



## The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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Volume 6, No. 8

Issue # 608

### **The Providence of God**

I want to begin by looking at the message of Psalm 135:5–8. It speaks about the glory of God in His work in behalf of His people and in his care and provision of his people. “For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. (6) Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. (7) He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he

maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures. (8) Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast.” There is more there about His judgment.

I would like to consider this morning for a message, *The Providence of God*. The providence of God refers to God’s guidance and care in His provision. The word “providence,” means provision — the provision

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of God. The thought that is conceived is that God's power sustains and guides human experience and destiny to a point, whether it is direct or indirect. What I would like to point out from this passage is that there are areas of God's providence that are direct in His control and supervision. One of them, or one category, would be God's control of His creation is direct and free. God's control of the creation is absolute — the lightning, the

storms, the wind, and so on. We recognize that there is a portion of God's providence and His care and guidance of human affairs that is less direct in the sense that we are left to choose. Therefore, His control of those areas is less direct, but this area of His creation is direct.

I would like to think of a number of illustrations in the first part of the message where God's providence is direct and absolute. The one mentioned here is the

Vol. 6 No. 8, Issue # 608. The Pulpit Exchange is a compilation of written sermons without commentary, published as often as possible, in the interests of promoting sound preaching in our conservative Anabaptist churches. All sermons have been transcribed and printed with permission. Names are removed so that we can focus on the message and content rather than on a certain speaker or style. (Names will be published in the next issue).

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Published by Door of Peace Publications/Les Éditions «Porte-de-Paix» a conservative Amish Mennonite/Anabaptist publisher  
c/o Keith G. White, P.O. Box 104, Blyth, Ontario Canada N0M 1H0

Cost per Issue \$4.95 + \$2.50 p& h Canada/ \$3.50 p& h USA

Creation. Another would be God in judgment. Verse 8 says, He “smote the firstborn of Egypt.” And then it goes on “Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan,” (verse 11) and other acts of God that were acts of judgment.

Another one that is good for us to remember as we think of the providence of God, is God’s rulership of the nations. We believe from the Scripture that God’s providence is direct and absolute in His guiding of the nations. Daniel 4:17, I am sure, is a verse that we are familiar with. Sometimes we read in the newspapers of what is developing in the electoral process and so on, including all the fuss and fuming, and the bragging (if you may call it that) and campaigning. We can lose sight of the fact that after all God is in control of who will be in authority in this country. Daniel 4:17 says, “This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.” And that is still true today brethren and sisters.

God is still in absolute and direct control. In His provi-

dence, His guiding, and His sustaining powers, He is controlling the affairs and the fate of nations in a direct way, and He is absolute in that authority. In times of war and in times of peace, God is in control. Daniel 2:38 is another reference from the same time to King Nebuchadnezzar, “And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all.” God made known to Nebuchadnezzar through the prophet Daniel while he was such an absolute world ruler, that place was given to him by God, and by God alone.

The proverb writer tells us that “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will” (Proverbs 21:1). There is a certain amount of trust we should have as we think of the affairs of nations and as we think of the unrest in the world today. We have the confidence and faith that God is still in control and simply to rest there.

In the New Testament in Romans 11, I) *I will cite several illustrations of God’s absolute providence.* II) *Then, I would like to look at areas where God’s providence is subject to our response, and His providence is*

*dependent on our response to Him.* Romans 11:28 speaks about the children of Israel who after the coming of Christ, and after the coming of the day of Pentecost, had rejected the message of truth. "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." This is a very precious truth as we think about the providence of God. This verse means that in God's view of things, He had chosen the children of Israel to be the nation to whom He would give the Law. God had chosen the children of Israel and the nation of Israel to bring Christ to the world.

Then, when they fell in sin and unbelief beyond the point of Christ's coming, it goes on to say that the "calling," and the "election," of God "are without repentance" (verse 29). That means that in the eyes of God these people (the lost, unbelieving, and indifferent) were beloved in God's eyes from the vantage point that they had been a part of His plan and He wished yet to call them back into the blessings of that arrangement. Therefore, they were blessed and they were beloved in the Father's eyes. That is a blessed truth. A very precious truth. When we think about the attitude of God toward

those who were once faithful and later failed and as we think of God's attitude yet toward the lost Israel, "as touching the election, they are beloved."

Ephesians 1:10, 11 is a reference to the Church. We believe that the providence of God related to the final state of the people of Israel is fully in God's hands in light of that Scripture. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: (11) In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." I do not know what you see in that but there is something there about the reference to the "fulness of times." That, I think, unlocks the meaning of predestination. God was working since the beginning of time toward an absolute and final outcome.

God was working to bring together both Jew and gentile in Christ into a new union with Him. In the fulness of time, Christ would be prepared as the Saviour. All of this was working according to "the counsel of his own will." It means that there was nothing that would stop Him. This was an absolute, step

by step plan. It unfolded as God intended and it was direct arbitration of His will. There was nothing that would stop it. It is the providence of God, and guiding to the end, the salvation of souls through the work of Christ and the Church. The predestination is that the purpose and plan would have an ultimate destiny. It does necessarily speak about the choice that we make related to that.

That is a deep thought, but all of these are ways in which the providence of God is absolute. It is not subject to anyone's response or decision. This is God's work and it will be finished without interference.

II) *Areas where God's providence and the human responsibility for choice and sin enter in.* I will refer to a number of Old Testament illustrations for this. The first illustration that I would like to give is that rather obscure story in the book of Genesis where it says that Abraham had gone down to Egypt and he thought, "Surely the fear of God is not in this place" (Genesis 20:11). Therefore, he said that Sarah was his sister, because he was afraid that the men of the place would kill him to take Sarah his wife. Indeed, she was his half sister, as the account goes on to explain.

The Scripture says that Abimelech took Sarah to the King's house, but God intervened in a dream and told him, "Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife" (Genesis 20:3), whom he had not touched. God said to Abimelech, "I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me" (Genesis 20:6). It mentions there that Abimelech said, "Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation" (Genesis 20:4)? When the men of the place (meaning the servants of Abimelech) realized that Sarah was Abraham's wife, they were sore afraid. It does seem like there was a degree of righteousness and a fear of God that does not even exist in the country that we live in.

I want to point out that the providence of God is related to human responsibility for sin and choice. *The providence of God will protect us from falling into sin if we are worthy, willing to be protected, and desiring to be protected.* That story beautifully illustrates this truth. There is protection in the providence of God for a sincere person who wishes not to fall into sin. Probably all of us have experienced at one time or another in

life that kind of protection. We were spared from falling into sin in a way that we were perhaps not quite conscious of the nature of our environment, the nature of temptation, what we would be exposed to, and God in His providence protected us from sin.

However, in another story in the Old Testament, it tells us of David and his awful sin. We are familiar with that story, how he took another man's wife and later plotted to murder her husband and so on. The Scriptures merely say, "But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD" (2 Samuel 11:27). *God's silence, or His lack of intervention when David proceeded with evil intentions does not indicate approval or a lack of notice on God's part.* It is sometimes, as the Ecclesiastes writer says, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). We certainly live like that in days like today, do we not. Nevertheless, God's silence and lack of intervention does not mean that providence is somehow overlooking or condoning what men are doing. Therefore, God's providence is present but God was displeased, and no more was done until later.

In Genesis 50:20 we have the story of Joseph and his brothers. This is a Scripture that we could puzzle over and seek to try to explain exactly how God works this. We want to come to that verse in the New Testament where ultimately, "we know that all things work together for good" (Romans 8:28), and we believe that. In Genesis 50:20 Joseph is talking to his brothers after they wept and prayed for forgiveness for having sold him into bondage. Joseph said in verse 19–21, "Fear not: for am I in the place of God? (20) But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. (21) Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." *This story brings into focus that, in the providence of God, He did not interfere with Joseph's brothers and their decision to do something that was cruel and wrong. And, by God allowing it, it does not mean that God thought it was fair, right, or even that it was not sinful.* God simply permitted the wrongdoing of Joseph's brothers to cause Joseph to suffer.

Brethren and sisters, we live in a world today where there are many people who are suffering,

because of the wrong doing of others which God does not stop or interfere with because He leaves them with the liberty of human choice. Nevertheless, others' suffer as a consequence of that. Joseph interpreted the understanding of the will of God, that even when that was in process, God was able, in His providence, to superintend those affairs to work things out to save the family and the race. They realized that it was evil (and it was evil and wrong). There was a reaping day for what they did. Nevertheless, God rearranged it for good to save the family and that is almost beyond our comprehension.

Satan, in his devices, does not, and cannot comprehend that truth. He cannot. He thinks only evil will produce evil. The Scripture says, "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8). That means that Satan, in his devices, was thinking that he would destroy Jesus, and in destroying him, nothing but evil could come of that. God knew that He was simply employing evil men to accomplish His purposes. That was beyond Satan's comprehension. Therefore, it gives comfort to me as we think of bad things

that happen. We want to talk a little bit later about why bad things happen to good people.

Years ago, there was a book written like that. I heard of it, but I never had the opportunity to read it. The title was simply *Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?* The writer sought to explain this truth from a Scriptural viewpoint. It was not, of course, in our setting, but it was a book with some profound thoughts about Satan and his work and how God employs the intentions of evil men at times to accomplish His purpose in the end.

*The providence of God allows self-willed people to have their own way.* We read in the book of Esther, "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai" (Esther 7:10). That seems like sort of a final note to Haman's folly. God allows sometimes for self-willed people to have their own way for a time. Haman was privileged to work out his devices against the people of God and it seemed like Haman was allowed some rope. He had the king doing his bidding and he was working wholeheartedly in the process of destroying the people of God. Then, it says that they "hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai."

I think of the story of Samson. Samson said to his parents, “Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well” (Judges 14:3). He wanted his own way. Then, it says something there in the Scripture related to the providence of God. It says, “But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD” (verse 4). The only thing that I can understand from that is that in the foreknowledge of God, God knew that this boy would learn something only if he learned it the hard way. Sometimes God lets people have their own way who want their own way. We know, as the story follows, that is what happened.

In the story of Rehoboam it says, “Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people.” Then, it says something about the providence of God. “For the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.” It was concerning dividing the kingdom. (1 Kings 12:15) It implied to me that sometimes God allows a self-willed person to be in authority when it is His purposes to use a self-willed person’s intentions to accomplish His will. This is what happened in Rehoboam’s case.

In the final analysis though

there are reasons for us to trust the superintending of God in all of these affairs, even though sometimes the purposes of God seem obscure. I would like to just read a few verses from Psalm 81 related to and concluding this thought about human choice and human responsibility for sin related to the providence of God. The thought that I would like to leave with us is that the Scripture never interprets Divine providence as interfering with human freedom. There are perhaps some references where it seems like it does, but it is not talking about the issue of human freedom, it is talking about the issue of human placement in position and station of life where that seems to conflict. Psalm 81:11, 12 says “But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. (12) So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels.” Then notice verse 13–16, “Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! (14) I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. (15) The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. (16) He should have fed them

also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.” That Psalm is one of many where God says, “if only you would have responded to me in a favourable way. This and this I would have done for you. But, since you did not, you prevented me and you prevented my providences from being exercised toward you in a favourable way.”

Beloved, we could be hindering God in His desire to bless us as we are guilty of not responding to Him in a favourable way. Consequently, the greatest blessing and the greatest providences are not our experience because we simply are not qualified. We are not available. We are not eligible, we might say. “Oh that my people would hearken unto me.”

III) *God’s providence in human suffering.* Romans 8:28 says, “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.” I like this verse. It seems to me to be a summary of what we have been considering here. All things, whether it is the direct control of God in the weather, the direct control of God in the governing of nations, or the indirect supervision of God in our lives, related to our choice — all of those, and even

the way that the choices of others affect me can be counted to work together for my welfare, if we love God, and if we are the ones who have responded to the call of His purpose.

That is where we draw the line — If we love God. It is when we carefully commit ourselves to God and choose in our realm of choice and there commit ourselves to God for those areas of life where we do not have a choice. There are those two areas of life. In one area we have a choice and in other areas, we do not have a choice. Therefore, we must commit to God and yield to God in those areas where we have a choice to expect His greatest and richest blessing. I thought of the story as I was thinking about this message, one can hardly imagine the grief that must have been part of that home, where the little maid was taken from her home and captured by the Syrians and she waited on Naaman’s wife. She was probably a girl not even quite school age from what it says from her comments and what she said to her mistress. We can hardly imagine something that cruel and severe a test in life where a kindergarten aged child would be robbed from her home and taken away.

We ask the question, why do

bad things happen to good people? Bad things happen to good people. Some of the suffering in our world is because we live in a world of sin, and suffering is the result of the choices of others. Some, like in Job's experience, seems to be the direct suggestion of Satan, and that seems to be in a slightly different category. Some suffering in life is simply because God is allowing us to be chastised. Paul prayed and besought the Lord three times that a thorn in his flesh would be removed (2 Corinthians 12:7-9) and the answer of God was, "My grace is sufficient for thee." I suppose that the mother of the maiden who waited on Naaman's wife probably never knew the great deed her daughter did in that foreign land. She probably never knew the great service of God that she did and never knew that her heroic act was recorded in the pages of Scripture. It was to her a suffering and grief, but it was a part of the providence of God. It was God permitted for them to experience. I am sure it was very painful for them to bear.

Do you believe that God, in His providence cares for you in your health and your sickness? In being injured or not being injured? I believe that He does. There are many Scriptures that refer to healing as directly from

the Lord. I suppose that if all of us would have everything wrong with us that might go wrong with people who are at our stage of life, very few of us would be alive anymore. "And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive to this day" (Joshua 14:10). Do you believe that God superintends your privileges in life, whether or not you have found companionship in life or whether you have been denied that privilege? Do you believe that God superintends that?

Do you believe that God superintends the privileges and opportunities you have had in vocational life and business? I have known people my own age who have tried very hard to get rich. I feel sorry for them because most times a person who is out to get rich is in for a lot of bitter disappointments and some of the people that actually do become wealthy seem to have been blessed by God in a way. It is not that we should not be diligent, but the Scriptures speaks explicitly about those who will to be rich [1 Timothy 6:9]. There is a danger and a snare in it, and many of them never get rich.

Do you believe that your privileges in life are God-given and that where you were called to live, your poverty, your wealth, all of these things, God is provid-

ing? We do well to accept His provisions for our life. My life is different from yours and yours different from mine. Our privileges and opportunities in life are different. However, when all things work together for good, and when we put God first in the

things that we may choose, God will fit together the rest. We are not promised that some of those things will not be painful or hard to bear. May God bless us and keep us in the coming days and help us to commit our all to Him.

## **Recognizing Divine Providence**

This subject of divine providence is one that the more I thought about, the more I realized some of the difficulties in understanding and recognizing divine providence. I trust as we discuss this subject, that we might find inspiration in this consideration. We think of God's providence as the care, benevolence, and guidance of God over His Creation and over mankind in particular. We probably think of the root word when we think of providence — 'provide,' and that is a common word that we use. That certainly gives us a basis for the thought of providence — God providing for mankind. However, the Scripture as it uses the word provide, carries with it probably a little different meaning, although not far off what we think about in the word provide.

The word "providence" in the Bible is only found one time and that is when the orator Tertullus

gave a flattering speech to Felix (Acts 24:2) and he commended him on his providence, or the way he had provided for the nation, and how they had been blessed by his providence. Well it was a flattering speech but it was the only use of the word providence in the Scripture. In contrast, the word "provide" is used many times in the Scripture. In the word provide, we find the thought of provision, which is an interesting consideration. Provision is the thought of providing, but it is the thought of seeing before hand. We think of provision as something that someone provides for us. However, it is not far apart really because the thought of provision is someone seeing something before hand and making provision for it, or providing for the need. Therefore, it is really closely related.

Genesis 22 gives the account of Abraham when he was called

to take Isaac, his son, and offer him for a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. Abraham was called to do a very difficult task — one that any father would shrink back from, and would wonder, “Must it be?” and “Is it even reasonable, or logical to do such a thing?” Abraham was called to do this, and I am impressed with his response. When they journeyed to this place, his son Isaac raised the question in Genesis 22:7, 8 “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? (8) And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.” “God will provide Himself,” He will see beforehand and prepare for such a need. He will provide Himself a Son for a burnt offering. We know the account here and Abraham finally put Isaac upon the altar and stretched forth his hand to slay his only son. The Lord called to him out of heaven in verses 11 and 12, “Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. (12) And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

In verse 14, we notice what Abraham said here, “Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.” I understand that thought that “it shall be seen,” to carry with it the very similar thought to the word provide. “It shall be seen.” We come back to this “provision,” or “seeing before hand.” That is the thought there, “seeing before hand, and preparing for it.” Therefore, that somewhat captures the thought of what we are looking at as divine providence. We might say it this way: divine providence is a preservation, care and government which God continually exercises upon His constituents (those whom He has created).

Usually when we think about divine providence, however, we often think about more than simply natural things that God provides. God’s provision for mankind started all the way at the beginning of time. Let us look at how God began to provide for man in the very beginning. He looked at man whom He had created and Adam came to the conclusion that he was not complete in himself, but needed someone to be a companion to him. God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Therefore, He provided for man’s

need by creating a woman and this was a part of God's initial provision. We know that God created the world as a provision for man to meet man's physical needs. However, here He provided another dimension of that provision in providing a companion. Thus, man's need was met by God's provision.

Now, some people come to the conclusion "How do I fit into that? I am not married. God never led me to be married, never gave me that opportunity, and how did I benefit from this great provision of God for mankind?" That provision also provided for the society in which we live in. Thus, a woman came into existence and from that grew the institution of the home. From that came children and society. That society provides companionship in a general way to everyone apart from the marriage relationship. Therefore, in that God was providing for man's basic needs. We know that His general purpose in that was to provide for man's specific need in the marriage relationship. However, above and beyond that He provided for all of man's needs for social interchange and companionship in a general way. Therefore, it was an act of God providing for man's need.

God provided many times for

His people. Again and again in the Bible we have God's provision for the physical and material needs of mankind. We have God in Bible history providing manna for the children of Israel. God provided water out of the rock, and in other ways. God provided leadership in Moses, and then in the spiritual leader Aaron. Saul, as the first king of Israel was a provision for the nation of Israel in their need for leadership. David, a man after God's own heart, was a very prominent figure in the history of Israel. There were the prophets which God sent to His people, "rising up early and sending them" (Jeremiah 7:25). God sent the prophets to give them the message. Ultimately, God sent Jesus Christ as His provision for mankind.

We referred to the account in Genesis about Abraham, and how there on the mountain, Abraham was ready to offer his son. God provided an alternative to that. He provided a ram, a lamb to take Isaac's place there on Mount Moriah. "In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." That pointed forward into the future. It was a type of Jesus Christ, and His work on Calvary, as the greatest provision for mankind. "In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." In Mount Calvary

it shall be seen. This great provision shall be seen there in Mount Calvary. Thus, we have perhaps what we would call the ultimate provision — the providence of God in sending His Son Jesus Christ into the world.

We have more than that. God gave the Scriptures as a provision — a providence. God in divine providence gave us the Scriptures to direct us and to inform us of His will and to help us understand what it means to have the Christian life. We have the providence of the Holy Spirit. God provided the Holy Spirit so that we are not left orphans in this world, but we have the Holy Spirit's presence with us as a Comforter.

We might look at that providence and say "That is not usually what we think about when we think about divine providence." Rather, can we think about how God provides for our everyday needs in either common or miraculous ways? We can usually think about that when we think about divine providence. All of this that we looked at already is a part of helping us to understand that God is providential. God's work is providential. It provides. It is the providence of God that meets man's needs in its entirety. Therefore, it is good for us to remember many of the overshad-

owing ways in which God's providence is at work.

Probably the more difficult question is the actual title we have, where we are looking at how to recognize God's providence. We sometimes say that hindsight is better than foresight. We can see after it is all over and after many days or weeks or years went by. We can look back and say, "Yes, I can see how God provided. I can see divine providence in that." The lesson or the message challenges us to be able to recognize divine providence perhaps even a little sooner than that, maybe earlier, maybe even as it is happening. Let us think about how God provides for us. That is a challenge for us. I pondered and spent quite a bit of time thinking about how we can, and how we do recognize divine providence, maybe a bit earlier than what we sometimes do.

*We recognize divine providence by seeing it in past history.* We have already looked at some of the history of God's people, of His working with mankind. That helps us to recognize divine providence in our experience. We look back and see how God provided for His people in the past and we then are able to see ways in which He is and will be providing for us today. We look for those ways. We do not limit

ourselves to that. We do not limit God in that way, and think that God can only work now in our day like He worked in the past. We believe that He does work many times similarly to what He worked in the past, but He has new ways to work as new situations and needs arise. He has other ways. He is not limited simply to ways that He has used before.

All of history helps us to recognize divine providence in our experience and in our day as well. We can look at secular and Bible history. Abraham knew something about God's providence in his own experience and in the people before him — the patriarchs. He knew something about that and that is why he could say to his son, "God will provide himself a lamb." He could say that because his knowledge of history and his looking at history. He came to that conclusion and recognized that in God's time, the Lord would provide. When the Lord provided, he saw and recognized it. Being aware of history is a part of recognizing divine providence.

Proverbs 3:6 says, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Doing that helps us to see divine providence. In all our ways, we acknowledge God's working in

the past and in our life today and in all that He does. We see God at work. We endeavour to see God at work. We acknowledge that God is working and accomplishing His will. As we do that, God will continue to provide. Therefore, it is a part of seeing divine providence. We look at the past and apply that to the present, and expect it in the future. There is a place in having an interest in history. Sometimes people say, "History is boring to me. I do not like history. I do not care for history that much." That kind of bothers me because really God wants us to learn from history. He wants us to at least have some interest in what happened in the past. He instructs us in that way. He said, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). That indicates that God wants us to learn something from the history before us, learn from what happened in the past, and how He worked in the past. He wants us to learn from that. Therefore, history should have some meaning to us, particularly Bible history, but even secular history should have some interest to us. Some of us will have more interest in it than others. I enjoy so

much and highly recommend reading the book, *Remember These Watershed Years* by brother David Martin. It is a very simple book, but it gives us a picture of how God provided for His people and directed the affairs of the world to accomplish His purposes. It is very interesting to see some of the high points of how God provided (divine providence) for His people and led them.

I would maybe look right now at an example from Israel's history that should be an inspiration to us. Sometimes we wonder why things happen. I would like for us to turn to Deuteronomy 32. Moses here, is somewhat rehearsing the history of Israel. He gave a little bit of an idea of what happened, and reminded them of it. It is interesting in verse 7 where we said about the importance of history. Here we have it, "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." *How do we recognize divine providence?* Again, we look back at what God did in the past and ask questions about it from those who lived before. We find out how they saw God working. That helps us to recognize divine providence. Then, he went on to rehearse this

and said, "When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. (9) For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, [that is a part of divine providence] "he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye" (verses 8, 9). Here is another part of divine providence in verses 11 and 12, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: (12) So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." Moses continued by talking about how God led Israel through the wilderness experience and provided for his needs through "honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; (14) Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs," and so on in verses 13 and 14.

The part of divine providence I like particularly is when it says in verse 11 "As an eagle stirreth up her nest." That is what God was doing as He was prepared to deliver His people out of Egypt. His people had moved down into

the land of Goshen by the providence of God. When they were in the land of Goshen, some of them began to mix in with the people of Egypt and began to dwell among the Egyptians. We know that ended being the mixed multitude. God knew that would not work. He would not have a people who would be a separate people and would be His people, if they would mingle among the Egyptians.

What did God do? In divine providence, He stirred up a nest. How did He do that? He allowed oppression to come upon His people and prepared them to leave. They probably would have been satisfied to stay in Egypt indefinitely. However, God saw to it that they were not satisfied. They were tired of living in Egypt. They did not know what to do about it, but they became tired of living in Egypt. In this way God stirred up a nest and made it undesirable to live there, like the eagle does. God brought them out, led them on the way, delivered them out of Egypt, and took them to the Promised Land. All of this was a part of divine providence.

It was not always very pleasant. I am sure the young eagle was often scared. As the mother eagle pushes it out of the nest, she stirs up the nest and pushes

the eagle out. The eagle begins to drop in mid air without ever having experienced flying before. I am sure it is rather a scary experience for them, but the mother eagle provides. She goes down underneath the young eagle and supports the eagle above it to help the young eagle learn how to fly, and how to take care of itself. That is what the Lord was doing in divine providence. He was doing that for Israel. He took them through difficult experiences, yet he did not leave them on their own, but provided for their needs. We see that in history. As we look at the history in the past, we see divine providence. It helps us to recognize divine providence in our day as well.

*We recognize divine providence by faith.* This is a very important part of recognizing divine providence. It is faith in the unseen hand of God. When we think of divine providence, we can see the effects of that. However, we really cannot see God Himself reaching with His hands and doing things. We know He used human instrumentality. God uses others to accomplish His purposes and to provide for our needs many times. Nevertheless, we might say that the hand that is overshadowing all this is an unseen hand. That

requires faith on our part, to actually see God at work. We will not recognize divine providence if we do not have faith. We have record in the Bible and in secular history of many individuals as well where one individual saw God was at work. He saw God was accomplishing His purposes in working things out and the individual next to him looked at the situation and saw it as a matter of what man had done and was simply chance. That is all he could see. What is the difference? The difference was faith. One man had faith in a God who was superintending the events of human history, the other man believed in the natural course of history of mankind all on its own, and simply however the ball bounces, as we say sometimes. It requires faith to see divine providence.

It was Abraham's faith. We know one of the strong characteristics of Abraham, was his faith. That was emphasized in Hebrews 11. It was emphasized in Romans 4:3. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Abraham's faith made it so that he could say, "God will provide." He saw divine providence.

It is interesting that Abraham was looking around expecting to see God's work. It says in that

account that "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram" (Genesis 22:13). I wonder, why did he look around? Why did Abraham turn and look around him? It almost seems like Abraham was expecting and looking in faith. He believed that there must be an evidence of divine providence here. There must be an evidence of something that God had provided to meet this need. He looked around and he saw this ram in the thicket. There was the answer. There was God's providence. It was faith that made Abraham believe that God would work this out.

*We must look to see it. We must expect divine providence. We must anticipate it.* I would hasten to say it is possible for people to imagine divine providence, and to look for it in every circumstance and to come to the conclusion that something was divine providence when it was not divine providence. People sometimes say that they believe God had spoken and God had revealed through circumstances that they ought to do a certain thing. However, it was not in harmony with the will of God. That is man's imagination, and man's own mind deceiving them. I am not talking about that. We must always look for divine

providence in harmony with God's Word and God's will if we want to be safe in seeing divine providence. A man of faith will look and expect divine providence like Abraham looked and found the providence of God at work. He saw the ram there. He looked for it. He was expecting it. We need to do that too. We need to look and expect it. That will help us to recognize divine providence.

We must be open to the direction of God in order to recognize divine providence. Let us seek His direction and be open to it, allow His Holy Spirit to direct us and to show us His will. Let us allow God to provide and to help to use us as part of His divine providence. To see His divine providence, we must be open to that. Sometimes God puts in people's hearts, or impresses upon people's minds to do things in certain ways and to go certain ways and to do certain things. He directs them to do that. We must be open to that with a reasonable caution of course. God works out divine providence and we will see divine providence at work when we are open to allow Him to direct us and to be sensitive to the voice of His Spirit.

I have several experiences as personal illustrations that are the closest to me. If I would give

opportunity, I am suspecting that probably we could spend the rest of this time telling of instances in our lives where divine providence was evident. That would be an inspiration to hear that shared.

This past winter we were on the Winter Bible School circuit preaching. The first night was out at Woodbury. I had planned to go out to Woodbury. Part of divine providence, I suppose, was that a customer from the Woodbury, Pennsylvania area called me and asked for an item that we had in our shop that he wanted to buy from us. He bought often from us and he needed another item. A thing like that was divine providence that he called on the day that I needed to go out there, so I could take it along out that evening. I planned to take the pickup truck because of needing to take that item along. I figured it would be easiest to take the pickup truck and the weather was maybe a little questionable. I thought that the pickup truck has four wheel drive and that would meet that need in case I encountered a problem with the weather. However, I had forgotten that the pickup truck, the last time I had taken it a long run, had after about an hour of driving begun to act up and got worse and worse,

and worse. At any rate, that day a sister from our congregation, a young sister who has a family out in the Woodbury area, called up my wife and said that she would like to go on along out to Woodbury if we are going as a family. In the end we were not going as a family. I was planning on going myself with the pickup truck, but we decided that yes, my daughter could go along and that would be appropriate for her to go along. I decided I should probably take the minivan, that way it would be a little nicer travelling with three people and I could fit the piece the item that I was taking along in the mini van. Therefore, I decided to take the mini van. Well, that was providential. I saw God, as I realized what would have happened, I realized it later, I saw God providing for that need.

If I would have taken the pickup truck like I had originally planned to, I would never have finished travelling to Woodbury that evening. I would have travelled about half way there and it would have left me sitting and I would not have been able to preach at Woodbury that evening. I do not know of any way that I could have remedied it halfway there at that time. Maybe the Lord would have had some way, but I believe it was a part of

divine providence that He directed those events that way so we drove the minivan and were able to get there without any problem.

The next evening, I was scheduled to go up to Waterloo, NY and I left again with the pickup truck. This time I figured "I will take the pickup truck." It was a longer drive and the weather was really bad. I knew before I left that it was raining in our area and snowing in New York, and I left with the pickup truck. I tried to decide which way I wanted to go to Waterloo. "Do I want to go up by the Susquehanna river on the 11 & 15? Or, do I want to go up by Danville, PA? I had given it some careful thought and decided that I would go by Danville. If I had any trouble, I would be closer to our people going that way.

Well, as I said earlier the pickup truck did cause a problem before I got to the Danville area. It was already making a problem. I was hardly able to get up the hills anymore. Our daughter taught school at Danville that year and I was able to stop there, pick up the car that she had and take that the rest of the way to Waterloo. I saw again, divine providence at work. God was directing that I would go by the way of Danville rather than going up by the river. If I had of gone

up by the river, I very likely would not have been able to get to Waterloo that evening.

Having two of those experiences happen one day after the other, again reminded me very keenly and impressed upon my mind that God is at work in divine providence. He directs our hearts and minds in ways that we take no credit to ourselves as we carefully consider. We really do not know what the future holds, but God directs our thoughts and our plans, and directs the lives of other people and impresses things upon their minds and puts things into their minds to do and say and go certain places that in the end works out for good many times. It is a part of divine providence. We need to see that and recognize divine providence and be open to His directing and guiding in our lives.

Another rather personal illustration. I had loaned some money to an individual without any interest and it was kind of an open-ended thing. I learned a lesson through that. One should always write down and record, and have paper work for it. I loaned him money and then we talked about it a few times after that and he made sure that I was not in need of it. Then, it went a long time and nothing was said. I

began to wonder whether he was still thinking about it or what his plans were. I really had not needed it, but there came a time where I was a little tight. I thought about and wondered how do things look financially, and I began to evaluate the assets that I had. I felt I really ought to confirm that this money is still owed me and that would be part of the assets and make sure that we are still thinking the same terms and thoughts.

Therefore, I cautiously and hesitantly, after considering, asked the brother about the money, whether he remembered that I had loaned him that money. He said that he did not remember a thing about it. It was completely blank. We decided that we would go home and check our records and verify it. We both did, and finally came to the conclusion after checking carefully that yes, he does owe me that money. He was embarrassed about it. It happened to suit him and he said, "Well, I can take care of that. I will see that you get paid for that." I saw that as divine providence because by arranging those events in that way, God had provided for money at a time when I needed it. When it was a little tight, He had provided for that money to be available. Earlier, I did not need

it but then I did. I could use it then. It was not that I would require it of the man, but it worked out very well.

Divine providence was work. God arranged it that way so that this brother forgot about it. It seemed strange and he was embarrassed about it, but I looked at it as divine providence that he kept that money and did not think about paying it until the Lord knew that I needed that money more than I would have at any other time. Then, God provided for that. Well, it was a personal illustration. It would be interesting to hear your illustrations and experiences along that line as well.

We are talking about a part of recognizing divine providence is being open and sensitive to the directing of His Spirit and the promptings of God in our lives. I have regretted personally several times when it seemed like God laid something on my heart to share with somebody else and I did not do it. "Should I share with this brother a little something?" Maybe God had blessed and I could share a little something with this brother and it looked like maybe he was in need at the time. We wondered was it the right thing to do or not and you kind of put it off. After a while you sort of let it go and you

did not do it. I have regretted many times that I was not more sensitive to the prompting of God in that. We can imagine a lot of things, but we are talking again in harmony with God, where God impresses it strongly upon our minds to do a certain thing. We may not understand exactly why, but I believe we ought to be sensitive to that. It is a part of seeing, recognizing, and being a part of divine providence and allowing God to use us that way to provide for someone else's need. It is good for us to do that and be sensitive to that.

*Closely related to this thought is the fact that if we want to recognize divine providence we ought to be careful that we do not stand in the way of divine providence or hinder God's divine providence. It is possible for us to do that. I thought about Balaam. God was at work in Balaam's experience. I do not completely understand the account. It was evident that at the time when Balaam was ready to go with Balak that God did not intend or want him to go. It was not His will for him to go at that time, at least not in the mind set that he had. God set about to stop Balaam from proceeding. Balaam rose up and was ready to go with the men, but the donkey stopped and the donkey would*

not go. He was hard and rough with the donkey until finally the donkey spoke to him and in that I think we can see divine providence.

We see divine providence in how God caused the donkey to stop and not go because God did not want Balaam to go without having further interchange and further communication between them. God wanted him to stop and God worked in divine providence through the donkey to stop him from not being able to go. We know that he said he would have taken the donkey's life if he could have. However, it was a part of divine providence and Balaam was hindering, not cooperating with divine providence there.

I thought of the story of Black Beauty. There was one occasion where some men were riding with the horse Black Beauty pulling the carriage. They came in a time of storm to a bridge with high water and the wind. It was raining and blowing. They really could not see what the bridge was like, but they trusted the horse and the horse would not cross the bridge. They tried this way and that but the horse would not go. Then suddenly the bridge keeper on the other side came out of his house waving the lantern and stopped and hollered for

them to stop because the bridge was out. Well, the horse would not go. That was divine providence. We might say, "Well a horse, an animal has another sense, that man does not have and therefore that is why the animal would not go." That may be, but I like to think that God uses the animals. He puts it into the minds of the animals, He puts it in their heads, as it were, to not do something and to know some things to help provide for the needs of mankind.

It is better for us to err, if we dare, on the side of attributing more to divine providence than simply to chance. It is better to err on that side than to be quick to say, "Well, that was just chance. That was the animal's instinct." It is better to err on the side of attributing it to God. It is safer to do that. I have tried to ponder, is it possible to actually to attribute too much to God to divine providence, is that possible? I am not sure that it is. We do know that there are events that God allows to happen as a course of human nature and the laws of nature.

Man takes certain steps and there are consequences that go with that, and many times God does not interfere. That is why accidents happen, especially carelessness accidents. Other

times, God interferes with a natural course of events and keeps accidents from happening to provide for man's need in that way. In light of all that, is it possible to attribute too much to God, or not, and too much to divine providence that is good? I am not talking about that which is bad or evil, but too much good to divine providence. I am not sure it is really possible to do that. I think if anything, we ought to err on that side if there is anything like error. Do you know what I mean? Therefore, it is good for us to consider the fact that we can actually be a hindrance to divine providence. We can actually stand in the way.

The story is told of a preacher who went to visit a poor widow lady. He was happy to go and visit her because a man had given him some money that he wanted to donate to some poor person. This preacher was going to go to this poor widow lady who was renting a house and was hardly able to pay the rent. He planned to take this money and some of his own that he had added to it to make it sufficient to pay for the rent. When he came to the house, why he saw that the blinds were open, and he saw that her plants were set out. He knew from past experience that she was at home. Therefore, he went up the stair-

way, knocked on the door, and there was no answer. He rang the door bell and there was still no answer. He knocked again louder and there was no answer. He was disappointed. He went a way down the steps saying such a pity that she is not home that I could give her this money to help her out.

He decided the next day that he would go back and try again. This time she answered the door. He had prayer with her and visited and encouraged her. He noticed that she was very downcast and began to cry. He asked her, "What is wrong?" She replied, "The landlord wants the rent and I do not have it. He was here yesterday and knocked on the door but I simply could not go to the door. I could not go to the door." Then he asked, "What time?" She told him what time the landlord was there, and he knew that was the time that he was there with the money to give her. Well, she was standing in the way, as it were, of divine providence. We need to be careful that we do not do that.

I know sometimes we could put ourselves in her shoes and say "Well, we avoid trouble when we do something like that." However, I have wondered already how many times we might actually be hindering God

from working out His will in divine providence. Let us think about that and be careful. We want to recognize divine providence and we will need to allow God to work and not stand in the way of His working.

*Another part of recognizing divine providence is to look for God's divine providence in the negative experiences of life.* We tend to look at the things that happen in our experience that are difficult, trying and unpleasant. We look at that and wonder, "How can any good come out of this? What is the Lord doing in this experience?" We tend to see the negative side of it very keenly. I thought about the Scripture in Romans 8:28 where it reminds us, "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." It does not say that "all things work for good." It says "all things work together for good." I would like to comment on that a little bit.

I thought that it was very interesting and inspirational to think about that. Not everything may work for good in insight, but all things work together to accomplish good. Therefore, I think we must recognize divine providence in those negative experiences of living, realizing "that all

things work together for good." When God is working in His people, He is doing so for good. He told the prophet Jeremiah, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11).

That is divine providence and His intention to work good in people's lives. Therefore, we need to look for God's divine providence in the negative and the difficult experiences of life. I know, maybe some of you can identify with me that it is very easy to look at the negative side and to be a little pessimistic in our outlook. I would probably turn to be a little bit on that side sometimes. Nevertheless, I am challenged with the need to see God at work and look for divine providence in those experiences, even though they are difficult.

I have another personal illustration. Sometime ago my wife had a finger that began to hurt and became all swollen red. It looked like a bee or a mosquito had bitten it but she knew nothing had happened to it. Then, it began to turn a little yellow right behind the nail. One of the sister's in the congregation said to her, "That is infected." She did not like that idea, but admitted that it did look that way. She

went to the doctor about that and sure enough it was infected. However, when she went to the doctor, the doctor said, “You have high blood pressure. You need to take some medicine for this. This is significantly high that it is a danger.” I look at that and I see divine providence. If it was not for the fact that this finger made a problem, then we would not have discovered the high blood pressure that was a danger. That would not have been discovered. God, in His divine providence arranged it again so that was discovered and could be treated. We see God at work.

We look at an experience like that and we say, “There was pain involved. There was a doctor. There was a time to go to the doctor. There was the expense of a doctor visit.” It looked all negative from that perspective. However, when you look at what God was able to do to help and to provide for that information and awareness, we see divine providence at work in those negative experiences. It is good for us to look for divine providence in those negative experiences.

*Another part of recognizing divine providence is to surrender to it.* Submission to divine providence helps us to recognize it. I am not talking about simply tak-

ing everything that comes and simply accepting it as, “Well, there is nothing you can do about it, it is all God’s working.” We call that *fatalism*. That is where we simply say, “God has decreed everything and there is no responsibility we have, and nothing for us to do. Whatever will happen will happen and there is nothing you can do about it anyway so, why bother.” Therefore, every obstacle we run up against, we simply give in and simply let happen what happens. We call that fatalism. That is not what I am talking about. God, expects us to be diligent. We do the best we know. We follow God’s leading and will in our lives, and live up to the best that we know. When we face obstacles, we try to overcome those obstacles.

That is the intent of God for mankind to pursue, to be diligent and to endeavour to overcome them and to find our way through obstacles. We know that the devil puts obstacles in our way to accomplish God’s will that hinder us from accomplishing God’s will and purposes. Therefore, we will not simply give up. Nevertheless, there does come a point where we can say sometimes that we knock our head against the wall and refuse to surrender and be submissive to divine providence. God is want-

ing to work in a certain way, and He puts obstacles in front of us and roadblocks, as it were, and we will not submit to it, we will not surrender to it. Or, He directs us into a difficult experience, and we would like to somehow get around that, and avoid that experience. We look for a better way, and we are not ready to surrender to that difficult experience to go through. If we want to recognize divine providence, we will need to be submissive and surrender to God's divine providence.

I thought about how Joseph, as he was down in the pit and hated by his brethren. He was sold to the Ishmaelites, and he was taken down to Egypt. He was put in prison. His thoughts could have been well running like mine might have where he would have come to the conclusion that all these things are negative. They were all against. It would have been difficult to surrender and say, "Well, God must have something in mind here. God must be working." In the midst of that it became evident that Joseph was faithful. He was diligent in all that he was given to do. He worked in favour and in harmony with the surroundings that he found himself in. He proved to be a blessing to other people. He became a part of divine providence in providing for the nation

of Egypt and for his own people, by surrendering himself to that and coming under the favour of Pharaoh. Pharaoh set him up. He interpreted the dream and through that he was able to give direction.

Pharaoh gave him the responsibility to give direction to the storing up of food and provision for the years of famine. Through that he was able to provide for the nation of Israel and the nation of Egypt. One of the reasons that he could do that was that he could see how God was doing that in his life. He was willing to surrender and submit to the way the Lord was leading, and his lot in life. He did not fight against it, as it were. Probably his outlook and submission was a little better than his father's. His father, on one occasion said, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me" (Genesis 42:36). Were they really against him? They were actually his salvation. They were actually provision for him. They actually provided for his need. He eventually took his family down there and provided for them very well.

Naomi is another example of that. She said, "I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty" (Ruth 1:21). Is that really what happened for

Naomi? Did she go out full and come back empty? Was she empty when she came back? She came back without her husband, and without her two sons, but she came back with Ruth. Ruth proved to be a blessing down to our generation today, and is continuing to be a blessing through her lineage. From Ruth, marrying Boaz, we have Obed, Jesse and David and Solomon. We have this finished down through to Jesus Christ Himself. All as a result of Ruth being brought back from the land of Moab by Naomi. Did she come back empty? Hardly could we call that coming back empty, could we? We see that is the way we tend to look. We tend to be unsubmitive to the things that are negative that seem to be working against us. We do not know whether at times God is using those difficult experiences to actually accomplish His good. We need to be ready to surrender to that, and be submissive to that if we want to recognize and be a part of that.

In Esther 4, we know what happened. The decree against the Jews to put them to death came from Haman and was signed by the king. Mordecai came to Esther and gave this message to Esther in verse 13, 14 “Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with

thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews. (14) For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” It was a call for Esther to surrender to her lot in life, and look at the opportunity that God was giving her, even though it was very difficult. What was Esther’s response in verse 16? “Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”

There was surrender and submission to divine providence. Here was an opportunity that she had. There was a possibility of doing something to save God’s people. Her life was at risk, but her conclusion, as she was willing to surrender to divine providence, was to say, “if I perish, I perish.” She was ready to take the steps to do that. That is a part also of recognizing divine providence. I do not think it was any question in her mind, until it was

all over, that God was using her and working through this experience for the good of His people. There was no question in her mind. She could see divine providence. One of the reasons she could see it was because she was submissive to the will of God.

May God help us as we consider this subject. May He help us to recognize His divine providence maybe a little sooner than what we sometimes do. May it help us to increase our faith in God and to appreciate what He has done for us. I would like to close with what the songwriter says, in Life Song #208.

“In some way or other  
The Lord will provide;  
It may not be my way,  
It may not be thy way,  
And yet in His own way  
The Lord will provide.

At some time or other  
The Lord will provide;  
It may not be my time,  
It may not be thy time,  
And yet in His own time  
The Lord will provide.

Despond then no longer,  
The Lord will provide;  
And this be the token —  
No word He hath spoken  
Was ever yet broken,  
The Lord will provide.

March on, then, right boldly;  
The sea shall divide;  
The pathway made glorious,  
With shoutings victorious,  
We’ll join in the chorus,  
The Lord will provide.

Recognizing divine providence.

## Scripture References

<b>Genesis</b>	<b>Joshua</b>	<b>Psalms</b>
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20:3                    201	<b>Judges</b>	135:5–8             197
20:4                    201	14:3, 4                    204	135:11                199
20:6                    201	<b>Ruth</b>	<b>Proverbs</b>
20:11                   201	1:21                        223	3:6                     211
22:7, 8                208	<b>2 Samuel</b>	21:1                    199
22:11, 12             208	11:27                      202	<b>Ecclesiastes</b>
22:13                   214	<b>1 Kings</b>	8:11                    202
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From a message by Dale Horst

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Blue Rock Mennonite Church

### The Subtle Sin of Cynicism

From a message by David G. Weaver

Sunday, September 17, 2006

Richland Mennonite Church

## FIFTY FUNDAMENTAL FACTS

### 50. **The righteous will spend eternity in the heaven of bliss and glory.**

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;” for this is but the beginning of an endless bliss in the realms of glory, in communion and fellowship with God and of saints and angels. Heaven is not only the goal of all true believers, but the climax and culmination of the Christian’s fondest hopes, and most cherished blessings. In the parable of the wheat and the tares our Saviour gives us this interpretation: “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast

them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:41-43). The “peculiar people, zealous of good works,” which Paul so graphically describes in Titus 2:11-14, constitute the heirs of glory who as the blood-washed throng in the realms of eternal light and glory will be singing together the song of Moses and the Lamb forever and ever. All this comes to the “monuments of God’s grace” who have accepted His tender mercies and loving kindness which impels them to say:

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

Praise Him, all creatures here  
below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly  
host,

Praise Father, Son, and Holy  
Ghost.”

### **Minister’s helps**

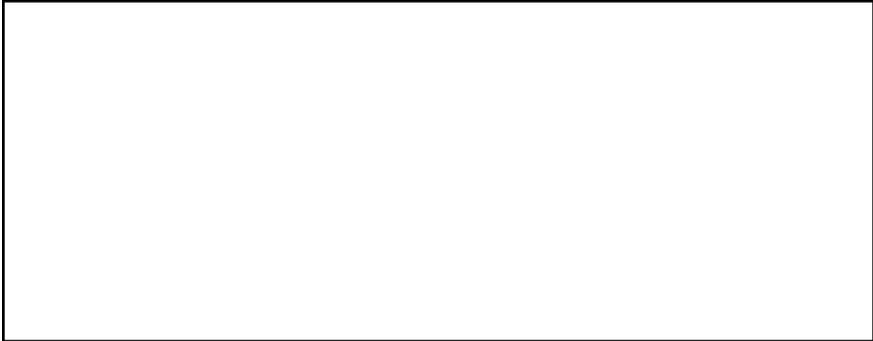
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- Value of Expository Preaching, The

### *Sermon Examples Using the Expository Approach*

- Cultivating Spiritual Vitality — 1 Peter 2



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