimes a person can tell the truth, and yet tell it in such manner as to give people an entirely false impression from what he said. Sometimes, in talking about the security of the child of God, we state that doctrine in such a **way** that people get a wrong idea as to what we are saying. Sometimes we say it this way. I have said it this way; I try not to say it this way any more, but I have said it in the past. Sometimes we say that if the child of God does not walk in the pathway of obedience, if he does not believe the truth, and abide in the truth, he will not lose his home in eternal heaven; **ALL HE LOSES** is the joys and benefits of this life. Well, that statement is true. If a child of God does not walk in the pathway of obedience, he does not lose anything in eternal heaven; all he loses is the joys and benefits that would have been his in this life.

But when we phrase it in that way, I am afraid that we leave the impression that that is not very much to lose. I think it is better if we say that what the disobedient child of God loses is **EVERYTHING THAT IS WORTH HAVING THIS SIDE OF THE GRAVE**. We do not stand to lose our home in that eternal city; but we do stand to lose ever so much, and in this booklet, I would like for us to look at some things that the Bible says about that.

In this passage John says that “if any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.” He goes on to say that “there is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it.” very nearly all of my life, I have heard people wrestle with the question, “What is the sin unto death?” I believe the Bible makes it

clear enough, and if the Lord will assist me, I would like for us to notice what the Bible says about that subject.

Generally, when you mention the sin unto death, somebody wants to identify a particular offense, and say, "This sin is the sin unto death." Somebody says the sin of adultery is the sin unto death. Somebody else says the sin of fornication, or the sin of murder, or some other heinous offense is the sin unto death. Now those are wicked sins, and we could spend the entire time talking about what terrible sins those are, and the great consequences that they bring upon the child of God. But when the apostle says that "there is a sin unto death," He is not talking about any particular, nameable offense, such as adultery, fornication, drunkenness, murder, and so on. He says that "there is A sin unto death," but in the next verse he goes on to say, "There is A sin not unto death." Do you see, if you try to narrow that sin unto death down to JUST ONE NAMEABLE OFFENSE, you are, by your own argument, left with JUST ONE OFFENSE that is not unto death, and I don't know anybody who believes that.

Well, before we go any farther, what is that sin unto death that John was talking about? It is simply this: THE SIN UNTO DEATH IS ANY OFFENSE THAT YOU COMMIT---THAT YOU PERSIST IN---UNTIL GOD TOTALLY, AND FINALLY, AND IRREVERSIBLY CUTS YOU OFF FROM THE JOYS AND BENEFITS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN YOURS IN THIS LIFE IN SUCH MANNER THAT THERE IS NO REVERSAL, NO REINSTATEMENT, AND YOU WILL NEVER AGAIN, FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, ENJOY WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE ENJOYED HAD YOU WALKED IN THE PATHWAY OF OBEDIENCE. And we will notice in just a few pages, if the Lord will bless us that that offense, very often, is something that you might not have expected it to be. Let me say it again.

What is the sin unto death? It is any offense in which you persist---which you continue in---until God totally, finally, and irreversibly cuts you off, and sets you adrift---as far as this world is concerned---so that there is no prospect, no hope, no possibility, that you will ever again be restored to the joy that you might have had here in this life. You are still a child of God. Heaven is still your home. God chose you; Christ died for you; he has quickened you by his Spirit from a state of death in sin to a state of life in Christ Jesus---and yet you have made shipwreck of your life---and there is no possibility that you will ever have what you might otherwise have had.

The Lord gives us several illustrations of that. [Mt 21:18-20](#), "Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered, and when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee from henceforth forever, and presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying,

How soon is the fig tree withered away.” Now bear in mind that this was a good plant, a good tree. A good tree brings forth good fruit. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. So this tree was capable of bringing forth good fruit. THIS TREE IS SYMBOLIC OF A CHILD OF GOD, WHO IS NOT BEARING THE FRUIT THAT HE OUGHT TO BEAR. The Lord hungered, he looked for food on this tree, he came to it, and found no fruit thereon, but leaves only, and he said unto it, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth, FOREVER.” Now bear in mind that it was a good tree. It was capable of bearing good fruit. It did not; The judgment of God fell upon it, and let me ask you: How long do you believe that it is going to be until this tree bears good fruit?

“Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward FOREVER.” That is long enough, is it not? NEVER AGAIN WILL THIS TREE BEAR THE FRUIT THAT IT MIGHT HAVE BORNE. This tree might at one time have borne that fruit, but now the judgment of God rests upon it, because it did not bear fruit, and now, there is no possibility that this tree will ever again be the fruitful tree that it might have been.

Let’s look at another illustration. In the twenty-fifth chapter, of Matthew, beginning at the fourteenth verse ([Mt 25:14](#)), “The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.” You remember the story. There were three servants. To one servant he delivered five talents, to another servant, two talents, and to another servant one talent. The man with five talents went out and worked with them, and doubled what he had. He gained five talents. The man with two talents went out, and with what he had to work with, he did the same thing. He doubled what he had. He gained two talents. Not all of us have the same capacity. God does not require me to use your talent. All God requires me to do is to do the best I can with what I have to work with. And that man with two talents did just as well as the man with five talents. He just did not have as much to work with. But the man with one talent “went and hid his talent in the earth,” and when his Lord came back he challenged him. You remember the Lord commended those other two servants, and gave the same commendation to the man with two talents as he did to the man with five talents. But then in verse twenty-four he which had received the one talent came and said, “Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sowed, and gathering where thou hast not strawed, and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth, lo, there thou hast what is thine. His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed; thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then, at my coming, I should have received mine own with

usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents, for unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And he cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth.”

Notice that these were ALL SERVANTS OF THE SAME LORD. They all had talents given them from the same Lord. They all had the ability, according to their own capacity, to serve their Lord. The man with one talent could not do as much as the man with five talents, but he could have done just like the man with two talents. He could have used what he had. But he did not use it, and he lost it. Let me ask you again, what do you believe was the prospect that his Lord would ever give him another talent. What do you think is the prospect that his Lord will say, “Okay, you have had one probation; you missed out that time, but I am going to give you another chance.” What do you think is the likelihood of that? It is not going to happen, is it? He was cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. These were all three servants of the same Lord. They all had talents with which they could have served their Lord.

Now once more, in John, chapter fifteen, I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine; ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me, ye can do nothing.” Now let me ask you: is this talking to children of God, or is it talking to dead alien sinners? It is talking to children of God, is it not? He says, “I am the vine, and ye are the branches.”

The dead alien sinner is not a branch in Christ Jesus. This is talking to the Lord’s children. Now notice verse six, “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and MEN cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” Is that talking about eternal damnation? It is not men that cast anyone away into that terrible place. But notice that it is men that cast these people into the fire. Sometimes that happens by a vote in conference in church. “Men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

Now it does not always happen that the person is turned out of the church. I have known some people who were in the condition that is described in these verses, who stayed in the church the rest of their lives. They never did anything so outward, so obvious, that they would ever be dealt with by the church, and yet, their joy was gone. Everything they had ever experienced was gone. It had been gone for years. There was no spiritual joy about them,

and yet, they stayed right there in the church, and, sometimes, were the most insistent on making all the decisions. That becomes a problem in the church, when that happens. But that is another story, and I do not want to get sidetracked on that. I have another theme I want to follow at this moment.

“If a man abide not in me (that is one of the branches in him) he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. Again, the same question we asked awhile ago: after this branch is cast into the fire and burned, what do you believe are the prospects that that branch will ever be put back in the vine, and bear fruit in the vine. That is a ridiculous question, isn’t it. NONE WHATSOEVER.

If a person is born of the Spirit of God there is nothing in all of this world that is going to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. David said it in Psalms chapter eighty nine, “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod and their iniquities with stripes, nevertheless, my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the word that goeth forth out of my mouth.” He deals very clearly with the eternal security of the child of God. There is nothing in this world that can separate the child of God from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, but the child of God can so persist in sin, and go on, and on, until he loses everything that is worth having here in this life.

We talk about a person losing the joy of his salvation. He can do that. He loses the joy of the church, the joy of the gospel. He wonders why the preacher cannot preach the way he used to preach. He allows, “That preacher used to go to the pulpit every Sunday morning and he would just set this place on fire, but he just can’t preach like that any more.” Perhaps the preacher preaches as well as ever. MAYBE THE MAN CANNOT LISTEN the way he used to. HE CANNOT HEAR the way he used to hear. A person stands to lose the joy of the church, his home in the church, his job, his family, his children, his home, his health, and, perhaps, even his sanity. There is no end to the things that a person stands to lose---this side of the grave. You will never lose what God has waiting on you on the other side. But I am sure that some of you can think of someone you have known very well. There is no doubt in your mind that he is a child of God. You have been with him in church. You have seen him rejoice under the preaching of the gospel, and you cannot doubt that he is born of the Spirit of God. And yet, today, he has made shipwreck of his life. You can supply the name. Everybody knows somebody who fits that pattern. He has lost the joy of his salvation; he has lost the joy of the church; he has lost his home in the church; he lost his wife; his children will not talk to him; he lost his job; he lost his business; he lost his home; he

lost his health; and perhaps, lost his sanity. He lost everything worth having--- this side of the grave. The text says, “Men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY THAT THOSE BRANCHES WILL EVER AGAIN BE PUT BACK TOGETHER AND PUT BACK IN THE VINE TO BEAR FRUIT HERE IN THIS LIFE.

[Heb 6:1-6](#), “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” I believe it is clear enough that he is talking about a child of God. He says that if that person shall fall away, it is impossible to renew him again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. That is still talking about that branch that was cut off and cast into the fire. It is talking about that fig tree to which the Lord said, “Let no fruit grow on thee from henceforth forever.” It is talking about that one talent servant whose talent was taken away and who was cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Paul says that IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW SUCH A PERSON TO REPENTANCE.

Somebody may want to know, “But what if he decides to repent?” HE CANNOT DO IT. It is not possible for him to repent. A person cannot repent just any time he decides to. IF GOD DOES NOT GIVE REPENTANCE YOU CANNOT REPENT. [2Ti 2:25](#), “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will GIVE THEM REPENTANCE to the acknowledging of the truth.” [Ac 11:18](#), “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles GRANTED REPENTANCE unto life.” [Ro 2:4](#), “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God LEADETH THEE TO REPENTANCE?” The one text says that God gives repentance, the next text says that he grants repentance, and the last text says that he leads to repentance. If God does not give repentance, if he does not grant it, if he does not lead you to it---you cannot repent.

You cannot just wake up one morning, after you have lived for a long time in a bad way, and say, “Hey, I just believe I will repent today. I believe I will change my way. I am going to turn over a new leaf. I am going to start doing

better.” It does not work that way. Now the religious world thinks you can do that. They think that is all there is to it. But they are wrong. You cannot just wake up one morning and decide, “I am going to do better.” If God does not give repentance, you will never repent. If he does not grant repentance, if he does not lead you to repentance, you cannot repent. The text says that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. You can talk to him all you want to, but you will never get him to repent. He cannot repent. It is not within his capacity.

[Heb 10:26](#), For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” This person is left WITHOUT CONSCIOUSNESS OF A HOPE in Christ Jesus. “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” What state is he in? Here it is. “But a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” He is a child of God, and he will live in heaven some day, but he feels none of the power of that hope in his heart. All that is there is fear, that fear of indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden the Son of God under foot, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace.” Now Paul is telling us about something that is worse (a “sorer punishment”) than death. What is worse than death? It is for a child of God to be cut off and be in the condition we have been talking about. That is what is worse than death.

Sometimes we talk about what a harsh thing the law of Moses was. And the Law of Moses was a harsh system. But for a person to be stoned to death was really a less punishment than to be left here in this life, cut off---completely cut off---from the joys and the benefits that he might otherwise have had. “Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be counted worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing.”

“The blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified...” Is that talking about a dead alien sinner? It does not sound like it. Those who will one day suffer eternally are not sanctified by the blood of the covenant. He “counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace, for we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord, and again, The Lord shall judge HIS PEOPLE.” This is talking about his people. If there was ever any doubt, that should remove all doubt. [Heb 10:31](#), “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

[2Pe 1:5](#), “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity, for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and HATH FORGOTTEN THAT HE WAS PURGED FROM HIS OLD SINS.” It does not mean that those sins are still charged against him. The Lord put those sins away at Calvary, and he “hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Heb. (10:14). But the man in this condition is BLIND; he “cannot see afar off,” and he has “FORGOTTEN that was purged from his old sins.” He does not have that witness within his heart.

I was talking with a man a few years ago. I stopped at the place where he was working, and visited with him for just a moment, and in the course of the conversation he said, “Brother Hunt, I just don’t get a thing in the world out of the church any more.” Now he was there every Sunday, and, for that matter, he makes all the decisions, ninety per cent of them, anyway. But he said, “Brother Hunt, I just don’t get a thing out of the church any more.” He said, “I think, perhaps, I have gotten too old to enjoy the church.” He is just a little older than I am, and at that time he was about the same age I am today. But, anyway, he thought he was too old to enjoy the church. That is sad, isn’t it? But, oh, how many children of God are in exactly that same condition. They are blind; they cannot see afar off, and they have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins.

I would like for us to notice two characters the Bible talks about, who were in that condition. [2Pe 2:15-16](#), “Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but was rebuked for his iniquity, the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice, forbad the madness of the prophet.” That is talking about Balaam, a prophet in the Old Testament. Balaam is one of the most mysterious characters in the Bible. And one of the reasons that he is so mysterious is because he behaved himself in such a manner that, sometimes, it is difficult to tell whether he was a child of God or not. But I believe that when we look at him closely, that the Bible makes it clear enough that he was a born again character. Listen to the way Balaam talks in the book of Numbers. In [Nu 23](#), beginning with verse 8 ([Nu 23:8](#)). Balak had called for him to come and to curse Israel, and he wanted to do that. Balak had promised him all kinds of wealth if he would curse Israel. Balak was afraid of Israel. Balak said, in verse seven, “Come and curse me Jacob, and come defy Israel.” And then in verse eight, Balaam replied, “How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed, or shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied, for from the top of

the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him, lo the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and number the fourth part of Israel, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

Do you remember how Jacob died? Jacob died in his own bed, in his right mind, with his family all around him, with his mind on the Lord, and he was talking about the Lord and his goodness. Balaam said that when he came to die, that was how he wanted to die---in his own bed, in his right mind, with his family all around him, and with his mind on the Lord. Does that sound like a dead alien sinner to you? It does not sound like a dead alien sinner to me. One that wants to die with his mind on the Lord bears evidence of an experience of grace.

[Nu 23:19](#), he says, “God is not a man that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent, hath he said, and shall he not do it, or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” Balaam had more light on Bible doctrine, and he manifested more light in that one verse of scripture than ninety-nine per cent of the religious people, and the religious leaders in America today. He does not sound like a dead alien sinner to me. “God is not a man that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it, or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”

And in [Nu 24:17](#), “I shall see him but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh, there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.”

Some two thousand years later there were wise men from the East, who saw the star that signalled the arrival of the King of Israel---the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ. They saw that star and they went to Bethlehem searching for the Christ child. I have heard it said that they saw that star and then followed it to Bethlehem. They did not do that, they followed it to Nazareth. They did not have to follow that star to Bethlehem; they had the prophecy of Micah, “And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel” ([Mic 5:2](#)). They saw that star and they went directly to Bethlehem. Why did they know that that star signalled the arrival of the King of Israel? Why did they know that that star signalled the arrival of the Savior? It was because they had read this prophecy of Balaam. They had read this text from [Nu 24](#), when Balaam said, “There shall come a STAR out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel.” Two thousand years later, after Balaam had prophesied that that star would appear, it did appear; the wise men saw it, they knew that the time of the Messiah was at hand; and they went to Bethlehem, seeking for the Lord.

I believe the Bible gives proof enough to show that Balaam was a child of God. The wicked do not talk the way Balaam talked; they do not pray the way Balaam prayed. Balaam prayed, wanting to “die the death of the righteous.” He said, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” But let us go to chapter thirty-one, verse eight, “Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword.” When the Bible gets around to recording the death of Balaam, it records it almost as a footnote, as if to say, “Oh, by the way, Balaam was killed in the battle too.” What happened to Balaam? What happened was that Balak offered him money if he would curse Israel, and he tried to curse Israel, and he could not do it. Balak made the offer again, and Balaam tried again to curse Israel, and he still could not do it. And Balak made the offer the third time, and Balaam tried to curse Israel the third time, and he still wound up promising blessing upon Israel.

But let us go to the Revelation. “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication,” [Re 2:14](#). Balaam tried to curse Israel, and he could not. He said, “I cannot curse those whom the Lord has blessed.” But, do you see, he had seen Balak’s money, and if there was any way he could earn that money, he wanted to do it. But he had discovered that God would not allow him to curse his people. Now, Balaam was also a crafty man in a natural way. And he finally went to Balak and said, “Balak, I have got it all figured out; God has blessed Israel, and I cannot curse them, but here is what you can do: if you will send bad women down there, you can get Israel in trouble with their God.” He taught Israel to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. He says, “I cannot curse them; God has blessed them, and I cannot undo it, but if you will send enough bad women down there, and get Israel to misbehave, and to offer sacrifice to strange gods, you can get them in trouble with their God, and bring the wrath of God on them.” He earned his pay, but he lost everything.

I hear a text over in Matthew, where the Lord says, “What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” ([Mt 16:28](#)). He did not lose his eternal destiny, but he lost everything that was worth here having in this life. The scriptures tell us. “In patience possess ye your souls.” Balaam did not do it. Balaam sold out. I am convinced that Balaam was a child of God, and I expect to see him someday. A man that talked the way he talked sounds like a child of God to me, and I expect that some day I shall see him there in the glory world. But he lost everything that was worth having here in this life. He said, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” That did not happen. He wound up in battle against the people of God, and he died fighting against Israel.

Have you ever seen it? Have you ever seen a child of God, who sold out, and died, fighting against the very cause that he had, at one time, supported? Sure you have. It happened to Balaam.

In [1Sa 10:6](#), Samuel was talking to Saul, who was about to become king over Israel. And he says to Saul, “And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy unto them, and shalt be TURNED INTO ANOTHER MAN. And it was so, that when he turned his back to go from Samuel, GOD GAVE HIM ANOTHER HEART.” It does not sound to me like it is talking about a dead alien sinner. He said, “Thou shalt be turned into another man,” and he said, “God gave him another heart.” What is it that happens in regeneration? God takes out that hard and stony heart, and gives a heart of flesh. Even though he was a big man physically, he was small in his own sight. He was a very humble man, a very self-effacing person. But he became king, and, as we say, it went to his head, and he was not able to handle it, and he became lifted up in pride. One time he endeavored to perform the office of the priest, because the priest did not get there on time. He tried to do the priest’s job for him. That got him in trouble. He did not have any business trying to take the priest’s job. And from there on it was downhill.

But, anyway, Samuel sent him to destroy the nation of Amalek. Do you remember? Amalek had stood against Israel, when Israel came into land of Canaan? Now God would send Israel to destroy the nation of Amalek. And he was commanded to destroy the entire nation---just wipe them off the face of the earth. There were reasons for that, which we don’t have time to get into, but suffice it to say that, because of their immoral life style, as people would say nowadays, because of the way they lived, they were just absolutely riddled with disease, and God was intending to use Israel, like a surgeon’s scalpel to remove that diseased flesh from the human race. That is as far as we need to go with that. But, anyway, God intended for that entire nation to be destroyed, to be wiped off the face of the earth. You remember the story. Saul did not do that. He saved the king, Agag, and the best of the cattle alive. And then, when Samuel arrived, Samuel asked Saul, “Have you done what you were supposed to do?” “Yes, I have done just exactly what I was told to do.” And Samuel wants to know, “Well, if you have, what meaneth, this lowing of the cattle in mine ears?” “Be sure your sin will find you out.” Samuel says, “I hear cattle lowing over on the other side of the hill. What is that commotion, if you have destroyed all of Amalek, and all their livestock?” And you remember that Saul tries to blame it on the people. But, we don’t have time to get into all of that. But in verse twenty-two, “And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.” The Amalekites were involved

in witchcraft, and Saul was telling Samuel, “You are not a bit better than they are. Your rebellion is just like their rebellion.” Witchcraft was a part of their national religion. He says, “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry, because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” Verse twenty-six, “And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee, FOR THE LORD HATH REJECTED THEE from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned to go away, he laid of hold the skirt of his mantle, and it rent, and Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou. And also the strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it, or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good.”

I doubt that it is really a coincidence that Samuel winds up saying almost identically the same words that Balaam had said hundreds of years before. “The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent.”

[1Sa 15:35](#), “And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.” Now notice one thing in the first verse of the next chapter ([1Sa 16:1](#)). “And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?” Two things I want to notice. What do you believe was the likelihood that Saul would ever again be the king of Israel? None whatsoever. He had lost it. It was gone. His rejection was total, and complete, and irreversible.

One other thing I want to notice. He says, “HOW LONG WILT THOU MOURN FOR SAUL, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?” Do you remember another expression very similar to that? The verse we started out with said, “There is a sin unto death; I DO NOT SAY THAT YE SHALL PRAY FOR IT.” God said to Samuel, “How long wilt thou mourn for Saul; it won’t do you you any good.” “There is a sin unto death; I do not say that ye shall pray for it.” Now that fits too well for it to be wrong. That is exactly what he is talking about. He says, “There is a sin unto death; I do not say that ye shall pray for it.” And here he says, “How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel.”

In [1Co 9:27](#), Paul the apostle says, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” What was Paul afraid of? Was he afraid he was going to lose his home in heaven? No. Paul made that plain enough. I don’t know any way language could make it any plainer than Paul made it. Paul made that as plain as it could be, that if one is chosen of God, redeemed by him, and

born of his Spirit, that he is heaven-bought, and heaven-born, and heaven-bound. And nothing in this world, past, present, or future, above us, or below us, or angels, or principalities, or powers, life, death, or anything else can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus ([Ro 8:38-39](#)). What was he afraid of? He was afraid that he would wind up like Balaam. He was afraid that he would wind up like King Saul. He said, because that could happen to him, he kept his body in subjection, “and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself might be a castaway.”

I have known people to make shipwreck of their life. We have all seen that, at one time or another. And, sometimes, after a person has just made total shipwreck of his life, somebody else will square his shoulders, and say, “Well, I will tell you, right now, I will never be guilty of anything of any such thing as that.” I don’t know that; and you don’t know that. It behooves every last one of us to be constantly on our knees, begging God that God would give us grace to survive. And to persist, and to press on in his service. If Paul the apostle, as eminent a servant as he was, was concerned lest he himself should be castaway, certainly, it behooves Harold Hunt that I be constantly on my guard.

I would like for us to notice, just for a moment, two offenses that, I believe, are the most common offenses, that ever put a child of God in that particular condition. Now we know that a person can destroy his life by gross immoral conduct. We know that adultery, fornication, drunkenness, murder, debauchery, and the like will destroy a person’s life. But, while we know that we are all at risk with regard to those things, generally, most of us are not very likely to commit any of those heinous offenses. Most children of God are not likely to fall into those sins. We stay on guard against those things. Now that is not to say that we are totally immune against those terrible sins; I don’t want to leave that impression. Oh, I would not, for a minute, leave that impression. But the thing I am pointing out is that the pitfall that you and I are most likely to get into is not nearly so much any of those things as it is some other things. There is much less likelihood that I will ever be guilty of robbing a bank than there is that I might fall into these offenses that we hear about in these next three texts. I believe that there are more children of God, who make shipwreck of their lives on these three rocks than on any other thing that ever besets any child of God.

Let’s go back, for a moment, to those three examples we used a moment ago: the one talent servant, the barren fig tree, and the branch that did not bear fruit. Let me ask you: what was the offense of those three? They were all guilty of exactly the same offense. What was their offense? THEIR OFFENSE WAS IN DOING ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. Was that not their

offense? Their offense was in doing nothing. And there are more children of God, who make shipwreck of their life in things that would never get you turned out of the church, than there are who make shipwreck of their lives in the great and heinous offenses. I want to notice three of them. We have noticed one already. There is, first of all, the great offense of doing absolutely nothing. And here are two others.

In [Mt 6](#), the Lord is giving what we refer to as “the Lord’s prayer.” There are some folks who will tell you this is not the Lord’s prayer; but that is not what I want to contend with at this moment. In [Mt 6:14-15](#), after he has taught them how to pray, he says, “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Notice that it is “your heavenly Father” if you forgive, and it is still “your Father,” if you don’t forgive. This is not talking about a person’s eternal destiny. That person who is chosen, and redeemed, and born of the Spirit of God, is a child of God, and he will be in heaven some day. It is “your Father,” if you forgive, and it is “your Father,” if you do not forgive. But notice what we get into, when we transgress.

He says, “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” A few times in my life I have seen somebody so upset at another person that he would look the other person in the eye, trying to let him know how angry he was, and tell him, “I will never forgive you until the day you die.” Did you ever hear anybody say that? It sends a cold chill over you, does it not? Just to think that anybody would say that. “I will never forgive you until the day you die.” Let me ask you: if it sends a cold chill over you to hear somebody say that to somebody else, THINK OF GOD SAYING THAT TO YOU.

Imagine God saying to Harold Hunt, “Harold Hunt, you are my child, and I will have you with me in heaven one day, but as far as this life is concerned, I will never forgive you until the day you die.” That is what the text says. “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES.”

There was no forgiveness for that barren fig tree. There was no possibility that the barren fig tree would ever bear another fig. There could be no forgiveness for that branch that was cast into the fire and burned. It could never be put together again. There was no forgiveness for that one talent servant, who lost his talent. It was gone, and he would never have it back again. Many a child of God has made shipwreck of his life. He persisted, and persisted, until finally, God said, “Enough.”

There is a sin unto death. What is the sin unto death? It is any sin that you continue in, until God finally says, "Enough," and he cuts you off. And as far as this life is concerned, it is all over. I BELIEVE THERE HAVE BEEN MORE CHILDREN OF GOD WHO GOT INTO THAT CONDITION BECAUSE OF MALICE, BECAUSE OF AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT, THAN, PROBABLY, FOR ANY OTHER REASON.

Somebody gets offended, and he says, "That is alright, I will bide my time, I will have my day, I will just sit here and pat my foot until my day comes. Just you watch, my day will come; I will have the last laugh." And he persists, and persists with that malicious spirit. Perhaps, he would not do anything to the other person. He has too much judgment to strike out at the other person. Somebody would see him do that. He might chuckle if he passes by and sees him changing a flat tire in the rain and mud. But he would not overtly do anything to him. But he says, "I will watch; I will wait; I will have my day. Just you wait, I will have my day."

And finally, his day does come, and like Saul, or like Balaam, or like the barren fig tree, God says to him, "Enough," and as far as this life is concerned, it is all over. And that judgment is irreversible. There will never again be for him that joy that he could have had. It is all over. HE WILL NEVER REPENT, BECAUSE HE CANNOT REPENT.

Now he may come to church every meeting time for the rest of his life. He may be very active in the church. And once in awhile he may get some sort of satisfaction from the church. He does get some benefit from the good company. He knows the people at the church; he grew up with them; he has known them all his life, and he likes their company. So he goes to church. He is ashamed not to. He cannot feel anything, but he enjoys being with them. Perhaps, before he got in that shape the church may have let him make most of the decisions, so he still gets to make most of the decisions. Perhaps, they do not realize what has happened to him. But he still cannot feel anything. It is all gone. It is over with.

I have the idea that, probably, most of the trouble in our churches has come from people in that condition, who stay right in the church. They have no spiritual joy at all. It is all gone. They have no spiritual discernment whatsoever, but they are still bound and determined to keep everybody else in line.

I believe that there have probably been more people, who got in trouble, because of a spiteful, malicious spirit than any other thing.

And there is another text that goes with that thought. [Mt 18:6](#), "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in

the depth of the sea.” How very careful we ought to be with regard to the Lord’s little ones. And that is not always one that is young in age. It may be one that is advanced in years. “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

We noticed a text a few moments ago that talked about that same thing. [Heb 10:28-29](#), “He that despised Moses” law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: OF HOW MUCH SORER PUNISHMENT, suppose ye shall he be counted worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? Paul says that there is something worse than death---a sorer punishment than to be stoned to death under Moses’ law, and this text says the same thing. This text says that he would be better off dead---he would be better off if he was drowned in the depth of the sea.

A few times I have heard somebody say that some person would be better off dead. I am sure that you have probably heard somebody say that. It is a terrifying statement, is it not? But this is God talking, and if God says it, it is right. I have heard people make that statement, when I did not think they were right; but when God says it, you can be sure that is the way it is. And he says that this person would be better off dead. I would hate for God to say that Harold Hunt would be better off dead. But that is what he says about this character.

But what got him into this condition? Was he guilty of some heinous offense that would get him turned out of the church? No, he was guilty of offending one of the Lord’s little ones. “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, IT WERE BETTER FOR HIM THAT A MILLSTONE WERE HANGED ABOUT HIS NECK, AND THAT HE WERE DROWNED IN THE DEPTH OF THE SEA.” The Lord says he would be better off dead. And the Lord says that it will not do any good to pray for him. His condition is irreversible. God has already pronounced judgment. The barren branch is burned up.

“There is a sin unto death; I do not say that ye shall pray for it.”

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
The Sixteen Ancestors Of All Mankind

THE SIXTEEN ANCESTORS OF ALL MANKIND

The Bible is God’s ultimate revelation to his children. It tells us everything we need to know and do religiously. It is the final revelation in every controversy with regard to the true religion.

But the Bible is all of that and more. Among many other things the Bible is the ultimate history of the human race. It lays down firm, and clear, and unmistakable landmarks against which all other history must be tested. It has been said that history is a system of agreed upon myths, and legends, and there is some truth in that, at least, as regards any history written by men. Human history is not the ultimate judge. Historians deal with the information available to them, and if that information is faulty, their conclusions are bound to be faulty.

But, even those records run out, if we follow history back far enough. In the fifth century B.C. a Greek historian by the name of Herodotus took on the task of writing the history of the world up to his time. He wrote a huge nine volume history which has been recognized as an authority since that day. He earned himself the name of *the Father of History*. Since the time of Herodotus we have had a reasonably accurate history, but prior to his day, the history of the world is a vast wasteland of fabulous myths and legends. There is not much real agreement among historians about specific details and events which took place before his day. Generation after generation handed down a system of legends, which were always slanted in favor of whichever nation was preserving the story. For that matter, not even Herodotus believed everything he wrote. He admitted that he included quite a few accounts simply because they made a better story. For the last two hundred years or so, archaeologists have provided us with glimpses into the far distant past. Some of their findings can be very enlightening, and we would not deny the great benefit of their work. Especially, they have produced a wealth of information about the great empires of the Middle East. They have learned to decipher long forgotten languages. They have, very painstakingly, deciphered the inscriptions on old monuments to piece together information about old kingdoms, and old wars. But for all the benefits they provide, they are still only glimpses. What one archaeologist affirms another denies.

All that stands in stark contrast to the record God has left us in the Bible. The Bible stands out as unique in all of history. The archaeologist looks at his little collection of artifacts, and guesses. The student of ancient history reads his prehistoric myth, and wonders which part of it is true, or if, indeed, any part of it can be believed.

The Bible is different. The Bible goes back, not to the dawn of history, but to the very morning of time itself. It gives the exact names of particular individuals and specific details of their lives. It traces family trees. It traces connections and relationships that are still profoundly affecting world events to this very day. Much of the conflict that is going on in world affairs at this very time is traceable to remote ages which are entirely unreachable by uninspired historians. The one and only source for some of that information is the historical evidence found in the Bible. It provides the only dependable record of ancient nations which have long since been absorbed by other people.

To give just one example, alongside of Egypt and Mesopotamia, the ancient Hittite Empire was one of the most powerful forces in the early ancient world. But as important and as mighty as that great empire was, until the early 1800's the Hittite Empire was virtually lost to history. Encyclopedia Britannica acknowledges that "the total knowledge of *the Hittites*....was derived from the Old Testament." That is quite an admission: that historians could not even verify the existence of such a powerful empire without the help of the Bible. Then beginning about 1810 archaeologists began to discover the remains of the Hittite Empire. Since then they have pieced together much of their story. The Bible had much to say about the Hittites, but historians could not even find them.

The characters written about in the Bible were real; they really lived, and they did do the things they are recorded to have done. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were real. David was a real person. Noah was real. His sons Shem, Ham and Japheth, and his sixteen grandsons were actual people.

In this little booklet I intend to briefly examine the history of each of those sixteen grandsons of Noah. One of the greatest deficiencies of secular history, with regard to the early ancient world, is the failure of historians to recognize the identity and the enormous importance of those sixteen men.

The grandsons of Noah provide the key to the history of the earliest ages of the world. In this little booklet I want to look at those sixteen men, and examine the evidence that they did live, and that the names recorded in the Bible were their actual names. More than that, we will identify the various modern nations which sprang from each of those men.

Now bear in mind that those men lived over four thousand years ago. Uninspired historians cannot reach back that far. Reliable human history cannot reach much farther than the time of Herodotus in the fifth century B.C. When you go back that far, human history loses entire empires. What are the chances, then, that we can find sixteen individuals? What are the chances that we can show that those sixteen men were who the Bible says they were?

Not only can we find all sixteen of those men, we can show where they lived and raised their families. God has provided us with absolutely mind-boggling evidence as to the existence and identity of those sixteen grandsons of Noah, and he has preserved that evidence in such form that it can never be lost or erased.

The identity of those sixteen grandsons of Noah is one of the most important facts in human history, and it is no credit to historians that they have not incorporated that fact into their histories.

There are some facts so important to be known that God has imprinted those facts on the memory of mankind in a way that all the ingenuity of men cannot erase them. The identity of those sixteen men is one of those facts. In this booklet we expect to demonstrate that God has provided mankind with a memory of those men in such manner that the evidence has not been lost even after four thousand years.

Just what is so important about those sixteen grandsons of Noah? Just this: those men are the ancestors of all mankind. Every person living today is descended from one or the other of those men.

Except for eight people, the entire human race perished in the Genesis Flood. After sixteen hundred years of human history mankind had become so corrupt that God determined to destroy every man living except Noah and his family.

[Ge 6:5-8](#), “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”

God sent a flood that covered the tallest hills, changed the entire geography of the earth, and destroyed every air breathing creature on earth, (“all in whose nostrils was the breath of life” [Ge 7:22](#)). Only Noah, and his wife, and his three sons and their wives, and the creatures Noah took into the ark, escaped. The rest of the human race perished in the flood.

When Noah and his family stepped out of the ark one year later, they stepped out into a vast empty earth. Those eight people were the only people on earth. God told them to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth” [Ge 9:2](#). It fell to Shem, Ham and Japheth, the three sons of Noah, and their sixteen sons to repopulate the earth, and that is what they did. Those three sons of Noah, and their wives, came out of the ark after the flood and made homes for themselves. Then the sons of those three brothers, these sixteen grandsons of Noah, fanned out over the earth and established the various nations of the ancient world.

God will not allow us to forget who these men were, and what they did. These sixteen men were the ancestors of the entire human race, and it is simply mind-boggling to examine the amount of evidence God has left us as to their individual existence and identity. Again, bear in mind that we are talking about sixteen individuals who lived over four thousand years ago. That is a time so remote that historians lose entire empires. Historians finally rediscovered the Hittite Empire only during the last century, and archaeologists are still discovering the shattered remains of civilizations they are completely unable to identify.

Perhaps, God provided us such a legacy of proof with regard to these men for the purpose of stopping the mouths of those skeptics, who are so fond of ridiculing the Bible. Skeptics in every age have insisted that the Bible is a book of myths and legends, but God has left us all the evidence we need to prove that those characters really lived, that they were who the Bible says they were, and that the names the Bible provides were their exact names. We will only have time and space to take a brief look at each of these men, and the evidence regarding them, but we believe that it will be sufficient to demonstrate that further inquiry will bear out the conclusions reached.

One important fact which secular historians rarely mention is that when the European explorers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries began to travel to the remote corners of the earth, wherever they went, they found primitive cultures where people were still talking about the Genesis Flood. For the most part, those people had no written language. They did not have books, magazines, nor newspapers. They had no written record of the flood, but they were still talking about it. How could it have happened that they still knew about the flood, literally thousands of years after the fact? For one thing, they did not have the distractions of books, and newspapers, and radio, and television; so they had an abundance of time to talk to each other. Before all of our modern advancements people communicated with each other on an individual basis more than we ever have since.

For four thousand years, those primitive, unlettered people sat around in the evening and told tales of long ago, and the most often repeated story was about a world destroying flood, and the one man and his family who survived to repopulate the new world. That was the most momentous event in the history of the world up until their time, and cultures all over the world were fascinated by the story. For four thousand years they could not stop telling it.

In the great voyages of discovery, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the European explorers traveled to the remotest corners of the globe, and wherever they went, they found the natives repeating that story. And wherever the story was told, the basic facts were always very similar. Whether it was the Gilgamesh Epic of the Babylonians, or another version told by American Indians, or still another version told by the Polynesians of the South Pacific, the main story line was always the same. Mankind had violated the law of his God; his disobedience brought a world destroying flood, and only one man and his family escaped.

One story had the ark shaped like a cigar; one had it shaped like a cube; another story allowed that the ark had nine stories. The details varied, but the basic facts were always the same: a violated law, a world destroying flood, a huge boat, and one man and his family who survived to populate the new world. Skeptics can ridicule the Bible, but they have no explanation of why (if the Genesis Flood did not happen) did primitive cultures all over the world—cultures which had absolutely no contact with each other—pass that legend down for four thousand years. What was the source of the legend if it never happened?

The various cultures remembered Noah, and they often worshiped him under a variety of names. The ancient Romans worshiped him under the name of Janus. You may remember from your ancient history classes that Janus was the god with two faces, one facing in each direction. That was the Roman version of Noah, the man who lived in two worlds, the world before the flood, and the world after the flood. In other words, he could look in two directions, toward two different worlds. Other people worshiped him under other names, and in other connections. Even today, the human race is divided into three distinct groups, based on the three sons of Noah. Down through the ages historians have always recognized

three major divisions of the races, the Hamitic, the Japhetic, and the Semitic, exactly corresponding to the three sons of Noah. The Hamitic races lived primarily in Africa and parts of Southwest Asia. The Japhetic races lived in Europe and Northern Asia. And the Semitic races lived primarily in the Middle East and eastward from there.

Modern anthropologists, with their evolutionary turn of mind, do their best to ignore the fact that their predecessors have always recognized those three major groups. For instance, under the heading of *Race* Encyclopedia Britannica says, "Tradition favored an oversimplified phylogeny, a three-race theory," but their evolutionary prejudice will not allow them to even list those names, much less to point out that the traditional names of the races (the Hamitic, the Japhetic, and the Semitic) exactly correspond to the names of the three sons of Noah.

But, at this moment, I am not so concerned with Noah and his three sons as I am with his sixteen grandsons. It is in those sixteen grandsons that the various nations find their origins, and it was by those families that the earth was repopulated.

After the flood, the ark came to rest "upon the mountains of Ararat" [Ge 8:4](#).

Mount Ararat is located at the very Eastern limit of Turkey, where Turkey and Soviet Armenia, and Iran meet. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the Persian (Iranian) name for Ararat is *Koh-i-Nuh*, meaning Noah's Mountain. Modern skeptics deny the very existence of Noah; it is embarrassing to them that for thousands of years the Armenians have called Mount Ararat by Noah's name. Mount Ararat is still sacred to the Armenians; they call it *The Mother of the World*. They still tell the story of Noah and the Genesis Flood, and insist that they were the first race of people to appear after the flood. Local legend maintains that for many years the remains of the ark were visible on the mountain.

At any rate, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, and from there the sons, and grandsons, of Noah fanned out into the vast empty places of the earth. In the providence of God, they, and their descendants, left a very clear record of where those families came to live, and the nations that were produced by them. But before we examine each of those names, we need to notice one aspect of that age of the world. That age had one very important characteristic which does not apply to any other age, either before or since.

Before the flood men lived to be very old. If you will look at [Ge 5](#), you will discover that it was not at all uncommon for somebody to live to be almost a thousand years old. Adam lived to be nine hundred and thirty years old ([Ge 5:5](#)). Methuselah lived to be nine hundred and sixty nine ([Ge 5:27](#)), and Noah lived to be nine hundred and fifty ([Ge 9:29](#)).

But all of that changed after the flood. For the next several generations they still lived to be very old by our standards, but the life expectancy of each generation dropped rapidly. Genesis chapter eleven gives the ages of the first several generations after the flood. If those life spans which are listed are typical of those which are not listed, and we have no reason to believe they were any different,

then, one strange fact becomes evident: for the next eight generations after the flood, the life expectancy of each generation was falling so rapidly, that it was the rule, rather than the exception, for the parents to outlive their children. And not only that, it was the rule for the grandparents to outlive their grandchildren, and for the great-grandparents to outlive their great-grandchildren, and so on. That went on for eight generations or more.

Let us take just a moment to see how that worked out. [Ge 11](#) records that “Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood” ([Ge 11:10](#)). He lived “after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years” ([Ge 11:11](#)). So Arphaxad died 502 years (2 years plus 500 years) after the flood. “Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah” ([Ge 11:12](#)) 37 years (2 years plus 35 years) after the flood. Salah lived another 403 years ([Ge 11:15](#)). He died 440 years after the flood (2 years plus 35 years plus 403 years). So he died 62 years before his father. The eleventh chapter of Genesis has all the numbers. You can work out the arithmetic for yourselves, but here is a listing of the date of the death of each of the patriarchs up until the time of Abraham.

- Shem died 502 years after the flood.
- Arphaxad died 440 years after the flood.
- Salah died 470 years after the flood.
- Eber died 531 years after the flood.
- Peleg died 340 years after the flood.
- Reu died 370 years after the flood.
- Serug died 393 years after the flood.
- Nahor died 241 years after the flood.
- Terah died 426 years after the flood.
- Abraham died 527 years after the flood.

Except for Eber, Shem outlived all his descendants for the next eight generations. Abraham was the first to outlive Shem, and he only outlived him by 25 years. The point is this: those first several generations after the flood lived to be very old, and it was not uncommon for a man to outlive his children, his grandchildren, and his great-grandchildren. By the time they died, there were several missing generations between themselves and their next oldest survivors. Those missing generations, and the enormous difference in age between themselves and their surviving descendants set them apart. They were unique in all of history. They stood all alone at the heads of their respective family clans. In the years after the flood, they fanned out, and established homes in the vast empty places of the earth, and they repopulated the earth with their offspring. Their families soon became great nations, and each of those sixteen grandsons of Noah stood at the head of the vast populations of their respective areas. Several things happened. The people in the various areas called themselves by the name of the one man who was their common ancestor. Since he was the patriarch of the entire population of that region, it was only natural that they should carry his

name. They also called their land by his name. They usually named their major city and the major river in that region after him.

The names of the sixteen grandsons of Noah were fixed on the various lands, and nations, and cities, and rivers, and for thousands of years those names have stood. Many of them stand until this present day. Their exact names, often unchanged in any way, have been so firmly fixed on the pages of history that they can never be erased.

God has given us clear and indisputable proof that the Bible record of the earliest days of mankind is accurate. He has left us all the evidence we need to rout those who have imagined that the Bible is a collection of myths and legends. It is impossible for human ingenuity to devise any way those names could have been any more firmly preserved than they have been. It is impossible to imagine a more convincing form of evidence.

Sometimes the various nations fell off into ancestor worship, and if they did, it was very natural for them to name their god after the man who was the ancestor of all of them. After all, if they were involved in ancestor worship, what could be more natural than for them to call their god by the name of their common ancestor. Human nature being what it is, it is not difficult to imagine how ancestor worship gained a hold over them. As we have seen, those first generations after the flood lived to be very old. If a man outlived all his children, his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, and so on, for several generations, it is easy to see that his descendants might get the idea that he was never going to die. And if they ever got that idea, it is also easy to see how they might imagine that he was really a god. Actually, they did not name their god after him, they simply claimed him for their god. The evidence is clear that many of the pagan gods were actually men whom their worshipers imagined to be gods. We shall see that the names of many of the pagan gods are traceable to the grandsons of Noah. More than that, for over four thousand years the names of those various ancient nations have been preserved in the Hebrew language. The Hebrew names for those ancient nations correspond exactly with the names of those sixteen grandsons of Noah. We cannot fail to see divine providence in the preservation of the Hebrew language. After all, what other language ever gained such prominence as a spoken language, then virtually died, and was centuries later revived as a spoken language.

We cannot imagine any more forceful, and any more conclusive, way in which the existence and identity of those men could have been established. Their names were attached to their descendants, to the land in which they lived, to the major cities and rivers of their various homelands, and sometimes even to the false gods which their descendants later came to worship. We shall see that those names continued for thousands of years, usually with very little change. And by divine providence, the identity of those men and their descendants was nailed down in the Hebrew language, and preserved for all ages.

In Genesis chapter ten, God gives us the names of those men, and he gives us clues as to where they lived and raised their families, and what became of their descendants. God has provided that chapter as a kind of index chapter for the very purpose of nailing down the identity of those men and the nations which sprang from them. He systematically and laboriously cataloged every one of them. In the next few pages we hope to examine those names one by one and discover some of the information available. We will only take time for the briefest glance at each one, but we believe the information provided will be sufficient.

[Ge 10:1-2](#), “Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood. The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshesh, and Tiras.” Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. This chapter deals with them in reverse order. It saves Shem till last; so we will do the same. We hope to show, both from the Bible record, and from history, that after the flood the family of Noah came down off Mount Ararat and Japheth and his descendants spread out to the north and west. They occupied the continent of Europe and the northwestern part of Asia.

The first name mentioned is Gomer. He was Noah’s grandson by Japheth. It is a fairly easy matter to trace the travels of Gomer and his descendants, both from the Bible and from secular history. Ezekiel locates the early descendants of Gomer. He tells us that, along with Togarmah, Gomer lived in the *north quarters* ([Eze 38:6](#)). If you will plot a line almost due north from Israel, you will find yourself in an area which in New Testament times was called Galatia. Paul wrote one of his epistles to the churches of Galatia. Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian who lived during the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, records that those people who were called Galatians, or Galls, in his day were previously called Gomerites (Josephus 1:6:1). The area is now in central Turkey. History records that the Galatians, or Galls, migrated westward to what is now called France. For many centuries France was called Gaul, after the Galls, the descendants of Gomer. Many of the Gomerites migrated farther to what is now called Wales. The Welsh historian Davis records that the Welsh people believe that the descendants of Gomer “landed on the Isle of Britain from France, about three hundred years after the flood” (pg 5). He also records that the Welsh language is called Gomeræg (after their ancestor Gomer). The Welsh people still sometimes refer to themselves as *the sons of Gomer*. John Gill records that the Welsh people in his day were called Cumero (Gomerites). So for four thousand years the name of Gomer has been firmly fixed in the traditional name of the Welsh people, and in the traditional name of their language.

It is an interesting study to trace the migration of the descendants of Gomer by their language. The traditional name of the ancient Welsh language is Gomeræg (from Gomer). It is a branch of the Indo-European languages known as Celtic or Keltic. Encyclopedia Britannica says that the Celtic group of languages reached

from Galatia on the East to Gaul, and Iberia (Spain), and Wales on the West. Classical Gomeræg was a highly developed, fully *inflected* language. By *inflected* we mean that their word endings, and their pronunciation, changed according to the way they were used. It was very much like classical Greek, which you may recall, had ten different ways to spell every noun, and thirty ways to spell every adjective, depending on how they were used. Modern Welsh has lost all the inflected endings.

The point we are getting to is that the ancient Welsh were a highly intelligent people. They had a language which rivaled the language of the Greek philosophers. They were not a bunch of savages running around in the forest, hiding behind trees. They were an intelligent people who knew where they came from. In the same way that, for thousands of years, the Jewish people have properly claimed to be the offspring of Abraham, the Welsh people have claimed to be the offspring of Gomer. The evidence is too plain to be ignored.

The Welsh are not the only descendants of Gomer. The text goes on to tell us that the sons of Gomer were “Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah” ([Ge 10; 3](#)). Not all of the family of Gomer reached Wales. There were members of their clan scattered all along the way. Some of the descendants of Togarmah and Ashkenaz settled fairly close to the foot of Mount Ararat. Encyclopedia Britannica says that the Armenians claim to be descended from Togarmah and Ashkenaz. They are careful not to mention who Togarmah and Ashkenaz were. That would be too much for them to admit; but the evidence is too clear for them to deny, so they just provide the information without comment. Armenia is the large area spreading out to the south and west of Mount Ararat. So, to this very day the Armenians claim these two grandsons of Noah as their ancestors. Ancient Armenia reached into Turkey. The name Turkey probably comes from Togarmah.

Again not all of the descendants of Ashkenaz settled in Armenia. Some of them migrated to Germany. *Ashkenaz* is the Hebrew word for Germany.

The next name mentioned is Magog. Magog is the Hebrew name for Russia (not Russia as we have come to know it, that is, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but the older, smaller, country of Russia). According to Ezekiel, Magog lived in *the north parts* ([Eze 38:15; 39:2](#)). If you travel due north from Israel, past Turkey, and across the Black Sea, you will arrive in the Russian Ukraine. According to Encyclopedi-a Britannica, the ancient name for the Ukraine is Scythia. Josephus records that those whom he called Magogites the Greeks called Scythians (1:6:1). *Scythe* is another name for a sickle. If anyone were required to associate some modern nation with the sign of the *scythe*, or sickle, the association would not be hard to make. We are all very well acquainted with the sign of the hammer and sickle. That modern Russian logo clearly identifies modern Russia with ancient Scythia, the ancient Magogites. The next son of Japheth is Madai. Along with Shem’s son Elam, Madai is the ancestor of our modern day Iranians. Josephus goes on to explain that the

descendants of Madai were called Medes by the Greeks. Every time the Medes are mentioned in the Bible the word is translated from the Hebrew word *Madai*. The Iranians are largely a combined race of people. They are a combination of the descendants of Madai and the descendants of Elam. After the time of Cyrus, who is supposed to have combined the Medes and the Persians (Elamites) into one kingdom, the Bible always (except for one instance) mentions the Medes in connection with the Persians. They became one kingdom, and were thus governed by one law (“the law of the Medes and the Persians” [Da 6:8,12,15](#)). In later history they were simply called Persians. Since 1935, they have insisted on being called Iran.

Javan, the name of Japheth's next son, is the Hebrew word for Greece. *Greece*, *Grecia*, or *Grecians* appears five times in the Old Testament, and it is always translated from the Hebrew word *Javan*. Daniel refers to Alexander the Great and calls him “the king of Grecia” [Da 8:21](#), literally “the king of Javan.” [Ge 10:4](#) goes on to name the sons of Javan, “Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim,” all of which have connections with the Greek people. The Elysians, an ancient Greek people, obviously received their name from Elishah. Hellas, an ancient name for Greece, probably comes from the name *Elishah*. Eleusis, the ancient Greek city where the Eleusinian Mysteries were celebrated, also is traceable to Elishah. *Tarshish*, or Tarsus, was located in the region of Cilicia. The entire region of Cilicia was originally called Tarsus. You may recall that Tarsus was the hometown of Paul (“Saul of Tarsus”). Encyclopedia Britannica says that *Kittim* is the Biblical name for Cyprus. The last son of Javan mentioned was Dodanim. The Greeks worshiped Jupiter under the name of Jupiter Dodanaeus, obviously a reference to this son of Javan. His oracle was at Dodena.

Next is Tubal. It seems clear that most of the descendants of Tubal settled in the vicinity of the Caucasus Mountains on the east of the Black Sea. Ezekiel mentions Tubal along with Gog and Meshech. “Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal,” [Eze 39:1](#). About 1100 B.C., Tigleth-pileser I, King of Assyria, refers to the descendants of Tubal as the Tabali. Encyclopedia acknowledges that the Tabali and Mushki, who settled in what is now the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic (the Russian Georgia) were “the Tubal and Meshech of Ezekiel.” The capital of Georgia is Tbilisi. One of their rivers is named Tobol. The connection is not hard to make.

Josephus says, “Thobel [Tubal] founded the Thobelites, who are now called Iberes” (1:6:1). The Spanish people claim to be descended from Tubal, and their ancient name *Iberia* is claimed to be derived from Tubal. The quote from Josephus makes it seem credible that some of the descendants of Tubal migrated from the region of the Caucasus Mountains to Spain. That seems even more credible, when we recall that, in the generations after the flood, there was a mass migration going on, radiating out from Mount Ararat. Also, as you will recall, the descendants of Gomer migrated from a region just to the southwest of Tubal through Gaul (present day France) on to Wales and the British Islands.

Meshech, the name of Japheth's fifth son is the ancient name for Moscow. Moscow is both the name of the capital of Russia, and the name of the region that surrounds the city. Until this very day, one section, the Meschera Lowland, still carries the name of Meshech, unchanged for over four thousand years. According to Josephus, the descendants of Tiras were called Thirasiensians. The Greeks changed their name to Thracians. The Greeks had a habit of changing the names of other people. You may remember that it was the Greeks who changed the name of Canaan to Palestine. Thrace reached from Macedonia on the south to the Danube River on the north to the Black Sea on the east. It took in much of what is now Yugoslavia. World Book Encyclopedia says that the people of Thrace were a savage Indo-European people, who loved warfare and looting. Mars the god of war, who was worshiped by the Romans, was earlier called Thuras or Tiras. This grandson of Noah was obviously the original for that pagan deity. So from their earliest history the Thracians worshiped their ancestor Tiras as Mars, the god of war.

It is a fact of nature that there are ethnic differences that attach to different races of people. For instance, by and large, the Jewish people have always been more successful business men than their Gentile counterparts. Germans are generally better mathematicians. America would have had a much harder time putting a man on the moon, had it not been for a German scientist by the name of Werner von Braun. Negroes have a natural sense of rhythm that others do not have. Those are characteristics, which, for the most part, belong to those people. All of this brings us back to the descendants of Tiras.

The descendants of those savage Indo-European people, who were long ago called Thracians, go to make up much of what is now modern day Yugoslavia. That explains a lot about what is going on in that land today. Serbs and Croats and Bosnians seem to be killing each other for the fun of it, and the outside world does not seem to be able to do anything about it. From time immemorial their ancestors worshiped Tiras, or Mars the god of war. Encyclopedia says they were "a savage Indo-European people who loved warfare and looting." That is a characteristic which attaches to the descendants of Tiras, and you can be sure that it is going to take more than a few United Nations advisors to get them to change their ways.

Next we come to the sons of Ham. [Ge 10:6](#), "And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan." The descendants of Ham live primarily in Southwest Asia and Africa. The Bible often refers to Africa as the land of Ham ([Ps 105:23,27](#); [106:22](#)).

The first mentioned is Cush. *Cush* is the Hebrew word for Ethiopia. Without exception the word *Ethiopia* in the Bible is always translated from the word *Cush*. The Ethiopians are descended from this grandson of Noah. Josephus says that the Ethiopians "are even at this day, both by themselves and by all men in Asia, called Chusites" (1:6:2).

Ham's next son was Mizraim. *Mizraim* is the Hebrew word for Egypt. The name Egypt appears hundreds of times in the Old Testament, and, with only one exception, it is always translated from the word *Mizraim*. You do not even need a lexicon to discover that fact. In Genesis chapter fifty, when the Egyptians accompanied the body of Jacob back to Canaan, the Canaanites observed the mourning of the Egyptians, and called the place *Abel Mizraim*. [Ge 50:11](#), “And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond Jordan.”

Phut, the name of Ham's next son is the Hebrew name for Libya. It is translated that way three times in the Old Testament. The ancient river Phut was in Libya. By Daniel's day the name had been changed to Libya ([Da 11:43](#)). Josephus says, “Phut also was the founder of Libya (sic), and called the inhabitants Phutites, from himself” (1:6:2)

Canaan, the name of Ham's last son is the Hebrew name for Palestine. The Greeks changed the name to Palestine, during the time of Alexander the Great. That name is far too well known by every Bible student to require any more comment on our behalf.

It is our purpose only to trace the sixteen grandsons of Noah, and not to spend time looking at their respective sons, but since we have spent some time with the sons of Gomer and Javan, perhaps, we should look very briefly at a few of the grandsons of Ham. We do not wish to labor the question. The descendants of several of the grandsons of Ham are very easy for even the most casual Bible reader to identify, and for that reason, we will only notice the connections in passing. There is Philistim, obviously the ancestor of the Philistines, and Sidon, the founder of the ancient city that bears his name, and Heth, the patriarch of the ancient Hittite empire, and the Jebusite (Jebus was the ancient name of the city of Jerusalem), and the Amorite, the Girgasite, the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite, ancient people who lived in the land of Canaan. The Amorites are very prominent in the history of that region.

The most prominent grandson of Ham was Nimrod, the founder of “Babel [Babylon], Erech, and Accad and Calneh. In the land of Shinar” ([Ge 10:10](#)). Nimrod figured very prominently in the early days of paganism. Any study of the sacred names of the various pagan religions becomes, virtually, a study in variant forms of the name of Nimrod. There is no other name that is so clearly traceable in the history of the different pagan religions. His city, Babylon, is synonymous with idolatry. But there is too much to be said about Nimrod to get started in this little book. Hopefully we shall take some time on that subject later.

Last, we come to the sons of Shem. [Ge 10:22](#), “The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.”

Elam is the ancient name for Persia, which is itself the ancient name for Iran. Until the time of Cyrus they were called Elamites, and they were still often called that even in New Testament times. The Jews from Persia, who were present at

Pentecost were called *Elamites* ([Ac 2:9](#)). Cyrus seems to have been the first to be called “the king of Persia” ([Ezr 1:1](#)). Since the 1930's they have insisted on being called Iran. It might be interesting to note that the word *Aryan*, which so fascinated Adolph Hitler, is a form of the word *Iran*. Adolph Hitler was this century’s most bitterly anti-Semitic leader. He hated the Jews with a passion; he wanted to wipe them off the face of the earth, and he wanted to produce a pure *Aryan* race of super men. But the very term *Aryan* signifies a *mixed race* of Semites and Japhethites. The Iranians are descended from Madai, the son of Japheth, and Elam, the son of Shem. It is not easy to think of anything funny with regard to Adolph Hitler, but the joke is on him. He chose a mixed race of Semites and Japhethites as the model for his pure race of supermen.

Asshur is the Hebrew word for Assyria. Assyria was one of the great empires of the distant past. It ranked along side of Babylon, and Egypt. Without exception, every time the word *Assyria* or *Assyrian* appears in the Old Testament, it is translated from the word *Asshur*. Asshur was also the name of the major god of the Assyrians. We mentioned before that the various nations tended to deify their very long-lived ancestors.

There is no race of people who bear the name of Arphaxad, the next mentioned son of Shem. Josephus says that the Chaldeans are the descendants of Arphaxad, and he is probably right, but it does seem possible that the reason there is no race of Arphaxadites is that his name was eclipsed by the name of his grandson Eber, from which we get the word *Hebrew*. Until the time of Abraham Eber was the only descendant of Shem who outlived him. Eber outlived his great-grandfather Shem by some twenty nine years, and he probably became the patriarch of the clan rather than his grandfather Arphaxad. At any rate the name of Arphaxad is largely forgotten in the historical record, while the name Eber (Hebrew) is firmly fixed on the pages of history.

Lud was the ancestor of the Lydians. Lydia was in what is now Western Turkey. Their capital was Sardis. You may remember that one of the seven churches of Asia was at Sardis ([Re 3:1](#)).

Aram, the name of Shem's remaining son is the Hebrew word for Syria. Again, without exception, any time the word Syria appears in the Old Testament it is translated from the word *Aram*. The Syrians call themselves Aramaens, and their language is called Aramaic. Aramaic, or Syriac, was one of the most prominent languages in the ancient world. Prior to the time of Alexander the Great and the spread of the Greek Empire, Aramaic was the international language. With the conquests of Alexander, Aramaic was replaced by the Greek language, but Aramaic was still the common language in Israel in the time of the apostles. On the cross, when the Lord cried out, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,” he was speaking Aramaic, the language of the common people. There are several other Aramaic expressions in the New Testament.

We have only taken the briefest glance at these sixteen men, who are the ancestors of all mankind, but we believe that enough has been said to show that

they really did live, that they are who the Bible says they were, and that their descendants are identifiable on the pages of history. We hope that we have shown in some small way that, not only is the Bible not a collection of myths and legends, but that it stands alone as the key to the history of the earliest ages of the world.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
They Shall Never Perish

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

“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 me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand,” [Joh 10:27-29](#).

There is an old saying, “Never say, Never; never is a mighty long time.” When somebody says, “I will never do thus and so, about as often as not, he finally gets around to doing it. And it has been my observation that when somebody says, “Such and such will never happen,” about as often as not, he is trying harder to convince himself than he is to convince you. But when God says, “Never,” he means, “Never.” And when God says, “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish,” you can be sure that his sheep, his people, are eternally secure in him.

I have heard it said that we do not actually have eternal life yet; we only have eternal life in prospect; we will receive eternal life at the resurrection. Well, that is not what the Bible says. “And this is the record that God *hath given* to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son,” [1Jo 5:11](#). The gospel *record* is that God has already given us eternal life; we are already saved, already born of his Spirit.

Notice the words, “This is the record.” In other words, “This is the gospel.” John was giving the definition of the gospel. I believe everybody ought to own a good dictionary. Our dictionary gets a lot of use. It is falling apart; you have to pick it up with both hands. I have to look up the definition of a lot of words. It is not uncommon for me to pop out of bed just about the time I ought to be going to sleep, and go to the dictionary to look up a word. My wife usually wants to know, “Won’t it wait until morning?” and my usual answer is, “In the morning I won’t remember what the word was.”

It is important to know the meanings of words if you are going to use them. You can get in trouble using words, if you do not know what they mean. You might say something you did not mean to say at all.

If a person is going to preach the gospel, he, at least, ought to know what the gospel is. If a person spends four years in college and three years in seminary,

and still does not know the definition of the gospel, I think he ought to ask for his money back. They did not teach him what he needs to know.

While a dictionary is a great benefit, the Bible defines its own terms better than the dictionary does. That is no reflection on those who compile dictionaries. All they try to do is to tell us what people mean when they use a particular word. The problem is that, especially in matters of religion, most people do not mean the same thing God does when he uses certain words. *Gospel* is one of those words that most people use to mean something entirely different than the Bible means when it uses the word.

Most religious people seem to think the gospel is an offer, a proposition. That is not the case at all. "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." By definition *gospel* means good news. It is the good news of what God has done on behalf of his people. It is not a proposition of what he will do if they come to terms.

Most people have it just backwards. They think the gospel gives instructions on how to get eternal life. The text teaches that the gospel is given to teach us that we already have eternal life, and it gives us the signs and characteristics of those who do have eternal life. It provides assurances for those who are born again that heaven is their home.

A few years ago a well known evangelist wrote a book entitled *How to be Born Again*. That is not the first time anybody ever wrote a book on a subject he did not know anything about. The good brother had not learned the definition of the gospel. It is not the purpose of the gospel to teach people how to be born again. It is the purpose of the gospel to teach them to know that they are already born of God' Spirit.

How do you know if you are born again? For one thing, if you have a genuine love for your fellow man, it is evidence that you are a child of God. The wicked do not have any such love. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and *everyone that loveth is born of God*, and knoweth God,"

[1Jo 4:7](#). That ought to be plain enough; if you love your fellow man, it is evidence that you love God, and that you are a child of God.

If you feel the Spirit of God stirring in your heart, it is evidence that you have been born again. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit *that we are the children of God*: and if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together," [Ro 8:16-17](#). God's Spirit does not reside in the heart of the wicked. If God's Spirit is in your heart, you are already heaven bought, heaven born, and heaven bound. But it is not our intention to write on the evidences of life; we will write more about that at another time. Our subject at the moment is the eternal security of the children of God.

A few years ago I was talking to a man on the job where I worked. He was not a religious man. Going to church and reading the Bible had never been part of his experience. But he was the sort of person you enjoy working with. If everybody on the job was as easy to get along with as he was, it would be a lot easier place to earn a living.

Finally, the subject got around to religion. That usually happens with me. He really did not know anything about religion, but he wanted to carry his end of the conversation, and, for want of anything better to say, he said, "Harold, do you believe that doctrine, *once saved, always saved*?" I told him I did, and he said, "Well, I don't believe it." I am sure he did not have any idea what he believed, but he was sure he did not believe in eternal security.

I don't like to argue about religion, but he had challenged one of our most cherished principles, and I felt like I had to respond. I was sure it would be a waste of time to quote a list of proof texts. Most people believe you can prove anything you want to prove by the Bible, if you just find the right proof text. They believe every denomination has their own favorite proof texts, and those texts prove the doctrines of that denomination. That is not right; the only thing you can prove by the Bible is the truth of the Bible, and that truth is entirely consistent. There is not one verse that contradicts any other verse. You can lift a verse out of context, and make it look like it says something it does not say at all, but if you apply the verse properly, it will not prove anything but the truth.

I knew I could not prove anything to him by quoting the Bible, but I knew that he and his wife had four children, and I asked him, "If one of your children were to wind up in the flames of eternal damnation, and it is within your power to get him out, what would you do? Now, there is no doubt that he deserves to be there, but he still your child; what would you do?" I said, "You don't have to answer me today; think about it a few days, and tell me what you would do."

He said, "You dummy, you know I don't have to think about that; I would get him out." I said, "You believe in *once saved, always saved*; you just did not know it. That is all we insist on. If one of God's children ever wound up in that terrible place, God would take that place apart to get his child out. Do you believe you love your children more than God loves his children? Do you believe your love for your children is more constant and more unconditional than God's love is?"

"My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," [Joh 10:29](#). Did you ever try to take anything away from somebody, when he had it clutched in his hand? You mothers, did you ever have to take anything away from one of the children, when he had it clutched in his hand? Perhaps, he had a marble in his hand, and

you knew that if you did not take it away, it would not be long till he would try to swallow it. It is in the nature of children to put everything they get hold of in their mouth. It was no real problem for you to take the marble away from him, but there is one thing necessary if you are going to take away anything somebody has clutched in his hand: you have to be bigger and stronger than he is.

And if anybody ever takes away one that God has in his hand, it will have to be somebody bigger and stronger than God is.

I love the types and comparisons and parallels of the Bible. The Bible teaches us about things we do not understand by showing how they are like things we do understand. The Bible uses figurative language to call up images in our minds to make the thought more clear to us. The Bible refers to the Lord as the Water of Life, the Bread of Life, the Tree of Life, the Good Shepherd, the Great Physician, and so on. That is figurative language, and it teaches us by making comparisons. We all know what water is like, what bread is like, and so on. Well, the Lord is like all those things, and those expressions impress that fact on our minds.

There are also some lessons to be learned from the contrasts of the Bible. To the heaven born soul, three of the most beautiful words in the language are, "He is able." "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself," [Php 2:20-21](#).

"Wherefore *he is able* to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

I would like to stand in every pulpit in the land; I would like to preach on every radio station in America, and preach that simple message, "He is able--he is able--he is able." "Wherefore *he is able* to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," [Heb 7:25](#). And here is the contrast, "My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and *no man is able* to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (vs 29). God is able to save them to the uttermost, and no man is able to pluck them out of his hand.

That is the big difference between the doctrine of the Bible and the doctrine of the world and the world's religion. The Bible says, "He is able," and the doctrine of the world says, "He is doing the best he can with the help he gets." Did anybody ever ask you for an explanation of the difference between the Primitive Baptists and other Baptists. When somebody asks that question, they usually do not want an hour long lecture; they just want a short statement of the difference. I cannot think of a shorter explanation, and it hits the nail

right on the head. The doctrine of the Bible says, "He is able," and the doctrine of the world says, "He is doing the best he can with the help he gets." The life of God is the ground, the foundation, of our life. Because he lives, we live. [Joh 14:19](#), "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me, because I live, ye shall live also." This verse indicates a cause and effect relationship. His life is the cause; our life is the effect. You will have to remove the cause, if you are going to remove the effect. You will have to destroy the life of God, if you intend to destroy the spiritual life of one of his children. Because he lives, and we are, by grace, joined to him, we live. There was an evil professor at Emory University, many years ago, who circulated the notion that God is dead. That does not surprise me. His god may be dead; his god was never really alive; but our God lives forever more. I like a little bumper sticker I saw a few days ago. It read: "You say that God is dead? Sorry to hear that; but my God is alive; I talked to him just this morning."

God provided Israel with six Cities of Refuge. When anybody fled to one of the Cities of Refuge, he could live there *as long as the high priest lived*. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Great High Priest. You and I are eternally secure *as long as he lives*. [Heb 7:23-25](#), "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, *seeing he ever liveth* to make intercession for them."

Somehow, some people have gotten the idea that the doctrine of salvation by the sovereign grace of God is a hard doctrine. There were those who believed that in the Lord's day. In the sixth chapter of John the Lord had preached the most beautiful sermon on the sovereignty of God. That chapter is just filled with good proof texts on sovereignty. But when the Lord finished that beautiful sermon on salvation by grace, a lot of the people said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it" (vs. 60). If they did not believe that doctrine when the Lord preached it, you can be sure that a lot of people will not believe it when we preach it in this day. Far from being a hard doctrine, the doctrine of salvation by the sovereign grace of God is the sweetest, the most comforting, the most soul cheering doctrine, that has ever entertained the hearts and minds of poor sinners of Adam's race.

But I will tell you what is hard doctrine: that doctrine that says a person may be born of the Spirit of God, and for thirty or forty years he does the best he can to serve the Lord. For thirty or forty years he lives in prospect of seeing the face of his Maker, and for all that time, the prospect of living with God, and with all the family of God, is the one thing that lifts him up, and gives him strength to endure his darkest hours. And then to think that in the last

years, or even the last weeks of his life, he might sin and lose it all—to think that God would mock his children, and tantalize them, by holding out the prospect of eternal heaven, and then at the last moment that he would snatch it away and plunge them off into the flames of eternal damnation—I tell you, that is hard doctrine; that is cruel doctrine. I would not accuse my worst enemy of treating his children the way those people who preach that doctrine accuse God of treating his own.

Over the years I have tried to come up with illustrations to explain these principles, and the best I can come up with is this: Suppose a man is out in the middle of the lake in a little boat, and a storm comes up. Before long the waves start to lap over the sides of the boat, and it goes down. He is in the water about to go under for the last time. He is half drowned and half conscious. At one moment his head is above the water, and the next moment it is below the water. It looks like any moment is going to be his last. About this time, two men come along in the biggest cabin cruiser you ever saw. They turn their boat and go over to where the man is. One of them throws him a life preserver. They tell me a drowning man will grab at anything, and he grabs the life preserver. He gets his hand on it, and works his arm through it, and as soon as he gets the life preserver up under his arm, one of the men says, “Hang on, fellow, I believe you will be alright now,” and he turns the boat and goes speeding on across the lake.

I really don't think that is what he ought to have done, do you? Let me ask you, when the good people in town hear about that, do you believe they might criticize those men? I think I might have some mean things to say about them, don't you? I believe they ought to have fished him out of the water and carried him to the other side of the lake, don't you? That is what the Lord does. He says, “He bare them, and carried them, all the days of old,” [Isa 63:9](#). And yet I hear people talk as if God saves somebody, and then says, “Hang on, fellow, I will be back in thirty or forty years to see how you made out.” Now you may object that nobody really preaches any such thing as they, but, quite the contrary, that seems to be the majority opinion among most religious people. It does not make any sense at all, but ever so many people believe it. Several years ago, two other preachers and I were on our way to a special meeting. We stopped at a grocery store, and another car pulled in beside us, pulling a boat. One of the preachers said, “Brother Hunt, did you see the sign on that boat?” I had, and I said, “I have an idea that I will preach on that before the day is out.” On the back of that boat was a little four by six sign saying, “I am saved, can I throw you a line?”

One of their hymns is entitled “Throw Out the Life Line.” But God does not just throw out a life line, and he does not depend on careless sinners to throw

out a life line to other sinners. He is the one and only Savior, and he does the saving himself. He does not depend on others to do the work for him.

When he saves somebody, he is safe. If a person is not safe, he is not saved, and if a person is forever in danger of falling away, losing his salvation, and suffering in eternal damnation, he is not safe—he is not saved.

Those who are born of the Spirit of God are not in danger of being lost. They are not in danger of eternal damnation. They are the children of God; they are the objects of his love, and he will not allow the objects of his love to suffer eternally.

[Ps 89:30-31](#), “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments.”

He is talking about the children doing wrong. He says the same thing four different ways, so there can be no doubt as to what he is saying. I have heard people say, “I wish the Bible was easier to understand.” I wonder how plain they want it to be? How easy to understand does it need to be? He says the same thing four different ways, so that if we might not understand one expression, we could not possibly misunderstand all the others.

Then, when he declares the security of his children in Christ Jesus, in spite of all the failures on our part, he says that four different times in four different ways. [Ps 89:33-34](#), “Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, my lovingkindness will I not utterly take away from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”

He says that if his children disobey, he will chasten them, but that chastening will not in any way alter his lovingkindness toward them, and it will not alter the covenant he has made on their behalf. I sit here wondering what comment I should make on those four expressions he uses to declare the constancy of his love toward his children, and his determination to do all he has promised to do on their behalf. But I realize that no comment is necessary. The language is too clear to be misunderstood. God loves his own; that love is eternal and unchangeable, and nothing in time or eternity can interfere with it. God will do all he has promised to do for his children; he will have every one of them with him in eternal heaven.

God gave his Son as the redemption price to pay the sin debt of his people. That chain of redemption is a golden chain which reaches all the way from eternity past to eternity to come.

[Ro 8:28-30](#), “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he

did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Notice that those who were chosen in eternity past are exactly the same people who will be glorified in eternity to come. Notice how Paul traces these same people from their being foreknown to their being glorified. No distinction is made between them; they are the same people.

One of the worst faults most people have is in failing to carry through with what they start. I have certainly had that problem. If I had carried through with all the sales campaigns I ever started, I would have made a lot more money than I ever did make. If I had carried through on all the study plans I ever started, I would probably preach a lot better than I do. But you can be sure that God carries through on what he starts. The religious world does not believe that. They believe he redeemed a lot more people than he will ever glorify. They believe he is doing the best he can with the help he gets, but he would do a lot better if he could get more help, if he could get better organized, if he could get more financial backing. But not so, God finishes what he starts.

[Php 1:6](#), “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” If God redeemed you by his grace, and quickened you by his Spirit, you can be sure that, one day, by his grace, he will finish the work. One day he will carry you home to glory. He does not begin a work, and never finish. He does not promise and never deliver.

[Ro 8:35-36](#), “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

Paul lists seven terrible calamities, and shows that none of them is able to separate any child of God from his love. Seven is a complete number. It signifies all of whatever is under consideration. If none of these great tragedies can separate any child of God from his love, there is nothing that can do it, because there is nothing bad that ever happened to anybody that is not contained in one or more of these expressions.

Tribulation: that is all the worst things that ever happened to anybody.

Distress: that is when you are in such trouble you don't know what to do, nor which way to turn.

Persecution: that is when people are mean to you, because of who you are, or what you stand for.

Famine: that is when you cannot provide yourself and those near and dear to you with sufficient food to sustain life.

Nakedness: that is when you cannot obtain the bare material necessities of life.

Peril: that just means danger, danger of being harmed, or danger of suffering great loss.

Sword: that goes beyond danger; it signifies actual bodily injury.

Paul could not paint a darker picture of great and terrible tragedies, and he assures us that none of these things can separate God's children from his love. Having said all of that, you would think Paul had made his argument as strong as it could possibly be made. There is nothing bad that ever happened to anybody that is not covered by one or more of those seven expressions. But then he makes his argument even stronger.

[Ro 8:38-39](#). "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."

Sometimes human language is not sufficient to carry the burden that is loaded on it. This is one such case. Human language groans under the load, and cannot entirely support it, but it does sufficiently express the thought, that there should be no doubt in anybody's mind as to what is being said. There is absolutely nothing which "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." If this language does not make the point, the point cannot be made.

Neither life nor death: nothing living nor dead can do it. That covers a lot of territory.

Nor angels: no one on earth knows how powerful the angels are, but they cannot do it.

Nor principalities nor powers: no organization of men can do it. No coalition of men can do it. No government of men can do it.

We hear a lot nowadays about world-wide conspiracies, occult conspiracies, conspiracies of international bankers to rule the world, and so on. Somebody is forever asking me, "Do you believe there is any such conspiracy. Of course there is a conspiracy to rule the world. That has been the motive of every conqueror and empire builder in every age of time. Name as many of them as you will: Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, the Roman Caesars (they came closer than anybody else ever did), Napoleon Bonaparte, Adolph Hitler, Worldwide Communism, the United Nations. They all have and have had the same goal. They want to rule the world. But men can put together as many organizations and coalitions as they will, but all their combined efforts can never separate one little child of God from his love.

Nor things present nor things to come: nothing that is, nothing that ever has been, and nothing that ever will be, can do it.

Nor height nor depth: nothing above us and nothing below us can do it.

Nor any other creature: that is the catch all. God is the one and only Creator. Everything outside of him is a creature. If the other expressions do not cover the ground (but they do) then this one does. There is nothing that can separate any child of God from his love.

In the last five verses of this chapter Paul is very nearly on shouting ground, and he builds to a crescendo, talking about the grace of God. I can almost see him now, as his chin begins to tremble, his hand shakes, and his eyes run over. Paul, the chief of sinners, has his eyes firmly fixed on his Redeemer. He cannot find any ground of hope in himself, and he will not even try. He knows, as every sinner should, that if he receives what he deserves, he will suffer eternally. Not one of us deserves a home in heaven, and if we were judged on our own merit, not one of us would ever be there. But Paul is not looking to himself, nor to any merit of his own. That is not the ground of his hope. He is looking to Christ, and his unchangeable, unwavering love of his own, as the basis of his hope of heaven.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Vanity Of Vanities

VANITY OF VANITIES

“The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity,” [Song 1:1-2](#).

The word *vanity* indicates something that doesn't do anything. It doesn't accomplish anything. It's not worth anything. It's a waste of time.

Now, with that in mind, notice that Solomon, this wisest of all men, says, “Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” He says it over and over. Everything is worthless; nothing does anything; nothing accomplishes anything; everything is a waste of time. If ever there was a text that requires some *rightly dividing* this one does.

The book of Ecclesiastes is, at one and the same time, the most optimistic, and the most pessimistic, of all books--depending on which part of the book you happen to be reading. I don't know any way you be any more pessimistic than Solomon is in this passage. “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity,” I.e. everything is a waste of time. And that brings us to the main theme of the book.

The main theme of the book of Ecclesiastes is that, regardless of what you do, or where you look, if you are looking for happiness and fulfillment in any other way than in your relationship with your Maker, you are wasting your time. More than that, it demonstrates that the harder you look in all the wrong places, the more miserable you are going to be.

Everything you do is a waste of time if you are not are not doing it with an eye on how best to please God. Everything you possess is worthless, if you do not realize you hold it as a trust from him. The life of Solomon, and the book of Ecclesiastes teach us in the most powerful way that nothing is more important than that we “fear God and keep his commandments” ([Ec 12:13](#)).

In order to get the lesson from what Solomon is saying, we need to know where he is coming from. Solomon identifies himself as the *son of David, king in Jerusalem*. He became king when his father David died.

Solomon became king at a very young age, and he recognized he was totally inadequate to the task. I never have been the king over anybody, but I believe God did once, many years ago, lay his hand on me and say, “Son, you’re going to have to preach.” That is a responsibility as great as the burden of any kingdom, and I might add, that anybody who does not realize that, has never learned what is involved in the gospel ministry. So, in some small way, I can relate to how Solomon felt. I am convinced that Solomon never felt any more inadequate to the task than I did.

It reminds me of the old boy who was making a speech about six months after he had taken a new job. He said, “Six months ago, when I took this job, I didn’t have any idea I could handle it; and now, six months later, sure enough, I was right.” Well, I can tell you, I was totally inadequate to the task, and Solomon was inadequate to his task.

Then, one night, God appeared to Solomon in a dream, and invited him to, “Ask what I shall give thee ([1Ki 3:5](#)).” That is about as open-ended an invitation as anybody could make. Bear in mind, this is God speaking. He owns everything there is. He created the heaven and the earth; it is his property, and he can dispose of it in any way he wishes. He can do whatever he chooses to do, and he did not place any restrictions on his invitation. He invited Solomon to just tell him what he wanted.

Solomon asked God for wisdom, for judgment. He did not ask to become the wisest of all men. He asked God to, “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people ([1Ki 3:9](#)).

God gave him wisdom; he made him wiser than all the men of that age. We are told that he was wiser than Ethan and Heman and Chalcol and Darba ([1Ki 4:31](#)). We don’t know much about those men, but I doubt they were four dummies. If I really tried, I think I could find four people in my home town, who are not quite as bright as I am. I have a few good candidates in mind. It wouldn’t mean much to compare him with four dummies. But these were not dummies. These were, no doubt, four of the most brilliant men. Solomon was wiser than any of them.

He didn't ask to be wiser than all men. He asked, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this thy people, that is so great," [2Ch 1:10](#). He asked for just enough wisdom that he would not mess up on the job.

Paul tells us God is "able to do exceedingly abundantly about all that we ask or think" ([Eph 3:20](#)). Sometimes we insult the Lord with some of our little requests. We ask for so little, when God is capable of doing so much. He did far more than Solomon asked for; he made Solomon the wisest of all men. Because he had not asked for wealth, or riches, or honor, or the life of his enemies, or long life for himself, God promised to give him all that, and much more.

Solomon conquered all the kings from the River Euphrates on the East, to the Mediterranean Sea on the West, to Egypt in the South. He subdued those kings, and as long as he lived, they were subject to him, and paid him tribute. Paying tribute means those kings collected from their own people, in order to subsidize Solomon and his people. He made gold and silver like stones in Jerusalem. His drinking glasses were made of gold.

God allowed Solomon to build him a house. His father David wanted to do it, and God would not allow him. He told David, "You're a man of war, you have shed much blood." But God did allow David to provide some of the raw materials that went into the building.

The description of Solomon's Temple tells us something about his wealth. Solomon's Temple was sixty cubits long; that is ninety feet long. It was twenty cubits wide; that is thirty feet wide, and thirty cubits, forty-five feet, tall. It had a forty-five foot ceiling.

It was gold plated inside and out. It was incrustated with precious jewels, and situated on top of mount Zion, towering over the city of Jerusalem. Can you imagine what that building must have looked like from a distance? Gold doesn't tarnish the way other metals do. That is one of the things that makes it valuable. Can you imagine a traveler approaching Jerusalem from a distance, and coming in sight of that gold plated building, situated on top of Mount Zion, and glistening in the hot Mediterranean sun? How it must have adorned the top of the mountain.

It took one hundred and eighty-three thousand, six hundred men, seven years to build it. There were thirty thousand men, who worked in the mountains by turns. There were always ten thousand in the mountains, and twenty thousand more at home, waiting to be called. There were another seventy thousand bearers of burdens, and eighty thousand hewers. And there were three thousand, and six hundred overseers of the work. Still it took those one hundred and eighty-three thousand men seven years to construct the Temple.

What a building it must have been. Considering that it was not a particularly large building, and it took almost two hundred thousand men seven years to build it, what craftsmanship must have gone into its construction.

The Queen of Sheba came from her country to see Solomon. When she saw the wisdom of Solomon, the apparel of his servants, the apparel of his cup bearers, the setting of his table, and how happy his servants were, she said, “It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes have seen it; and behold, the half was not told me,” [1Ki 10:6-7](#).

After he finished building the Lord’s house, he built a house for himself. It took thirteen years to build his house. Notice it took almost twice as long to build his house as it did to build the Temple. Granted, after the finished building the Temple, it may have taken him much longer to build his own house, because he laid off most of the men, and worked with just a skeleton crew, but I doubt that.

In the first place, nobody likes lay-offs. Can you imagine what it would have done to the economy of Israel, if he had laid off most of those one hundred and eighty thousand laborers. He would have had a rebellion on his hands. Once he got the momentum up, it is reasonable to think he kept most of those men working right on into the next project.

And then, after he built that, he built the house of the forest of Lebanon. We are not told how long it took to build that house, but we are told that it was almost twice as long and twice as wide as the Temple.

Solomon had wealth beyond calculation. He was the wisest of all men. He is one of the most famous men in the history of the world. Today, three thousand years later, his name is still legendary. People, especially Jewish people, still name their babies after Solomon. *Sol* is short for Solomon, and it is a very common nickname for Jewish men.

He reigned from an ivory throne. Sometimes a single ivory figurine can cost hundreds of dollars. His entire throne was made of ivory, and it was overlaid with gold. It was situated at the top of six massive steps. The throne had one lion on the right side, and another on the left. Solomon’s subjects approached his throne by six steps, and there was a lion to the left, and another to the right, on each of those steps. Those were probably ferocious looking carved lions. Their purpose was to intimidate anybody who approached the throne. There were fourteen lions in all, and they were intended as a reminder that when you were before this throne, you were in the presence of power. He had the power of life and death over you.

I am taking it for granted those were carved lions. From reading the text, we cannot be sure they were not real living, breathing, roaring lions. The

principle is the same either way. When anybody approached his throne, Solomon meant for him to be intimidated.

He had everything anybody could want, and a lot I don't know why anybody would want. We have pointed out several times that he was the wisest of all men, but for a while I want us to look at those areas in which he was (as we might say) as dumb as a post.

For one thing, I don't know what anybody would want with a thousand wives. I have one, and wouldn't take the world for her. I tremble to think where I would be today, if God had not provided me with her, but I don't want another one. Why would anybody want all the problems that came with a thousand wives. For one thing, a thousand wives come with a thousand mothers-in-law.

Actually he had seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, three hundred kept women. He is bound to have had wives he would not have recognized on the street, especially if he met one of them early in the morning, before she put on her *going out in public* face.

He had everything the carnal nature of man could conceivably want, but in this most pessimistic part of the book of the Ecclesiastes he tells how miserable he was. This part of the book of Ecclesiastes is so pessimistic that, as often as not, when I preach from the book of Ecclesiastes, I start at the conclusion, and work back to the beginning. I know you are supposed to start at the beginning, and work to the conclusion, but the beginning of this book is so pessimistic, and the conclusion is so much more encouraging, that I rarely have enough nerve to start at the beginning.

I'm like the little boy, who never could figure out why you should eat dessert last. He thought it made more sense to eat dessert when you were hungry, and had more capacity, and save all that other stuff for later. Well, usually, when I preach on this book, I do it that way, I start at the ending. That is where it gets more encouraging. But I want to start at the beginning, and notice how Solomons wealth, and power, and fame affected him. Here is this wisest, wealthiest, most famous, most powerful of all men, telling his experience. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

The word *all* is never absolute; it is always limited to *the entirety* of whatever is under consideration. It never applies to things not under consideration. But notice all that is under consideration.

Chapter two, verse one, "I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity." From listening to people talk, you could get the idea we were put here to be entertained. People are so concerned with entertainment. But God didn't put

us here to be entertained. He put us on earth to worship him, and he put us here to work.

One of my pet peeves is the way the people on television news are forever bringing out some entertainer to express his or her opinion on matters of great concern, as if that singer, or that actor, knew more about the subject than the rest of us. As often as not, I sit there and think, "Airhead, airhead, why don't they bring out somebody, who knows what is going on." I wish there was some kind of five year delay rule about interviewing celebrities. Require them to wait five years after the celebrity becomes so well known, before they bring him on television to tell us how we ought to handle the great problems of the day. Then, if they can still find him, and if there is anybody who still cares what he thinks, let him give his opinion. I believe that would cut way down on the celebrity interviews.

Solomon could not find happiness any other way, so he tried to find it in entertainment, but that did not help.

Verse two, "I said of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine." He indulged in all the low and base activities of the flesh, and he gained no satisfaction from that.

He tried to find happiness in his work. He said, "I made me great works; I builded me houses," ([Ec 2:4](#)). He built one palace that took thirteen years to build. And he built *houses*, more than one; he did not just build the house of the forest of Lebanon.

Can you imagine Solomon in his beautiful palace. The Bible doesn't give a detailed description of it the way it does of Solomon's Temple. It doesn't say it was gold plated the way the Temple was. It doesn't tell us it was encrusted with precious jewels. It may not have been any of those things, but I think it probably was.

It took thirteen years to build that house, and I have an idea he probably built it on top of a tall hill. Solomon could live anywhere he wanted to, and it is reasonable to think he built his palace on a tall hill, so he could look out over his realm.

It, no doubt, took tens of thousands of people thirteen years to build this house, and listen to how he describes the grounds. He says, "I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit." I have an idea he had his house situated where that he could sit on his ivory throne, and look out over his property. What a sight those gardens and orchards must have been. The house was forty five feet tall, so the throne room probably had a forty five foot ceiling.

Can you imagine this wealthiest, wisest, most famous of all kings sitting on an ivory throne, in this beautiful palace on top of a very tall hill, surrounded by

beautiful gardens, and orchards, and looking out over his realm. Can you imagine how he congratulated himself that he was the sovereign over all he could see in every direction, and for hundreds of miles beyond that.

He goes on to say, “I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house” ([Ec 2:5-7](#)). He had servants at his beck and call; they were there to do whatever he wanted done.

He says, “I gathered me also silver and gold.” He had more money than anybody could possibly need. If you are looking for happiness in money, you will never find it. In chapter five he says, “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver,” ([Ec 5:10](#)).

If you ever get the idea it takes material things to make you happy, it will not take you long to discover that you cannot pile material things high enough to gain happiness? You’ll discover you’re a lot like the old farmer, who was buying up all the land around him. Somebody accused him of wanting to own all the land. He said, “I’m not guilty; I don’t want to own all the land, I just want to own all the land that joins my property.” If it takes material things to make you happy, you’ll never find happiness.

He says, “I gat me men singers and women singers,” ([Ec 2:8](#)). Solomon didn’t have to buy the latest tape, or the latest CD, he could just send for the musicians, and dancers, and entertainers, and instruct them to give a command performance. And he could require them to stay, until he got tired of them; then he could send for somebody else.

“So I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me and whatsoever my eyes desired I kept not from them.” That’s summarizes it, doesn’t it? He says, “If I wanted it, I got it.”

And then in verse seventeen he says, “Therefore I hated life.” Can you imagine anybody accomplishing all Solomon accomplished, and having everything he had, and saying, “I wish I was dead.”

He would get that wish after awhile. It happens to all of us, eventually. In verse fourteen he says, “A wise man’s eyes are in his head, but a fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.”

I read bumper stickers. Some of them will not do to repeat, but some of them are pretty good. I read one lately that said, “Eat right, exercise, get plenty of sleep--die anyway.”

He says, “Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun; because I would leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labor

wherein I have labored, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity,” ([Ec 2:18-19](#)).

He says, “I hate everything I’ve done, because I will leave it unto the man that should come after me.”

I am sure you’ve heard of the very rich man who died, and the next morning everybody was wondering how much he left. Some smart aleck spoke up and said, “I know exactly how much he left, he left it all.” No matter how much you accumulate, unless you spend it before you die, you’re not piling it up for yourself, you’re piling it up or somebody else.

Somebody says, “I’m laying up for my kids.” If you could come back ten years after you leave this old world, you would probably find out those kids were a lot better at spending it, than you ever were at putting it together.

Sometimes, inherited money can be a curse. For that matter, you would have probably left them better off, if you had just equipped them, and taught them how to earn money for themselves, rather than leaving them enough money that they don’t have to work.

“Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labor, which I took under the sun, for there is a man whose labor is in wisdom, and knowledge, and equity; yet to a man who hath not labored therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil,” ([Ec 2:20-21](#)).

I sold life insurance for over twenty-four years. There was one objection that, perhaps, the majority of men had against buying life insurance. It was very rarely any man would have the audacity to say out loud, in front of his wife, why he would not buy the policy, but most of them had exactly the same objection, and every now and then one would have enough nerve to say out loud why he wasn’t going to buy it.

Once in awhile, one of them would say, “She’s an attractive young woman; she’ll marry again. If I were to die today, there’s no way she’s going to stay single. She will marry again, and do you mean to tell me you want me to pay my hard earned money to your company, so that, when I die, my wife can collect all that money, and spend it on some other man, that I probably wouldn’t even like if I knew him? There’s no way I’m going to spend my money, so she can live better with him than she ever did with me, and compare me unfavorably with him, because they’ve got my insurance money to make it easier for them to get along on.”

That’s nothing new. That’s exactly the way Solomon thought three thousand years ago. He thought, “No matter how hard I work, and how much I accumulate, I’m going to leave it to somebody who will come after me, and, who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool.”

But to go back to the beginning of the book, in chapter one, he says, “What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun,” ([Ec 1:3](#)). Did you ever talk like that? Did you ever say, “I get up early in the morning, I work all day, I go to bed, I get up as tired the next morning as I was when I went to bed. I work and toil all day from early to late. I go to bed. I get up tired the next morning. I work and labor, and I’m just as bad off today as I was yesterday. I’m worse off today than I was a year ago. I’m not making a bit of progress. What is the use?” Did you ever feel that way? Did you ever wonder, “What am I accomplishing? I’m not doing a bit of good.”

Several years ago, an old Tennessean earned a lot of money singing about that. I don’t know if Tennessee Ernie Ford ever saw the inside of a coal mine, but he made a lot of money singing about it. Some of you remember the song, “You load sixteen tons, and what do you get, another day older, and deeper in dept.”

If you never felt that way, you’re different from the rest of us. Most every one of us, at one time or another, has said, “What am I accomplishing? I work, I struggle, I toil, I do everything I can. I don’t know anything I can do, more than I am doing, and I’m not getting anywhere.”

That’s the way Solomon felt about it. This was the man who made gold and silver in Jerusalem as plentiful as stones. He built houses, that took tens of thousands of people years to build. And he still says, “I’m not getting anywhere, I am not accomplishing a thing.” He had conquered all the nations around him. They all brought him presents, and paid him tribute, and he still says, “I’m not getting anywhere.”

He is not just sorry for himself; he feels sorry for all of humanity. In verse four he says, “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever.” “One generation is born, they work, they live, they die. Another generation is born, they work, they live, they die. Another generation is born, they work, they toil, they die, and what do they accomplish? How is the world any better off, than it was before any of us was born? He says it’s all a waste of time. He’s sorry for mankind.

I have been so down in the valley I’ve felt sorry for myself, but I never have been so distressed that I felt sorry for all of mankind, but Solomon felt sorry for mankind. He thought everybody else was in the same frame of mind he was.

He was sorry for the sun. He says, “The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place to where he arose, ([Ec 1:5](#)). He says, “The sun comes up, and the sun goes down. One day ends, another day begins, and what good does it do. The sun comes up and the sun goes down. One day

ends, another day begins, and we're right where we were before." He feels like the sun is just going around in circles. It is not getting anywhere.

He is even sorry for the weather. "The wind goeth toward the south, turneth about unto the north, it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits ([Ec 1:6](#))." That is what the weather man calls the *jet stream*. He is sorry for the jet stream; he thinks it is just like the sun; it is just going around in circles. When a man gets sorry for the weather he's in bad shape.

I don't anyway anybody can get any lower than this man was. He had everything that ought to make anybody happy, and he was even sorry for the wind.

He is sorry for the river. He says, "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come thither they return again," ([Ec 1:7](#)). I am very poor at remembering the words to songs, but most of you are acquainted with the song that goes, "Ole Man River, you just keep rolling along." Can you imagine somebody standing on the river bridge that crosses the Mississippi River at Memphis, and saying to the river, "Ole Man River, you are just wasting your time; you been running and running for thousands of years; you have dumped all this water into the Gulf of Mexico, and you still don't have it full; you might as well quit."

I know somebody is saying, "Harold Hunt, you are just being silly." No, I am just commenting on how twisted Solomon's thinking was about this time. He was looking for happiness in all the wrong places, and there is no way he could be any more pessimistic, any more depressed. You couldn't be any richer than this man was. You could not be any more famous. And you could not be any more miserable.

Let's shift gears for a few moments. It gets better. In the very end of the book Solomon says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man," ([Ec 12:13](#)). He says, "This is all that makes any difference."

No matter what your lot in life may be, if you are born of the spirit of God, you are an heir to all that heaven is, heir to all that heaven means. Paul says we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ," [Ro 8:17](#).

We are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We Old Baptist preachers love to point out the difference between being joint heirs and equal heirs. He didn't say we are equal heirs. Somebody says, "Brother Hunt, I want to be an equal heir in the estate." Well I don't. Do you see, if we are equal heirs, every person owns an equal portion along with everybody else? And any person could conceivably forfeit his portion. But if we are joint heirs, nobody can sell until everybody sells. And no matter who might decide to sell out, we are joint

heirs with Jesus Christ and Paul tells us, “He remaineth faithful, he cannot deny himself.” He’ll never sell out.

We’re joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. That means that every one of us owns the entire estate. We own it jointly with every other child of God, and we own it jointly with the Lord. If we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ, that means that by grace, being members of the family, we own everything the Lord Jesus Christ owns.

Think about that, we own everything God owns--we own it jointly with him. I like an expression I borrowed from an old black preacher out of Texas. The old brother was commenting on the notion that God is dead. He said, “You tell me God is dead? Why did they not run the notice in the paper?” He wanted to know, “What funeral home handled the service? Where is the cemetery where he’s buried? And why was I not notified, I’m a member of the family?”

By grace, you and I are members of the family, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Now, if you live like a pauper, and dress like a pauper, and eat like a pauper, and think like a pauper, you might as well be a pauper.

But we don’t dress like paupers, we’re dressed with the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. We don’t eat like paupers. We eat of that manna from on high. We don’t think like paupers. Being born of the spirit of God, we are of the seed royal, we are members of God’s family; and we are just waiting for that day when we can join all the royal family in that eternal home God has provided for his redeemed.

We are not going to be waiting nearly as long as I used to think we were. I used to think of the prospect of living seventy, eighty, ninety years or more, and that seemed like a terribly long time.

Now I do a little arithmetic, and I realize we are not here for long. I never will forget the day I turned thirty-five, I multiplied that by two, and it came out seventy, and I’ve not been the same since.

That didn’t have near the effect it did, when I turned fifty. When I turned fifty, the thought hit me, “Harold Hunt if you’re going to do any preaching, you had better get busy; you are not going to be here long.” I was flat broke, and that is not just a figure of speech. I was not the pastor of any church; I was preaching wherever I was sent for. Our entire family fortune was enough to live about ten days, but I quit my job, and I have spent virtually every waking hour since, either preaching, or getting ready to preach.

What is your life? It is just a vapor. We are not going to be here long. In a very little while, you and I are going to leave this world, and we are going to

come into full possession of all God has, of all Jesus has. We are heirs with God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Somebody says, "Well, Harold Hunt, if I'm an heir to all that, I wouldn't mind having an advance on it every now and again." If you are not receiving regular advances on that inheritance, you are doing something wrong, because God does just that. He gives his children regular advances on all we are going to receive after awhile.

Every time you feel the Spirit of God stirring in your heart, you are receiving an advance. Every time you see evidence of the providence of God working in your life, you are receiving an advance. Every time you meet with the saints, and enjoy their fellowship, you are receiving an advance on the fellowship we will enjoy in that eternal city. Every time you hear the gospel preached in power, you are receiving an advance on the greater knowledge we will receive after awhile. Every time you see evidence of the Spirit of God in the countenance of those around you, you are getting a preview of the joy of heaven above.

No wonder Paul said, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," [Heb 11:1](#). Substance is that which you can lay hold on. Faith is more than the mental acknowledgment of certain Bible truths. Faith is the very substance of heaven itself. It is a foretaste of heaven itself; it is that part of eternal heaven we already have in our hearts.

"Faith is the substance of things hope for," but bear in mind, that we are not hoping for eternal life. If we have been born of God's Spirit, we already have eternal life. John says, "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, ([1Jo 5:11](#))." We already have eternal life. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and what we are hoping for is heaven itself. Faith is that part of heaven we already have in our hearts. It is an advance on better things to come.

Faith carries it's own evidence. How do we know there's a heaven? John tells us he saw "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," [Re 22:1](#). How do we know that river really exists? How do we know we will ever receive any benefit from it? We know that pure river of water of life exists , because it flows through our hearts while we live down here. So long as we live in fellowship with him, we are able to drink from that crystal clear water that flows from on high.

Being of the see royal, being born of his spirit, and being members of the family, we are heirs of all heaven is, and all heaven means. Nothing else means anything.

All the rest of it, all that is out there, is "vanity of vanities, and vexation of spirit." As long as we have fellowship with him, why should we worry about

anything? Paul says, “For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” [2Co 4:17](#). No matter what you and I may suffer here in this world, it is just *light affliction*.

Paul said, “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore or die, we are the Lord’s,” [Ro 14:8](#). No matter what happens, we are his; he will take care of us, and one day take us home to be with him.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Water Baptism

WATER BAPTISM

There is a beautiful simplicity in those ordinances the Lord has provided for the New Testament Church. “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward,” [2Co 1:12](#). Under the Law of Moses there was such a long list of sacrifices, and feasts, and ceremonies, that you have to wonder how they managed to keep them all straight. Every observance differed from all the others, and it had its own list of minute details, and conditions, to be observed.

The Lord has provided the New Testament Church with just two ordinances—water baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. He has also provided footwashing as an *example* (not actually an ordinance), which it is the great joy of his church to observe in connection with the Lord’s Supper. Those services are very simple, and very clear, in the purpose for which they were intended, and in the lessons they teach. They are the property of the Lord’s church. He has given them for our benefit, and we ought to guard them, and protect them to the very best of our ability. It is our great joy, not only to claim those ordinances as the property of his church, but to observe them, and preserve them, through the ages, and to learn all we can from the simple lessons they teach.

The Purpose of Baptism: Baptism by immersion in water, upon a profession of faith in Christ Jesus, is the manner God requires in which for his obedient children to publicly profess our faith in him. He created us, and saved us by his grace, and he has a right to expect us to publicly profess our faith in him. Baptism by immersion in water is the manner he requires for that public profession.

Not only does he require baptism of his children; he has set water baptism as the boundary line between gospel disobedience and disobedience. When Peter

says, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ,” [Ac 2:38](#), he was not giving an invitation; and we make a mistake when call it an invitation. He was telling us what we must do in order to follow Christ in gospel obedience. The call to be baptized is not an invitation; it is a commandment.

A person may be baptized and still not be obedient to God’s commandments; but nobody can be obedient to his commandments without being baptized.

Water baptism has nothing to do with eternal salvation. The failure to be baptized will not interfere with God’s purpose to save his redeemed, and to house them with him in eternal heaven; but it has everything to do with our gospel obedience, and our enjoyment of the blessings of God in this life. In order to enjoy those benefits that are available to the child of God in gospel obedience a person must be baptized in water. Once a born again person is taught his duty with regard to baptism, his failure to be baptized is simply rebellion against God’s command, and no one can expect to enjoy the blessings of God while he is in a state of rebellion.

The language is clear and to the point; we are commanded to be baptized. Notice that when Christ referred to the baptism of John he uses John’s baptism to draw a clear and distinct boundary line between those who *justified God* and those who *rejected the counsel of God against themselves*, and he shows that boundary line to be water baptism.

[Lu 7:29-30](#), “And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.” He does not leave us an option; we are commanded to be baptized.

Notice that they *justified God* by being baptized. To *justify* signifies to *declare to be just*; that is, by being baptized, they declared that God is just in all he says and does. He is just in delivering us from our sins, and he is just in requiring us to indicate our hope in him by being baptized.

The opposite of *justify* is *condemn*. If we justify God by being baptized, it follows that we condemn him by refusing to be baptized. You cannot acknowledge the one without the other.

By being baptized we declare that God is just in all he says and does; he is just in what he requires of us. By refusing to be baptized we declare that he is unjust; especially, we indicate that he is unjust in requiring us to be baptized. We indicate that he has no right to make such a demand.

Indeed, baptism in water has nothing to do with our eternal salvation, but it is, nonetheless, a serious matter for any person who has a hope of heaven to refuse to be baptized.

Qualifications for Baptism: On the one hand, the commandment is, “Repent and be baptized every one of you.” On the other hand, there are some qualifications for baptism. Not everybody is a proper subject for baptism. Unbelievers are not to be baptized. The Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip, “What doth hinder me to be baptized?” [Ac 8:36](#). There are some things that do hinder baptism, and when those hindrances are in the way, the minister cannot proceed with the baptism. Philip answered, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,” ([Ac 8:37](#)). If a person clearly does not have faith in Christ and his redemptive work on behalf of his people, he is not to be baptized. It is by baptism that a person publicly professes faith in Christ, and gains membership in the church. The church is *an assembly of baptized believers*. It is not an assembly of unbelievers. No assembly could claim to be a church if it was made up of unbelievers. It might be a social club; but it is not a church.

Infants are not to be baptized. This same text is the death knell to infant baptism. Philip says clearly enough, “If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.” In other words, one who does not believe cannot be baptized, and little babies are not capable of believing. They may come to believe later, and that will be soon enough to baptize them, but until that day the Bible is clear enough; they cannot be baptized.

Those who show no signs of repentance are not to be baptized. Or to put it another way, those who have never seen themselves as sinners, cannot be baptized. That is the Bible pattern. When those proud, arrogant Pharisees and Sadducees came to John the Baptist to be baptized, John refused, and he refused in no uncertain terms. He called them a *generation of vipers*, a family of snakes ([Mt 3:7](#)), and told them that in order for him to baptize them they must *bring forth fruits meet for repentance* ([Mt 3:8](#)). It is penitent believers who are to be baptized; and proud, arrogant, self righteous individuals are not really believers, no matter how much they may protest to the contrary. A self-righteous attitude indicates that one has not seen himself for the sinner he is, nor the Lord for the Savior he is. One who has seen something of his own unworthiness is filled with self-loathing, and he falls humbly before the feet of Jesus. He presents himself for baptism in humble submission to the command of his Lord. He does not request baptism as something he has the right to demand.

Again, there are those whose lives, or whose living conditions, prevent them from being baptized. [1Co 6:9-10](#), “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, no adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” It is by being baptized upon a

public profession of faith in Christ that a person gains membership in the Lord's church. In this passage Paul provides a list of those who cannot have membership in the Lord's church— those who cannot be baptized.

There is repentance available for any sin a person can repent of, and turn from, and Paul shows in the next verse that some of the members of the church at Corinth had, indeed, been guilty of some of those sins, and had turned from them; but so long as they were in those conditions, or were involved in those kinds of conduct, they could not *inherit the kingdom of God*. “And such **were** some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,” ([1Co 6:11](#)).

We have no right to complain about those requirements the Lord has laid down for membership in the church. It is his church and he has the right to say who will be its members.

The mode of Baptism: *Baptize* is a transliteration of the Greek word *Baptizo*. By *transliterate* we mean the word was not translated; it was simply transposed into the English language by substituting the English letters for the corresponding Greek letters. The final *o* (omicron) in the Greek became the English letter *e*. The Greek word is *baptizo* and that word came from *bapto*. It means to plunge, to dip, to immerse. Baptism is a symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also a symbol that this child of God is dead to sin—and to the law—and that he has risen to walk in newness of life with his Lord.

If to baptize means to plunge, dip, or immerse, then baptism must be a plunging, dipping, or immersing. Baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in order to be a clear symbol it must involve a symbolic burial. [Ro 6:4](#), “Therefore we are buried (literally, completely buried) with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Any form that does not involve the complete immersing of the body in water does not constitute a burying; it does not constitute baptism.

Baptism by immersion in water is a very clear symbol. When a person is baptized, he closes his eyes, folds his hands over his chest, momentarily ceases to breathe, becomes completely passive, yields himself into the hands of the minister, is lowered beneath the surface of the water, is then raised up from the water, usually shakes his head, opens his eyes, and again begins to breathe and manifest signs of life.

It is impossible for human ingenuity to devise a clearer symbol of death, burial, and resurrection than God has provided for us in baptism by immersion in water.

John the Baptist was the first to baptize, and he baptized by immersion in water. [Joh 3:23](#), “And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was *much water* there.” It does not take much water to sprinkle a few drops on somebody’s head, but it takes a lot of water to immerse him. John baptized in the river of Jordan, because it takes a lot of water to baptize somebody. It takes a lot of water to bury him. [Mr 1:4-5](#), “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.” He baptized them in the river, that is, he plunged them in the river.—he immersed them.

This has been the doctrine of our people all through the ages. Perhaps, a few quotes from some of our ablest ministers from the past will illustrate the point.

C.H. Cayce: “We do no violence to language if we take a word out of a sentence and put another word in its place that means the same thing as the word taken out. If we do this we are doing no violence, and are not changing the meaning of the sentence. The word *sprinkle* means “to scatter in drops or small particles.” Now try the language, “And were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan.” The sentence reads alright that way, and is found in [Mr 1:5](#). Remember, we do no violence by removing or taking a word out, and placing the true meaning of the word in the place of it. So, “and were all dipped of him in the river of Jordan.” The sentence still reads all right. “And were all immersed of him in the river of Jordan.” It is alright yet. “And were all scattered in drops or small particles of him in the river of Jordan.” The sentence is all wrong now. Why? Because baptism is not sprinkling; it is dipping, immersing. Read the account of the baptism of the eunuch in the eighth chapter of Acts and apply the same rule, and you will have it that Philip scattered the eunuch about in drops or small particles. He did not do this, but ‘they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch,’ and Philip baptized him, dipped him, immersed him.”

“Suppose some of your dear friends or near relatives were to die, and some person should carry their body to the cemetery and pour or sprinkle a little dirt on their head, and then say we have buried your relative or friend. Would you consider the people to be your friends who would do this? No; you would consider them as your enemies. Now read [Ro 6:4](#), ‘Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.’ The apostle here plainly says we are ‘buried with him by baptism.’ If we are buried by baptism, then baptism must be a

burial—it must be an immersion. Anything short of a burial, therefore, is not baptism, for we are buried by it. Then as baptism is a burial, how can we claim to be Christ’s friends when we say we baptize his friends who are dead to sin by sprinkling or pouring a little water on their heads? Let us prove our faith by our works. We have faith that Christ died, was buried, and rose again. Let us show that faith by being buried with him by baptism, and arising to walk in newness of life.” (C.H. Cayce vol. 1 pg. 46)

Authority to Baptize Baptism is Christ’s ordinance. It belongs to him, and he calls, appoints, and sends out those whom he will have to administer it. They were first, baptized, and ordained, and then sent out. [Joh 15:16](#), “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” That was the pattern when the Lord called his own disciples, and the pattern is the same today. In order for any minister to have authority to baptize he must be (1) called by the Lord to preach, and (2) ordained under the authority of the church. [Ac 13:2-3](#), “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” Notice that the Holy Ghost says *I have called them*. The ordination was performed by the presbytery, under the authority of the church, and by the direction of the Holy Spirit, but the calling was from God. If a man has not been called of God to preach the gospel, he is not to be ordained, and he has no authority to baptize.

Sylvester Hassell: “Question: ‘Was John’s baptism Christian baptism, and were the baptisms practiced by the disciples of Christ previous to his crucifixion identical with those practiced by his apostles after his ascension? And did John baptize in any name, and, if in the name of Christ, was Christ baptized in his own name?’”

Answer: “John’s baptism was from heaven, and he therefore baptized by the authority or in the name of God. He baptized Christ, although Christ was sinless, to fulfill all righteousness; that is, to do the righteous will of God, to point forward to Christ’s atoning death for our sins and his resurrection for our justification, and to show the example that we are to follow. Though Christ had no sin of his own, he was the representative of his sinful people. He was a real man, as well as the real God, and he was baptized and labored and suffered and bled and died and rose as a man. Some of John’s disciples whom he had baptized followed Christ, and were not baptized in water again, so far as we are told in the Scriptures. The baptisms performed by Christ’s disciples before his crucifixion were undoubtedly in the name, or by the authority, of God (Christ is God), and did not have to be repeated, and were

therefore substantially the same as those performed by his apostles after his ascension, though the form of words used was not probably the same; the Scriptures do not tell us the form of words used in the baptisms performed by John, or in those performed by the disciples of Christ before his crucifixion, and it is, therefore, not necessary for us to know that form of words. An attempt to be wise above what is written, and speculation upon things that the Lord has not revealed to us, are not only unprofitable, but injurious to the people of God, tending, not to edify and unite, but to confuse and divide them.”

The Symbolism of Marriage in Baptism Baptism is the ceremony by which the Lord’s obedient children, the bride of Christ, are married to the Lord. We were by nature married to the Law, but Christ has fulfilled every requirement of the Law on our behalf, and the law cannot require anything more of us. The law required perfect obedience, and on our behalf he provided perfect obedience. The Law called for the death of sinners, and in our room and stead he died. When Christ died and went to the grave on our behalf, every requirement of the law went there with him. By his suffering and death we are dead to the Law, and the Law is dead to us. The marriage ceremony states that the union is binding *until death do us part*. Now that Christ has suffered and died in order to satisfy every demand of the law, our first husband, the Law, is now dead. Our first husband being dead we are free to be married to another—to be married, that is, to Christ.

[Ro 7:4](#), “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

Question: In baptism, does the subject become married to Christ, or does he actually become married to the church. Answer: Both. The Bible says it both ways.

[Isa 62:5](#), “For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.”

The text in Romans talks about our being married “to him that is raised from the dead,” in other words, to Christ. The text in Isaiah talks about our being married to the *virgin* bride of Christ, the church. Christ is the bridegroom; the church is his bride. As the *young man*, the subject of baptism, is married to the church, he becomes a part of the bride of Christ, hence, married to him.

S.A. Payne: “In [Mal 3:1](#), same verse referred to, it is said, ‘And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.’”

“Who is this, but the Savior coming to John on the bank of Jordan? And in coming to him he comes to, or confronts those whom John has made ready. He calls this, coming to his temple. Here is where the marriage occurs.”

“We hear John exclaiming, ‘Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.’ Here is the midnight cry, ‘Behold the Bride-groom cometh, go ye out to meet him.’ “Those who were ready, who were prepared in heart, and had obeyed the teaching of John, were admitted to the marriage.”

“Hence, Christ suddenly came to his temple, ‘even the messenger of the covenant ‘whom ye delight in.’ This was fulfilled in Jesus’s approach to John, and those whom he had baptized, here the union of the Bride and Bridegroom was effected, and the church, there began in its incipency—began to be builded.”

Rebaptism : The question is often asked, “If I have been baptized before, why must I be baptized again in order to join your church?” If your husband dies and you take a new husband, you need a new marriage ceremony. If you have become dead to the law as it is taught by the denominational churches, and made alive to the gospel as it is taught by the true church, it is your place to be married to Christ in baptism.

Sylvester Hassell on Infant Baptism: “It is claimed that Irenaeus was born A.D. 97, and that he makes one allusion to infant baptism. The fact is that both the date and place of Irenaeus’s birth and death are unknown. The ablest scholars believe that he was born between A.D. 120 and 140; and some suppose that he died A.D. 202. His book against Heresies was composed, says Mr. Schaff, between the years 177 and 192. In that book he says that ‘our Lord came in order that through himself he might save all men, infants, and little ones, and children and youths and elders, even all who through him are born again unto God.’ The expression ‘*born again*’ is said, in the early so-called ‘Father,’ *habitually* to mean ‘*baptized*,’ but it remains to be proved that it *always* has that meaning, and that it has that meaning in the sentence just quoted from Irenaeus. The phrase ‘through him,’ instead of ‘through water,’ militates emphatically against the idea of baptismal regeneration in this passage—so admit the German scholars. The earliest *undoubted* reference to child baptism is by Tertullian of North Africa (born 160 A.D., died between 220 and 240—converted about A.D. 190), and he earnestly opposes it.

Certainly then, child baptism must have been, not of apostolic, but of recent origin, when Tertullian wrote. Bunsen shows that Tertullian was not arguing against *infant baptism* at all, then unknown, but against the baptism of little growing children from six years old, who could go down with the other catechumens into the baptismal bath, but were not yet in a state to make the proper responses. This custom was coming into fashion, but Tertullian rejects it. From boys of ten, who might possibly sometimes give evidence of sincere

piety, the clergy advanced to take in those of six or seven responded for by others, though able to descend into the water, unaided with the adult catechumens. Then those of three or four, when just able to repeat a few of the sacred words, as Gregory Nazianzen recommends, were, by a further corruption, brought by baptism into the fold of the 'church' From this very circumstance would arise the strongest argument for going a step further. For since in these very young children baptism could not be a profession of personal faith, it could only lead the masses to suppose that it acted as a charm, and that the child was *more safe* in case of death, a view carefully cherished by the clergy. Thus arose the belief that *all* even infants, dying without baptism, would be lost; and hence followed the baptism of babes eight days old, and even those of a day. The first *known* instance of this last was A.D. 256, in North Africa, and these ideas slowly and gradually pervaded the 'church' as Neander has shown. A host of authorities fully sustain this view of the origin of infant baptism.' 'The Catholic practice of pretending to make even infants catechumens, or rudimentally instructed in Christianity, before baptism, is an undesigned proof of the correctness of the above explanation, and of the truth of Baptist principles.'— . *F. Curtis*. Dean Stanley says that there is but one known instance of infant baptism in the third century, though he defends the practice as being 'a standing testimony to the truth, value, and eternal significance of natural religion,' and as showing that, 'in every child of Adam, whilst there is much evil, there is more good.' "The baptism of youth, it is maintained by many, began in this [fourth, ed.] century. In the year 370 the Emperor Valens sent for Basil to baptize his dying son Galetes; the ground of the request was the illness of the youth. Basil refused to do it, and it was eventually done by an Arian bishop. If an emperor's son must be baptized before he died, although destitute of faith, of course the next highest in authority must have the same privilege accorded him, and so on down to the lowest officer and the poorest and most obscure man in the empire. And upon similar grounds it came to be urged that if young men and youths, who were taught to ask for baptism, could receive it and thus escape eternal punishment, the same blessing ought to be conferred on poor helpless infants, who could not even speak for themselves and knew not anything. So that it was agreed eventually that they should also be baptized as soon as born or soon thereafter, so that they also, by this means, in case of death, might escape the flames of hell! And either about 256 A.D. In Africa, or 370 A.D. In Rome, is where youths' and children's baptism, without faith, came from; not from Christ or his apostles. Be it remembered, then, that *370 years after the birth of our Savior*, an emperor's child was baptized by an Arian Bishop—*having been refused by one of the Athanasian or orthodox party!*"

“During the first three centuries Christian congregations all over the East continued separate independent bodies, unsupported by government and consequently without any secular power over one another. All this time they were Baptist churches; and though all the ‘fathers’ of the first four ages down to Jerome were of Greece, Syria, and Africa, and though they give great numbers of histories of the baptism of adults, yet there is not (if we except the case referred by Fidus to Cyprian, 256 A.D.) one record of the baptism of the baptism of a child till the year 370, when Galetes, the dying son of the Emperor Valens, was baptized by order of a monarch, who swore he would not be contradicted (see Rob. Res., p.55).” (G.H. Orchard)

Alien Baptism: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” [Mt 20:19-20](#).

The only people who are authorized to baptize are those whom God has called to preach, and who are teaching what he taught. The baptism any man administers is only as good as the doctrine he teaches. If any person whom God has not called to preach, or who does not preach what Christ preached, does go about to administer baptism, he has no authority to do so. He is a free lance operator—he is operating on his own. He, and perhaps his ‘church,’ have simply set up for themselves. No ‘church’ can claim to be Christ’s church which does not teach as he taught, and no minister can claim to be administering Christ’s baptism at the same time he opposes Christ’s doctrine. He may get people wet, but he cannot baptize them. He is somewhat akin to the printer, who decides to begin printing one hundred dollar bills. The product may look very much like the real thing, but the man had no authority to print them: they are counterfeit.

An assembly may look very much like a New Testament church, but if it does not advocate those principles taught in the Scriptures, it is not the Lord’s church, and any baptism administered under its authority is invalid baptism—alien baptism—and no New Testament Church can honor that baptism.

C.H. Cayce: “Baptism must be administered by one who has been set apart by the church to the work whereunto God has called him, if it be gospel baptism. ‘As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.’—[Ac 13:2-4](#). Here we have the called ministers of Christ set apart by the church for the work whereunto the Lord had called them. It is a part of the work of the ministry to administer the ordinances.

Those who are commanded to teach, as ministers of the gospel, are the same who are to baptize. ‘Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’—[Mt 28:19-20](#). In this text the same persons who are commanded to go teach are also commanded to baptize. It is the work of the ministry to go teach the things concerning the kingdom of Christ, and it is the work of those who teach these things to baptize those who are taught. The Primitive Baptists are the only people, in our judgment, who are teaching as Christ commanded. They are teaching the true doctrine of God our Savior. Hence, the Primitive Baptist ministers are the persons who are authorized by the Savior to administer baptism. Others are not teaching the doctrine of God our Savior, are not teaching the things commanded by the Savior, so are not authorized by him to administer baptism. If they baptize, it is without the authority of Christ. Baptism administered without the authority of Christ is not gospel baptism. This is a good reason why Primitive Baptists do not receive the baptism administered by Methodists, Missionary Baptists, or other people. We do not think the doctrine or principles they hold to and teach are true, and the baptism they administer is no better than the doctrine they teach.”

“‘And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’—[Lu 22:29-30](#). The Savior has appointed a kingdom for his people here in the world, that they may have a blessed home here on earth, that they may eat and drink at his table in his kingdom—only one. ‘There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.’—Solomon’s [Song 6:8-9](#). The church of Christ is but one. There are many institutions, but of all the institutions of the world, only one is the church of Christ. The Savior has never authorized the queens nor concubines nor the virgins to administer the ordinances of his house. These queens, concubines, and virgins represent the many institutions that are in the world. Jesus has never commanded that his ordinances be administered in these institutions. His love, his dove, his undefiled, is but one. That is his church or kingdom, which is but one. He has authorized and commanded that his ordinances be administered in this one kingdom. They cannot be administered elsewhere so that they will be recognized or approved by him. He does not approve of anything being done in a place where he has not commanded. We think the Primitive Baptist Church is the true church of Christ, the kingdom he set up while he was on earth. If it is, then, that is the place where the ordinances are to be

administered. This is another reason why we do not accept the baptism administered by other people. If the Primitive Baptist Church is the church of Christ, the others are not. If any of the others are the church of Christ, then the Primitive Baptist Church is not the church of Christ.”

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye are also become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”—[Ro 7:4](#). Those who are dead to the law are those who have been born again. They are dead to the law, and they should now be married to Christ. In order that they be married to Christ the marriage ceremony must be performed by one who has the proper authority to perform it. If two people desire to marry, in order that they carry out the desire, they must have the ceremony performed by one who is authorized to do so. They may get a good man to pronounce the ceremony for them, but unless he has the proper authority, the marriage would not be legal. It would make no difference how good the man may be who pronounces the ceremony; his goodness and honesty, or sincerity, would not make the marriage legal. To be married to Christ, the rite must be performed by one authorized to perform it. Baptism is the ceremony, or the rite, by which God’s people are married to Christ. It is the work of the ministry who are set apart by his church to administer baptism, they are the persons who are authorized to administer the ordinance. They are the only ones who can perform the marriage ceremony. Others may go through the form, but it is not recognized by the Savior. The form may be alright, but a form without reality or authority is without value. So the baptism administered by others is without authority, hence without value, so far as the true church of Christ is concerned.” (*C.H. Cayce vol. 1 ppg 53-55*).

Water baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances of the Lord’s church. They belong to him, and he delivered them to the church to administer and protect. “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you,” [1Co 11:2](#). Those services are a precious property of the church, and we ought to be ever so careful in the way we handle them. No other assembly can lay a valid claim to them. They belong to the church, the bride of Christ, and she will not share them with anyone else.

It is this claim to their exclusive right to these ordinances that has been the main bone of contention between the Lord’s church and others all through the ages. That was the sticking point between them and the Roman Catholic Church during the times of persecution. That is how our spiritual ancestors came to be called *Anabaptists*. The name means *rebaptizers*. They would not recognize the validity of Roman Catholic baptism, and they required anyone

who came to them from that fellowship to be baptized by an ordained minister, working under the authority of the Lord's church.

They did not actually call themselves *Anabaptists*. That name was given them by others. They insisted they did not *rebaptize* anybody. They insisted the Roman Catholics had no authority to baptize, and their baptism was, therefore, no baptism at all. They taught that those who came to them from the Roman Catholic Church stood in need of valid water baptism. By refusing to accept Roman Catholic baptism, they not only denied the Roman Catholic claim to be the only true church; they denied that the Roman Catholic Church was any part of the Church of Christ, or that it had any authority to administer the ordinances. That infuriated their Roman Catholic persecutors.

It was not so much the doctrine they preached, as it was their refusal to accept Roman Catholic baptism, that brought on them the fury of the Inquisition.

Because they would not compromise—because they would not accept alien baptism—they were burned at the stake; they were stretched on the rack, until their arms and legs were pulled out of joint; they were persecuted, and tortured, in the most diabolical and inhumane methods imaginable. The ordinances of the Lord's church are a precious possession, given her by her Lord, and she will not surrender those ordinances to his enemies.

In recent years we have been hearing that there is a way to get around that obstacle. In recent years we have been told that it is alright to accept alien baptism after all—if only we can deal with an entire 'church' at the same time.

We are being told that a 'church' may be made up of people, none of whom have ever had valid gospel baptism, and if any other church should receive a single member from that 'church,' that church would be guilty of accepting alien baptism. We are told that other churches must then labor with the church which received that member, and if the church will not correct the matter, all other churches must *raise bars* against that church and have nothing to do with her.

We are also told that if any other church should dare to have any dealings with that offending church, every orderly church must, then, *raise bars* against that church also, until that church, and every church that dares to recognize her, is cut off from every orderly church in the land.

But we are told there is a way to get around all of that. We are told that if we could receive the entire 'church'—and not just a single member—we can receive alien baptism, after all. We are told that if a 'church,' whose members have never been properly baptized, will only vote in conference that they want to be affiliated with *mainstream* Primitive Baptists, that will make everything alright.

But that is exactly the opposite of what the Bible teaches. There is only one text in the Bible dealing with the way the church must deal with alien baptism. That text teaches (1) that there is such a thing as alien baptism, (2) that the church cannot recognize alien baptism, (3) that the baptism a man administers is no better than the doctrine he preaches, and (4) that it makes no difference if those who have such baptism do apply as a ‘church’ body, they still must be baptized by one authorized to administer the ordinance.

That text is in Acts, chapter nineteen. “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,” [Ac 19:1-5](#).

These people had not been baptized by John, but rather “unto John’s baptism” ([Ac 19:3](#)). They had obviously been baptized by Apollos, before Aquila and Priscilla had taken him aside and “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” ([Ac 18:26](#)). Among other things, he needed to be instructed about the person and work of the Holy Ghost. His disciples had “not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost” ([Ac 19:2](#)). And he needed to be instructed about the question of authority to administer baptism. The fact that a person may himself have been baptized by John did not mean that he had the authority, in turn, to baptize other people. At any rate, Paul would not recognize this work of Apollos as being valid gospel baptism, and he proceeded to baptize these people in the proper form, and under the proper authority.

Luke does not refer to these disciples as a *church*, even though they were *an assembly of baptized believers*. Their *baptism* was not valid, gospel baptism, and neither Luke nor Paul would recognize them as a duly constituted church. But the fact remains; Paul dealt with them as a group; they acted as a group; the Holy Spirit represents them as speaking in a collective capacity, and Paul stills proceeds to baptize the entire group.

This is the one text dealing with alien baptism, and it makes one thing perfectly clear. If a ‘church’ is made up of members who have never been properly baptized, receiving them as a body will not change alien baptism into valid gospel baptism. In spite of what we are being told, there is no such Bible doctrine as Retroactive Baptism, nor Retroactive Validation of Baptism. That text cannot be found.

All of that brings us to another point, and this is the point we have been aiming for all along. If you can properly receive the entire church into the fellowship of orderly Primitive Baptist churches based on the baptism of her members, then you could have received individual members from that church. Unless you are willing to claim that you have found some kind of magic formula for converting alien baptism into valid gospel baptism, you must acknowledge that, by receiving the entire church, you are acknowledging that the church is, and has been, a true New Testament church, and her members have had proper baptism all along.

If you can properly receive the entire church, you have no right to complain if another church, especially another church at a great distance, receives a single member from that church. You have no right to go to war with another church for receiving a member you would have yourself received—on his baptism—provided he was part of a package arrangement.

We would not deny that, in any questionable situation, it is more politically expedient to receive the entire church, than it is to receive a single member from that church. You are much less likely to be criticized. And there can be no question that, over the years, for the sake of maintaining peace, good and honorable ministers have declined to receive individual members, whom they would have received if their entire church had requested recognition.

For the sake of peace, our brethren have often done more than was absolutely required. It was for the sake of peace that Paul “took and circumcised Timothy,” [Ac 16:3](#). It was not, because he had a commandment from God to do that, but “because of the Jews which were in those quarters.” He did not wish to provoke an unnecessary war with them.

No one should object if some church declines to receive an individual member in such a situation. That is their own business, and other churches have no right insist that they must take that member. But, by the same token, that church has no right to complain, if another church does receive him. After all, they would have received him themselves, if he could have persuaded his entire church to come along.

What we must object to, however, is for anyone to take their own custom, which has never been more than a political expediency, and, on the basis of their own authority, to codify that custom into a law which must be followed by all other churches.

The vast majority of our Primitive Baptist people want to live in peace. We value the church more than anything else in this world. We love each other, and we want to visit, and worship with other churches of like faith. And when separated brethren are making a good faith effort to resolve differences, and

heal old wounds, we do not need any self-appointed monitors laying down the law for brethren hundreds of miles away.

God has given us the ordinances of his church as a blessing; we do not need to fashion them into a club to use against our own brethren. And we do not need for the ordinances of the church to be turned into engines to fortify and perpetuate old divisions, which should never have happened in the first place.

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another,”

[Ro 14:17-19](#).

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt

What Did God Determine Before To Be Done?

What Did God *Determine Before to be Done*

“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, **for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done,**” [Ac 4:27-28](#).

The Absoluters claim this text; it is their fortress. They are sure it establishes their doctrine as no other text does.

But before we get to that, we need to establish what we mean by *absolutism*. Absolutism is the doctrine that before God ever created the world, he predetermined and predestinated everything that will ever happen in time. We are told that he so arranged all the events, and all the conditions and circumstances leading up to those events that everything that happens—good, bad, or indifferent— happens exactly the way he predestinated it to happen.

Those of us who do not believe that doctrine refuse to believe that he predestinated everything that happens. Especially we refuse to believe that he predestinated all the sin and wickedness in the world.

The Absoluter insists that his doctrine does not make God the author of sin, but he persists in his argument that God so arranged conditions and circumstances that everything that happens—both good and evil—takes place in exactly the way he predestinated it to happen.

All of that brings us to our text. There can be no question that the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, together with all the humiliation and mistreatment that was heaped on him, was the vilest, the most wicked, event in the history of the world. The Absoluter is sure that if he can prove God predestinated the wickedness that went on at Calvary, he will have no trouble in proving that God predestinated all the other wickedness in the world. And he is sure that is

precisely what this text says. **But that is not what it says.** If you will stay with us for the next few minutes, I believe we can demonstrate that this text does not teach anything resembling the *Absolute* doctrine.

Two contrary forces at work

The first thing we need to point out is that there were two contrary forces at work that day, and it is impossible to imagine anything more different than those forces were. Those two forces had **two different causes**—two different sources—and, ultimately, two different ends in view. It is the failure to recognize those opposite forces—and the different causes behind those forces—that has caused most of the confusion about this text.

The first force was man at war with his maker. That war began with the sin of Adam in the very morning of time, and it continues until this very day, but **it reached its climax at the crucifixion of our Lord.** Never in all of history has man ever raged against his Maker the way he did at Calvary.

God became man; he was incarnate in human flesh. The adversary opposed him every step of the way; but it was especially at Calvary that he did everything within his power to destroy him.

The second force was the grace of God working out salvation on behalf of his people. God had determined from all eternity that he would save his people, and that is what he was working out at the cross.

One of those forces resulted in all those wicked men did to the Lord; the other resulted in the atonement.

The Crucifixion and the Atonement

The crucifixion and the atonement are two entirely different things, and we must not confuse the two. The crucifixion was man's work; the atonement was God's work. The cause of the atonement was the purpose, the grace, and the mercy of God. **The cause of all they did to the Lord was the hatred and corruption their own depraved heart.** It is the ultimate expression of man's war against his Maker.

It was not God that put such hatred in their heart. We are told plainly, **"They hated me without a cause."** That is, they did not need God to cause them to hate him. Those who claim God is the cause of everything those wicked men did that day have God to argue with. God tells us in no uncertain language, **"They hated me without a cause."** **Their hatred flowed naturally and freely from the corruption of their own heart.** It did not flow from the purpose and grace of God.

God had determined from all eternity that he would work out the atonement on the cross; he prophesied he would do it that way, and there could never be any doubt that is the way it would take place. He would display his grace against the dark background of their wickedness. But their

wickedness would play no part in what he was doing on behalf of his people, and there is no way anybody can show that he predestinated their wickedness—nor any wicked thing they did.

The significance of the crucifixion is that it was the ultimate climax of man's rebellion against God—his war against God.

Man has been at war with his Maker ever since Adam sinned. All during the public ministry of the Lord the adversary did all within his power to destroy him. He could not destroy him. But when his time was fully come, the Father delivered his Son into their hands, and suffered them to do their worst. That is exactly what the Bible teaches.

“Him being **delivered** by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain,” [Ac 2:28](#).

The redemption was God's work; the wickedness that went on at Calvary was part of man's war against God, and we must never confuse the two.

Wicked men were active in every part of the crucifixion. Men took him through the mock trial. Men beat him with whips. Men beat him into such a bloody mess that he hardly looked like a man ([Isa 52:14](#)). Men assembled the cross. Men drove the nails. A man pierced his side. Men mocked him, and ridiculed him. That was all man's work, but man had no part in redemption. Man played no part in the atonement.

The wicked were involved
in his *humiliation*

Having said all that, we must acknowledge that what they did contributed in a very real way to his *humiliation*. The mocking, the beating, the spitting, the crown of thorns, the denial of the very modesty of his own clothing, all that was a very real part of his *humiliation*; and the wickedness of man played a part in that.

Luke tells us, “**In his *humiliation* his *judgment* was taken away,**” [Ac 8:33](#).

In Isaiah it reads, “He was taken from prison and from *judgment*.”

Part of his *humiliation* was the false *judgment* that was passed on him. The spotless and pure Son of God, who “had done no violence, nor was deceit found in his mouth,” was judged as if he was a common criminal, deserving of death.

But God draws a very clear boundary between the *humiliation* of the Lord and the *atonement*. [Heb 12:2](#), “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Our Lord *despised the shame*—the *humiliation*—of all they did to him. Can you imagine the mortification of being stripped of his clothing, and crucified, exposed to the mockery of that sacrilegious mob.

But there was a “*joy* that was set before him.” That was the *joy* of redeeming his people and atoning for our sins. For the *joy* of the one he endured the *shame* of the other. It is hard to imagine how he could have drawn a clearer and more distinct boundary. The one was a source of joy; the other brought shame and embarrassment. **The sins of men were very much a part of the one; they were not a part of the other.**

God delivered his Son
into their hands

Old Elder Benjamin Lampton used to say, “It was not necessary for God to predestinate wickedness; man has done a very good job of that all by himself.”

We are simply told that God delivered his Son into their hand. Their wicked depraved heart did the rest.

“Him being **delivered** by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain,” [Ac 2:23](#).

In his determinate counsel and foreknowledge God determined to deliver his Son to their vengeance. He determined to suffer them to heap every indignity on his own beloved Son. They would mock him, and ridicule him. They would plow his back, and jerk out his beard. They would spit in his face, and beat him until his face no longer looked human. They would taunt him, and call him names.

All that was a part of his *humiliation*; but his *humiliation* was not the *atonement*. Their mockery was not the price of our redemption. Their parting his garments among them was not the price of our redemption. Their beating him in the face did not redeem us. **Rather he redeemed us by laying down his life for us ([Joh 10:11,15](#)).**

His *humiliation* causes the *atonement* to shine all the more brightly, and that was the very purpose of the *humiliation*, but they are not the same thing.

Delivered into their hands

God did not determine to cause them to do any of those things; but in his determinate counsel and foreknowledge he did determine to deliver him into their hands. Their depravity would do the rest.

God prophesied they would do all of that, and there was never any possibility it would take place in any other way. How could God do that? He is the eternal one; he inhabits eternity. He can look across time as easily as you and I can look across a room. But he is no more the cause of all he sees than we are the cause of all we see.

God determined from all eternity that he would deliver his son into their hands. **He did not determine to accept their work as any part of the *atonement*.** So far as the atonement is concerned, the Lord trod the winepress entirely alone.

Sin did not bring salvation

Nothing those men did contributed in any way to our salvation. There is no way around it. **If what those men did contributed to the atonement, then sin brought salvation.** If what they did contributed to the atonement, then Jesus did not do the work by himself. That would make them his helpers. But that is not the way the Bible tells it.

“I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was **none with me**....And I looked and there was **none to help**; and I wondered that there was **none to uphold**: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury it upheld me,” [Isa 63:3,5](#).

He says it over and over; there was nobody involved in this work except himself. The Arminian thinks the preacher is involved; the Absoluter thinks those who nailed him to the cross were involved. They are both wrong.

God did not need their help

The atonement was a transaction between God the Father and God the Son—on behalf of his people—and those wicked men were not parties to the transaction. **God did not need their help**, and nothing they did added anything to what God accomplished on our behalf.

The Lord told us over seven hundred years ahead of the time, “**I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me.**” He went on to say, “I looked and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold, therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me.” God did not need those wicked men to assist him in his work. He was perfectly capable of saving his people, and he did it all by himself.

Ultimate Good and Ultimate Evil

Never in time or eternity did the ultimate good and the ultimate evil come face to face the way they did at Calvary. In the very face of the greatest evil this world has ever known God worked out the salvation of his people, and nothing they could do could stop him.

Keep in mind that the Bible is one harmonious fabric throughout. It is consistent; it never contradicts itself. If there is ever a contradiction, it is in your own mind.

Also keep in mind that in studying the Bible you begin with what is clear and undeniable. Then (with the Lord’s help) you study and reason your way—step by step—toward that which is not so clear. If you start with what is most clear, and move one step after another to the next most obvious fact, by the time you finish, you will often discover that those unclear questions have fallen into place. That is certainly the case with this text.

What God determined before to be done

First, notice what Christ was doing at Calvary in the first place. **God determined from all eternity that his Son should suffer, bleed, and die on behalf of his people.**

That is what he “determined before to be done.”

That is why he came into this world; that is why he went to Calvary. **God imputed our sins to his Son, and he died to pay our sin debt.** Our sins, and the guilt of our sins, were removed by the suffering and death of our Lord. “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do **whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done,**” [Ac 4:27-28](#).

Exactly what does he mean by what God’s hand and counsel “determined before to be done?” The Absoluter tells us it involves all that went on that day. He tells us God orchestrated and manipulated every stroke and every blow that struck our Lord, that he predestinated every vile thing that was done to him.

But we must never charge God with being the author of sin, and we must never charge him with manipulating any man, and causing him to sin. The Absoluter can come up with some mighty fancy footwork, explaining how God can arrange conditions and circumstances, and something he calls *second cause*, so that everything man does—for good or evil—God predestinated him to do it. It is amazing what elaborate tapestries he can weave in explaining how God can cause men to do everything they do, without being the cause of what they do.

But we do not need theological mumbo-jumbo. If we will just let the Bible say what it says, most subjects become fairly simple. And this subject is simple enough, if you just let the Bible say what it says.

God purposed that his Son should suffer, bleed, and die
It was the purpose of God that his Son should suffer, bleed, and die, and up to that point that was also the purpose of those who were *gathered together*.

It was the purpose of that mob that Jesus should suffer, bleed, and die. It is in that sense they were gathered to do what God *determined before to be done*. **They were *gathered together* to bring about the suffering and death of the Lord.**

The same intent; different causes

But their motive, and the cause of their action were totally different from God’s purpose. **God determined that his Son should *give* his life; the mob intended to *take* his life.**

The cause of what God did was the most loving and gracious of all motives. The cause of all they did was the most evil and hateful of all motives. The one sprang from the purpose, the love and mercy of God; the other sprang from the corruption of their own depraved heart.

No one can reasonably deny that they were, indeed, gathered together for to do whatsoever God's hand and counsel determined before to be done. They were gathered together to bring about the suffering and death of the Lord. **But God was no more the cause of what they did, than they were the cause of what God did.**

The Absoluter limits God's
ability to know the future

We need to realize first that God knows everything there is to know. He knows everything that will ever happen before it happens, and he has known it from all eternity. That is one of the proofs that he is God. The Absoluter tells us that God cannot know what is going to happen, unless he has determined to manipulate and orchestrate all the conditions and circumstances leading up to that event, so that whatever happens is the inevitable result of all that has gone before, and so the inevitable result of God's decree.

But that notion limits God. It has God using his power to prop up his foreknowledge. It would have us believe that if God did not cause all things to happen just the way they do, the foreknowledge of God would come crashing to the ground.

Those who think God must make men do what they do, in order to know what they are going to do, have imagined that God is like we are. But God is not like us. He is not so limited that he cannot know what is going to happen without orchestrating and manipulating it to make it happen. He can look across time as easily as you and I can look across the room.

God knows all that will ever happen, and when he chooses to do so, he reveals to us as much as he wants us to know. Over a period of hundreds of years he inspired the prophets to write all that was needed to be known about the life and death, the ministry and crucifixion of the Lord. There could never be any doubt that all that would transpire at Calvary would come about the way God said it would.

How could he do that? He is God, he can do anything he chooses to do. He inhabits eternity. The prophet tells us that. Time does not encompass God the way it encompasses us. He encompasses time. He is the I AM, the eternal one. There is ever so much God does that we cannot explain. In fact, we cannot explain much of the *how* of anything God does.

We cannot explain how he created an entire universe out of nothing. He is so vast the very heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and yet he was born of a woman and lived in a body such as you and I have. We cannot explain that.

We cannot explain how the Spirit does its work in regeneration. We cannot explain how he is going to raise the dead. So we should not be surprised that we cannot explain how he can know every tiny detail of what is going to happen in the future.

But it is the height of folly to try to explain the unexplainable by insisting that God knows the future, because he pulls the strings, and makes everything—both good and evil—happen just the way it does. Nobody was ever more unwise, than when he tries to compensate for his own ignorance by charging God with being the cause of all the evil in the world.

God succeeded at the cross;
the mob failed

But we are reminded that it says, “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and *slain*,” [Ac 2:23](#), or when it says they “*killed* the Lord Jesus,” [1Th 2:15](#). **Over and over God charges them with killing the Lord Jesus.** If it was the death of the Lord that purchased salvation, and if they killed their Lord, was it not their killing the Lord that brought salvation? At least in that sense, was the sin of man not an integral part of our salvation? How could the Lord have saved his people if the soldiers had not done their part in bringing about his death?

The soldiers did not bring about his death;
the Lord gave his life;

First off, that line of reasoning assumes too much. The Lord clearly tells us they did not have the power to take his life.

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd *giveth his life* for the sheep,” [Joh 10:11](#). They did not take his life; he gave it.

[Joh 10:15](#), “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and *I lay down my life* for the sheep.”

Again we are told, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because *I lay down my life* that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but *I lay it down of myself*. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father,” [Joh 10:17-18](#).

But we are reminded that we read over and over that they *killed the Lord Jesus*. **If they did not actually bring about his death, why does the Bible repeatedly use that language.**

Divine justice speaking

One thing we must keep in mind, especially in this context, is that we belong to God; we are his property. And the law belongs to him. He has a right to say what is required of us, and he has the right to set the penalties.

It is his right—not ours—to say what constitutes murder. He says, “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer,”

[1Jo 3:15](#). If God claims the right to charge one who hates his brother with being a murderer, **I, for one, am not going to argue that he has no such right.** And if God claims the right to charge one with murder if he hates his brother, he certainly has the right to charge those wicked soldiers with having killed the Lord.

We must be very careful about setting limits on what God can do, or what charges he can bring against sin and sinners.

The nature of the act
lies in the motive of the heart

In his book entitled *Justification*, Elder J. H. Oliphant explains it very well.

“Sin resides in the **will**, the **intent**; not so much in the act as in the will. A man shot with the design to kill a deer; he missed the deer and killed a friend; there was a man killed, but the crime of murder was not committed. Another man shot with the design of killing a man; he missed the man and killed a deer. **In this case there was murder, but no one killed; the crime was in the will.** In this way men may be guilty of murder, theft, adultery, etc., without the deed actually being committed. The will is the nest of sin.”

They intended to kill the Lord. They were gathered together for the purpose of killing him. They did everything necessary to be done in order to kill him—if it had been possible that he could have been killed. And they left thinking they had killed him. So they did everything necessary to incur their guilt.

Bear in mind that the nature of the act is determined by the motive of the heart. That is a principle clearly established in law. A prosecuting attorney told me recently that he had sent men to the penitentiary on that distinction. Even though they failed in their effort to kill the Lord, they were guilty of killing him, nonetheless—and God so charges them.

Purged with blood

But, if the wickedness of man added nothing to the atonement, how is it that our sins are purged by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. How could we have been redeemed by blood, if the soldiers had not done their part?

Was it not the place of those soldiers to shed the Lord’s blood. Was that not their contribution to the atonement?

God “laid on him” ([Isa 53:6](#)), imputed to him, “the iniquity of us all,” and he judicially and legally carried those sins on the cross. The shedding of his blood put away those sins.

Atonement by blood is, indeed, the central fact of the gospel. Aside from the virtue of Christ’s shed blood nothing else means anything.

We are told, “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and **without shedding of blood is no remission,**” [Heb 9:22](#).

Peter tells us, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by

tradition from your fathers; **but with the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,” [1Pe 1:18-19](#).

Paul tells us about “**the blood of the everlasting covenant**,” [Heb 13:20](#).

When the Lord gave us his own Supper, he said, “**This is my blood of the new testament**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,” [Mt 26:18](#).

The list goes on, and on, and on. The very focal point of the gospel is that **we are redeemed by the suffering, the death, and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and without shedding of blood is no remission.**

Then, if our sins are atoned for by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, how could they have been atoned for, if those soldiers had not beaten him, if they had not plowed his back. How could they have been put away if that soldier had not pierced his side? **Did they not, at least, assist in our salvation to the extent they shed his blood?**

That is a valid question, and it must have an answer. But first we must realize there is a difference between those soldiers’ drawing blood, and the Lord’s shedding his blood. The Lord freely and voluntarily shed his blood, and it is that shedding of his blood that brought salvation. **Our salvation was purchased by the Lord’s shedding his blood; it was not purchased by soldiers drawing blood.** There is a difference, and it is the most profound of all distinctions.

The Lord freely and voluntarily
shed his blood

After I wrote the first draft of this little booklet one good brother pointed out that my application of [Ps 22:14](#) was probably not right. I have gone back and read the text several times. Even though it leaves me having to admit that I have been wrong all along in my application of that text, I appreciate his faithfulness. **None of us is right all the time, and I appreciate those who are faithful to point out my errors.**

The lesson I was drawing from that verse is right; Christ did consciously and experientially feel the weight and the guilt of our sins pressing down on his soul as he hung on the cross. That was the very *travail of his soul* that Isaiah talks about. But I was using the wrong verse to prove it. This verse teaches an entirely different lesson.

That is one of our advantages as Primitive Baptists. We do not have seminaries, and do not want them. But you can be sure that if you miss the mark, and if your error is fundamental, your brethren will beat your ears down. That can be painful, but I would not have it any other way. That fact generates a kind of uniformity the seminaries can ever produce.

Poured out like water

But, let’s go back to the verse and see exactly what it does say. It is amazing the light it casts on the subject before us.

In [Ps 22:14](#), we are brought to the moment of the Lord's death. It reads like this; "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels."

It am of the opinion that you should read any text literally, unless there is a clear reason to do otherwise. This is one of the most literal of all texts, and it is a powerful statement, when you just let it say what it says.

If you look up that verse in Strongs' Concordance, you will notice that the word translated *melted* is number 4549 in Strong's Hebrew Lexicon. (That is in the back of Strong's Concordance.) The word is *mawsas*. That did not help much; so I looked up *mawsas* in *Gesenius' Lexicon*. According to Gesenius, *mawsas* means "to cause to flow, to flow down, to dissolve, to melt."

You cannot imagine the thrill that ran over me when I read that definition. Admittedly, it meant that I had been reading the verse wrong for all these years; but I am perfectly willing to give up any opinion, if someone can show me that opinion is in error. The brother did me a great service; and I shall be forever in his debt.

Now, let's go back and read that verse one more time. Remember that this entire passage is a prophecy of Christ on the cross. He is brought into *the dust of death* (vs. 15), and at the moment of his death, he says, "My heart is like wax." In other words, his heart is no longer firm, and under pressure, and pumping blood. **His heart is like wax; it is soft, and limp, and pliable.** Then he tells us why his "heart is like wax." He says, "It is melted in the midst of my bowels." His heart has melted (emptied, *flowed down*) into the midst of his bowels.

Emptied into the midst of his bowels

But to make it abundantly clear, he uses two different words to signify the same thing. He begins the verse with, "I am *poured out* like water. The word translated *poured out* is *shawfak*. If you look up that word in Strong's Lexicon (it is number 8210), it is defined as "to *spill* forth....gush out, pour (out)." **He says his blood gushed out into the midst of his bowels.**

That was his own voluntary act; it was not the work of those wicked soldiers. He voluntarily poured out (shed) his life's blood on behalf of his chosen. It appears the Holy Spirit is making the text as clear as it needs to be—my own initial confusion notwithstanding.

It is amazing how simple, how clear, the Bible becomes, if we just let it say what it says.

Isaiah tells us, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, *the Savior*," [Isa 45:15](#). That wicked crowd did not assist the Lord; they did not even know what was going on. At the moment God was providing *salvation* for his people, he hid what he was doing from the prying eyes of the wicked.

They could see what they were doing; but they could not see what he was doing—out of their sight.

He voluntarily laid his life down

I am told that when a person was crucified, he did not die from his wounds. Having nails driven through their hands and feet was not in itself a mortal wound. **Painful though those wounds were, they were not by themselves life-threatening.** Rather, when a person was crucified, as his strength failed, his body would sink lower and lower, his lungs would fill with fluid, and the weight of his body pressing on his lungs smothered him. He would hold his weight up as long as he could, and when he could do so no longer, he finally smothered to death. That is one of the reasons crucifixion was such a slow, painful, agonizing death.

But the torment of the crucifixion, painful though it was, was not sufficient to kill the Lord. Just before he died, he cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. **A person smothering to death does not cry with a loud voice.** He was demonstrating for all to hear, that though he was about to die, they did not, and could not, kill him. **He was about to voluntarily lay his life down.** At one moment he cried with a loud voice—he was very much alive. The next moment he yielded up the ghost and died.

Those who persist in claiming the soldiers succeeded in actually bringing about the death of the Lord need to tell us, what did those men do to the Lord between the time he cried with a loud voice and the time he died. At one moment he was very much alive; the next moment he was dead. **What did the soldiers do—in that interval of time—that was sufficient to kill him?**

The fact is that during that interval of time there was one final act that brought about his death. We are told that he *yielded up the ghost*. **That was the single act that brought about his death.** For all they did to him, he did not die until he voluntarily yielded up the ghost. But that was his act, not theirs. **The Lord freely and voluntarily laid down his life.**

When he died

our redemption was complete

It was the death of the Lord that paid our sin debt; and the instant he died, our sins were forever put away. Just before he died, he said, “It is finished;” he cried with a loud voice; he yielded up the ghost, and he died. **The earth shook; the rocks rent; the veil of the temple was rent in twain; and God rolled our sins away.**

[Joh 19:32-34](#), “Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that **he was dead already**, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side and forthwith came there out blood and water.”

It was after the Lord died—after our sins had been atoned for—the soldier pierced his side.

When he pierced the side of the Lord, “forthwith came there out blood and water,” not just blood, but *blood and water*. **He had been some time dead; the separation of the blood that takes place at death was already well under way.**

It is hard to imagine that soldier made any contribution to the atonement, when the atonement was already finished before he came along with his spear.

With his stripes we are healed

But somebody reminds us that Isaiah says, “But he was *wounded* for our transgressions, he was *bruised* for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and *with his stripes we are healed*,” [Isa 53:5](#).

I do not claim to have all the answers about this question, nor any other. I have had to change my mind too many times about too many things to claim to have more than a few answers about a few subjects. I have been wrong too many times to fall out with my brother, because he cannot exactly pronounce my favorite *Shibboleth*.

But, having said all that, I believe the Bible is clear enough for us to know that in the work of redemption the Lord did his work entirely alone.

[Isa 63:3,5](#), “I have trodden the winepress **alone**; and of the people there was **none with me**....and I looked, and there was **none to help**; and I wondered that there was **none to uphold**: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.”

The *humiliation* of the Lord, and the *atonement*

To end where we began, we need to keep in mind that there were two contrary forces at work that day. The first was man at war with his Maker. The second was the grace of God working out the salvation of his people. The one resulted in all the abuse and the indignity—the *humiliation*—that was heaped on our Lord. **Man was very much involved in that work.** The second was the grace of God working out the atonement on behalf of his people. In that work God was entirely alone.

The abuse and the indignity they heaped on the Lord—and the stripes they laid on his back—cause the grace of God to shine all the more brightly; but nothing those wicked men did contributed in any way to our salvation. **The stripes with which we are healed were not the stripes those wicked men put on his back.** Those stripes contributed to his *humiliation*, but they were not the stripes with which the people of God are healed.

At the very most all they did to the Lord was a reflection of what God the Father did to him—out of their sight. “Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Savior” ([Isa 45:15](#)). While they were striping and

bruising his body, God striped and bruised his soul. **But God would not allow them to watch as he did his mighty work.**

Someone recently made a movie about the crucifixion and the final hours leading up to it. I have not seen the movie; I don't expect that I will. **I do not want to see any actor pretending to be my Lord—not even play-acting.**

But from all over the land we hear reports of how people have been affected, and their lives impacted, by the graphic portrayal of his suffering and death. I have no doubt the movie is as faithful to the facts as any movie has ever been. But I believe it is safe to say that the movie comes nowhere near portraying the actual suffering of the Lord. Isaiah says, "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" ([Isa 52:14](#)). His visage (his face) was beaten until he hardly looked human. I have seen snippets of the movie on television, and it does not portray his beating as being all that brutal. So as graphic as the movie is, it still falls short of portraying his suffering for all it was.

But while I never expect to see the movie, I do often think about his suffering and death, and I cannot think about the beating he took, without, somehow, feeling the sting of the whip. I cannot think about how they slapped him and spat in his face, without feeling the anger rise up in me. I cannot think about how they denied him the modesty of his own clothing, without wanting to find something, a robe, a blanket, anything, and run up and cover him from their mockery. Oh, the mockery, the shame, the humiliation of it all. **We could never, and should never, minimize the agony, the shame of all he suffered at the hands of those who crucified him.** When I realize all he suffered for me, I want to fall at his feet, and say, "Thank you Lord, thank you, thank you, thank you."

The travail of his soul

But, still, for all the shame, and the excruciating *physical pain*, he suffered, that was a small thing compared to *the travail of his soul*.

[Isa 53:11](#), "**He shall see of *the travail of his soul*, and shall be satisfied.**"

For over fifty years I have preached about how the Lord legally and judicially carried our sins to the cross. And that is true; he did. That is the theme of this fifty third chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah. But then, one day, I realized that, not only did the Lord legally and judicially carry my sins to the cross. **He consciously carried my sins.**

As he was hanging on the cross he could *consciously* feel the weight and the guilt of my sins. The Lord had never been so precious to me as he was, when I realized that he could consciously feel the guilt of my sins pressing down on his soul.

If you will, think back to a time when you did something you knew was wrong. You thought about it before you did it. You argued with your conscience. You decided that at any other time, and under any other circumstances, and, perhaps, for anybody else, it would be wrong, but maybe, just this once and never again, it would be alright. When you argue with yourself over whether something is wrong, you always lose.

So you went ahead and did whatever it was you were thinking about, and no sooner than you did it, your conscience woke up. Your conscience can be a very poor guide. It will be as quiet as a mouse until the deed is done, and then, when it is too late, it will wake up and accuse you.

Do you remember how guilty you felt, how helpless and undone? There was no excuse; you did it with your eyes open, and then you paid the consequences. **There is no torment more painful than the torment of a guilty conscience.** When you consider how you felt when your sins were pressing on your soul, suppose that at some time you should feel all the guilty consciences you have ever felt in your entire life tormenting you at the same time. Do you think you could bear the load?

Now consider that not only did the Lord consciously feel the weight and guilt of all your sins pressing on his soul as he was hanging on the cross, **he could consciously feel ALL the guilt of ALL the sins of ALL his people.**

Our consciences are more than a little hardened by sin. We do not have the same sensitivity to sin the Lord had. So it is impossible for us to feel what the Lord felt. More than that, the human mind cannot conceive of *the travail of his soul* as our Lord consciously felt *all* the weight and *all* the guilt of *all* the sins of *all* his people pressing down on him.

That was *the travail of his soul* Isaiah was talking about. That was what he carried on the cross. **It is in that sense that Isaiah said, “He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.”** That was the greatest agony of the cross. Compared to that, the physical pain, excruciating though it must have been, was a little thing.

If his physical suffering was the greatest torment of the cross, there have been others who have suffered similar agony. We all know of people who have died in indescribable physical pain. But no man ever experienced what the Lord suffered as he felt the weight and the guilt of our sins pressing down on his soul. **No man ever suffered what Isaiah calls *the travail of his soul*.**

The justice of God is satisfied

The agony those soldiers imposed on his body did not satisfy the righteous demands of God’s law, but *the travail of his soul* did. At the very most all they did was a reflection of what God was doing—out of their sight. Let’s take one last look at what Isaiah calls *the travail of his soul*.

[Isa 53:4](#), “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him **stricken of God**, and afflicted.” Notice he was *smitten of God*; that is not the same as being beaten by the soldiers. At the very time the soldiers were doing their worst—out of their sight—God was doing all that was best for his people. He was afflicting the soul of our Lord.

[Isa 53:5](#), “But he was wounded *for our transgression*, he was bruised *for our iniquities*; he chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Again, notice that all of this was *for our transgression, for our iniquities*.

Everything the soldiers did was for the purpose of satisfying their own malice. They did, indeed, beat him, but it was for a different cause.

[Isa 53:10](#), “Yet it pleased the Lord *to bruise him*; he hath put him to grief.” **These are the bruises God put on him**; they are not the bruises the soldiers inflicted. Again, **it is God who put him to grief**. The grief God heaped on his soul was far greater than the grief the soldiers inflicted on his body.

[Isa 53:11](#), “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” He did not say, “He shall see the pain in his hands and his feet.” He did not say, “He shall see the pain in his back.” **The travail of his soul satisfied the demands of the broken law of God; the pain inflicted by those soldiers did not.**

[Isa 53:12](#), “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath *poured out* his soul unto death.” The word that is here translated *poured out* is different than either word used in [Ps 22:14](#). Here the word is *arah*. **Gesenius defines the word as, “to empty a vessel, to pour out, in doing which its bottom is laid bare, uncovered.”** The word used is different, but the principle is the same. The Lord “poured out his soul unto death.” His heart *gushed out into the midst of his bowels*. That was his act; it was not the act of those wicked soldiers. He voluntarily laid down his life; it was not taken from him.

Again, the question is whether, all by himself, he redeemed his people by *shedding his blood*, or if the soldiers participated by *drawing blood*.

The prophet will not allow us to miss the point. **“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief,”** [Isa 53:10](#). The passage is as clear as it needs to be. The Lord bruised him; the Lord put him to grief. That was God’s work, and it is with those stripes we are healed.

If you are convinced that was man’s work, I hope you will not feel hard at me for believing that—from beginning to end—and in every respect—the atonement was God’s work.

The Old Testament type

If you will, allow me one more thought as a postscript. The Old Testament sacrifices were symbolic of the sacrificial death of Christ. In those sacrifices there were four elements necessary. There was the sacrifice, the lamb, the bullock, etc. There was the priest to offer the sacrifice. There was the altar on

which the sacrifice was offered. And there was God himself to accept the sacrifice. That is a clear picture of the offering of Christ on our behalf. **First, Christ was himself the sacrifice.** [Joh 1:29](#), “Behold *the lamb of God* which taketh away the sins of the world.” Those Old Testament sacrifices pointed to him.

Second, he was the priest offering the sacrifice. [Heb 2:17](#), “Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be *a merciful and faithful high priest* in things pertaining to God, *to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*”

Third, his own deity was the altar on which, in his human nature, he was offered as a sacrifice to God. It was the altar that sanctified the offering. [Mt 23:19](#), “Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or *the altar that sanctifieth the gift?*” The altar on which the Lord was offered to the Father was not Calvary. If that was the case, the altar was desecrated; there were two thieves crucified with him. The altar on which he was offered to the Father was his deity. It was his deity which set apart and *sanctified* his humanity.

Fourth, there was the Father, who accepted the offering as full and complete satisfaction for our sin debt. He imputed our sins to his Son ([Isa 53:6](#)); he poured out on him his wrath against sin; he smote him ([Isa 53:4](#)), bruised him, and brought him to grief ([Isa 53:10](#)); and he was *satisfied* with *the travail of his soul* ([Isa 53:11](#)) as an *offering for sin* ([Isa 53:10](#)).

This was strictly a transaction between God the Father and his Son—man was not included in that transaction

He did his work out of sight of the crowd. They did not participate in the transaction. **They did not even know what was going on.** The only thing they accomplished was to rage against their Maker at the very time he was working out redemption on behalf of his people.

[Isa 63:3,5](#), “I have trodden the winepress along; and of the people there was **none with me**....And I looked, and there was **none to help**; and I wondered that there was **none to uphold**: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury it upheld me.”

**Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
What God Hath Joined Together**

WHAT GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER

Our Primitive Baptists have no need to apologize for the firm stand the vast majority of our people have generally taken on the subject of divorce and remarriage. If we have erred, our error has been in not being as outspoken as we should have been. Ours is the high moral ground, and it is the clear teaching of the Bible. I believe, that instead of apologizing for our position, we ought to speak out loud and clear, that this is the Bible standard.

If a couple is involved in an adulterous marriage, we cannot receive them into the membership of the church. The Bible is clear enough. We wish their situation was different, but it is not. Knowing the personal satisfaction we receive from the church, it is heartbreaking to see others, who cannot enjoy that benefit, but we cannot compromise those standards God has provided for the government of his church. The church belongs to him, and he has the right to set down the guide-lines. We must hasten to add that we are in no way complaining about those guidelines and restrictions he has left us. Those guidelines are for the benefit of the church. There is not one rule God has left us that is not for our benefit.

And keep it always in mind that this is a moral question. So far as our churches are concerned, it is a question of church discipline. It is a question of order and disorder. We know that. But it is more than that. This is a moral question under consideration. We dare not compromise those moral standards God has laid out in his Word. The Lord told the disciples, “Ye are the light of the world” [Mt 5:14](#). There is a heavy responsibility resting on the church to provide an example for those around her. If the church does not provide the moral lead for this sinful age, we cannot imagine who will. Down through the ages, wherever the church has been found, it has had a profound effect on the morals of the land. To this very day America is blessed because of the presence of the church.

There is one question we must clear up before we go any farther. Our firm stand on this question has given some people the idea that we believe there are some sins so heinous that God cannot, or will not, forgive—that perhaps, somebody might sink so low in sin, that there can never be any recovery. No, no, a thousand times no. No sinner ever sank so low in sin, but that there can be forgiveness and pardon, if he will forsake his way and turn to the Lord. How very compassionate we ought to be toward repenting sinners. There is many a little child of God who has made a mess of his life, and who desperately needs our help and compassion. Far too often we are like the Levite who looked, and then, passed by on the other side. Most of us are far too complacent. We are too comfortable with our own concerns to take just a little time to deal with one who may desperately need our help.

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that there is forgiveness available for any sin a person can repent of and turn from. Just notice a few texts. [Isa 55:7](#), “et the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” [Mt 12:31](#), “herefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men,” [Re 3:21](#), “And I gave

her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.” The Lord pointedly says that there is forgiveness for “all manner of sin and blasphemy.” There was forgiveness for Paul, the chief of sinners ([1Ti 1:15](#)). The church never had a more bitter enemy than he was. He held the coats of those who stoned Stephen to death ([Ac 7:58](#)), but God forgave him. There was forgiveness for Mary Magdalene, “ut of whom went seven devils”([Lu 8:2](#)). There was forgiveness for Peter, who cursed and swore and said he did not even know the Lord ([Mt 26:74](#)). There was forgiveness for those at the foot of the cross, who mocked the Lord and made fun of him. No one was ever more vile than that crowd, who made all manner of fun of the Lord at the very time he was suffering and dying on behalf of his people. But our kind and compassionate Redeemer looked down from the cross and said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” [Lu 23:34](#).

I am sure that if any one of us could see ourselves as the Lord sees us, we would not marvel nearly so much that he forgave those sinners, as we would marvel that he could forgive such sinners as we are.

How very compassionate we ought to be toward those sin-sick and wounded children of God, whose lives are in such need of repair. How very tender and patient we ought to be with them. How very ready to help them and guide them. There is not one of us who can square his shoulders, and throw out his chest, and say with any confidence, “I tell you, right now, I will never do the way this person has done.” We don’t know that. We have no idea what our lot might be. We know what our determination is—at this present moment of time. But we ought to know that we are dependent on the grace of God to sustain us each moment of our lives. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,” [1Co 10:12](#).

But forgiveness of sin is not the question. There can be no question that forgiveness is available for any sin we can repent of and turn from. We are not talking about past offenses; we are talking about a present condition.

There is only one adequate guide in the matter, and that is the Bible. Carnal human nature will lead us astray. It misunderstands and misapplies the most basic moral principles. Those principles must be taught in a clear and positive manner, and even then it resents and rebels against them. We must have an authoritative guide, if we are going to direct our lives aright. [Jer 10:23](#), “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” The guide God has provided in the Bible is intended to instruct us in every aspect of our lives. That guide has never gone out of date; it is sufficient for every day and age.

Those principles God teaches in the Bible are a system of absolutes. We are living in an age which does not like absolute principles, and unchangeable values. We hear much about relative values, and situation ethics. There are

relatively few who are willing to acknowledge that those instructions God has given in the Bible are eternal and unchanging.

In this little booklet we want to talk about the institution of marriage and those instructions God has given as to when, and under what conditions a marriage may properly be dissolved. If we would learn anything about the nature of the marriage union, we must go to the Bible to learn it. Marriage is God's institution. It belongs to him. He established it in the very morning of time, and he established those principles which are to govern it. Let us look, then, at what the Bible has to say.

First, marriage is a lifetime arrangement. [Ro 7:2](#), "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth." In this age of such moral decline in America, society has forgotten the importance, the sanctity, of the marriage union. More and more people, nowadays, have decided that marriage is not really necessary. Untold numbers of them are saying, "We will just live together for awhile, and we will decide later whether we want to get married. After six months or so, if we find that we are compatible, we just might get married."

Other people, who would never engage in such an arrangement as that, decide to get married, and then later they decide whether they want to stay married. I sold life insurance for twenty four years, and a few people have made that very statement to me. They were in a perfectly good humor with each other, but they would tell me that they had married, and now they were taking their time to decide whether they were really right for each other, and if they should find that they ought not to have married, they will just divorce, and find other partners. They would make no bones about it. Really, there is a great similarity between the two arrangements. Both couples have totally lost sight of the sanctity of the marriage union.

Outside of the gift of his Son, the marriage union is the greatest benefit God has given to his creation. Marriage is the very foundation of civilization itself. Children must have the godly environment of a family and a home in order to grow up and learn those moral principles they will need to guide them during the remainder of their lives.

And in any nation, when families and homes fall apart to such an extent that a large segment of society does not have that godly and healthy environment in which for children to grow up and learn those necessary moral principles, that nation will never be able to build jails and prisons big enough and fast enough to house all the people who need to be there. That is the condition in America at this very moment.

The problems that exist in America will never solved in Washington. They will never be solved in Nashville, Atlanta, Montgomery, Jackson, nor in any

of the state capitals of this land. The problems that are plaguing America began in the home, and if they are not solved in the home, they will never be solved.

People need to think before they enter into a marriage. The union between a devoted husband and wife is the sweetest and most tender union on earth. It is a symbol of the union between Christ and his church. But not every marriage is all it should be. Before you marry him, you need to be very sure that you want to spend the rest of your life with him. To look at it from the negative side, as long as he is faithful to those vows, you are stuck with him. I am going to show you by the scriptures that as long as he is faithful to those vows, there is no way you can get a valid divorce from him.

The Bible provides the one and only ground for divorce and remarriage. [Mt 5:32](#), “But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” The Bible gives this one ground for severing a marriage. If one of them (either the husband or wife) is guilty of fornication, the innocent party has the right to a divorce, and, therefore, the right to remarry. God will recognize that divorce. God does not require the innocent party to put up with any such conduct as that.

There are sometimes situations which arise in which it is physically unsafe for a woman to continue to be married to a man. Good judgment requires her to leave for the safety of herself and her children. In such a case, she has a perfect right to leave, but the scriptures do not grant her the right to remarry. But, if I might interject my own personal opinion in this particular situation, if a man is so abusive that his wife must leave for her own protection, it is very likely, if she will only watch, that she will discover he is guilty of much more than abuse. It is hard to imagine that a man would be faithful to his marriage vows, when at the same time, he terrorizes his wife and children.

This is the only ground for divorce God will recognize, but more than that: God explicitly forbids the judicial system to grant any divorce on any other basis. [Mt 19:5-6](#), “And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh, what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” I fear that most of the time this verse is overlooked. The verse is quoted often enough. It has been quoted many times, but I fear that almost without exception people still do not realize what the verse is saying. “Wherefore, they are no more twain, but one flesh, what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Every verse in the Bible is for me, but not every verse in the Bible is to me. This verse is for me, but it is not to me. Why? Because I am not in the business of putting marriages asunder. I have never tried to do that. I have

never claimed the authority to do that. Then who is this verse addressed to? This verse is directed to those people who are in the business of putting marriages asunder. Who is that? Well, in our system of government, it is the state legislatures, who make the laws, and it is the judges and lawyers, who implement the laws governing divorce.

Notice what the text says. This text is addressed to the state legislatures, which make the laws, and to the judges and lawyers, who implement those laws, and (in effect) it tells them, “Don’t you make any law, and don’t you take advantage of any law, that will sever a marriage on any other basis than the one ground provided in this text.” Think about that. God has put the various state legislatures on notice. He strictly forbids any legislation which will sever a marriage on any other basis than the one ground he allows. “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

When God singles out any one group of people for such special instructions, it behooves them to take notice.

God is the one lawgiver. [Jas 4:12](#), “There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy, who art thou that judgest another?” Probably the greatest authority on English law who ever lived was a man by the name of William Blackstone. He died in 1780, at the time of the American Revolution. Up until Blackstone’s day English legal experts generally wrote on Roman law. William Blackstone wrote a large four volume commentary on English law. Blackstone’s own countrymen did not like him, but the Americans just loved him. I looked up the article on Blackstone recently in Encyclopedia Britannica, which is a British publication, and they did not have very many good things to say about him, but for the first one hundred years of American history, Blackstone’s Commentaries were all most American lawyers knew about the law. The point I am getting to is this: Blackstone’s most fundamental principle said, “The law of God is the source of every valid human law.”

In other words, if any lawmaking body makes a law that is contrary to God’s it is not a valid law. The law does not really mean anything. That is why, on the one hand, Paul could repeatedly instruct us to be subject to the laws of the land ([Ro 13:1-5](#); [Tit 3:1](#)), and how, on the other hand, the Bible could commend the three Hebrew children because they refused to obey the Babylonian law which required them to bow down and worship the graven image that was erected in the plain of Dura ([Da 3:10-30](#)). The decree of the king was the law of the land, but it was not a valid law, because it was contrary to God’s law. Any time a state legislature, or the federal government, passes a law that is clearly contrary to God’s law it is an invalid law.

Blackstone went on to say that the law of God is revealed in nature and in the Scriptures. But whether we discover God’s law in nature or in the Bible, that

law is the basis of every valid human law. In this respect there is a grand similarity between the gospel minister and the lawmakers of the land. Preachers do not have the right to conjure up their own ideas about what principles they want to advocate from the pulpit. It is our duty to study the Bible, and to find out what the Bible teaches, and to teach that. By the same token, no lawmaking body has the right to just sit around and dream up laws. It is their duty to search for God's law—in nature or in Scriptures—and to pass laws to govern the land based on that law.

Up until 1970, if anyone wanted to get a divorce, she (or he) had to prove grounds for divorce. She had to prove adultery, or desertion, or cruelty. But there has been a great moral decline, which began in the United States about the end of the Second World War. I think most everybody would agree that the morals of Americans have been going down since about that time. That moral decline was in full swing by the beginning of the 1960's, when we began to hear about *the new morality*. That is just another name for the old immorality. We began to hear about *the sexual revolution*. I don't even like to use that expression, and I am sure that you do not like to hear it, but nobody can deny that for the last thirty years or so, a large portion of the American people have simply put their morals on the shelf. There is, indeed, a grand decline in the moral fabric of our nation.

Then in 1970, right at the height of the so-called *sexual revolution*, the state of California passed the first *no fault divorce* law in the history of the Western World. An article was published not long ago, which said, "At one fell blow the state of California swept away every moral consideration from the institution of marriage." But that is not really right. Rather they *denied* every moral consideration with regard to the institution of marriage. Their law did not change anything. Man does not have the right, the authority, nor the ability to pass a valid law that is contrary to God's law.

Within ten years after that first *no fault divorce* law, every state in the union except two had adopted some form of *no fault divorce* law. Those two states may have done so by now. Today, as a general rule, about all you have to do is file for a divorce, and you can get it. If there are no children involved, and if there is very little money or property involved, one state will grant a divorce by mail, without even requiring a court hearing.

Our American people have never been so deceived and imposed upon as we have been deceived by our state legislatures, in this matter of *no fault divorce*. Because the laws are on the books, the American people have come to believe that once they get a divorce decree, all connection with their spouse is once and for all severed. They do not realize that the authority on which those laws were passed was a usurped authority—that the legislature had no authority to

pass any such law. They do not realize that the law is an invalid law, and that no valid divorce can ever be granted on the strength of it.

At one fell blow the various lawmaking bodies endeavored to sweep away “every moral consideration from the institution of marriage,” and the silence in the pulpits of America was deafening. Marriage is the very foundation of civilization. It is the cement that holds our society together. When marriage and the home fall apart in any nation, as it is happening in America today, that nation very soon comes to ruin. Never in the history of the Western World has the Judeo-Christian ethic been so boldly and brazenly attacked as it has been attacked by the passage of the various *no fault divorce* laws, and never has the Christian ministry been so remiss in our duty as we have been in failing to denounce those laws.

Our various state legislatures have set our people up for unacceptable, adulterous marriages. They have virtually taken them by the hand, and led them into such marriages, and the ministry has stood silently by and watched it happen with hardly a protest.

In 1973, right about that same time, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down the *Roe vs Wade* decision, which forbade the various states to interfere with any expectant mother, if she wanted to destroy her unborn child before it ever saw the light of day. Let me ask you: Do you believe it ceased to be wrong to destroy that little defenseless child, just because the Supreme Court handed down that decision? No, of course not. When an expectant mother goes to an abortion clinic and pays money to have that little baby destroyed, it is still murder, no matter what the Supreme Court may say. Those God-given principles which govern the taking of human life are the same today as they have ever been. The *Roe vs Wade* decision did not change that. And those God-given principles which govern the sanctity of the marriage union are also the same as they have always been. *No fault divorce* laws have not changed that.

Blackstone was right. The Bible is right. God is the one lawgiver, and his law is the source of every valid human law. James said, “There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy,” [Jas 4:12](#). Isaiah said, “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,” [Isa 8:20](#). Any law that is contrary to God’s law is not a valid law.

Suppose lawmakers go ahead and pass those laws anyway. Do you believe God will allow himself to be overridden, and overruled, and reversed? No. God’s law is still in effect. Those no fault divorce laws are invalid laws, and no valid divorce can be granted on the basis of an invalid law. Such divorces granted on any basis other than the one ground God allows do have the force

of law, but it is an invalid law, and any divorce granted on that basis is an invalid divorce.

Suppose two people do divorce for some other cause than the one cause which God allows. The Bible deals with that, and gives instruction to the person who finds himself in that situation. [1Co 7:11](#), “But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband.” This verse has to do with a person who divorces for some other reason. In this case it has to do with a believer and an unbeliever, but it could be for any other cause except the one cause God recognizes.

In the very morning of time God created Adam, and he said, “It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him.” It was so important for a man to have a wife that God created one for him. Four thousand years later Paul said to Timothy, “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” Here are two texts four thousand years apart teaching us that men ought to have wives, and that women ought to have husbands.

But God singles out one class of people and instructs them not to get married. That ought to make it clear enough. Who is this one class of people God singles out? It is anybody, who is divorced for any cause except that one cause which God recognizes. God tells her, “Don’t you get married.”

Notice that she is unmarried. The text says so: “Let her remain unmarried. She has gotten her *no fault divorce*, so why can she not get married? Because she already has a husband. “Let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband.” We have Paul’s word for it that he is still her husband—in spite of the divorce. The divorce did not entirely sever the marriage union. It was not a valid divorce. The only divorce God will recognize is a divorce based on the one cause he allows. She already has a husband. If she wants to be married, she will have to go back to her own husband.

[Ro 7:3](#), “So then if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress, but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”

Fornication and adultery differ in this way: Fornication is the broad term, and adultery is a more narrow term. Fornication takes in every form of illicit sexual relations. Adultery always involves at least one married person.

Adultery is fornication, but fornication is not necessarily adultery. Webster defines fornication as “voluntary sexual intercourse between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman.” Two single people can commit fornication.

Adultery always involves at least one person who is married to somebody else. Webster defines adultery as “voluntary sexual intercourse of a married

man with a woman other than his wife, or of a married woman with a man other than her husband.”

Paul says, “So then if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress.” If her previous husband was not actually still her husband, there is no way she could commit adultery. But Paul makes it very clear that he is still her husband.

Why does God caution her against getting married? Because she already has a husband. This is so simple I believe a little third grader could understand it. The Bible becomes much easier to understand, if we will just let it say what it says. “So then if while her husband liveth....she be married to another man. She already has a husband—but now she is married to another man. She got a *no fault divorce*. She got a new marriage license. She went through the ceremony. She is married to another man. But the text says that the other man is still her husband.

Blackstone said it clearly. The law of God is the source of every valid human law. The various states passed their *no fault divorce* laws, but no valid divorce has ever been granted on the strength of those laws.

“So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress.” It did not say, “If she become married....” It said, “If she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress.” The statement does not have to do with past action; it has to do with the present condition. Folks challenge Primitive Baptists. They want to know, “Why can this person not live in the church? He married into this situation twenty years ago?” The bottom line is simply this. He cannot live in the church at the same time he is living with (married to) another man’s wife.

American society has become desensitized to the sanctity of the marriage union. We use the expression, *the sexual revolution*, and we talk about the way that mind set has affected people. But it appears that the mentality which comes from that idea has affected more people than we imagine.

We probably should have made this point much sooner. But at any rate, we must take time now to point out as strongly as we can that many, perhaps most, of those who are involved in the situation we are describing are as honorable, and honest, and decent as anybody you would ever care to meet. They are truly devoted to each other. They love each other, and they love their children. They are good neighbors, and good citizens. Many of them love the Lord, and they are trying as hard as anybody to live God-honoring lives. Many of them love the church; they attend as often as any member of the church.

For that matter, very few of them realize the nature of their situation. The law of the land has deceived them, and the ministry has failed them. If the

ministry had been more faithful, there probably would not be nearly as many people as there are in that condition. Some of them got in their present situation at a time, when they were younger and more reckless. Others simply did not realize the sanctity of the marriage union and the seriousness of the matter. They had not been properly instructed. For that the ministry must take part of the blame.

No doubt, many of the people in the condition we are describing do live immoral lives, but that applies to the population as a whole. We should not get the idea that the people under consideration are necessarily bad people. Many of them are pillars of the community. We have no desire to injure the tender feelings of any little child of God who finds himself in that situation, but, by the same token, we dare not compromise the instructions God has given us with regard to the subject.

There are few questions on which the thinking of the American people has undergone such a change as it has on this question during the last forty or fifty years. During the memory of most of those reading these lines there was a time when the more conservative denominational churches were much closer to the Bible standard than they are today. When I was growing up, I knew nothing about the Primitive Baptists, and consequently knew nothing about their doctrine, but in the area where I lived the expression *living in adultery* was well known and understood. The sanctity of the marriage union was recognized, and the break up of a marriage was seen for the tragedy that it is. Divorce carried the stigma that properly belonged to it, and when anyone was said to be *living in adultery* the reproach was obvious, both in the words and in the way they were repeated. The more conservative denominational churches in our area would readily accept a person in that condition into their membership, but if a preacher was perceived to be *living in adultery*, they would generally not call him as pastor, nor invite him to hold their special meetings.

Most of you remember when Nelson Rockefeller wanted so much to be president. Do you remember the question the news media asked at that time? They wanted to know, "Will the American people accept a divorced man in the White House?" But the thinking of the American people has changed. By the time Ronald Reagan came along the question did not even come up. In that very short time we had become desensitized to the question of divorce and remarriage.

Sometimes somebody says, "But, Brother Hunt, that took place before he had an experience of grace. He has been born again since that time. Does that not do away with his previous condition?" No it does not. God provided marriage for all of mankind. He did not just provide it for his children. Marriage is God's institution. He set it up. It belongs to him. He gave all of mankind the

principles which are to govern it, and those restrictions are binding on all of mankind. The wicked are bound by those principles as surely as the righteous are.

There could be no doubt that question would come up, and the Holy Spirit was very careful to provide a text dealing with it. [Mt 14:3](#), “For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias’ sake, his brother Philip’s wife, for John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.” John the Baptist told Herod that it was not lawful— not legal—f him to have his brother’s wife. Herod was as mean as a snake. He never gave any indication that he had ever been born of the Spirit of God, but he was still bound by the same principles that govern anybody else. He took his brother Philip’s wife. Bear in mind that they went through all the formalities. In the book of Mark we are told that “he had married her” [Mr 6:17](#). She got her *no fault divorce*. They went through the formalities, but John the Baptist, that brave old preacher, challenged that wicked king, and told him the marriage was *not lawful*—not legal. John knew that wicked old king was fully capable of taking his life, and he finally did do just that, but that did not deter him from telling him the truth.

Notice that he did not tell him, “it was unlawful for thee to marry her.” Most Bible students will admit that an adulterous marriage is improper at its outset. Not so many will admit that it continues to be wrong for its duration. The marriage was wrong at its inception, but John was not talking about Herod’s past sins; he was talking about his present situation. He said, “You still have her; it is not lawful for thee to have her.” What was John saying, when he told Herod it was not lawful for him to have his brother’s wife? Just what we have been saying all along: that any divorce Herodias had gotten from Herod’s brother was not a valid divorce, and therefore any subsequent marriage was not lawful—not legal.

There are at least two lessons to be learned from this passage. First, that it does not make any difference on which side of regeneration a person gets into that situation. John was talking to a man who never gave any indication that he had ever been born of the Spirit of God, and he held him to the same restrictions that he would anybody else.

The second lesson is probably more central to our subject. John told that wicked old king that it was not lawful for him to have his brother’s wife. Surely we ought to have at least as high a standard for members of a Primitive Baptist Church as John proclaimed for that wicked king.

One passage which has given people some concern on this point is in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians. [1Co 6:9-11](#), “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with

mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” This passage has left some people thinking Paul was here justifying receiving adulterers into the church. But that is not what he is saying at all. Notice the tense of the verb: “And such *were* some of you...” There is repentance available for any sin a person may repent of and turn from. These people were no longer involved in the sinful conduct mentioned.

We must acknowledge that there has always been some confusion on this point. When I joined the church more than thirty years ago, there were older brethren in this area who were convinced that regeneration did, indeed, take a person out of adultery. There were members, who had been taken into the church on that basis. The cases I knew about died long ago, but for all I know, there may still be others in the churches in that condition. There are a few areas today in which many of our people are just as firmly convinced that regeneration does take a person out of a state of adultery as I am convinced that it does not.

I believe it behooves us to search the Scriptures, and to be just as faithful as God will give us the grace and determination to be in proclaiming those high moral principles God has laid down with regard to divorce and remarriage. No church can wilfully take adulterers into the church without suffering the consequences. Once we wilfully forsake the clear moral ground of the Scriptures on this point, we are not likely to escape that long slippery slide to the bottom. It will not be long until there will be very little we will not accept. We have seen what is happening in the denominational churches. There is no reason to believe our lot will be any different, if we follow the same course they have followed.

Our people are agreed that, if a member of the church is guilty either of fornication or adultery, he must be excluded. We cannot tolerate such conduct among our membership. On that point our people do not generally have any problem. No other group of people has been so faithful as our Primitive Baptist people have been in that regard. If the denominational churches of the land would take the position our Primitive Baptist churches have taken on that one point, it would make an enormous difference in the spiritual condition of this nation. The greatest problem in the land is the silence of its spiritual leaders on basic moral issues.

There are some few of our people who believe that if a person became involved in an adulterous marriage many years ago, and later had an experience of grace, he can now be received into the church. I am convinced that they are dead wrong. I cannot see how the Bible could be any more clear

on this point. If a marriage is adulterous at its inception; it is adulterous for its duration. I have no doubt that those who follow such a course will one day see their error.

But there are areas in which not everyone agrees with what most of us perceive the Bible to teach on this point. The difference of opinion on that point goes back for generations. Many of the previous generation in this area had that idea. While we may differ very vigorously with that notion we need to use judgment in the matter. It does not behoove us to be constantly on the alert for someone who does not agree with us, just so we can declare against them.

There have been far too many declarations of non-fellowship, and too many divisions, as it is. It is sad to say, but very often, those, who have been the quickest to break fellowship with their brethren, have also been the most careful to conceal problems, when they arise in their own church, or in their own family.

How often we have seen it happen that those ministers, who are so anxious to straighten out everybody else, themselves have the most to hide. Problems arise in their own families, and they are unwilling to deal with the matter, or to allow the church to deal with it. We have often seen it happen that churches or ministers, who seem to have set themselves up as regulators, generally wind up with serious problems of their own, which they are unwilling to handle. Being so obviously caught in their own trap, we cannot help but wonder if God has not dealt with their arrogance by delivering them over to judgment.

We cannot straighten out every church in the land, and we should not try. If the conduct of a particular church is injuring the good name of our Primitive Baptist people, we have no choice but to disown them—to declare against them. But there is no way we will ever get every church in the land to march in lock step. The churches of the apostles' day were not perfect in every respect, and we cannot expect that we will fare any better in our day. The church at Corinth had serious problems. So did the churches of Galatia, and all but two of the seven churches of Asia.

Paul and John did not declare against those churches, and they did not persuade the other churches to do so. But they did reprimand them sharply. They called on them to repent, and to turn away from their misconduct.

Let me end where I began. Our Primitive Baptists have no need to apologize for the firm stand the majority of our people have generally taken on the subject of divorce and remarriage. If a couple is involved in an adulterous marriage, we cannot receive them into the church. We mean them no harm,

but they cannot be members of the church. We cannot abandon those simple moral precepts God has provided in order to gain a few members.

It behooves us that we use all the persuasive power God will give us to persuade our various churches to stay with the high moral ground God has assigned us, but we cannot straighten out every church in the land. Sometimes the conduct of a church scandalizes the good name of our Lord and of our Primitive Baptist people, and the other churches have no choice but to disown them, to declare against them. There is a limit to forbearance, but we ought to be as patient as the Scriptures will allow us to be, before we write off any church as a lost cause.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
When God Thunders In The Heavens

When God Thunders In The Heavens

[Ps 18:13](#), “The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the highest gave his voice, hailstones and coals of fire.”

Many of us remember a time when it was fairly common for somebody to become overwhelmed in the Lord’s service and shout for joy. That does not happen very often, nowadays. That is very much a thing of the past. I notice that even among our own people, it makes some of our people a little uneasy to refer to people getting happy and shouting in church, as if that is not quite socially acceptable.

I suppose whether it is socially acceptable to shout for joy depends very much on the context. If you want to learn something about whether it is socially acceptable to shout for joy, you should come to Knoxville some Saturday afternoon in the fall. If the University of Tennessee happens to be playing Alabama, and Tennessee scores the winning touchdown, you will probably learn more than you ever wanted to know about whether it is socially acceptable to shout for joy.

If the University of Tennessee Vols do score the winning touchdown, our folks up here in the mountains jump up and down, and whoop and holler, like a bunch of heathens.

I suppose there would be more shouting for joy in the Lord’s house if there were more people who consider worshiping God to be as important as our people in Tennessee consider football.

But I am not interested in talking about why we shout. I want us to think about those times when God has shouted. Every one of the most important events in the history of the world has been marked and underscored by God shouting.

I have heard there is power in the spoken word. I suppose what makes the difference is who is speaking the word. Sometimes, my spoken word does not make much difference.

In this little booklet I would like for us to think about some of those times when God speaks. More than that, I would like for us to think about those times when God has literally shouted. The Bible talks about several times when God has shouted in the heavens. It talks about other times when he, even today, speaks with that same almighty, life-giving voice.

One thing we learn very early is that when God speaks, things happen. When he shouts, worlds spring into existence. Once he shouted and literally rearranged the face of the planet.

Another time he shouted, and set a huge mountain on fire. On another occasion he shouted, and rolled away the sins of a vast multitude of people. All of time and eternity revolves around that moment of time. That is what the text before us is talking about.

There is a time coming when he will shout, and all over this planet, the dead are going to rise. Some who have been dead for thousands of years will rise. Nobody on earth knows anything about most of them. Nobody knows who they were, who their parents were, who their children were, or when and where they lived. But God knows who they were. He knows more about them than they ever knew about themselves. And on that grand day, he will shout in the heavens, and bring them out of the grave. But I am getting ahead of myself. I want to start at the beginning. That is usually a good place to start. The first time we read about God shouting is in the very morning of time.

[Ge 1:1](#), “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light and there was light.”

I am the farthest thing you will ever see from an astronomer, but I enjoy reading some of the things astronomers write, and I assume they probably have it right. I would not know how to argue with them, if I tried. They tell us something about the vastness of the universe.

I read somewhere that it is something like 2000 light years from earth to the Andromeda Galaxy, the nearest heavenly body to the earth. I suppose that is right. They use figures and distances I cannot really comprehend. They talk about how far it is from one side of the universe to the other side, and they leave me dumbfounded.

I don't know what constitutes the end of the universe. I have always wondered, if you get to the end of the universe, what is a couple of miles beyond that. I don't expect anybody is ever going to figure that out.

They boggle our minds talking about the vastness of the universe. They tell us that some of the stars are so huge that if you were to replace our sun with one of those huge stars, the surface of that star would reach beyond the very orbit of the earth itself. That is probably right.

There are untold billions of stars, galaxies, and nebulae in the universe. With all the things astronomers disagree about, they can agree on, at least, one thing. They agree there are more heavenly bodies in the heavens than they will ever be able to count. But as many as there are, and as widely as they are scattered over the universe, there was a point in time, when God simply said, "Let there be light," and the lights came on all over the universe.

To very limits of the created universe, the lights came on. If God spoke in a voice that could be heard throughout the vastness of the universe, I believe you would have to say that was a shout, don't you? God shouted. He said, "Let there be light, and the lights came on all over this created universe.

The most important events in the history of the world have been marked and underscored by God thundering in the heavens.

In [Ps 104:5](#), we read about another time when God shouted. "Who laid the foundation of the earth, that it should not be removed forever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment. The waters stood above the mountains; at thy rebuke they fled, at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys into the place which thou hast founded for them."

He starts out talking about the original creation. He says that God "laid the foundation of the earth that it should not be removed forever." That is talking about the creation. And then in the next expression he goes to the Genesis flood. He says, "Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment. The waters stood above the mountains."

The word *deep* is a poetic expression referring to the ocean. This text says, that God *covered the earth with the deep*. He covered the earth with the ocean. Then he said, "The waters stood above the mountains."

In the book of Genesis, we read, "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered," [Ge 7:19-20](#).

"At thy rebuke they fled, at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away." Evolutionist types tell us there never was any such thing as the Genesis flood. They have the proof there never could have been any such thing as the Genesis flood. We will get to their so-called *proof* in just a moment.

I remember when I was in the fourth grade we studied something about the various kinds of rock: igneous rock, conglomerate rock, sedimentary rock, etc.

We learned that sedimentary rock is rock that settled out of water. They told us there was a time, when this entire continent was submerged beneath the ocean, and the sedimentary rock settled out of those oceans.

Then on almost the same page they told us there never was any such thing as the Genesis flood. I believe a little third grader could see the contradiction in that, don't you?

They would explain that sedimentary rock settled out of water. And how did it happen? They have a stock answer for just about anything you ask them. How did it happen? "It took a long time." They sound like a broken record. No matter what you ask them, that is the answer. "It took a long time." How did all this sedimentary rock—some of it hundreds of feet thick in places, thousands of feet thick in other places—how did that much material settle out. "It took a long time."

I believe a little third grader could perform the very simplest experiment and prove that is just not right. A little third grader could take a quart fruit jar, and fill it almost full of water, and finish filling it with dirt, and sand, and gravel, and shake it up really good, and set it on the shelf, and see how many millions of years it takes for that sediment to settle out of the water.

There are ever so many questions evolutionists don't want you to ask. They don't want to hear it. One of the questions evolutionists do not want to hear is, "Where did the force come from that kept the water stirred up for millions of years?" Our brilliant evolutionist friends pretend that question has never been asked.

They cannot answer it. They have absolutely no idea, but the Bible tells us exactly where that force came from. It did not take millions of years. The Bible tells us how the water got so stirred up, and how the sediment settled out. And it explains it in language a little third grader can understand.

Before we get to that, let's take a moment to look at the evolutionist's *proof* there never was a Genesis Flood. They know there never was a world wide flood—even though they tell us there was a time when the ocean covered our continent. They know that because they know there is not enough water vapor in the atmosphere to produce a worldwide flood. They can measure it. And they are right, they can measure it. They know approximately how much water is in the atmosphere.

They tell us if you were to wring every particle of moisture out of the atmosphere, you could not get a knee deep world wide flood, much less deep enough to cover the tallest mountains. Then they lean back, and smile, with that sickening evolutionist smile, as if they had just proved something.

But what does that have to do with anything? The Bible talks about the water coming down. It does not say a thing about the water going back up.

Do you remember reading in Genesis chapter one, where it talks about the water that used to be above the atmosphere? It tells about a huge canopy of water, a virtual ocean of water above the *firmament of heaven*.

[Ge 1:11](#), “And God made the firmament, and divided the waters that were under the firmament from the waters that were above the firmament.”

This says there was water under the firmament, the firmament of heaven, and water above the firmament. But what is this *firmament* of heaven? The Bible gives the definition. The Bible defines its own terms better than we can. [Ge 1:20](#), “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and *fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven*.” So this firmament of heaven is where the birds fly. In the original creation there were waters beneath the firmament, beneath the atmosphere, and water above the firmament.

In the flood we read that the “windows of heaven were opened” ([Ge 7:11](#)). For forty days and forty nights that huge ocean of water that encased the atmosphere rained down on the earth.

And *the fountains of the great deep were broken up*. The subterranean waters under the earth welled up from beneath.

That did not empty *the great deep*. There is still a lot of water down there. Geologists call those subterranean waters *aquifers*. If there was not some of that water still down there, you could not dig a well. There used to be a lot more water under ground than there is now, and there used to be an entire ocean of water above the atmosphere. That water is no longer up there.

The fountains of the deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. For forty days and forty nights the rain came down until every air breathing creature, “all in which was the breath of life,” died. Except for Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives, and those creatures which were taken into the ark, every air breathing creature on earth died.

Then at the end of the flood, we read, “At thy rebuke they fled, *at the voice of thy thunder* they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys; unto the place which thou hast founded for them,” ([Ps 104:7-8](#)).

This is talking about that next great time when God thundered in the heavens. I like simple language, and simple explanations. If you will read this passage slowly and carefully—the way any little third grader would—it becomes very simple.

We are told “the waters stood above the mountains” ([Ps 104:6](#)). That is talking about the Genesis Flood. We are told God *founded a place* for the waters ([Ps 104:8](#)). He prepared a place with sufficient capacity to hold the waters. Then at the voice of God’s thunder *they hasted away* ([Ps 104:7](#)). God

thundered in the heavens and the waters rushed away to the place God had *founded* for them.

If you want to know where the waters of the Genesis flood went, just look and see where all the water is. That place God founded for the waters is the basin of all the oceans of the world. The waters of the flood are not in the atmosphere. They are in the place God founded for them. If you want to get some idea of the magnitude of the Genesis flood, just take a look at the oceans. The waters of the oceans are the waters of the Genesis flood.

“At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them,” [Ps 104:7-8](#). God thundered in the heavens, he founded the basins of the oceans to receive the waters of the flood, and those waters went rushing to the place God had founded for them.

When that much water is in motion, it never moves evenly and gently. We are told, “They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them” ([Ps 104:8](#)). Before the waters of the oceans finally settled into the place God had founded for them, there was a lot of sloshing that went on. The effect of all those trillions of gallons of sloshing water holds the answer to most of the questions geologists are wrestling with til this very day.

Then when the waters finally settled in place, God “set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth” ([Ps 104:9](#)). When they finally settled in place, God set a bound that they can never again cover the earth.

When God thunders in the heavens mighty things happen.

Moving water does not move gently and easily. When God founded a place for this water to run to, it did not drain to a point, and gently come to rest. There was lot of sloshing going on. The text says, “They go up by the mountains and down by the valleys. They went up by the mountains and down by the valleys, up by the mountains, and down by the valleys until they eventually came to rest.

There is that force the evolutionist has never found. He does not want to find it. The force that gathered up all the material that settled out and formed sedimentary rock is the rushing water that moved back and forth until it finally settled in the place God founded for it.

With all that water moving back and forth, sloshing back and forth, there was some enormous erosion taking place. It would gather up material, and carry it in one direction. When it went so far it would slow down, come to a stop, and begin to drop that load of trash. (Geologists call that load of trash, *detritus*; that is Latin for trash. They could not afford to call it *trash*; that would make

it too simple.) Then it would slosh in the other direction, gathering up more material, and when it would go so far in that direction, it would slow down, and drop its load, before it started back again.

Sometimes, as it gained speed, it would pick up material it had just deposited, and redeposit it farther along. As it laid that material down, layer after layer, there would be one kind of material gathered up from one place, and another kind of material gathered from another place, until those layers began to look like an old fashioned stack cake.

Does that not sound like something you see where the interstate is cut into a hillside? You don't need a degree in geology to figure that out. I believe a little third or fourth grader could see it. Unless he admits there was the Genesis Flood, the geologist can never explain where the force came from that got so much material stirred up, and why it settled in such layers as it did. And yet God left such a clear and visible record that any little child can see it. More than that, when anything settles out of water, it settles on the floor. It does not settle on the wall. But as you drive along the interstate where they have made those cuts, that sedimentary rock is not always level. Sometimes it looks like corrugated roofing. There is a place not very far from where I live where some of the layers stand straight up and down.

When God thundered in the heavens, dropped the bottoms of the oceans, and prepared a place for the waters to run to, the displaced material had to go somewhere. It would not compress. If went down in one place, it had to go up somewhere else.

When you look at all those convoluted layers of sedimentary rock, it kind of looks like somebody stood at the edge of a bed and pushed the quilts sideways. If you stand at the edge of a bed and start to push the quilts, they are not going to slide easily. They will crumple and fold. That is what happened when God thundered in the heavens, dropped the bottom of the oceans, and founded a place for the waters to run to. As the displaced material moved out of the way, it pushed other material sideways, and made strange patterns in the soft, pliable sedimentary rock.

And as the water ran off, sometimes it cut huge gullies and canyons in the fresh rock layers. Sometimes, that wet, heavy, abrasive material would begin to build up. And then, after awhile, it would become so heavy it would break through the barrier, and it would go rushing toward the sea. It would cut great channels.

A few years ago, I visited the Grand Canyon. That is an absolutely awesome sight—a mile deep, five miles wide, and two hundred miles long. If you ask the guide how that happened, he will tell you the Colorado River cut the

Grand Canyon. Ah, come on now. How did the Colorado River cut the Grand Canyon?

You know exactly what he is going to say. “It took a long time.” They sound like a broken record. No matter what you ask, you get the same answer.

Pretending it took a long time might explain how the Grand Canyon got so deep, but how did it get so wide? Was there some kind of mechanism that made the Colorado River move back and forth, back and forth, like a giant lathe?

When all that material finally broke loose, it came rushing through those layers of sediment. At that time it was still soft, wet, and pliable, and those rushing waters cut that two hundred mile long channel. There are smaller canyons all over the south west. Those canyons are evidence of what happened at the end of the Genesis Flood.

About 25 years ago, it was as if God said to evolutionist types, “Okay, everybody, just stand still and watch, I am going to show you how I did it.”

Do you remember when Mt. Helens erupted? In May of 1980, the top one quarter of a mile of that volcano was blasted into smithereens, and it fell back to earth in layers. With all the ice, and snow, on the top of that mountain, and with Spirit Lake, and Tuttle River, flowing into the sediment, it amassed a huge build up. It began to build up and build up, much like it did at the Genesis Flood. That wet, heavy, abrasive material built up, and built up, until it finally broke loose. When it did, it cut a channel, roughly one fortieth the size of the Grand Canyon. A ditch one fortieth the size of the Grand Canyon is still a good sized gully. It cut a channel very similar, and in the same fashion as the Grand Canyon—and it did it in one day.

Do you remember how excited the scientific community got over that development? They did not get the least bit excited. They had their blinders on. Their reaction was, “Don’t tell me, I don’t want to hear it. Don’t tell me God formed a huge canyon at Mount St. Helens. Don’t tell me he did it in one day. I don’t want to hear about it.”

They remind me of somebody who was talking about one of his friends. He said, “That man has a mind like concrete— all mixed up and permanently set.”

That is the reason evolutionists will not allow creation to be taught in school. They know that if teachers were allowed to present creation alongside of evolution, the evolutionists would not stand a chance. Those children would see right through it.

Every now and then, when I am talking about how we need to preach in as simple a manner as we can, I make the point that the preacher ought to

preach so the little fellows can understand—and hope the old folks can keep up.

Those little fellows are brighter than we give them credit for, and if they could see evolution and creation presented side by side, they could easily see how ridiculous the evolutionary notion is.

In the book of Exodus, we find another time when God thundered in the heavens. In Exodus, chapter nineteen, God was about to give Israel the Law of Moses. We Primitive Baptist preachers enjoy preaching about the insufficiency of the Law. The Law was not sufficient to produce children of God. It was not sufficient to deliver anybody from eternal damnation. It was not sufficient to gain anybody a home in eternal heaven. It was not sufficient to justify anybody before God.

But it was never intended for any of those things. So we preach about the insufficiency of the law to accomplish any of those things. But for the purpose for which it was given, the Law was very effective. It was the best system of law any nation ever had. It was a very fair system. The punishment exactly fit the offense.

To give you just one example, the Law provided *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*. Somebody says, “Brother Hunt, the Lord said that is a bad principle.” You are right; it is a bad principle when one person takes that responsibility upon himself. The Lord was talking about one person taking it upon himself to exact an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But when that principle is applied by the proper authorities it was a very good principle.

In other words, under the Law of Moses, if you were to walk up to somebody, and just haul off and bust him in the mouth, and knock his tooth out, they did not arrest you, and put you in jail. They did not leave you in jail, to be kept up by the taxpayers, while your family was left to shift for themselves.

What it did provide was that if you were to haul off and bust somebody in the mouth, and knock his tooth out, you had to submit to have somebody come up, and haul off and bust you in the mouth, and knock your tooth out. And, by the way, it was very likely the man you hit would gather up his friends, so he could have an audience to stand off to one side, and laugh at you while you were having your tooth knocked out. It sounds pretty fair to me.

I don't have time to run through a litany of the provisions of the Law, but for the purpose for which it was given, there has never been a better system of law. It was never intended to be a system of salvation, a system of justification, but as a system of law, it was the best law any nation ever had.

[Ex 19:10](#), “And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today, and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready

against the third day, for the third day, the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people on Mount Sinai.”

[Ex 19:11](#), “And be ready against the third day, for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds for the people round about saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it. Whosoever toucheth the mountain, shall surely be put to death. There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through, whether it be beast or man, it shall not live. When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.”

Can you imagine how uneasy that made those people? In the weeks and months before, they had seen the plague of water turned to blood. They had seen the plague of locusts. The plague of lice. The plague of frogs. The murrain of beasts. They had seen the hail that destroyed the crops. They had seen the death of the firstborn. They had come to the Red Sea, and God divided the Red Sea in parts, and the children of Israel marched through as by dry land, “which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.”

And now, they have come up to the foot of Mt. Sinai. This huge mountain is towering over them. And God tells Moses, to warn the people not even to touch the mountain. If even a dog should walk up on the side of the mountain, it had to be killed. If an old milk cow walked up on the mountain, it had to be killed.

Here are about two or three million people at the foot of Mt. Sinai. [Ex 19:16](#), “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, that all the people in the camp trembled.”

Paul says, “And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake,” ([Heb 12:21](#)).

[Ex 19:17](#), “Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace. And the whole mount quaked greatly.”

First the mountain was covered with a cloud. There was the crash of thunder. There was the flash of lightning, and the mountain caught on fire. The very mountain was smoking like a furnace. God thundered in the heavens, and Paul says that God’s “voice then shook the earth,” ([Heb 12:26](#)). His voice shook this very planet.

God called Moses to come up on the mountain. No wonder Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake.” If you had been at the foot of that mountain, and God had told you, “Come up here, I want to talk to you,” you might have quaked too.

Moses went up. He was exceedingly fearing and quaking, but he went up. Have you ever heard the expression, “He laid down the law?” That is exactly what God did. He called Moses to the top of the mountain, and he laid down the law. He gave Moses the law that was to govern Israel for the next fifteen hundred years.

God thundered in the heavens and delivered the Law to Israel by the hand of Moses. Why did God do it that way?

Perhaps he had a lot of reasons. But it reminds me of a little anecdote. You have probably heard of the old farmer, who was trying to get the mule to pull the wagon, and the mule did not want to pull. The farmer popped the mule with the reins, and he would not move. And he popped him with the reins, and said, “Giddyup,” and the mule still would not move.

After about the third time, the farmer climbed down out of the wagon, and reached over behind the seat and got a club about three feet long, and whittled down like a baseball bat. He walked around in front of that old mule, planted his feet right firmly, raised that pole up over his head, and laid it very firmly between the old mule’s eyes. He said, “First you have got to get his attention.”

When God came down on Mount Sinai, he was getting the attention of a stubborn and rebellious nation. He intended for them to know this law was his law. He did not intend for anybody to go around, pretending Moses had been on the mountain all that time, with hammer and chisel, carving out those commandments. He intended for them to know there was something more than Moses involved in the law he gave to Israel, and there were consequences to the way they behaved.

Let us go to the New Testament for a few instances when God thundered in the heavens.

[Mt 27:50-51](#), “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost, and behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.”

All of time and eternity revolves around what happened at Calvary.

Everything before that day looked forward to the Lord Jesus Christ suffering, bleeding, and dying on the cross, to put our sins away. Everything since that day looks back to what the Lord accomplished by his suffering and death.

Every sacrifice in the Old Testament pointed forward to that day. Our preaching points back to that day, as well as pointing forward to the day when the Lord is coming again.

The sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood pointed forward to his taking our sins away, but those sacrifices never removed one sin. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, he rolled our sins away. He paid our sin debt before God.

The Law said, “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” He died in our room and stead. At the instant he died, he cried with a loud voice, showing that he was not smothering to death. He cried with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost, and God rolled our sins away.

The eighteenth Psalm is a companion text to that passage. Matthew tells about the Lord crying out on the cross. In Psalms eighteen, David tells of the Lord hanging on the cross, and by the spirit of prophecy, he was able to look one thousand years into the future, and see what the people who were present were not able to see. For three hours the people at the foot of the cross were in the dark. They could not see what was going on.

In verse three we see the Lord hanging on the cross. He says, “I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from mine enemies. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God; he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.”

When the Lord was hanging on the cross, he prayed to the Father. If there was ever anybody who could have gotten by without praying, the Lord could have gotten by without praying. And if it behooved the Lord to pray, it certainly behoves the likes of you and me that we pray.

Notice what happened when he prayed. Matthew did not say anything about this. Matthew did not see it. They were all in the dark. Why were they left in the dark?

Isaiah said, “Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior,” [Isa 45:15](#). It appears to me that God does some things for his own satisfaction, and he does not have to allow anybody to watch. The people on the ground could not see what was going on. They could feel it, but they could not see it.

[Ps 18:7](#), “Then the earth shook and trembled, the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured, coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also and came down, and darkness was under his feet.”

That is talking about those three hours of darkness when the Lord hanged on the cross.

[Ps 18:10-12](#), “And he rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him, his thick clouds passed, hailstones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the highest gave his voice, hailstones and coals of fire.”

God had his own reasons for not displaying it to everybody, but sometimes, I like to just close my eyes, and imagine what a spectacle there must have been in the heavens. If you will, go back and read those three verses and imagine what a spectacle that must have been.

I doubt the skyrockets of ten million Fourth of July celebrations all rolled into one could have equaled what a display that must have been, when God thundered in the heavens and rolled our sins away. “At the brightness that was before him, his thick clouds passed, hailstones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the highest gave his voice, hailstones and coals of fire.”

When God thundered in the heavens; he rolled our sins away; and his people were eternally redeemed.

In the book of Acts, we read about the Lord ascending to heaven. He was on the mountain with the disciples. His work was finished. It had been forty days since he rose from the dead. [Ac 1:9](#), “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven; this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go away into heaven.”

Those two men, these two angels, said the Lord is coming back the same way he went away. He went away in a cloud; he is coming back in a cloud. There is a problem, though. I read in Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout.”

He ascended in a cloud; he is coming back in a cloud. So far, so good. But Paul said he is coming back with a shout. Luke did not say anything about his going away with a shout, but the two angels said he is coming back the same way he went away. Why did Luke not say anything about the Lord going away with a shout?

Luke did not say it, because he did not hear him shout. Did he shout when he went away? He did, but Luke did not hear him. He did not shout for Luke’s benefit.

[Ps 47:5](#) tells us, “God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with a sound of a trumpet.”

This verse says, “God is gone up....” Let me ask you, when did God ever go anywhere? If God is omnipresent—and we preach that he is—if he is everywhere present and nowhere absent, how could he go anywhere? How could he go anywhere, if he is already everywhere?

Jesus Christ was, and is, God. When he ascended to glory, he was going back where he came from. David said he went up *with a shout*. God went up, when the Lord Jesus ascended to glory. Those at the foot of the cross did not hear him shout. He did not shout for their benefit. He shouted for his own benefit. Awhile ago we talked about his crying out with a loud voice, when he was on the cross. In Psalms eighteen, we read, in that same context, that, “God also thundered in the heavens.” Did he thunder in the heavens, or did he shout on the cross? He did both.

There are mysteries about the incarnation that you and I will never be able to unravel. Paul said in one of his letters to Timothy, “And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness....” He was talking about the incarnation. He says the incarnation is a mystery. If you can explain it, it is not a mystery. In John, chapter three, he said, “There is no man that has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is also in heaven.”

He said in that verse the Son of Man is *in heaven*, and when he said it, he was standing down here on the ground. How do you explain that? I don’t; I just read it, take it for what it says, and leave it there.

Even though we cannot entirely unravel it, it was all the same thing, when he shouted on the cross, and he thundered in the heavens. But what I am getting to is this. Even though, in some sense, he was in heaven, he was at the same time down here on the ground.

In some sense that you and I will never be able to explain, he had been away from home for some thirty-three years. I suppose since I introduced that thought, I had better go ahead, and explain it.

We sing a song, “We will know all about it by and by.” I am not entirely sure that is right. I expect that when we get over there we will know ten thousand times more than we know down here, but that will still not be knowing all about it. In order to know all about it, we would have to know as much as God does, and we will never know that much. God will always be God; we will always be his creatures, and we will never know all he knows.

In some sense, he had been away from home for thirty-three years, and I am sure he was anxious to get back home. I enjoy traveling, and I enjoy preaching, but even more, I enjoy getting back home. I don’t enjoy leaving my wife at home by herself, knowing how desolate, how forsaken she feels. And I have an idea that she probably misses me as much as I miss her.

There are a lot of inventions I could have done without, but I really appreciate cell-phones. She usually calls me two or three times between the time I leave the church and the time I get home. I am glad she does. I love to hear the sound of her voice.

As much as I enjoy traveling, I do not enjoy being away from home. I do not blush to tell you, the most exciting event of every day is when I wake up, and she is still there. I miss that when I am away. I thank God that he provided me with her. God only knows what would have become of me, if God had not known that I needed somebody to make up all that is lacking in me.

Sometimes the greatest contribution she makes is to rain on my parade. She is good at puncturing my balloon. We husbands do not always appreciate that, but that can be a great benefit. I served a church in Mississippi for several years. Somebody said, “Why did you not move down there?” For one thing, I was serving another church in Tennessee. I preached in Mississippi three times a month, and six times a month in Tennessee.

The subject of moving to Mississippi did come up. She was agreeable. She said, “It is alright with me—but I do hope you will come back and see me every now and then.” Well, that settled that question.

Sometimes I get homesick before I get out of town. I know how desolate and alone she feels, and I am anxious to get back home. I often count the miles and the hours when I am away. Whether I am enjoying the meeting does not have a thing to do with it. I may be enjoying the meeting, but I am still anxious to get back home.

The point I am getting to is that our Lord had been away from home for some thirty three years, and now, in some sense that we can never explain he was back home. When he rolled our sins away, I believe he shouted for his own satisfaction. I believe he shouted for the benefit of those on the other side. Their Lord was coming home. But either way, he ascended back to heaven with a shout. He went away with a shout, and he is coming back with a shout—with a shout of triumph—with a shout of victory.

I have friends who think the Lord is trying to save all the race. Some of the people he wants ever so much to save are going to burn, but he is still going to come back with a shout of victory. It does not fit, does it?

No, I believe when he comes again in the clouds of glory, it will be with a shout of victory. It will be a shout of triumph, because every one the Father chose, every one the Son redeemed, will have been born of his Spirit. And he will carry every last one of them home with him to eternal glory.

That shout will be sufficient to raise the dead. All over this planet there will be people coming out of the grave—bodies being raised and rejoined with that departed spirit to be forever with the Lord.

One other connection and I am done. In John chapter five, we read about two times when God thunders, when he speaks with a voice of authority, with a voice of power.

[Joh 5:25](#), “Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.”

This hour *now is*. He is talking about regeneration. “The hour is coming *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.”

[Joh 5:28](#), “Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming [no *now is* in this verse], in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”

This is the same day we read about in [1Th 4](#). He draws an exact parallel between resurrection and regeneration. He uses almost identically the same language.

The main difference is that in one verse he says this hour now is, and in the other verse he shows that he is talking about those who are in the graves.

Other than that, he uses almost the same language.

He talks about regeneration in the same way he talks about resurrection. Just as surely as he is going to thunder in the heavens, and raise the dead, in regeneration, he speaks with that same powerful, life-giving voice to one dead in sins, and he is instantly made alive.

Let me ask you, do you believe that on the resurrection morning, God is going to come in the clouds of glory, and call for the dead to rise— and nothing happens? Can you imagine God pleading, “Ah, come on now—please—ah, come on. Why not tonight, wilt thou be raised, then why not, oh, why not tonight. Why not, please, why not tonight?”

Do you believe the resurrection is going to be that way? I believe he is going to speak, and the dead are going to be raised all over this earth. He draws an exact parallel to show that the way it will be in the resurrection, is exactly the way it is in regeneration. Read those two verses and notice the parallel.

The point I am getting to is that the voice that gives divine life in regeneration is the same voice that spoke and the lights came on all over the universe. The same voice that dropped the bottom of the oceans, and raised the tallest mountains. The same voice that spoke and jarred this old planet, when God gave the Law to Israel. That same voice that jarred this planet, when the Lord suffered and died on the cross.

That same voice that one day is going to raise the dead is the voice that speaks to one dead in trespasses and sins, and gives him life.

Why would anybody trade that assurance for the notion that God delegates such responsibility to men—to people like you and me? No wonder he said, “he speaks and it is done, he commands and it stands fast.”

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Which System Is Unfair?

WHICH SYSTEM IS UNFAIR?

The doctrine our Primitive Baptist people subscribe to is fundamentally different from the doctrine of the denominational world. You do not have to be around an Primitive Baptist church very long before you notice there are some fundamental differences in the things we believe, especially with regard to the way people are saved.

But sometimes we Primitive Baptist preachers have been guilty of pointing out that difference in an improper way. Sometimes, especially at our special meetings, we have been guilty of setting up anybody who does not agree with us like a *straw man*; we flail the stuffings out of him, and the congregation just loves it. But very often, there is some little child of God there for the first time, who is, perhaps, related to one of the members of the church. For a long time he has been after him to “come out and attend one of our services, and see if you don’t enjoy it.” Then the preacher goes to the pulpit, and is abusive in some of the things he says. He is careless in the way he presents the opposing point of view, and the way he attacks it. He says things that are calculated to offend those who do not agree with him.

The visitor never comes back, and we hear folks asking, “Why did he not come back; we had such a good meeting; the preachers preached so well; why did he not come back?” I don’t think you need to be too bright to figure that out. We are commanded to preach the truth in love. There is no room to compromise on the truth. We cannot compromise one principle of gospel truth; but we can be as uncompromising as God requires us to be, and still preach the truth in love.

Sometimes we Primitive Baptists preach as if the Primitive Baptists have a lock on sincerity. Sometimes we leave the impression that if you want to find sincerity, you will have to go to the Primitive Baptists to find it, because that is where sincerity is found. Brethren, that is not right. There are children of God in the denominational churches who are just as humble, just as sincere, just as God-fearing, as anybody you will ever meet.

There is a world of difference between that person who wilfully, and maliciously preaches falsehood, knowing all the while that what he is preaching is false, and those little sheep under his care, who are simply confused. Paul says, “Giving none offense in any thing that the ministry be not blamed.” During my ministry I have lost more sleep over the thought that by my way of presenting what I have to say I have injured some little child of God than I have ever lost for any other reason. I know I have been guilty.

Sometimes I have inadvertently been guilty, but I have been guilty, nonetheless. Sometimes it was just through a slip of the tongue. I want to preach the truth in love as best I can, and I have no desire to set up any other person as a straw man, and have fun in ridiculing what he believes. How very careful we ought to be.

But having said all of that, we must insist that it is proper to defend the truth when it is challenged. We have an obligation to defend the truth, and while we have no desire to injure any little child of God, we can allow no compromise in defending the truth. We must stand firmly on those things the Bible teaches. There is enormous difference between defending the truth when it is challenged, and simply setting up the other person for the purpose of taking advantage of him. We must be ready to give an answer when we are asked. If somebody challenges the truth, we ought to be ready to answer that challenge. It is our purpose in this booklet to answer one of the challenges that are often brought against those who believe in salvation by the sovereign grace of God. Perhaps, the most common challenge ever brought against the sovereignty of God is that God would be unfair if he did not give everybody a chance to be saved. Most of you have encountered that complaint at one time or another. If somebody hears that you believe in predestination, that is likely the first thing they say.

Think about that for a moment. Consider the audacity of anybody who would dare challenge God, and accuse God of being unfair. It is a small thing for us to challenge some other man, but for man to accuse his Maker, to bring God into the dock, and sit in judgment on God is the height of arrogance. That is what sinful man has wanted all along. That is what the serpent wanted in the garden. He said, "Yea, hath God said....?" He challenged the truthfulness of God. He said, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Do you see? He was accusing God. Far be it from the creature to accuse his Maker of being unfair.

For that matter God would be completely fair if he had allowed the human race to run its course from the morning of time until the very last day, and never provided salvation for anybody. God did not owe salvation to anybody. He did not owe salvation to me, to you, nor to any other person. Paul said to the Romans, "For who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again." Paul was saying, "Is there any of you who ever gave God anything. If there is, let him step forward, and God will pay him." "Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again." If God owes you anything, he will pay you. But God does not owe you anything. He does not owe you the very breath you are breathing. God would have been completely fair if he had never saved anybody.

Salvation is not based on chance in the first place. Chance is a gambling term. Various forms of gambling are referred to as *games of chance*. That expression is synonymous with gambling. Our salvation is not a *game of chance*. Our salvation is based on the firm and sure decrees of our Maker. But, for the sake of discussion, let us consider this question of "an equal chance of being saved." Salvation is not based on chance, but since somebody

is forever bringing up the subject, let us consider the matter from that point of view, and see if their argument can survive on that basis.

Many years ago I heard one good brother say that, at some time between the cradle and the grave, everybody will have at least one chance to be saved. For the sake of discussion, let's imagine that salvation is based on chance. Those who tell you salvation is based on chance will also usually tell you that in order to be saved you must hear the gospel and believe it, and you must repent of sin and turn from it. That is probably a broad enough statement to cover most of those who have that idea. Some of them insist that you must also "hold out faithful" until the end, that you must not lose your salvation once you get it. Others insist on adding water baptism to the formula. Some of them modify the formula one way, and some modify it another way, but all of them will usually agree that, as a minimum, you must hear the gospel and believe it, and that you must repent of sin and turn from it.

Now, I ask you, if those are the things that are necessary in order for any person to be born again, does everybody have an equal chance to be saved? Let's consider the possibilities. Here is one little fellow who is born into a godly home. His mom and dad love the Lord. They read their Bible regularly. They live godly lives. They do the very best they can to instill in his mind the principles they have learned from the Bible. The very first place he is taken, after he is old enough to be out of the house, is to church. And from then on it is twice every Sunday and every Wednesday night. Whether he wants to go or not, he is in church. He hears a lot more preaching than he really wants to hear. He gets to be about fifteen or sixteen years old, and he decides that he does not want to go to church today. His folks tell him, "It doesn't matter, you get ready, you are going to church." He may put up a fuss, but his dad tells him something on the order of, "As long as you are under my roof, and eat at my table, you are going to church when the rest of us go to church." Some of you may have had that conversation with one of your children.

Sometimes somebody tells me, "Brother Hunt, I never have tried to force my children to go to church. I have always let them make up their own minds." Why would you do anything like that? On Monday morning do you let them make up their own minds as to whether they go to school or not? Which do you think is the more important: reading, writing, and arithmetic, or faith, and repentance, and reading the Bible. I do not want to diminish the importance of going to school, but I certainly do not want to diminish the importance of keeping those little fellows in church, either. As long as they are under your influence, it is your place to have them in church on a regular basis.

But this little boy's parents bring him to church every Sunday, and every Sunday night, and most every Wednesday night. Along about age fifteen he begins counting down. He starts telling himself something like, "In another

two years, and eleven months, and fourteen days I will be eighteen, and then I will make up my own mind. Then I will decide for myself whether I want to go to church or not. I will make my own decisions.” And surely enough, he turns eighteen, and he quits going to church. He does not go back. In those eighteen years he heard a lot of preaching, and heard the Bible read a lot, but now he feels like he is old enough to make his own decisions, and he decides he has heard enough preaching to do him for a long time to come.

But in a few years he meets the prettiest little girl he ever saw. One thing leads to another, and before long they are married. The first Sunday after they are married he is sleeping in. He has just turned over for the second time, and he is ready to snooze for a while longer. About that time his wife comes to the door and says, “Breakfast is about ready, get up.”

He says, “I don’t think I want anything; I will just eat some cereal when I get up.”

She tells him, “Get up, it’s going to be time to go to church in a little while.”

He says, “I am not going. You go ahead, if you want to, but I don’t think I want to go.”

About that time she tells him, “Now you listen here, it is Sunday and I am going to church; I have always gone to church; so roll out of there; you have got to take me.”

He just thought he was old enough to make his own decisions. So for years to come he is in church every Sunday morning, and every Sunday night, and most every Wednesday night.

Now consider another little fellow. He is born into a wicked home. His parents are wicked. There is hardly anything they will not do. They do not go to church. They do not encourage him to go to church, and they had just as soon that he did not go. He uses the vilest language. From the time he is old enough to talk they teach him to use profanity. They think it is cute. He gets into every kind of meanness. He is about seventeen years old. He is drinking; he is on drugs. One night he is out with his buddies, and they get into a racket. One of them produces a gun, and a moment later he is lying in the street, dying. He has never been inside a church in his life, and he is lying there with his life slipping away.

Somebody tells me, “God is unfair if he does not give everybody an equal chance to be saved.” I would like for somebody to take the time to explain to me—if hearing the gospel is what gives a person a chance to be born again—how is it this little boy has the same chance as the first boy has?

Salvation is not based on chance. It is based on the sure and firm decrees of a sovereign God. God can and does reach right down into some of the most wicked of homes, and saves those whom he chooses to save. If it was based on chance those, who are born into wicked homes would have very little, if any, chance; but God sovereignly, irresistibly, sends his Spirit into the hearts of those he chooses to save, and no power on earth can stop him from doing what he chooses to do.

I have known children who were born into some of the most wicked of homes, who turned out to be very fine people. It was obvious that God's Spirit lived in their hearts. No chance system would ever have reached them, but God's Spirit did. And I have know some children who were born into righteous homes, who turned out bad. It works both ways.

God saves his people, and he does it without any help. God does not need the help of puny man to do his work. If God cannot do his work without our help, he certainly could not do it with our help. It takes a mighty arrogant attitude for anybody to think that after God has done the best he can to save sinners, and failed in the effort, we can pitch in and help him to do what he could not do without our help.

When God created the world, he took six days to do it. I am careful to say God took six days to create the world. That is not the same as to say that it took God six days to do the work. He could have created the universe in an instant of time, if he had wanted to, but, for some reason he spread the work out over six days. He created Adam on the sixth day. There are probably a lot of reasons God created Adam on the last day of creation, but one reason he created man last was so man could not take credit for any part of creation. Then after God had done everything he intended to do, on the seventh day he rested. He did it all by himself. He created the universe all by himself—and then he rested. He rested because he had created all the worlds he intended to create. He could have created ten million worlds like this, if he had wanted to, without taxing his energies in the least. He did not rest because he was tired; he rested because he had finished the work. He went to Calvary and provided redemption all by himself—and when he arose from the dead, he ascended to heaven and sat down. Why did the Lord sit down when he ascended back to glory? He sat down because the work was done. That is what he said in the Garden of Gethsemane. He said, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do."

The old Jewish priesthood was in many ways a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ. There were many ways in which the Old Testament priesthood was different from the Lord Jesus, our great high priest, but for the most part it was symbolic of his priesthood. There is a text in Hebrews chapter seven,

talking about the Jewish priesthood. It says, "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices."

I memorized that verse years and years ago, and I quoted it a lot of times before I noticed what it said. It is amazing how you can read a verse over and over, and still not see what it says. Notice that the priest STANDETH daily. For fifteen hundred years the Old Testament priesthood did their work standing up. Why did they do their work standing up? There were two reasons. First there was no place to sit down. There was no chair in the tabernacle. The reason there was no chair was that they did not need a chair; their work was never done. But Paul said, "For by one offering he [Christ Jesus] hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." After the Lord made that one sacrifice at Calvary he ascended to heaven and sat down. He sat down because the work was complete. By that one offering the Lord accomplished what the Old Testament priesthood could not accomplish with their thousands of offerings. God can do what he chooses to do. He can reach into the most wicked families and save those he chooses to save.

In 1917, in the Bolshevik Revolution the Communists took over Russia; they overthrew the Tsar and set up their own Communist regime, and over the next sixty or seventy years they very nearly conquered the world. They established Communism as an officially atheistic government. They outlawed God. They put up an *iron curtain* to keep God out of Russia. But they could not keep him out. Their scheme would not work. In the last three or four years we have seen Communism fall apart in Russia. It fell apart in the Eastern Block nations. It is falling apart all over the world. And no sooner did that Communistic regime fall apart than the world discovered untold numbers of people all over Russia hungering, starving, for the truth of the gospel. They are sending messages to America, saying, "Send us Bibles; come over here and teach us from the Bible." We hear reports of people in previously Communistic countries who have a great appetite for spiritual things. They have lived for seventy years under an atheistic government, and now they do not know how they ought to behave themselves. They have no absolute standard by which to govern their lives, and many of them are crying out for just such a standard to tell them what is right and what is wrong. Something inside them teaches them there is such a standard. That is proof sufficient to show that God has been saving people in Communist Russia all the while.

But suppose salvation is really based on chance. Suppose the sinner must hear the preached gospel and respond to it in order to be born again. On that basis is there any way to show that, for the last seventy years, those people in Russia had an equal chance with people here in America? During those years when the gospel was outlawed in Russia, did they have an equal chance?

When the Bible was outlawed, and preachers were outlawed, do you believe those people had an equal chance?

Salvation is not based on chance. It will take somebody with more power than Joseph Stalin, or Leon Trotsky, or Nicolai Lenin, or Karl Marx, and that crowd of Communists to keep God out of any country. During all those seventy years God reached down into Communist Russia and saved those he meant to save. A lot of those God saved do not know a lot about him. They don't know his name. They don't know what to call him. But they do know something has happened in their heart. A lot of them are worshiping God in a manner that we would not approve, but with the limited light they have some of them are searching for the truth, and trying to worship God.

During the conflict we call Desert Storm there were some terrifying stories that came out of Iraq, but there were some heart warming stories as well. There was one young woman who was interviewed on television just after the conflict started. All the Americans and Europeans were trying to get out of Iraq. The conflict broke out so quickly they had trouble leaving the country. They were getting out the best way they could. This young woman told how an Iraqi citizen had loaded several Americans and Europeans in a Land Rover and drove them across the desert to safety. She told how he went bouncing along at breakneck speed to get them out of the country. Sometimes they would be stopped by soldiers, and they would turn them back, but he would just go far enough to get out of sight, and then he would turn and head for the border again. As soon as he reached the border, he unloaded them and headed back for another load. They tried to pay him, but he did not want any money; he just wanted to help these people who were in great danger.

That man was very likely a Moslem. He was involved in a religion that does not recognize the God of the Bible. They call their God Allah. It is unlikely that he ever heard very many, if any, Christian sermons. He probably has no idea what the gospel message is.

That man could very well have lost his life trying to get Westerners out of Iraq. We have no way of knowing if he is alive today. If the most popular religious notion is right, if that man did lose his life in that heroic effort, he is burning in the flames of eternal damnation right now. He never heard the gospel message; he did not have an opportunity to respond to it, and now he is lost forever. I ask you, how can any right thinking person even imagine that such a system as that is fair. If that system is right, how can anybody imagine that man had an equal chance to be saved?

I thank God that system is not right. That man has more evidence that God's Spirit lives in his heart than most of the people in our churches today. The preacher may not have reached him, but God's Spirit did. People do not behave the way that man did unless they have been saved by the grace of God.

You can be sure that God loves him; Christ died for him, and God's Spirit lives in his heart. He may be confused in his religion, but he has the evidence that God's Spirit lives in his heart. The wicked do not behave the way he behaved.

Joseph Stalin could not keep God out of Russia; Adolph Hitler could not keep him out of Germany; and Saddam Hussein cannot keep him out of Iraq. The puny efforts of man cannot hinder God, and they cannot help him. Salvation is not based on chance. It is based on the firm and sure decrees of God. It is based on the love, and mercy, and grace of God. Folks may complain that God is not fair, but you can be sure that God will save every person he intends to save, and all the most wicked regimes in the world will never be able to keep him out, nor to hinder him in his work.

Joseph Stalin was one of the most wicked men in this century. You hear more about Adolph Hitler than you do about Joseph Stalin. Adolph Hitler was just as mean as history says he was. He did the very best he could to wipe the Jewish people off the face of the earth. He intended to rid the earth of Jews, and gypsies, and the mentally retarded, and any others that he considered undesirable. It was not just Jews; he attacked others as well. He killed millions and millions of people, just because he did not like them. You don't hear as much about it, but Joseph Stalin did the same thing in Russia that Adolph Hitler did in Germany. He slaughtered millions of his own people in order to establish his regime.

Joseph Stalin thought he could keep God out of Russia. But in the middle 60's, Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alleyeva, defected to the United States. The very first thing she wanted to tell when she arrived was her experience with the Lord in Communist Russia. Stalin could not keep God out of Russia; he could not keep him out of his own family. In spite of the wickedness of that terrible tyrant, God reached into Stalin's own home and saved his daughter. Almost four thousand years ago God told Abraham, "In thee shall ALL THE FAMILIES of the earth be blessed," ([Ge 12:3](#)). On other occasions he says that these blessings will reach "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and tribe;" but here he brings it down much closer. Here he says that every *family* of the earth will be blessed. Those who boast so much about their chance system cannot reach every family, but God can. There are any number of places in the world today where preachers are no longer allowed to go, but those tyrants who have expelled the preachers cannot expel God. God will still save his own, regardless of all the objections of the wicked. He could reach right into the family of Joseph Stalin, and save his little girl, and there is not a thing her daddy could do to stop him.

Several years ago a woman by the name of Madelyn O'Hare was upset, because of the prayers her little boy was hearing in school. She sued the

school system to stop them from praying. She carried her case all the way to the United States Supreme Court, and they ruled in her favor. She was determined to see to it that her little boy did not have to listen to those prayers. But little boys grow up. The last I heard, that little boy, whose mother was so determined that he would not have to listen to other people praying, was preaching what he understands to be the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. His mother could carry her case all the way to the Supreme Court, but she could not require God to submit to their ruling. That Supreme Court ruling was an invalid ruling in the first place. God is the source of every valid human law. Any human law that is contrary to God's law is an invalid law, and we are not required to recognize it. Mrs. O'Hare managed to get a Supreme Court ruling, but that ruling did not stop God; he saved the little boy anyway. If salvation was based on chance that little boy would not have had much of a chance, but salvation is not based on chance.

If salvation was limited to the very small number you and I can reach, there would be very few people saved. It is no wonder so many people believe there will be only a tiny number in heaven. In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" ([Mt 7:13-14](#)). But that is not talking about eternal heaven. That is talking about the strait and narrow pathway of obedience that some few of God's children find and walk in right here in this life. There are not many of the children of God who enjoy the benefits they could enjoy in their service toward God, but that is not to say that there is only a tiny number that will see heaven.

When John described the family of God he said, "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." The entire family of God is such a vast host that no man, and no group of men, could count them. They are as innumerable as the stars of the sky and the sands of the sea.

Years ago, when I was just a boy, I used to attend a Bible camp every summer. The lady who ran the camp was sent by an organization in Chicago to evangelize our people in the mountains of East Tennessee. One Sunday night she came to the church my family was attending, and she was allowed to make a little talk. She explained that "God has no hands, except your hands; he has no feet except your feet," and so on. I was about eleven years old, and looked more like I was seven. I was very small for my age. I looked down at those little tiny hands, and those little tiny feet, and I thought, "If God does not have any hands except these hands, and no feet except these feet, he must be a very small god."

I hear people talk about how God is doing the best he can, and he would do a lot better if he could just get better organized, if he could get better financed. He would do a lot better, if we would just help him. If people were not so tight with their money, they could hire a few more preachers, and send a few more missionaries, and God would do ever so much more than he is doing now.

When the mission program first got started, they used to quote figures as to how much it cost to keep a missionary on the field long enough to convert one soul. The first figure I ever heard quoted came from an old publication which dated almost from the beginning of that effort. At that time they figured that it cost just over five dollars. Five dollars was a lot more money then than it is now. At that time common laborers worked for about fifty cents a day. You can imagine how that was used to get people to turn loose of their money in the prospect of saving people from hell. With inflation the way it is, suppose that in today's money it takes one thousand dollars to keep a missionary on the field long enough to save one soul. Let me ask you, if your money (whether it is five dollars or one thousand dollars) would help to save any person from eternal damnation, how could you in good conscience spend that money for anything else? Suppose you spend ten thousand dollars on a car trade. At today's prices you will probably spend a lot more than that. But, if you would, you probably could have spent a thousand dollars on that old jalopy you were driving, and you could have made it last another year. You could have given that other nine thousand dollars to the mission program and that would have kept a missionary on the field long enough to save nine people from eternal damnation. How could you bear to ride around in that shiny automobile, knowing that, because you spent so much money on a car trade, nine people are going to burn in the flames of eternal damnation? But perhaps you did not spend ten thousand dollars. Perhaps you bought an old, old car and you spent a lot less. The principle is the same. You could walk, if you had to. It would be better to walk to work than to spend money on any car trade that would have saved somebody from eternal hell. It would be better for most of us if we did more walking. You need your exercise, so you make a point of walking two miles every day, but then in the afternoon, your wife tells you that she needs a loaf of bread, and you get in the car and drive a quarter of a mile to the grocery store. It does not make a lot of sense. If giving money is what it takes to save souls from hell, there are a lot of ways we could save money to give to the program. But money will not get people into heaven, and it will not keep them out. [1Pe 1:18-19](#), "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

How could you bear to spend money for anything? You spend twenty dollars for a new shirt. Fifty of those add up to a thousand dollars. Would it not be better to wear a shirt till it falls apart? If somebody's eternal destiny depends on your money, should you not give every penny you can get your hands on to the program. A church spends thousands of dollars for new pews. For about ten dollars apiece they could have bought folding chairs. They may spend hundreds of thousands of dollars for a new meeting house. If they were really serious, they could just rent a meeting hall, and put all of that money into the program.

Consider some poor ignorant native in some faraway land. He has never heard the gospel. If he hears it, he might believe it, and repent, and (according to that system) be born again. Now consider some miserly, greedy, self-centered Christian in America, who has the money to give to the program so that somebody could go over there and preach to that man, but because the selfish Christian wants a shiny new car, or because he just wants to increase the balance on his bank statement, he does not give. If that is the case, it looks to me like the wrong person got punished. I believe the person who was so tight is the one who ought to suffer—if that system is right. Think about it. Is it fair that one person should burn in the flames of eternal damnation, because somebody else was stingy with his money.

Years ago I had a conversation with a good brother who believed that system. He was sure that a person must hear the gospel and respond to it in order to be born again. I presented some of the challenges that we have been considering. I asked him about some native in the jungles of the South Pacific, who had never heard the gospel. According to that system he has never had a chance to be born again. What will his destiny be if the preacher never reaches him? The brother decided that anybody in that condition would live in heaven, because he did not know any better. He had never had a chance to be saved, so he would be saved by his ignorance. After all, how could God send anybody to hell, if he had never had a chance?

But think about that for a moment. Here is a poor native who has never heard the gospel. If he dies in that condition, he will live in heaven, because he never had a chance. But now, the preacher reaches him. He presents him with the gospel message. He does not like what he hears, and he says, "Away with any such message; I don't believe a word of it." He has had his chance, and missed it. Now if he dies, he will be forever lost, because he heard the gospel message and rejected it. He was better off before the preacher talked to him. If that notion is right, we would do better to call all the missionaries home, and allow the rest of the world to live and die in their ignorance, and be saved by their not knowing any better. In fact, if that notion is right, we would probably

do well to close all the churches here in America, and let our neighbors get to heaven the same way.

“The legs of the lame are not equal.” There is no way you can make sense out of that system. It is too self-contradictory. There is no way you can present it in such way as to show that God is in any way fair in his dealings with mankind. Those who accuse the doctrine of salvation by the sovereign grace of God with being an unfair system have it all wrong. It is the contrary system that is unfair.

In the book of Matthew, chapter twenty five, the Lord is talking about the final judgment. To many people that passage is one of the most terrifying passages in the Bible. I have talked to a lot of people who tell me how terrified they are of that final day, when all of mankind will stand before God and be judged. “When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left; then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation.....Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Just a few weeks ago I helped with the funeral of a good friend of mine. He and I used to work together. For several years we were in the insurance business. We were both struggling to raise our families. Neither of us was especially good at the job. We just managed to scratch out a living. He worked hard, always hoping to come up with enough business each week to survive a while longer. He came down with cancer this last January. He lived until the middle of August. I was with two denominational preachers in the funeral. I enjoyed getting acquainted with the preachers. I had a good conversation with one of them in particular.

The brother who had died had made a public profession of faith in Christ about two years before and had joined a denominational church. Both of those preachers had been closely associated with him during those two years. One of the preachers made a comment about what a fine man he had been. And that was right; he was a fine man; if he told you anything, you could believe it. The preacher went on to say that being such a fine person was probably what kept him from being saved much earlier than he was. Because he was such a fine man he did not see his need of the grace of God until just a few years before he died. The preacher was so alarmed about what might have happened. “What if he had died three years ago?”

He was a fine family man. I thought very highly of him, and I felt a great sense of loss when he died. We had not worked together for several years, but I still saw him very often. He got out of the insurance business, and started selling used cars, and for the last several years, he sold me most of the cars I bought. I always trusted him; if he told you anything you could believe it. He would tell you the good points about the car, and he would tell you the bad. But, anyway, the preacher was alarmed at the thought the man might have died before he made that all-important profession, and that he would have burned in the flames of eternal damnation. There are a lot of people who have the idea that hell will be full of good, honest, kind hearted people who would give you the shirt off their back, but because they did not make that public profession, they are lost world without end.

We will notice in the next few lines that the Bible does not teach any such thing. Notice what the Bible does say about the matter. “The King shall say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

The Lord does not need anything you have—but his children do. This chapter is not telling what gains you a home in heaven. It is the suffering, and death, and imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ that saves people from eternal damnation, and gains them a home in heaven. This chapter does not say a thing about imputed righteousness. It is not talking about what gains you a home in heaven; it is giving a DESCRIPTION of those who are going to be in heaven. It is giving those characteristics which describe a child of God. He said the exact same thing to every person he set on his right hand. He told them, “I was an hungred and ye fed me; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink,” and so on. Every one of those on his right hand had compassion on his fellow man. No doubt, some of them had more compassion than others, but every person on his right hand was a caring, compassionate person.

Now turn to those on his left hand. “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in:

naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.”

Notice what he does not say. He did not say, “I was hungry, and ye did not give me enough.” He did not say, “I was thirsty, and ye did not give me enough.” He said, “I was hungry, and ye gave NO MEAT; I was thirsty, and ye gave me NO DRINK.” YOU WILL NOT FIND THE FIRST TRACE OF HUMAN KINDNESS IN ANY PERSON ON THE LEFT. There is a place of eternal damnation, a burning, flaming hell. The wicked will fill that place up, and they will be there in all eternity. But if you find any person who has compassion for his fellow man, you have found a child of God, and on that final day you will find him on the right hand of his Lord.

In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” The Lord does not identify his people by labels. He identifies them by description. You know a tree by its fruits. Here in the little town where I live there is a college. It has a nice little campus, and they have a lot of trees. They have little name plates on some of the trees. Most people can identify the more common trees. You do not need a nameplate to identify a pine tree, or an oak, or a maple, but there are some trees that you might not be able to identify without a nameplate.

Suppose you come up to a tree and it is loaded down with apples. Do you need a nameplate? I believe if I saw a tree loaded with apples. I would know right away that I had found an apple tree. And I can tell you that if you find somebody who bears this fruit—this fruit of kindness, and love, and compassion toward his fellow man—you have found a child of God.

In [1Jo 4:7](#), the Lord said, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.” [1Jo 4:20](#) and [1Jo 4:21](#), “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also.” If a man does not love his fellow man, he does not love God. But if he does love his fellow man, he does love God. They go together.

There may be somebody who will burn in the flames of eternal damnation that you love, but there will not be anybody there who loves you. The Lord says, “EVERY ONE THAT LOVETH IS BORN OF GOD, AND KNOWETH

GOD.” As surely as you find a tree with apples on it you have found an apple tree, AND AS SURELY AS YOU FIND SOMEBODY WITH GENUINE LOVE FOR HIS FELLOW MAN YOU HAVE FOUND A CHILD OF GOD. Paul said, “For our God is a consuming fire.” When I was a boy growing up in the foothills of East Tennessee, most everybody heated with coal. I am talking about a coal heater that sat in the middle of the living room floor. Nobody in the community where I lived had central heat. If you walked into the room, you did not have to ask anybody if there was a fire in the heater. If there was a fire in the heater, the fire inside would manifest itself outside. If somebody is born of the Spirit of God, you do not have to ask him if God’s Spirit lives in his heart. Our God is a consuming fire, and the fire in the heart of the child of God will manifest itself outside. The warmth of the Spirit of God living in the heart of an individual is not manifest nearly so much by a religious creed as it is manifest by a genuine concern for those around us.

There is an eternal burning hell, and the Adolph Hitler’s, the Joseph Stalin’s, the Saddam Hussein’s, and the Ted Bundy’s of this world will fill that place up. But you will not find anybody there who had genuine love, and compassion for his fellow man. If you find anybody who has genuine love for his fellow man you have found a child of God. He has that love because God’s Spirit lives in his heart. He is not a child of God, because he has those characteristics. It is the other way around. He has those characteristics because he is a child of God. Having apples does not make an apple tree, but it proves that it is an apple tree.

There may be those in this sinful world, perplexed with the sinfulness of our own nature, and confused by our own twisted thinking, who would dare to accuse God of being unfair, but you can be sure that in that eternal city, when everything will be made clear, there will never any such accusation made.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Which System Makes Sense?

WHICH SYSTEM MAKES SENSE

A Sunday School teacher asked one of her class to define faith. He thought about it for awhile and said, “Faith is when you believe what you know ain’t so.” The little boy missed it a country mile, but, even at that, in some sense, he showed more insight than most religious leaders in our day. He realized that what his teachers had been telling him just did not make sense.

True religion, religion that is based on Bible truth, is clear and logical and consistent; it makes sense; it does not contradict itself. Most religious people do not believe that. They believe religion, even their own religion, is largely a mass of contradictions. They makes statements like, “Don’t you know the

Bible contradicts itself?” or “You can prove anything you want to by the Bible, if you just find the right text.” They believe the Bible itself is a mass of contradictions. They think every denomination can prove its doctrine by the Bible, by simply finding the right text.

Their doctrine contradicts itself; their preachers contradict themselves, and they think the Bible does the same thing. Very often a preacher will tell his congregation something on this order: “Salvation is wholly and solely by grace. It is not based on works. It is not based on your righteousness nor your goodness. It is not based on anything you do. The only thing you have to do to be saved is.....”

And then—after he has explained that salvation is not based on anything you do—he goes on to explain what you have to do in order to get salvation. And for some strange reason he cannot seem to realize that he has just contradicted himself.

No wonder the little boy thought, “Faith is when you believe what you know ain’t so.” The little boy realized the preacher had contradicted himself, whether the preacher did or not.

True religion is clear and logical and consistent. Every aspect of it is in perfect agreement with every other aspect. There is no doctrine of the Bible that contradicts, or weakens, any other doctrine of the Bible. Every verse in the Bible is in perfect agreement with every other verse. If any verse appears to contradict any other verse, it is only that—only appearance. The contradiction is in your own mind. You have misinterpreted one verse or the other. Perhaps, you have misinterpreted both verses. The Bible is God’s Word; the Bible speaking is God speaking, and God can neither lie, nor contradict himself.

There is an abundance of confusion in religion, and one of the main reasons for all the confusion is that so very few people have ever acknowledged the absolute accuracy of the Bible. They are willing to say that the Bible *contains* the truth, but they are not willing to admit that the Bible *is* truth, that it is true in every instance, in every expression, and in every connection. So long as people go through the Bible picking and choosing the verses they want to believe, and rejecting those verses that seem to contradict their favorite verses, they will never discover the truth. It is only when people acknowledge the absolute honesty of God, and the absolute accuracy of the Bible that they can ever hope to arrive at gospel truth.

Again, bear in mind that the Bible is God’ word. The Bible speaking is God speaking. If there are mistakes in the Bible, they are God’ mistakes. It is hard for me to imagine the audacity of anybody would dare to claim there are mistakes in the Bible, or that the Bible contradicts itself. Allow me to say it again: it is only when people acknowledge the absolute honesty of God, and

therefore the absolute accuracy of the Bible that they can ever hope to discover divine truth. God simply will not reveal his secrets to those who challenge his honesty.

Having questioned the accuracy of the Bible, and therefore the honesty of God, people proceed to reach the strangest conclusions in matters of religion. It is amazing to consider some of the unreasonable and illogical claims that are made in the name of religion. Many of those notions would not be accepted for a minute, if they were taught in any other connection, but when they are taught in the name of religion, they are supposed to make sense. In this little booklet, we hope to consider some of those strange notions.

Before we look at some of those notions, we must take time to insist that we do not, in any sense, question the sincerity, nor the devotion to God, of any of those good people who entertain the ideas we will examine. Quite the contrary, for the most part, those people are some of the most sincere, the most humble, and the most God-fearing, people you would ever care to meet. They would never wilfully question the honesty of God. They have never stopped to think what it means to say that the Bible is the Word of God. They have just never stopped to think that when they allow that “there are contradictions in the Bible,” they are actually questioning God’s honesty.

Very few people are systematic in matters of religion. They have adopted a collection of various religious notions and ideas, but they have never stopped to realize that, if their doctrines are right, they will all agree with each other, and support each other. They do not realize that no two doctrines, both of which are true, can ever contradict each other, and that no two texts of the Bible can ever contradict each other.

In fact, in some sense, it is their deeply felt religious convictions which make them so vulnerable to religious error. Generally, they are very dedicated to their religion. They would not consider questioning their most deeply held beliefs. It would seem sacrilegious to doubt what they have been taught. That devotion is both their strength and their weakness. It makes them unwilling to consider that some of the ideas they have been taught all of their lives just do not make any kind of sense. They have never stopped to consider that they would never accept those same ideas, if they were taught in any other connection.

One of the areas, in which most of present day religion just does not make sense, has to do with the justice of God. To hear most people talk, you would think God sacrifices justice in order to be gracious. You would think God ceased to be just in order to save sinners. You would think God says to Justice, “Now, Justice, you be still; Justice don’t you say a word; I am going to save this sinner, and you don’t have anything to say in the matter.”

If any judge in our court system handled his court the way most preachers seem to think God handles his affairs, we would be very upset with the judge. In our present day society one of the most serious complaints we hear has to do with our judicial system. Our society is in trouble, and many of our people are convinced that much of the trouble lies with the courts. Those involved in law enforcement do their job. They gather the evidence, arrest the guilty parties, bring them to trial, prove their guilt, and get a conviction. And then some liberal, bleeding-heart judge suspends the sentence; or he puts them on probation, or hands down a sentence that is little more than a slap on the wrist. It is no wonder criminals are not afraid to break the law. They know they are not likely to be caught, and even if they are caught, some soft-hearted, soft-headed judge will let them off. Far too many of our judges just will not enforce the law. They turn loose some of the most bloodthirsty criminals. Some of the most violent crimes being committed today are committed by men who would have already been in prison, if the judges had done their job in previous cases.

That is not the only thing afflicting our society, but, you can be sure that one of the reasons our people do not feel safe in their homes, nor on the streets, is that a corrupt, incompetent judiciary refuses to punish the guilty.

In one instance a man beat an old woman to death with an axe handle, because she did not want to give him her Social Security check. He was arrested, brought to trial, and proved guilty. The judge threw out the charges on a technicality.

In another case a man sent a bomb to the prosecuting attorney who had convicted him. He was convicted, and sent to prison. He appealed the case, and the three appeals judges threw out the charges. They argued that since the bomb did not actually go off, it was not really a deadly device, and the man was not really guilty as charged.

In another case a man abducted a little girl, mistreated her, and finally beat her to death. The case was thrown out of court, because the arresting officers did not go precisely by the prescribed guidelines. The little girl's parents were outraged; the entire community was upset, and properly so. I believe most of the American people would agree that one of the most vexing problems in the land is an incompetent judicial system that cannot be persuaded to properly punish the guilty.

What does all of that have to do with the subject at hand? Simply this: to listen to most of our religious instructors, you would think God deals with sin the same way our judiciary deals with criminals. Most religious people seem to think God saves sinners by simply forgiving the guilty, setting them free, and delivering them from the punishment they justly deserve. We criticize such conduct in the judiciary, and yet it is commended in matters of religion.

The Bible is clear enough: God is the judge of all the earth ([Ac 17:31](#); [2Ti 4:1](#); [Heb 12:23](#)). According to the most common notion, no matter what his offense may be, the vilest sinner can go to God and say, “I repent; I am sorry, and if you will forgive me, I promise I won’t do that any more.” And according to that notion, God just pats him on the head, forgives him, promises him a home in heaven, and refuses to exact the punishment he is due.”

That refusal to punish the guilty is the very thing we criticize in our judiciary, and yet, in matters of religion, preachers run the length and breadth of the land insisting that is exactly the way God saves sinners.

We do not question whether those preachers who spend their time insisting on that notion are sincere. No doubt, many of them are entirely sincere in the matter. They just do not know any better. They have heard that notion preached all their lives, and they have never stopped to think about whether it makes any kind of sense or not. They have heard it, accepted it, believed it, and that is that. It has never occurred to them to question whether it was true or not. It would seem sacrilegious to question a principle so basic to their religion.

But, however unsettling the thought may be, the fact remains: most religious instructors teach that God saves sinners the same way our present day judiciary treats criminals: regardless of his guilt, the sinner shows some amount of repentance, and God then forgives him, and refuses to punish the guilty. Society finds that kind of conduct repulsive in the judiciary, and yet preachers insist that is the very way God saves sinners.

No wonder the little boy thought, “Faith is when you believe what you know ain’t so.” The little boy recognized that the argument did not make any kind of sense, whether his teachers did or not.

But somebody replies, “Harold Hunt, you are misrepresenting us, and misrepresenting us in an outrageous manner at that. We do not teach any such thing. We do teach that God forgives sinners. We do teach that any sinner may be forgiven and saved from his sins, regardless of how vile those sins may be. Look at the apostle Paul. He had a hand in the stoning of Stephen ([Ac 7:55-59](#)), and God saved him. He said himself that he was chief of sinners ([1Ti 1:15](#)) and God still saved him. History is filled with characters who were the vilest of sinners until God saved them and turned their lives around.”

“We do teach that God forgives and saves even the vilest of sinners, but we teach that he saves those sinners only on the basis of the shed blood and imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. We teach that Jesus Christ went to the cross of Calvary, and there on the cross he fully and completely paid their sin debt. He put their sins away. There is not a charge against them. Their sins are atoned for; they are put away *as far as the east is from the west*

([Ps 103:12](#)). They are justified before God on the basis of the shed blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, and that righteousness is sufficient to atone for every sin.”

“Harold Hunt, charge us if you will; accuse us if you will, but be honest about it. Tell the whole truth. Don’t charge us with teaching what we do not teach.”

Well, we do certainly want to be honest in the matter. Those, who object to our observations, do, generally, teach everything that is laid out in the above response. They do teach that God saves sinners, regardless of how vile those sinners may be, and that he saves them on the basis of the shed blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. They do teach that the Lord Jesus Christ went to Calvary and put their sins away *as far as the east is from the west*. The Bible teaches that, and they teach it.

So far, so good. If they would teach all of those principles, and leave it there, everything would be just fine. The problem in most of religion, as in most other things, is that the right hand gives and the left hand takes away.

Most religious instructors teach that the Lord Jesus Christ went to Calvary and on the cross, he fully and completely paid our sin debt. There is not a charge against us. Christ fully and completely satisfied divine justice on our behalf. There is nothing charged against us. Christ removed it all at Calvary. So far, so good, if that was the end of it, it would be just fine. But they go on to say that if any one of those same sinners, whose sins are atoned for, and whose sin debt is paid, does not repent of sin, and believe the gospel, God is going to send him to eternal damnation anyway—even though his sins are atoned for, his sin debt is paid, and there is not a charge against him. Bear in mind that we have been told our claim of eternal heaven is based on the fact that Christ died on the cross to put our sins away.

I ask, in all candor, on what basis can such a person be sent to eternal damnation, if his sins are atoned for, his sin debt is paid, and there is not a charge against him?

If Christ paid his sin debt on the cross of Calvary, how can he be required to pay a debt that is already paid? Would that not be a case of God collecting the debt twice, once at the hand of the Redeemer, and next at the hand of the sinner? Of course, it would. On what basis could anybody justify collecting the debt twice? Again, bear in mind that the religion of the Bible is clear, and logical, and reasonable. It makes sense.

But somebody says he will be sent to hell for unbelief. Is unbelief a sin? Did Christ not atone for all sins at Calvary? We are told that he did. Then he must have atoned for that sin too. Somebody says he atoned for every sin but that one. Where is the text that says he atoned for every sin but one? Did the Bible not say that he had forgiven us all trespasses ([Col 2:13](#))? Is unbelief not a

trespass? If it is, how could God forgive it, if Christ did not atone for it on the cross?

We would count any business man to be dishonest, who knowingly and willingly collected the same debt twice, but most religious instructors insist that is exactly what God does in the matter of eternal damnation. According to that strange notion, those who will one day suffer in eternal damnation will do so even though their sins are atoned for, their sin debt is paid, and there is not a charge against them. We would count a business man to be dishonest who did any such thing, and yet preachers crisscross the land insisting that is the way God deals with sinners.

Pardon my repetition, but, again, it is no wonder the little boy thought, "Faith is when you believe what you know ain't so." The little boy could see through it, whether the preacher could or not. The doctrine of the Bible makes sense; that strange system does not.

But, what does the Bible teach about the question? It teaches that sinners are saved and forgiven on the basis on the shed blood and imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Up to that point, our friends tell it right. It teaches that Christ fully and completely paid our sin debt on the cross of Calvary. It teaches that our sins are fully atoned for; there is not a charge against us.

Again, up to that point they tell it right.

Then where do they go wrong? They go wrong on this point. In [Mt 25](#) we are told about the final judgment, when all mankind will stand before God. We are told that *the goats*, those who will suffer eternally are set on his left hand, and *the sheep*, those who will live in heaven are set on his right.

In [Joh 10:15](#), the Lord said, "I lay down my life for the sheep." There is not a verse in the Bible that indicates Christ died for the goats, not a verse to indicate that he died for those who will one day suffer eternally, nothing to show that he put their sins away. According to the most common notion, Christ died for the goats, as well as for the sheep, but, in spite of all his best efforts to save them, the goats are going to suffer eternally, anyway; he paid their sin debt, but God is going to collect the debt again, first at the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, and next from the sinner in the flames of eternal damnation.

Either Christ paid their sin debt, and the justice of God is satisfied, or else he did not. If he paid their sin debt, there is no basis on which they can be punished for that same debt. If they are to be punished for their sin debt, it is evident that Christ did not pay the debt on their behalf. The Bible is plain enough; Christ laid down his life for the sheep ([Joh 10:15](#)); he did not die for the goats. His suffering and death secured and guaranteed eternal heaven on behalf of those for whom he died. It did not benefit the goats, those who will

some day suffer eternally. It did not injure them, either; it left them exactly where it found them.

Those who will one day live in heaven will be there, because their sin debt is paid; their sins are atoned for; there is no charge against them. Those who would insist otherwise either cast God in the role of the judge, who refuses to punish the wicked, or else they cast him as the business man who collects the same debt twice.

There are ever so many ways in which the most common notions in religion, as they are being taught today, just do not make sense. We are told that God wants to save everybody; he is doing the best he can to save everybody, and in spite of his best efforts to save everybody, he is, for the most part, failing in the effort.

The Bible teaches clearly enough that God has all power in heaven and earth ([Mt 28; 19](#)). It teaches that he does according to his own will, both in heaven and in earth, and none can stay his hand, nor say unto him, What doest thou ([Da 4:35](#)). If God has all the power there is, and nobody can stop him from doing whatever he chooses to do, and if he wants so badly to save everybody, we would ask why he does not go ahead and save everybody. But we are told that he must have the consent of the sinner, before he can save him. We are told that God will not, under any circumstances, violate the free will of the sinner. The sinner must be willing. Somehow, it would be unspeakable for God to violate the will of the sinner; God may want ever so badly to carry the sinner to heaven, but if the sinner decides he does not want to go, there is nothing God can do; God's hands are tied.

If that is the case, we would ask how is it that God can send the same sinner to eternal damnation on that final day—if the sinner decides he does not want to go? Would that not be a violation of the free will of the sinner? You would think that if the sinner can refuse to be saved and live in heaven, he could also refuse to be damned and spend eternity in hell. If he can do the one, you would think he could do the other.

No wonder the little boy thought, "Faith is when you believe what you know ain't so." The little boy could see through it.

Another area in which the established religion does not make sense is in its objection to the doctrine of the sovereignty of God—the doctrine that God is in charge. The doctrine of God's sovereignty simply teaches that God does whatever he chooses to do; he does not have to consult with man. The carnal nature of man objects to that doctrine. The doctrine of the sovereignty of God credits God with having more power, and more authority than man likes to acknowledge. And it denies to man much of the power he thinks is his. But to the spiritual nature of the heaven born soul, it is the only thing that makes sense. It is so reasonable to the heaven born soul that we can safely say that

every person born of the Spirit of God believes in God's sovereignty. His mind may not understand it, but his heart believes it.

Prayer is the most profound proof that the doctrine of the sovereignty of God is logical and reasonable to the heaven born soul. As surely as any person believes in prayer, he believes in the sovereignty of God.

If you do not believe God has the right, and the power, to do whatever he chooses to do, why ask him to do it—why pray?

Every prayer is an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God. At any given moment there are millions of children of God scattered all over the earth, calling on God in prayer, begging God to intervene in their behalf. Every plea is a heartfelt recognition of God's sovereignty—God's absolute right and power to intervene in our lives.

The carnal nature objects to the doctrine of Particular Redemption, the doctrine that Christ died for the elect, for the sheep. But, however much the carnal nature may object to that doctrine, it is the only doctrine that makes sense. Not only is it the only doctrine that makes sense, every person who has any judgment at all practices particular redemption in his own personal affairs, and we would think any man had taken leave of his senses, who conducted his affairs in any other way.

To *redeem* simply means to buy, to purchase. There are three words in the Greek language that are translated *redeem*. They are *agoradzo*, *exagoradzo*, and *lutroo*. *Agoradzo* means to buy; *exagoradzo* means to buy back, and *lutroo*, means to deliver by paying a ransom price. To redeem simply means to purchase by paying a price. When we talk about Particular Redemption we just mean that the Lord was *particular* in the work of *redemption*; *he* knew what he was paying for.

Everyone of us practices particular redemption in our everyday affairs. We want to know what we are paying for. Even children practice particular redemption. If you don't believe that, you take a three year old to WalMart. Let him point to one toy, then you buy him a different toy. He will let you know very quickly that he believes in particular redemption. He knows what he wants.

It is a fact. If you knew somebody who did not practice particular redemption in his personal affairs, you would think he had lost his mind. Suppose you need to trade cars. You cannot afford a new car; you really cannot afford any kind of car, but you have to trade; your old jalopy is falling apart. You have been saving for months, trying to get enough money together to pay cash. You know that if you pay cash you can get a better deal than you would get if you have to finance the car. Before you get all the money together, your old car coughs, and snorts, and lies down and dies. It has come to the end of the way; you have to have it pulled home.

You have managed to save barely three thousand dollars. Three thousand dollars will not buy much of an automobile, but it will pay for some kind of used car that will probably serve your needs, for awhile, anyway. You don't have a way to get to work the next day, but you call one of your buddies, and ask if he will give you a ride. He will only need to help that one day. He agrees to help, and the next morning he stops to pick you up. On the way to work you spot a used car lot. You tell him, "Look, there is a car lot; if you will stop, I won't be gone more than a few minutes." You pop out of the car and go to the office. You introduce yourself to the salesman and explain your predicament. You tell him you only have three thousand dollars, but you would like to buy as good a car as that amount will pay for. Will he give you a receipt for the three thousand dollars, and have a car ready when you get back that afternoon? The salesman agrees; you give him your money, wait for a receipt, and hurry back to the car and head on to work. That afternoon you have your buddy to drop you off at the car lot so you can pick up the new car. The salesman has picked out a car for you, and you thank him for his services and drive away in the new car.

Let me ask you; would you buy a used car that way? I doubt it. When I trade cars, I usually buy a late model used car. I cannot afford a new car. But, before I close the deal, I look over the selection available. I kick the tires, and slam the doors, and look under the hood. I don't have the foggiest idea what I am looking for, but that is what you do when you buy a used car; you slam the doors, and kick the tires, and look under the hood. At least, I make my own decision about which car I am trading for. I cannot imagine anybody buying a used car without first looking around and deciding which car he wanted.

When you pick out a used car, you are practicing particular redemption. You are determining what you are paying for, before you pay your money.

I am sure that some of those who read the example I have just given will say, "Harold Hunt, you are just being silly, nobody would trade cars without knowing what he is getting." And yet, those same people, who insist on knowing exactly what they are paying for in a car trade, are not willing to allow God to do the same thing in the redemption of his people. You can be sure that even more certainly than you are determined to know all the details of any car trade, God knows all the details in the redemption of his people. The redemption of the people of God is the most important transaction that has ever taken place in time or in eternity. God would no more enter blindly into that grand transaction than you would enter blindly into a car trade. Again, it just does not make sense to think that God would pay the redemption price for his people without knowing what he was doing, and who he was paying for.

If you will, allow me one more illustration along this line. Suppose a young man is about to get married. He calls the preacher to see if he will be able to perform the ceremony. He tells the preacher the time of the ceremony, and asks if he will be available at that time. The preacher says he can be there; he does not have any plans that cannot be changed. He is glad to be of service, and he asks him who he is marrying. The young man tells him he has not thought too much about that, but he has put an ad in the paper, announcing that he is going to get married, that he is looking for a wife, and he is waiting for the time of the ceremony to see who shows up.

Again, I am sure there are those who think Harold Hunt is just being silly to suppose any such thing. And yet, the illustration exactly fits the case. If, indeed, we are born of his Spirit, we are the bride of Christ. [Eph 5:31-32](#), “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Nobody in his right mind would plan a wedding without knowing who the bride would be, and yet ever so many of the religious instructors of this day teach that the Lord does just that. He has planned that great Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and yet (we are told) he has no idea who the bride will be. We are told that he has sent out a general call, and now he is waiting to see who (if anybody) will respond.

The truth of the gospel is clear and logical and consistent. It makes sense. God said, “I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people,” [Heb 8:10](#). Again he said, “I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them,” [Heb 10:16](#). He said essentially the same thing twice, so we would not miss it. God has written his law in our hearts and in our minds. If what we are taught does not agree with what God has written in our hearts, we are able, by the grace of God, to recognize the fallacy of it. We recognize that it does not make sense.

The Lord tells us, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” [Joh 14:6](#). The Lord Jesus Christ is Truth Incarnate. If he dwells in your heart, truth dwells in your heart. If he dwells in your heart, you believe the truth in your heart. Your mind may not understand what your heart knows, but truth is in your heart, nevertheless. It is the work of the gospel to teach our minds to understand what our hearts already know.

Writings by Elder Harold Hunt
Ye Must Be Born Again

Ye Must Be Born Again

[Joh 3:7](#), “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

There is probably not another text in the Bible that is more agreed--and disagreed--upon than this text. It would be hard to find an evangelical Christian who would say, "I do not believe in the necessity of the new birth." I believe that is a safe enough statement, don't you?

By *evangelical* I mean anyone whose religion is focused more on the preaching of the gospel than it is on ceremony and ritual. Roman Catholics, and Greek Orthodox are more focused on ritual and ceremony. Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians are more focused on the preaching of the gospel.

Among most of my acquaintances, and I suppose most of yours, it would be difficult to find anybody who would say, "I do not believe in the necessity of being born again."

And yet, while most everybody agrees on that simple statement, it is difficult to find any agreement on *what it means to be born again*. Being born again is a miraculous experience. There is a world of difference between that person who is born again, and the person who has never been again. It is a difference more profound than anything we have ever seen in nature.

It is that failure to realize what a profound change takes place in being born again that produces much of the confusion in religion. Far too many people see little change in being born again, other than the accepting as true certain principles the person had not believed before. They see being born again as a change of attitude more than anything else.

Paul said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he a new creature, old things are passed away; behold all things are made new," [2Co 5:17](#).

That verse is quoted often enough, but it seems that few people realize it means exactly what it says. When a person is *in Christ*, when he is born again, he is literally *a new creature*--a new creation. He has a new nature he did not have before, and while there are some things in nature that resemble it, there is nothing in nature quite like that new spiritual nature that comes with being born again. In this little booklet we will look at several of those differences. We will notice that while those differences cannot be seen with the eyes, they are more profound than we will ever be able to fully explain.

For one thing, there are senses, spiritual senses, the child of God has that the dead alien sinner does not have. The wicked have senses that resemble those spiritual senses, but they are far from being the same.

By the same token, an animal has senses that resemble those senses you and I have. An animal can see; he can hear; he can feel. He can touch. He can love; he can hate; he can hold a grudge. If you don't believe an animal can hold a grudge, you forget that you have been tormenting your neighbor's Rottweiler, and you get within the length of his chain, and he will teach you that he can hold a grudge.

There are some senses an animal has that are better than yours and mine. A dog can hear things, like whistles, that you and I cannot hear. I have been told that bloodhounds have a sense of smell six hundred times better than ours. I suppose that is right; I would not know how to disprove it. They tell me a bat has a kind of sonar that allows him to virtually see in the dark. A hawk flying over a field has eyesight that enables him to see a little field mouse way down below him in the grass.

As keen as those animal senses are, they are far different from yours and mine. Sometimes somebody has a favorite dog, and he will say, "That dog thinks he's a person." You can be sure that dogs do have personality, but that does not mean they are almost human. I never saw a dog that could read a book, or write a poem, They have senses, but they are different kinds of senses from ours.

The dead alien sinner has senses, but they are very different to the spiritual senses the child of God has, and no amount of religion, no amount of teaching is able to duplicate those spiritual senses. "Ye must be born again."

One difference between the wicked person, the person who has never been born again, and the born again child of God is the difference between life and death. Before a person is born again, he is spiritually dead.

Paul said to the Ephesians, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins," [Eph 2:1](#). We were, by nature, dead in trespasses and sins; we are, by spiritual birth, made alive in Christ Jesus.

Sometimes, when we explain what we mean by the *dead alien sinner* being dead in trespasses and sins, somebody will respond that "sinners are not as dead as you Primitive Baptists say they are." I did not know there were any degrees in death. I did not know there was any such thing as *dead, deader, and deadest*. If I were to bring you the sad news that old Uncle Hezekiah is dead, I wonder how many of you would ask me, "Brother Hunt, how dead is he?"

Until a person is born of the Spirit, he is dead--dead to the things of the Spirit. He is fully alive to things in nature. He may be the most brilliant person you

would ever expect to meet; but he is as dead to spiritual things as if he were stone cold dead in his grave. Being dead to the things of the spirit, there is no way you can communicate with him on a spiritual level. There is no way you can teach him spiritual principles. He is incapable of learning what you are trying to teach. We will see more about what that means as we go along.

When a person is born again, God sovereignly, irresistibly, sends his Spirit into the heart of the sinner, and he is made alive in Christ Jesus. He has a new life, a spiritual life, which he did not have before. And just as he received natural senses when he was born naturally, he now receives spiritual senses by being born spiritually. Before he was born again, he could see, hear, feel, touch and taste natural things. Now he can see, hear, feel, touch, and taste spiritual things. He can now understand things he could not understand before. He still has that natural life he has always had, but now he is alive in an entirely new way, and that new life opens up an entirely new world.

[Joh 3:5](#), “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the spirit, *he cannot see* the kingdom of God.”

In this text we are told that, except a person is born again, *he cannot see* the kingdom of God. He cannot see the things of the Spirit.

In John, chapter eight, the Lord challenged some people that he knew had never been born again. You and I cannot know; I cannot look at somebody and tell whether he has been born again. But the Lord knew. And the Lord said to those folks, “Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him.”

He also said in the same text, “Why can ye not understand my speech, even because *ye cannot hear my word*.”

So, the one who is dead in trespasses and sins *cannot see* spiritual things; *cannot hear* spiritual things, *cannot understand* spiritual things. He is as oblivious to things spiritual as one corporeally dead is oblivious to things natural.

Peter said, “*If so be ye have tasted* that the Lord is gracious,” [1Pe 2:3](#).

The dead alien sinner *cannot see*; he *cannot hear*; he *cannot understand* spiritual things. More than that, the dead alien sinner *is not able to taste* that the Lord is gracious. Let me use this illustration. Sometimes we can teach better by illustration than we can by abstract reasoning. Suppose you were to meet somebody, who in all his life has never had anything to eat but corn

bread and molasses. I am not sure they go together. I don't have anything against corn bread or molasses. I can just think about nice hot crusty corn bread, baked right thin, and with plenty of butter in between, and it makes me hungry.

I used to think I just loved sorghum molasses, with plenty of butter, and hot biscuits, but a few years ago, my doctor told me I don't like that any more. I thought I did, but he says I don't, and since I pay him money to tell me things like that, I figured I might as well quit eating sorghum molasses, with all that butter, and hot biscuits.

Anyway, suppose you were to meet somebody who in all his life has never had anything to eat but corn bread and molasses. I don't have any idea there is anybody like that, but bear with me, I have a point to make. Now this person has never had anything to eat but corn bread and molasses, and you have been down to the Cracker Barrel and you have just finished off a big plate of roast beef with brown gravy, and mashed potatoes, the kind where they mash up the skins with the potatoes. That gives them a lot more flavor. And some green beans, and fresh corn, and a big wedge of corn bread, and a big slice of apple pie, with vanilla ice cream on top, and two big glasses of cold milk. You have just finished that off, and you are as content as a hog sleeping in the sun.

Now you run into your friend, who has never had anything to eat but corn bread and molasses, and you explain to him, so that he knows exactly what you know about what that meal tasted like.

I am not talking about taking your word for it. He has confidence in you. He thinks you are a right good fellow, and he will believe anything you tell him. I am not talking about his taking your word for it. *I am talking about his knowing what you know.* Do you believe you could teach him to know what you know about what that meal tasted like? You cannot do it to save your life. There are some things you will never know until you experience them; they cannot be taught.

You can teach the dead alien sinner to acknowledge the truth of the gospel with his lips. That is, you can teach him to give lip-service to the gospel; but you cannot teach him to believe it in his heart.

In his heart he does not believe it; he cannot believe it; you cannot make him believe it. There is nothing more repugnant to the dead alien sinner than the gospel message. You cannot teach him to believe from his heart that he is a lost, ruined sinner and in need of a savior.

Let me illustrate that. There are some things I don't believe, some things I don't intend to believe. You cannot make me believe it.

For instance, the French like to think of themselves as connoisseurs of good food. They have a dish they call *escargot*. In case there is anybody who does not know, *escargot* is French for snails. They think escargot is mighty good eating. I don't believe that. I don't intend to believe it. And you cannot make me believe it. I admit that if I were forced to eat snails, I would rather have them pan fried than stewed, but I don't believe snails were made to eat, and you cannot make me believe they were.

You might get me down and choke me and force them down me, but I will just keep them down until you turn me loose, and I assure you, I know how to bring them back up. You cannot make me believe they were made to eat.

And there is no way you can make the dead alien sinner believe his sins are such that he deserves eternal damnation, and his only hope of escape is in the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot teach him to love the Lord.

To tell the dead alien sinner that he is a hell deserving sinner, and unless something is done for him, he is going to burn, is more repugnant to him than it is to me to think I am going to have to eat snails. He does not believe it. He does not want to believe it. He does not intend to believe it. And you cannot make him believe it.

The wicked (not born again) person can hear the gospel message audibly; he can recognize the logic of it, but he cannot accept it in any spiritual manner. He is incapable of receiving the spiritual impact of it. Paul stated it very plainly.

[1Co 2:14](#), "But the natural man *receiveth* not the things of the spirit, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

He cannot *receive* spiritual things. And I believe it is by divine providence that the King James Translators chose exactly that word--*receive*.

It is difficult for most of us to recognize there is such a difference between one dead in trespasses and sins and one made alive in Christ Jesus. It is difficult to realize there are some things the heaven born soul can see, can hear, can taste, can feel, and understand, that someone sitting right next to him in the same service cannot see, cannot hear, cannot feel, cannot understand.

I used this illustration the last time I preached on this subject. I said, if I were to tell you that, at this very moment, this building is literally reverberating with all kinds of music; the walls are shaking with country and western, rock and roll, jazz, folk tunes, all kinds of instrumental and vocal music--that this building is just rocking--at the very least, you would think, "The preacher is being a little bit silly." Would you not think that? Well, I am going to tell you this building is literally rocking with every kind of music imaginable, but you and I cannot hear a note of it.

But if you had a radio, perhaps a little transistor radio, or better still, a nice Bose radio, you could turn it on, and tune it in, and you could *receive* and listen to all the music I am talking about.

Let me ask you; did that transistor radio put all that music in this room. Did it put all the country and western, the rock and roll, and the jazz in this room? No, that music is already in this room, but at this moment you and I do not have a *receiver* to hear it. I don't think you do anyway, not unless somebody has an earpiece, and you are tuning me out. But that music is here. I can't hear it, and you can't hear it. We are not able to receive it.

I did say it was providential that the King James translators used the word *receive*. In our language *receiver* is a common word for describing a radio. We talk about a radio *receiver*. The radio allows us to *receive* the radio signal.

[1Co 2:14](#), "But the natural man *receiveth* not the things of the spirit, because they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Having made that point, you might not be quite as surprised if I were to tell you that there are all kinds of pictures, moving pictures, passing through this room--every kind of scene imaginable, and we cannot see them; but if we have a television receiver, we can bring in all those pictures. That television set does not produce any of the pictures, but it does *receive* the pictures that are already there.

The dead alien sinner is as incapable of receiving spiritual things as my ears and yours are of receiving radio signals. That person who is not born again can sit right next to somebody, who is really enjoying the service, and not have the slightest idea why the other person seems so happy.

Sometimes I am in a meeting, and somebody will have invited a friend, maybe a relative who is visiting, to come to the meeting.

"Come and go to church with me."

“I don’t want to go.”

“Oh, come on, you will enjoy it.”

“I just don’t want to go.”

“Ah, come on; I really want you to go with me.”

Then, very reluctantly, he is dragged to church. He did not want to go, but he did not want to be rude and say, “Leave me alone; I am not going to go.” So he goes, but he has no intention of enjoying himself.

Other people are obviously enjoying the service. Their faces reflect their satisfaction. Somebody’s face takes on color. Here and there eyes begin to fill and run over. A chin begins to tremble, and the effect of the Lord’s Spirit is reflected in their countenance.

But I look out over the congregation, and see our friend. He is sitting there, all swelled up like a bullfrog. He has his arms folded; he is leaning back; his chin is a little higher than it needs to be, and he is enduring the service. You cannot reach him to save your life. If you come over a wisecrack, you will get a reaction. He can relate to that. But other than that, you cannot reach his case. He cannot hear; he cannot see, he cannot feel, what other people are enjoying. He is not enjoying himself, and nobody can make him enjoy it.

Do you see? He does not have a *receiver*, that spiritual nature, and those spiritual senses, that come with being born again. He is spiritually dead--dead to the things of the Spirit. And without that spiritual receiver in his heart, he is as deaf to the things of the Spirit, as you and I are to radio signals, if we do not have a radio receiver.

He is totally unable to understand and appreciate the things that are so precious to others sitting right next to him.

You can put together an order of worship that is entertaining to the carnal nature, and you can build a crowd. We are seeing a lot of that nowadays, and there are good, humble children of God who are being caught up in it. We are living in an age in which true and pure religion is very much on the decline at the same time we see churches building huge meeting houses. They pave over pasture fields; they fill them with cars, and they fill their meeting houses with people, but most of it has very little to do with true religion.

Generally, from what little I have seen of it, the focus of their operation is more on entertainment than it is on religion. I don’t see as much of it as a lot

of people do, and I don't want to. I don't want to sound offensive, but I don't really want to see a lot more than I already have.

What you see going on in religion today is that people have learned to do for religion what Sam Walton did for merchandising. Sam Walton learned how to sell merchandise. He knew how to do business. And religious people have learned how to sell religion. If you want a counselor, rather than go to the local psychiatrist, and pay a hundred dollars an hour, you can go to one of these new mega-churches, and get counseling on the cheap. Anything you want, they have--and especially they have entertainment.

They have a beat; they have got rhythm. I rarely go to the shopping mall. I used to go once a year at Christmas time. My wife took care of all the other presents, and I would take care of hers, until after awhile, she gave up on that arrangement. Now, along about Christmas time, she tells me what I bought her.

But, anyway, until she finally gave up on me, I would always make that one obligatory trip every year to the shopping mall. Once, a few years ago, I went to the mall, and one of our local wannabe mega-churches was putting on a musical extravaganza. They had a huge crowd; it entirely blocked my way. You could squeeze past, but it was difficult, and I thought maybe I would stay for a moment and listen.

I have a tin ear. Music does very nearly nothing for me. But I stood there and listened to them sing, and they were good at it. They had a beautiful young choir director, and she was really good at her job. She had enough energy for two or three, and she was all over the place. She kept that crowd stirred up.

Before long, I found myself rocking to the beat. I didn't know I was capable of that. But there I stood, rocking to the beat. I don't care a thing about that sort of music; but it was having an effect on me. Do you see? If you can produce that sort of entertainment, and if you can provide it on the cheap, you can raise a crowd. Instead of paying \$40 for a concert ticket, you can go to church and get the same thing. I have heard that some concert tickets sell for more than \$40. I would not know. So instead of paying \$40 or more, you can go to church, enjoy the concert, and just kick in whatever you want to.

Religious people have learned to do for religion what Sam Walton did for merchandising, and they are filling their meeting houses to the full. But the fact that a person rocks to the beat, the fact that he is affected by the music, does not mean a thing, spiritually.

The wicked simply cannot appreciate spiritual things. It occurs to me--I believe you will agree with me--that if a dead alien sinner could sneak into heaven (he cannot, but suppose he could), if a dead alien sinner could sneak into heaven, he would not be there all day, until he would try to sneak back out again. He would not like the company. He would not like the conversation. He would not like the atmosphere. He would not like anything about it. He would rather be anywhere but there. He would want to be in the company of people like himself. He would want to be around people with the same values, the same interests he has.

That person that is born of the Spirit has different interests than the wicked. He is able to see, to hear, to feel, to taste spiritual things the dead alien sinner cannot see, hear, feel, and taste. And to some extent, because we enjoy those experiences for so long, we have difficulty realizing that there are others who are totally blind and deaf, and unfeeling to those things.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees were religious, but some of them were very wicked. I know they were. I quoted a text a moment ago, where the Lord told some of them, "Ye are of your father, the devil," and that does not mean they were mighty good people. So some of those people, who were very wicked, saw the Lord physically, but all they could see was a threat to their authority, a threat to their power, a threat to their income, and they wanted to do away with him.

Isaiah said, "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him," [Isa 53:3](#).

To that one who sees himself as a sinner, and sees himself in need of a savior, the Lord is precious to his soul. We see him as the Savior of sinners, and he is precious to our souls. But there is nothing attractive about the Lord to the natural man; there is no way you can present the Lord Jesus to the dead alien sinner so that he is appealing to him. If you preach Christ in such manner that he is appealing to the wicked, you have found one of those other Jesuses, one of those other would be saviors.

[2Co 11:14](#), "For if he that cometh preacheth *another Jesus*, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive *another spirit*, which ye have not received, or *another gospel*, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

There is no thought more repugnant to the wicked than the sovereignty of God, and the notion that we are dependent on him. He is convinced he deserves a chance, and God is unfair if he does not give it to him. The meanest man in town can say *Amen* to that. He is convinced he is *as good as*

the next man; he is fully capable of saving himself, and given the chance he will do just that. He loves all this talk about a *chance* of salvation.

Let me tell you, if you and I stood before God judged on our own track record, we would not stand a chance. Do you know why so many people dread the thought of standing before God? And I mean this without intending any offense toward those precious children of God, who believe the contrary system. I have learned, or, at least, I am trying to learn to be more considerate, to be more courteous, than I have been in the past toward those precious children of God, who have never come to understand and to appreciate some of the doctrines that are so precious to you and me.

We Primitive Baptists do ourselves a disservice when we imply that we, somehow, have a corner on sincerity, perhaps that we are more sincere than others. Let me tell you, there are children of God, precious children of God, in the contrary system, who oppose our doctrine, because they do not understand it. They are just as honest, just as humble, just as God-fearing, just as sincere in what they believe, as any Primitive Baptist ever was. And we do ourselves a disservice, when we imply anything to the contrary.

I believe the majority of them are honest and sincere people, trying to serve the Lord. Having said that, the reason so many people are fearful of standing before God in judgment is that they have been taught that on that day we will be judged based on our works. Our track record, they tell us, will determine whether we live in eternal heaven or not. But, deep down, every one of us knows that if we are judged on our track record, we are lost world without end. Based on our works, there is not a person living who could be saved.

One of the earliest experiences I ever had was when I was a tiny little fellow, barely old enough to understand conversation. My grandmother picked me up and set me on her lap, and began to explain to me that there is a day coming, when, I will stand before God in judgment, and she explained that all the good things I have ever done will be put on the right side of a mighty pair of scales, and all the bad things I have ever done will be put on the other side of the scales. And she said, whichever outweighs the other will determine where I spend eternity.

She was convinced our salvation is based our track record, and she was trying to get me headed out in the right direction. She wanted me to be sure to have a good supply of good deeds on the right side of the scales.

She scared the living daylights out of me.

I spent years terrified that I would have forty nine percent on the good side, and fifty one percent the bad side, and I would burn forever for that two percent. It is no wonder people are terrified at the thought of standing before God in judgment.

My grandmother meant well. She was afraid I would burn someday, and she was trying to see to it that I would escape that terrible place. So she wanted me to get a good start. She was a good and honest person, and she wanted me to get started on a record of good works.

But, after many years, I finally realized my grandmother was not saying what she thought she was saying at all. Sometimes people do that, especially in religious matters. They think they are saying one thing, when they are actually saying something entirely different.

It is kind of like the preacher who says, "Salvation is by grace; salvation is not by works; you can never work your way to a home in heaven. What you do does not have a thing in the world to do with it. The only thing you have to do is....," and he does not realize he just contradicted himself.

It is strange that a person can come over a statement like that and not realize he has contradicted himself; but if he has heard that all his life, he becomes numb to the contradiction. My grandmother meant well. But my grandmother did not realize that what she was saying was that *all God requires to get into heaven is a good average.*

Her formula of fifty one percent good will get you into heaven, is the same as saying that all it takes is a good average. If you tell the truth more often than you tell a lie, you will be alright. On that basis, most any motor-mouth has a mighty good chance.

I have known some mighty experienced liars in my time. I have heard it said that a liar cannot look you in the eye. Have you ever heard that? Don't you believe it. I have known some liars who could look you straight in the eye, lie through their teeth, and never crack a smile. This not being able to look you in the eye only has to do with amateur liars. It does not apply to liars who have mastered their craft. My grandmother was as honest as she could be, but based on what she said, if you tell the truth twice, it gives you the right to tell a lie once, and still get into heaven based on honesty. That won't work.

The laws of the state of Tennessee won't allow that. The laws of the state of Tennessee require absolute perfection. You may tell me, we don't have any perfect people in Tennessee. That is right; we don't; but the laws of the state

of Tennessee still require perfection. Let me illustrate that, and I believe you will agree with me.

I try to stay close to the legal speed limit. I generally fudge about 3 or 4 miles an hour, because I have learned I can get by with it. I have learned that I can pass right by the man going about four miles over the limit, and he won't pay any attention. I imagine the unofficial speed limit is four miles above the posted limit.

But suppose I am on a trip, and I drive for hours just barely under the limit. If the limit says 70 mph, I make a point of going 68. If it says 75 miles an hour, I go 73. But as I begin to get closer to my destination, I realize I am going to be late. So I pop it up to about 80 miles an hour for a few miles. Then I pass the man. He sees me before I see him, and he pulls out. It is too late to slow down now; I am already caught. He pulls in behind me, with his light flashing.

"Sir, do you know how fast you were going?"

"Yes, sir, I was doing 80 miles an hour."

"Do you know what the speed limit is along here?"

"Yes, sir, it is 70 miles an hour."

"And how fast were you going?"

"I was doing 80."

"I hate to tell you, but I am going to have to write you a ticket."

"But sir, I perceive that you are not aware of the principle of a good average."

Do you think he is going to give me a ticket? I believe that is a safe assumption. He does not care how fast I have been driving all day; he is just concerned that I was doing 80 miles an hour when he saw me.

The laws of Tennessee will not settle for a good average, and a good average will never get you into heaven. The man won't take that. He does not care if I have driven 68 miles an hour for a thousand miles. What he is concerned with is that I was doing 80 miles an hour when he saw me.

If you are arrested for robbing a bank, you cannot go into court, and talk about all the banks you did not rob. This business about a good average won't cut it. It won't keep you out of jail, and it sure won't get you into heaven.

What does it take? It takes absolute perfection, and the only source of absolute perfection is the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we see the Lord as our one and only hope of eternal heaven, we see ourselves lost and undone. We are able to see him in a way the wicked are not able to see him. The child of God is capable; the dead alien sinner is not capable.

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, ye must be born again.”

The dead alien sinner cannot be taught spiritual things. If his mind is taught the logic of the truth, his heart still rejects it. It is not within his capacity to accept and believe the truth of the gospel.

In a natural sense, there are some things you and I cannot be taught. You and I cannot be taught to receive a radio signal. You cannot be taught to receive a television signal. You have to have a receiver.

The dead alien sinner cannot be taught to receive the things of the Spirit of God, and he is incapable of enjoying the presence of the Lord's Spirit. He may attend your meeting and enjoy the music. He may enjoy the company. He may enjoy being around the people. He has known them all his life. He likes them. He enjoys their company, and he enjoys being there. But he cannot enjoy the things of the Spirit. Peter said, “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” The dead alien sinner cannot taste the things of the Spirit.

If you find one who does believe, you have found one who is already born again. The wicked do not believe the gospel in order to be born again; it is the born again person who believes, because he is born again.

“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”