

## CAN A MAN BE UNBORN?

The Good Calvinists usually insist upon the new birth (at least theoretically.. Good! So do all people who are evangelical and evangelistic.

But then to support the teaching of "eternal security" we are asked, "If one is born again, can he be unborn?"

The answer must be, "No." Still, it is sometimes misleading and sometimes dangerous to carry any analogy too far.

That youth who became a "prodigal" was a son while he was in his father's house. He did remain a son while he was a prodigal in the far country feeding swine. But his relation was one of no practical benefit. Though he was still a son he was "lost" from home. The implication of the story is that it was when he came to himself and returned home that he obtained again the blessings of sonship.

That he would have had the blessings if he had not returned no one believes. If he was "elected" to return so that he had to do it anyway and if all those who have been sons are bound to return, then Jesus was wasting a lot of time suggesting that men may and should return and that they will be received by the Father if they return.

And further considering this matter of sonship:

Suppose a son is sick. Much-loved by his father, every means is used for his recovery. But suppose he dies. Do sensible people then stand around and argue that being a son he must be kept in the home? They bury him—at least his body—because he is dead.

So one may be born into the divine family. Thank God! But suppose he becomes again a sinner—is again dead in trespass and sin—is he to be kept among the living children?

Let us not fool ourselves. God has an awful burying place called hell where men who have never been sons and those who have been sons but have died are to be kept away from God's children who are alive. In hell there is the "living death." This death is eternal. There is no recovery.

It is a good thing for us to remember that men are made in God's image. "So God created man in his own image." A fundamental in that image was the right and power of choice. To teach that men may choose with God but cannot again choose against Him is to suggest that man's free moral agency is taken away when he is born into the divine family!

To say that if he chooses God and then goes back on that choice, God will still save him is to reflect upon the character of God. Just remember that God's immutability does not mean that He is going to save James Jones and Mary Andrews no matter whether they choose Him and continue to choose Him or not. God's immutability means that He remains ever the same in His attitude toward right and wrong. And it means that His conditions of obtaining and of retaining salvation change not.—Free Methodist.

## ELIJAH THE TISHBITE

The little girl stood by the old lady who lay on the couch. She said, "I am bigger than grandmother."

Elijah fled from the face of Jezebel. Finally, tired and discouraged, he sat under a tree

wishing that he might die. It is easy to stand by his weary body, showing how grand we are.

But Elijah denounced the sins of the wicked royal pair and took the consequences in exile and self-sacrifice, while the false prophets ate at the king's table. Elijah in a minority one to four hundred and fifty challenged the power of the false gods, their prophets and prestige. Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down rather than try to do sacrifice without preparation. Elijah was on such intimate terms with his God that when he prayed against rain it rained not for three years and six months, and after the long drouth when he prayed for rain there was a mighty downpour.

Lord, help us so that if we are going to reach to be like the prophet our aim shall not smother in his smallest hour but aspire to his moral grandeur.—Sel.

## THESE CHANGE NOT

The times are different.

The automobile has taken the place of the oxcart and the horse and buggy.

The telephone and the telegraph have displaced the runner and the messenger on horseback.

Electricity's lurid illuminations in the shop and home and street have driven the physical darkness and dimness from all civilization.

The radio carries the voice halfway around the earth. Battles are fought in the air. Business men eat the evening meal in Chicago and breakfast in Los Angeles. Mosquitoes are driven from the swamps and pests from the orchards by mind's brilliant victory over unfavorable conditions.

Still sin remains in its myriad manifestations. Lying is as it was, and dishonesty may have some new manifestations but continues. The human heart is the same abyss—still by nature an evil thing known best to God. And although the new cults have tried to dispose of it, hell remains the same awful condition and place. And just the same as in the old days before there were any modern inventions, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God."

And truth abides, and faithfulness, and humility, and self-sacrifice, and justice, and mercy. Still there can be a turning to God. Still the atonement remains to cover all the past. Still there can be the new heart, and there remains the way of salvation which is better than all the grand devices of this age.

Heaven is still the City of God. Still its gates stand open to all who have been made fit.

It is the surface things which have changed. All that matters fundamentally is just the same.—Free Methodist.

## "MY PASTOR DOES NOT CALL ON ME"

We understand that this statement is at times made by our church people. In this as in all other matters the pastor should have his opportunity of explanation. Some pastoral calls cannot be made, due to circumstances beyond human control. Some sick calls are not made because the pastor does not know of the illness, not being informed. At times the pastor himself is ill, or there is serious illness in his family, or he is absent, or an accident may have interfered with the appointment. As a church, all who seek its

success and prosperity should do all in reason to give loyal support and good co-operation to its ministry, for no church can succeed if it lacks capable, contented, industrious and faithful preachers.

But some preachers do fail because they are not good pastors. They lack the industry of a good pastor. They do not seem to have the pastoral heart and the soul-winning wisdom taught by the love of God. There is perhaps no other feature of his work that will enable a preacher of ordinary ability to succeed like this item of faithful calling in the homes of the parish and community.

Jesus said of such a matter: "I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine." How constant is the association of the shepherd with his flock! His concern for their welfare binds him to his task day and night. He charges himself with their food and drink, their safety in storms, their defense against wild beasts and robbers. All that may in reason be covered by the work of the shepherding of souls, Christ would lay down upon His ministers in their labors for God and the Church. Have any of the flock been lured away from the fold? A call may bring them back. Are some of them in danger from poisonous literature, a false ism of the day? There is nothing else so good as a kindly, patient visit to hear the case and find the remedy. Offenses may have come, feelings are hurt, misunderstandings have arisen and the shepherd needs to be out among his flock. There are times when a church will be swept by a horde of destroyers and it is very important to have there a minister who is a wise and courageous pastor, who will not be stampeeded by the howling of wolves and who has the courage and patience to help every member of his flock in the way most needed.

Pastoral visiting is a necessity to a practical ministry. Many a good sermon text is suggested in these contracts, and opportunities arise by which to judge of the success or failure of sermons already delivered. Physically, mentally and spiritually new strength and blessing will be found in an energetic program of pastoral calling. Difficulties that stand in the way can often be removed in a few minutes of a pastoral call that might withstand years of sermons from the pulpit.

Bonds of sympathy and good will are formed and built up through the years. In sickness and health, at weddings, funerals and reunions the church that helps its preacher to be a friendly and welcomed visitor will reap the benefit of its hospitality. Writing on this theme Bishop Matthew Simpson says:

"As Christ came down from heaven and walked among men that He might do them good, so must the minister come out of his study and walk in the common paths of life. This is not only a duty, but it is an essential requisite to the highest ministerial success. He must be a man among men to gain their affections, to share in their sympathies. He must take to some extent on his heart their burdens and sorrows and cares; his humanity will be improved and enlarged; and he will speak with a sympathy and tenderness and love unknown before."

I exceedingly longed that God would get to Himself a name among the heathen, and I appealed to Him with the greatest freedom, that He knew I "preferred Him above my chief joy." Indeed, I had no notion of joy from this world; I cared not whether or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls for Christ.—Brainerd.