

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., JANUARY 1994

NO. 1

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

THE HOUSE OF GOD

**O Come into the house of God,
The temple of our Lord;
Thou pilgrim of the earthly sod
What joy, what peace afford.**

**"Tis here we come to worship him,
The author of our faith,
The finisher also to them -
His own, the Scripture saith.**

**Where two or three meet in my
name,
I'm in the midst of them;
So does his holy word proclaim,
And prayer is made to him.**

**The word of truth is sweet to hear,
The gospel sound is great:
On wings of glory, he'll appear;
His mercies is made to him.**

**His gracious, heavenly love we
crave
To save from shame of sin;
His holy, righteous life he gave
To blot the guilt we're in.**

**May we our hope in Christ defend
The sinner's race we run;
By faith we view our journey's end
Praise Father, praise the Son.**

By Charles B. Osborne

**See brother Osborne's
obituary this issue.**

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walked in darkness have seen a great light." This light is to be seen by his people, a promise of God through Isaiah, he being God's mouthpiece as all true prophets are of God. Let us think for a moment now, if God did not control all events in the future no prophet could declare with certainty events to come 771 years before they came to pass, could he?

Matthew chapter 1, verse 21; "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

This is the angel of the Lord speaking to Joseph in a dream.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Can we for any reason imagine anything so exact unless it be of God. A son born, it was sure to be born alive, a child born and as told by the angel she shall conceive, not a doubt about the conception was there? A child born unto us a son given, it had to be a son or else the prophet wasn't correct. Let's pause here, unto who was this son given, unto us, this us in every case is the Lord's people, people chosen in Christ before the world was, could be to no other and not to us, unto us. Born unto us for born in us the hope of glory. Farther on in Matthew and she shall bring forth a son, named Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins. He was sure to be conceived, Mary overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save His people from their sins.

Can we ever surmise that any of these events were more likely to happen than another or possibly they would not come to pass.

EDITORIAL



ELDER J.R. WILLIAMS

Isaiah 9th chapter, verse 6; ***"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government***

shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

"For unto us" meaning that in the preceding scriptures a promise is being made by Isaiah that in spite of all that has gone on before there is a change coming, ***"The people that***

A son sure to be born, sure to be called Jesus, sure to save his people from their sins. Notice his people, not the whole earth, sure to save from all danger or events that could take any until the appointed time of God for their departure. But to His people sure to save from their sins. From whose sins, their sins, no one elses, no one caused them to sin, their sins, we can't stress too strongly who they belong to.

Then is there not a reason for His name being called Wonderful. Truly a wonder, a mystery, one to take their sins in His body and die in their stead. Each convicted soul needs a Counselor, one to plead our case to the Father, He paid the price for their redemption. The mighty God, endowed with all the power of the Father, came to do the will of the Father, saying I came not to do my will but the will of the Father that sent me, and this is the will of the Father that sent me, of all that He has given me I have lost nothing, but will raise them up at the last day. As everlasting as the Father, I in the Father and the Father in me, Surely The everlasting Father.

None shall know of even peace, if they haven't been in conflict, as speaking of things in nature, or our world. Our world is the place we live, also the things that surround us. The Lord's people have been, are today and shall ever be in warfare, the flesh warring against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh, but thanks be to God He has given his people the victory. He has to be their prince of peace, for He has spoken peace into their souls. They no more fight with the powers of this world, but look to Him for their salvation. With

no end in praising, the end is in Him for we know He is the beginning and the end.

Elder J.R. Williams

CORRESPONDENCE

Elgin, Or. 97827
Dec. 6, 1993

Dear Elder Williams,



We once again have come to that time of year set aside by the religions of the world to remember the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and many exhibit in pompous ceremonious programs, preformed to excite the populace of this carnal world, giving little thought for lack of knowledge to this wondrous birth.

Some five years ago I received the enclosed letter from Elder Cleo Robertson wherein he expressed a view that I have nowhere seen in print nor heard from the pulpit and because this Dear Brother expressed it so sweetly and with such loving kindness I have kept this letter all these years and have re-read it many times.

Now, as I have found it so up-lifting to my poor soul, I am sending it to you to be published in the Signs if you see fit for there are many who will lift up their voices in thanksgiving for he has promised that where two or three are gathered in his name that he shall be in their midst.

In bonds of love,
Lloyd C. Spikes

February 28, 1989

Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Spikes
Post Office Box 357
Elgin, Oregon 97827

Dear Brother and Sister Spikes:

Although I have had a desire to write to you since receiving your letter of December 12, I seem not to have had the occasion to do so until now. I do want you to know how very much I enjoyed hearing from you. Your letter was very meaningful as I have attempted to speak on the subject of the birth of Christ and in the same light as you set it forth.

Matthew 1:18: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise." Mary was flesh, as you and I, and was of the earth earthy. She was a sinner and never reached perfection in this life in the flesh. The scripture says there is none righteous. There is none that doeth good; no, not one. Sin is a transgression of the law. It is all unrighteousness. And it is anything that is not of faith. Therefore, Mary was a sinner. Yet, God chose her to experience this wonderful and miraculous birth. She, indeed, was blessed. She was a virgin. She had not known a man and therefore, this birth could not be said to be by the works of the flesh or carnal man. Mary was overshadowed by the power of the Highest or by the Holy Spirit. This birth takes place in the hearts of his elect in exactly the same way. You are overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and Christ is born in you the Hope of Glory. Then, you experience the reality of Isaiah's prophecy,

"Unto you a child is born. Unto you a son is given." You, too, are a virgin in the sense that this birth was not by any works of men. Joseph could take no credit for this birth. He was not the father of Christ though the world thought so.

The shepherds abiding in the field were keeping watch over their flock by night. You will notice they were in the field, not many fields. It was night because Christ was not yet born; therefore, they were said to be abiding or waiting with patience. Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, and experience hope. They were a type of God's ministers. Though they were abiding in the field and keeping watch over the flock, yet it was night. They could not yet preach the gospel. Then, suddenly, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. The message given to them was "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Then, they were given a sign. They would find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. The sign was the revelation they experienced of Christ bound by the purposes and decrees of his father. He was under the law and obedient to it. No other way could he fulfill it for God is under no law nor subject to any law.

Swaddling clothes also indicate death. He was born of a woman though his father was God. He was without sin. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. He was delivered by the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God. No

man could take his life. He lay it down willingly. The ram that Abraham saw and that was the sacrifice instead of Isaac was a type of Christ. He was laid in a manger. No more appropriate place for our saviour. A manger is the place where food is put for the animals to feed. Christ said he was the bread of life. What more could the shepherds be given to preach: This was the gospel. They must experience this and therefore were led to this babe. They, then, made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. When the angel and a multitude of the heavenly host appeared unto the shepherds, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men was proclaimed. This was not for all of Adam's race, but only to those who experienced this marvelous birth. We only have to look at history and our present state of worldly affairs to know this proclamation was not to all mankind. Only those to whom this child is born ascribe all the honor and glory to God. Only they know and feel the glory of God as they experience this birth and feel their sins forgiven. We experience these feelings from time to time, but it seems only for a moment at the time. The peace proclaimed came with the birth of Christ and was for this earth that we dwell in. Christ said, "My peace I give unto you." Christ is our peace and only when this birth takes place, do we know his peace. His good will covered every heir of promise and therefore, not a one shall perish. Not one who experiences this birth can be plucked from his hand.

Now, there came wise men following a star to worship this child that was born. The bible does not say three wise men nor any other specific number. These men were made wise by the Holy Spirit. They were not following a star because of any carnal wisdom. The star was Christ, high and bright but revealed only to those wise in the wisdom of Christ. He was leading them to himself. They came bearing gifts. Not presents, but gifts. They came bearing those things which they had been given. Every heir of promise comes bearing faith, hope, and charity. When the wise men saw Christ, they could not go back the same way they came. They went a different way from that time forward.

We do not worship nor celebrate the date man has established as the birth of Christ as the world does. We rejoice in the birth of this glorious savior within us. This is a place that He prepared.

I did not mean to be so lengthy, but did desire to write you. The Lord willing, we are planning to visit you again the second weekend in August if this is agreeable. We have a few other people who want to go with us. I will let you know details later.

In bonds of love,
Elder Cleo Robertson

PSALM 27 : 1-2.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

November 7, 1993

My dear ones,

It's Sunday morning, first Sunday. I think of the meeting places where you are now assembled. I love to think of you. It would be very nice to meet with you but we are not all blessed alike. The dear Lord has blessed me very much all the days of my life. He blessed me when I knew it not and then He put in my heart, I do hope, a love for you, a desire to hear His holy name, and even, I trust, a love for Him. I was assembled with some of you last Sunday and Saturday in one of these meeting places. I yet eat that food that was given unto me. I hope many of you are able to go and meet with those of like precious faith.

And some of you have been unable to attend meetings for some time. May the dear Lord meet with you, may He bring your mind to Him, may He give you that soft heart from which love flows for Him and His people. How wonderful it is to think on this God of love who has all wisdom and power and gives us love for the brethren.

My mind has been drawn much to the texts I was blessed to hear expounded. First came Elder Campbell from Memphis to speak so softly and firmly from the 8th Chapter of Romans. I thought of Elder Plybon and how he used this text often - I remembered a sister saying how she loved to hear him speak of Romans, 8th Chapter. Elder Key came forward and spoke from Ephesians, 1st Chapter, reminding us, with love, that not only do we have the 8th Chapter of Romans but also the 1st Chapter of

Ephesians to testify of spiritual blessings. Elder Davis spoke from Acts, 13th Chapter and I believe 22nd verse. These visiting Elders came in love to see us and speak of the love of the dear Heavenly Father. Another text I remember is I Corinthians, 15th Chapter, which was used by one of our "home Elders." To this poor one the Heavenly Father blessed these brethren to speak and me to hear. May all praise be unto Him.

Brother Julian Williams I missed you at meeting and do hope your health has been strengthened and you are this day speaking to dear ones of spiritual blessings. We are a hungry people and the dear Lord has said, feed my sheep. You and Sister Mae have been in my thoughts much this week. Sister Susie Willis, I was sorry you were not at meeting and I thought you and Sister Mary Hedrick may enjoy seeing some of the texts we heard.

My attempt to tell you of the beauty and wonder of the blessings received is very poor indeed, yet, know ye that He who blesses shall never be any less rich with the giving of a multitude of blessings!

With love I hope,
Reidy Pickeral

Romans 15: 4-5.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

ARTICLES

EXCERPTS.

(From an article written by
Lawrence Keister, Scottsdale, Pa.)



ur first topic is the minister under criticism - nothing new - nothing idealistic - nothing that can be avoided.

Criticism seems to be inevitable. It comes without invitation, and must be met in some way. A minister has enough to do without having this additional burden. Surely he deserves the support of all who pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

Any active minister is almost sure to suffer persecution and feel the effects of criticism, sometimes friendly and just, sometimes false and unfounded. Only a few friends will be kind enough to tell him his faults without telling anyone else. Ill will is sure to express itself, and now and then a minister is singled out as an object of dislike. Something he says or does is misinterpreted or he may be charged with words and deeds of which he has no thought.

Of course a minister expects the opposition of worldly minded people. Our Lord foretold this fact, but, strange to say, He offered it as one ground of happiness. "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake."

There are three ways to meet criticism: ignore it, resent it, or bear it and

profit by it. The Christian must be Christian under all circumstances.

No minister can afford to devote his time and energy to self-vindication. A good man will have his defenders as well as his accusers and though the latter may be vociferous the former will be victorious. God is on the side of right and God and one man have often been a majority. (Examples: Jonah, Daniel and others.)

"Blessed are ye," are the Lord's words to courageous Christians. The faithful words of a minister are committed to the care of Providence, for God's word never returns to Him void; but prospers in the thing whereunto He sent it.

(True), Religion asks no outside aids. It meets every need and hence Jesus says, "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.

Paul makes the sweeping assertion, "Ye are more than conquerors through Him who hath loved you."

A wise minister perseveres under persecution, but seldom seeks or prays for popularity. Paul said, "We preach not ourselves but Christ the Lord." The Christian should seek glory at the proper place. "How can ye believe," says Jesus, "who receive glory one of another and the glory that cometh from the only (true) God ye seek not." "Glorify Thy Son," is the prayer of our Lord. He was dishonored on earth, He is to be honored, also. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. "He shall glorify me for He shall take of mine and declare it unto you." The prayer and answer have meaning for every one who knows, (by faith) "That the Son was dead; but is alive forevermore."

Paul summarized our religion as it is recorded in personal experience. "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren; and whom He foreordained, them He also called, and whom He called them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

"If believers are not yet glorified the Head already is," he says, "and they are virtually so in Him." Each successive grace is, as it were, implied in the preceding and so we conclude that the glorifying of the Christian is not all left to the future."

"We have been raised up together with Christ," says Paul, "and made to sit together (with Him) in heavenly places. We are (thus) directly related to the risen and ascended Christ, the Christ who promises to be in the midst when two or three are gathered, or assembled in His name. The Christ who is manifested through the Spirit and who is exalted above all authority and every name that is named." "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

No wise minister prays for popularity because there is something better, something more enduring, more to be desired. Applause dies away; but the Crown of Life endures because it is the gift of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 13: 13.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

VOICES OF THE PAST

"O wretched man that I am!" - Romans vii. 24.

Now, these feelings which this Apostle groaned under are experienced by all the quickened family. Blessed then be the name of God most High, that he inspired him to trace out and leave upon record his experience, that we might derive comfort and relief from it. What should we otherwise have thought? We should have reasoned thus: 'Here is an apostle perfectly holy, perpetually heavenly-minded, having nothing but the image of Christ in him, continually living to the Lord's glory, and unceasingly enjoying communion with him!' We should have viewed him as a perfect saint, if he had not told us what he was; and then, having viewed him as a perfect saint, we should have turned our desponding eyes into our own bosom, and seen such an awful contrast, that we should despair of ever being saved at all! But seeing the soul conflict which the Apostle passed through, and feeling a measure of the same in our own bosom, it encourages, supports, and leads the soul on to believe that this is the way in which the saints are called to travel, however rough, rugged, and perplexing it may be to them.

Be assured, then, if you have never cried out from the depths of your soul, "O wretched man that I am!" you are dead in sin, or dead in a profession. If internal guilt, misery, and condemna-

tion never forced that cry from your bosom, depend upon it, the life and power of God is not in your soul. But if there has been, and still is, from time to time, this cry in your breast, forced out of it by the pressure of sin and guilt, you have a testimony that the same Lord who taught Paul is teaching you.

J.C. Philpot

EPHESIANS 6: 14-17.

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;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

DEAR BRETHREN:

By request I will try to write an account of my experience and call to the ministry.

First, I will speak of my nationality: on my father's side I am Irish, and on my mother's side Dutch, but both of my parents were American born, and I was their fourth child. At the age of ten years, it pleased God to take my mother away from me, to her long home, and although it was forty-two years ago, I have never forgotten her kind words and christian like looks. The night she died she called us children to her

bedside and bid us farewell. It seemed to me that my best friend on earth was gone; I can never describe my feelings. I had no mother to speak to, and O, how lonely I felt, yet I thought my mother had gone to rest.

Now while feeling so serious about the death of my mother, I resolved that I would try to live the life of a christian, so I set about it with all my might; I would slip off from the other children and try to pray to God to fit and prepare me for heaven, so that when I died I would meet my mother there, and after a few weeks I thought that I was getting to be a pretty good boy. Then I thought that I would try to save my sisters that were older than I was. I approached them upon the subject of religion, and told them that they must quit their laughing and joking one another so much, and quit all their bad habits, and that I had done so, and that I felt a heap better. What a poor, deceived mortal I was, not knowing that I must have the life of Christ before I could live as a christian. But as young as I was, by my natural notions I was a complete Arminian. As time passed on my sorrow and care wore away. Now mark, it was not a godly sorrow which worketh repentance. Now I concluded that I would just lay my religion aside, and that I was too young to undertake to live such a particular life, and that it would be an easy matter to get religion again. I thought that a few prayers, and some good resolutions would put me in good shape again.

At the age of twenty, I was married to my first wife. During her life we were attending a meeting which was going

on in the neighborhood held by the Missionary Baptists, and I was enjoying myself finely, playing pranks with the young fellows, and having a good time, as I called it. But one day, right in the midst of my sport, a fear took hold upon me which made me tremble, it appeared to me that hell was my doom, I slipped to the side of my wife and told her that I was going home. She said, "Wait till meeting closes." When we got started for home she asked me what was the matter? I told her that I could not tell her, but that I felt that I was going to die, and that hell, was my portion; I had sinned away the day of grace. This was the first time in my life that I ever felt to be a sinner in the sight of God. I was here in a sin-cursed world, without God, or any well grounded hope after death. I thought, "O, that I had died when I was young, then this trouble would have never been on me."

Like many others, I fled then to the law, thinking to obtain righteousness by it, and feeling that I must work a work which would initiate me into God's favor. I would slip away into some secret place, where I thought no one would see me, and there would try to pour out my soul in prayer to God for mercy. For four long years I labored to do right in order to be saved. I lived in a neighborhood where they were principally Missionary Baptists, and they invited me to attend their meetings, and I did so; they preached the do and live system. So, with her fair speeches and enticing words, I went the way to her house not knowing the dead was there. I went to their social meetings, and they would tell how well they were getting along,

and how determined they were to make heaven their home. O, how I wished that I could feel as they claimed to feel, but instead, I felt that I was a poor sinner, and with every effort I made, I only got worse.

About this time my wife was taken sick and died, and I was left with two little children. She left a bright evidence of her acceptance with the Lord. About twelve months after, I was married again. I was now laboring hard, clearing up my land, and nights I would read my Bible, searching for comfort to my troubled soul. In my wife's sickness I had gotten in debt, and had sold the only horse that I had, so that season I was compelled to carry everything that we had to eat on my back, a distance of seven miles. One morning I started to go after some provisions; I had to go through the wood some two miles, and as I was walking along it appeared to me that I was the greatest sinner that had ever lived on the earth, and that I was bound for torment, which would only be just. In a moment a feeling took hold upon me so that I could stand upon my feet no longer, and

While prostrate on the ground I lay,

*Not knowing help was near me,
A heavenly whisper seemed to say,*

"Poor sinner I have saved thee."

I sprang to my feet feeling that God for Christ's sake had forgiven my sins; I praised my blessed Lord aloud; it seemed that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he had perfected praise.

Here I saw the church of Jesus Christ saved and complete in him, and washed with the washing of regeneration. The time had come when I could say, He hath taken my feet out of the miry clay, and hath placed them on a rock, and put a new song in my mouth, even praise to my God. It seemed to me that even the twigs on the trees were wafting their praises to God. After some time I went on my journey to secure my provisions. I hurried home so that I could tell my wife that my burden of sin was gone, and when I got to the door my little children met me, and then my wife came, and I began to tell her what great things the Lord had done for me, whereof I was glad. I went about my work feeling that I would have no more trouble. The next morning, however, I was in the yard cutting wood, when all at once, darkness seemed to shut me in. O, what oppressed feelings I had; I thought that I had grasped the shadow, and missed the substance. I stood there for a while with my head down studying about the peace which I had felt the day before. Just then a voice seemed to say to me, You must cry. I said, Lord, what shall I cry? The voice said, Cry unto Jerusalem. All at once light took place of the darkness. I began talking and crying. My wife and little children came to where I was. She wanted to know what was the matter with me. I told her the Spirit of the Lord was upon me, and that I could not help talking. She said, "You are going crazy, come and go with me to the house." Here was my first impression with regard to preaching. Now I tried to beg the Lord to put this on some one else, for I could not preach.

I was slow of speech, and of a stammering tongue, and had no learning. Then the inward voice would say, I have made your mouth, and I can fill it.

I then thought I would let no one know anything about my impression to preach, but it was forcibly pressed upon my mind, day and night, that I must preach. My Missionary friends soon found out that I had professed a hope, and that I was in opposition to them, that now I believed salvation was wholly of the Lord from first to last. They would gather up by the road, and wait for me, to attack me about my dangerous doctrine of election and predestination. They would say that Christ was the elect, and no one else. I would ask them if they believed that he was the head of the church? and they would confess that he was. "Well," I would say, "if the head is elect, is not the body equally so, with him? Can they be separated?" The Lord says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." His life is their life, and their life is hid with Christ in God.

Now I wanted to hear the people preach that I had once despised and hated; they were the old order of Baptists, but there were none in my neighborhood; I mean no members of the church. One man who lived about a mile from me was contending for that doctrine, his name was Melton, he was a son of Elder William Melton. I went often to his house to hear him talk, and he was much comfort to me.

The time of the Hopewell church meeting was the First Sunday in each month, and the Saturday before. I had by this time bought me a horse, and on Sunday I started to the meeting, a

distance of ten miles. On my way I had to go by Elder Melton's. He with his wife came to the road, just as I came up, and we went together. We had not gone far when Mrs. Melton asked me where I was going? I thought that she mistrusted something, but told her that I was going to the meeting. Elder Melton took for his text that day the words, "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities." O, how I was carried away in my feelings, and I went home rejoicing.

The next spring, brother Melton preached for a few members that lived at Melton Creek; I went, and at the close of his sermon he said, "O that it would please God to call some young blue eyed person to the ministry, as I am old, and feel that my time is about out." It appeared to me that he knew about my feelings, and I wondered why this was, as I had never told any one my feelings with regard to preaching. I went to dinner with a cousin who was a member of the church, and after dinner we were sitting talking of our hope in Christ, when his wife came in and joined in the conversation with us. All at once she turned to me and said, "Well, I think that the old man got close to you today." My blood almost run cold, I knew that I had never said anything about my impressions to any one, and wondered why she singled me out. It appeared to me that she and my cousin knew my feelings, so I soon started for home, feeling that I would wear that impression out.

One night I dreamed that I was standing in the presence of a great congregation. All at once a man came to me and handed me a chain and an ax. I

thought he was the loveliest person that I ever saw. I thought he said the chain is the gospel chain, and that the ax was to score to the line, no matter where the chips may fly. After this I felt impressed to go to the church and follow my blessed Lord down into the liquid grave, if the church could fellowship me; yet I felt too unworthy to be with them. I believed that the Primitive Baptists were the church of God, yet I stayed away eight years on account of my impression about having to preach. I thought in this way to wear out the impression, but finally I was made willing to go, and to relate a part of what I have here written, and was received, and baptized by Elder Wm. L. Melton. Now, I thought, perhaps this impression would leave me, but it was not so; the impression still remained. With Charley Melton, a son of the minister, I was on my way to the Friendship church to the meeting, when I concluded to tell him my troubles about this matter. I had the utmost confidence that he was as sound in doctrine as any Baptist that I ever knew. We had been together more or less all our lives. I said to him, "I have something that I want to tell you." He said, "Well, tell it, I want to hear it; they all know it, it is not hidden from the church." As I began to tell him my feelings, he burst into a flood of tears, and said, "You ought to confess it to the church, and not confer with flesh and blood." He asked me if I had ever said anything to his father about it? I replied that I had not. We both went on our way crying. He had a rich experience, though he never went to the church. Shortly after this he was killed.

I went to brother Melton's, and unboomed myself to him. He said that he would attend to the matter at the next meeting. So he called the church together after preaching, and then told me to relate my call to the church. I did so, and they gave me license to exercise my gift in the bounds of the Pocatatico Association. This was done at the December meeting, and the next January I was ordained, and I have been trying to preach ever since. I travel over six or seven counties every season, and preach with the liberty that God gives me. I am now fifty-three years of age, and my health is not good. I often start away a distance of thirty or forty miles, leaving my wife and daughter by themselves. I have a feeling I cannot express; the call says, Go, while my mind says, Stay. I love to meet the dear children of God, and hear them tell what the blessed Lord has done for their souls. I love the doctrine of salvation by grace, and grace alone. It was grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.

From your brother,
J.W. McLanahan

HEBREWS 13 : 5-6.

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.



or the benefit of our readers we will quote the second and third of the seventh chapter of Romans: "*For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 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.*"

While we are convinced that this concerns chiefly the church and her glorious Head, we, at the same time, are satisfied that it has a literal application, and we will first consider our subject from the latter angle. We cannot condemn too strongly loose living on the part of members of an Old School Baptist Church. The people of God are referred to in the Scriptures as being the "*salt of the earth*", but the Savior said, "*If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men.*" - Matt. 5:13. This matter was of sufficient importance for Jesus to give forthwith another simile, which he did by saying, "*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick: and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,*

and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” - Matt. 5: 14-16. Of all people on the face of the earth, Old Baptists should live honorable and circumspect lives, in every sense of the word, so far as it is humanly possible to do. The marriage relationship is unquestionably the most sacred of all earthly relationships and it should be kept inviolate. Human beings, however, are weak, and from time to time situations arise which definitely call for relief. A careful reading of the fifth chapter of first Corinthians will show clearly what we mean. The Corinthians were apparently as incestuous as any people could possibly be, and the apostle shows conclusively that some of the things which they were guilty of were not to be condoned by the church. He urged them to **“purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.”** He says, **“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators; yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” - Cor. 5:9-13.** Jesus

said, **“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” - Matt. 19:9.** Certainly, no one could ask for any higher authority on this or any other matter than the Head of the church, but we have heard the point raised that Jesus was here addressing the Pharisees, and not his disciples. The very next verse, however, shows conclusively that his disciples were present and continued the discussion with him. Neither does the language used by Jesus permit of any discrimination, for he said, **“Whosoever shall put away his wife.”** etc. If this does not cover the entire field, we do not know what manner of speech he could have used that would. If we turn to Matthew 5:32, where Jesus was addressing his disciples only, and no one else, we find in substance the very same language. He said to his disciples, **“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 comitteth adultery.”** Dr John Gill, of England, regarded by some as the most outstanding commentator of all time, places a comma after the word “divorced” in the above quotation, which to our mind clarifies the meaning somewhat. Whether we so divide it or not, the meaning is, unquestionably, that whosoever shall marry her that is put away, or divorced, saving for any other cause than that stated, which is fornication,

committeth adultery. The gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) did not always use the same language in quoting the Savior, and with reference to this matter we find that Mark only says, "***Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.***" - ***Mark 10: 11-12.*** On this occasion Jesus had also been addressing the Pharisees, but his disciples, "***in the house***", the record reads, "***Asked him again of the same matter.***" We find another instance of the gospel writers not agreeing exactly: in the case of the two thieves which were crucified with Jesus. In Matthew 27:44, it says, "***The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.***" In Mark 15:32, the record is, "***Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.***" In Luke 23:39-40, we find a different account. It says, "***And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we received the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.***" We believe that all accounts were true and correct: that in the beginning, both railed on him until there was a change

of heart in one, when he confessed his guilt and declared that Jesus had done nothing amiss. With regard to the divorce and remarriage question there are two statements by Matthew having the same meaning, according to our interpretation, while Mark did not quote Jesus as fully as Matthew did. If Jesus said more on one occasion than he did on another, or was more fully quoted by one than another, we are certainly justified in accepting the full and complete statement in preference to the one where he did not dwell upon the subject at the same length, or where he was quoted only in part. May we ask that our readers examine for themselves very carefully both Matthew 5:32, and 19:9, and see if they do not mean the same thing. According to our understanding, then this is the one and only Bible ground upon which a man can put away his wife and marry again without committing adultery. The sin of fornication, in our mind, is a sin unto death. If the law of the land was built upon and confined to this principle there would be far fewer divorces in the country. The laws of many states are unquestionably too loosely drawn in this respect, and while divorces may be granted on various and sundry grounds, leaving the parties free to marry again under such laws, the Lord's people are under a higher law than that of the land, and they should obey God rather than man. We repeat that the only ground which we believe warrants a man putting away his wife, or the wife her husband, is that of fornication. Nothing else, however grievous and hard to be borne, is justified by the Scriptures, in

our opinion. Where there is guilt for this cause, the innocent party can have the marriage tie annulled and be free to marry again, without being guilty of adultery. We cannot conceive of a more horrible existence than for a virtuous woman to be tied to a licentious husband, who persists in living a lewd life with another woman, or vice versa. Under the law such an one was actually stoned, or put to death, according to Leviticus 20:10, which reads as follows: ***“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”*** If this was carried out to the letter under the gospel, and the guilty ones were literally put to death, there could be no question as to the right of the innocent, living survivor, whether husband or wife, being free to marry again. In the gospel church, however, they are not actually put to death corporally, but such a sin is deserving of death, or separation, and if the guilty party is put away and accounted dead by the innocent party and the church, the latter is freed from the former and at liberty to marry again without committing adultery.

In our text, the apostle undoubtedly had under consideration mainly Christ and his church. He said, ***“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?”*** He then went on to show that the woman is only bound to the law of her husband so long as he

liveth, but that if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, and is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Paul was writing to the gospel church at Rome, which was composed of both Jews and Gentiles, and he would have them (the Jews especially) understand that Moses, who typified the law, was dead; that all of the obligations of the church to the law had been met and satisfied by Christ, and that henceforth she owed all of her allegiance to him. When Jesus talked with the woman of Samaria at Jacob’s well, he had a definite purpose in saying to her, ***“Go, call thy husband, and come hither.”*** She answered, and said, ***“I have no husband.”*** Jesus then said to her, ***“Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.”*** - ***John 4: 16-18.*** Here is an illustration, in part at least, of what we have heretofore tried to set forth. He whom she then had was evidently still alive corporally, but there is also a sense in which he was evidently dead to her, else Jesus would not have said to her he ***“is not thy husband.”*** Her five husbands no doubt represented the five books of the law; or the fullness thereof, but she had now reached the place where she could no longer receive any comfort or draw any consolation from the law, and being dead to the law, she was a fit subject of gospel address and was free to be married to another, even Christ. The apostle emphasized this in the verse next following our text, by saying, ***“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 who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

The Scripture is a thorough furnisher unto God's children as to how they should live in this evil world. There is nothing wrong with the Scripture, but the difficulty is the inability of the creature to measure up to the standard set. It is in this very chapter that Paul stresses the weakness of the flesh. He says, ***"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do."*** He further enlarges upon this by saying, ***"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."*** - Rom. 7: 21-25. How corrupt and loathsome, indeed, is ***"the body of this death."*** Well did the apostle ask, who shall deliver us

from it, and he gave the only possible answer to the question by pointing out our escape through our Lord Jesus Christ. How diligent we should be then in all things pertaining to the cause of our Lord, ***"who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our words, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."*** There is a grave responsibility devolving upon those who have separated themselves from the world by uniting with the true church. How extremely careful, then, they should be to avoid even the appearance of evil and to refrain from spiritual adultery of all kinds, by not affiliating with or partaking of the things of Mystery Babylon. Of one thing we are definitely sure and certain, and that is if they are kept from such things, it will be by the grace of God, and not of themselves, lest any man should boast. It is only through the Spirit that we can mortify the deeds of the body. John wrote, ***"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."*** - 1 John 2:1. What a wonderful gospel is that which we have to proclaim, declaring as it does that the vilest of the vile may come and find forgiveness with God, by and through our Savior, Jesus Christ, and though one may so live as to be deprived of the love and fellowship of the church here in this wicked world, yet our heavenly

Husband is merciful and faithful and will not put away his bride in eternity.

Submitted in love for the consideration of the household of faith.

Elder R.L. Dodson

ST JOHN 18: 7-9.

Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

WHY DO CHILDREN OF GOD SUFFER?

January, 1947

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." 2 Tim. 2:12



Elder E. J. Lambert

Experiences related by God's children in this age that suffering is yet common. They are all experimentally acquainted with grief, temptations, persecutions, tribulations and all manner of suffering. Job was afflicted in body and had all earthly possessions taken from him. All the Israelites suffered under Egyptian bondage. David was sorely oppressed and

conscious of his great sins. Paul was beaten with many stripes and was made to exclaim, "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" Yes, this suffering is necessary, but why?

We do not suffer in order to merit a home in heaven, because Jesus fulfilled the law to a jot and tittle for us. Therefore, it is solely upon His merits that we shall inhabit that place prepared for His saints in after life. He has merited our salvation in heaven by His obedience.

We do not suffer in order to merit blessings in time for these were included in the "*all things that pertain unto life and godliness*" that was given to us by the Father through merits of Jesus. These blessings that we enjoy in time are not merited by us as Paul says, "*By grace are ye saved (in time) through faith; and that (faith) not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast.*"

We do not suffer to satisfy justice; nor to merit any blessing in time; nor to gain a home in heaven. We suffer because it was appointed unto us to suffer; God appointed to us this suffering just as He appointed Paul to suffer as an apostle, a preacher and teacher of the Gentiles (1 Tim. 1:11, 12). In 1st Thessalonians 3:3 we read, "*That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.*" So then, this suffering comes by the appointment of God. It was also appointed unto Jesus to suffer and as it was necessary for Him to have suffered so it is necessary

that we suffer. Paul reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered (Acts 17:3). It was not only necessary that Jesus suffer because of our sins, but it was also necessary in order to learn obedience. Paul wrote to the Hebrews concerning Jesus, **"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered"** (Heb. 5:8). So Jesus was taught obedience through suffering. We learn obedience by the things we suffer.

Paul told the Philippian brethren, **"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake"** (Phil. 2:29). Even the suffering of God's children is a gift. It is a valuable gift for it teaches obedience. We are made obedient through suffering. Paul did not preach the gospel for filthy lucre's sake nor for any glory for He said, **"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"** (1 Cor. 9:16). The sufferings that Paul experienced drove him to obedience. God is a perfect Teacher and will make His children obedient as it is said in Psalms 110:3, **"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."**

How could we have believed that Jesus was the Christ had we never suffered? It took the suffering of trials, heartaches, disappointments, vexation of our natural spirits, and failures in all our undertakings to teach us that we were not capable of saving ourselves

and to make us to cry to some power other than ourselves to save us. Thus, by this suffering God taught us faith. How could we believe in an all-wise sovereign God had we not suffered so many disappointments to teach us that we are at best but vanity and foolish, and to teach us that **"It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"**? By these experiences God teaches us that there is a power that is sovereign and worketh all things after the counsel of His own will and no power is able to withstand Him.

It takes the sufferings that we experience to teach us daily that we are nothing - yea, less than nothing and vanity. This suffering is necessary to keep us humble and dependent upon the grace of God. This suffering makes us to be constant in prayer to the God of Israel for His mercies. We cry unto Him daily for His continued mercies, realizing that we do not merit anything but His hot wrath. If justice were meted out to us according to that we deserve, hell would be our doom.

Now we are comforted with this thought, **"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."** Oh, blessed thought! Paul reckoned in his letter to the Roman brethren, **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"** (Rom. 8:18). Now we experience sufferings; then, we shall experience glory. Now we experience death; then, we shall experience life. Now we experience sin; then, we shall experience holiness. Now we experience foolishness; then, we shall

experience holiness. Now we experience hope; then, we shall experience reality.

No other people suffer as the children of God suffer. No other people has experienced that pure heart that teaches that the best of man's righteousness is but filthy rags in God's sight. No other people are convinced that without Him we can do nothing. Other people conclude that they have some power vested in them upon the volition of their own will. They think that they can, at least, accept or reject. We would be of the same opinion were it not for the sufferings that we experience that teaches us otherwise. This lesson is learned through suffering. May God be praised for blessing us with suffering to keep us humble and submissive to His will and at each other's feet.

Elder E.J. Lambert

MEETINGS

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The next session of the Staunton River Union will be held with Springfield Church, the Lord willing, the 5th Sunday and Saturday before in January 29th and 30th, 1994.

We invite all our ministers, brethren and friends to come and be with us.

Oscar D. Pickral, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

A Friend, VA	\$7.00
Eld. Marvin Brumfield, VA	2.00
Mrs. Charity Dowdy, NC	2.00
Eld. Joe Sawyer, NC	7.00
Mrs. Sylvia Conner, VA	2.00
Wilton L. Sutphin, VA	2.00
Mrs. Betty D. Southard, NC	2.00
Aubrey Oakes, VA	7.00
Ms. Valsie Akers, VA	2.00
Mrs. Woodrow Blankenship, VA	2.00
Mrs. Nannie Trevathan, NC	2.00
Mrs. Julia R. Garner, NC	2.00
W.H. Norman, NC	7.00
Casey Johnson, NC	2.00
Mrs. Kelly Watson, NC	2.00
Billy Poindexter, VA	7.00
Mrs. Rachel J. Green, WV	2.00
Mrs. Glenn Savage, KY	10.00
Mrs. Grace Locke, KY	
In memory Warnard Locke	5.00
A Friend, VA	
In memory of former Pastors ...	25.00
Bro. & Sister Osborne, MD	2.00
Russ Erbough, IL	50.00
Mrs. Mabel Hedrick, VA	2.00
Mrs. Ruby T. Gusler, VA	2.00
Mrs. Norma Smith, VA	2.00
Charles F. Pratt, Sr., NC	2.00
Guy J. Holley, VA	2.00
Mrs. Geneva Pettie, LA	2.00
Charlie Johnston, VA	2.00

We acknowledge a sizeable gift from the estate of Elder Ben Preston. See his obituary this issue.

OBITUARIES

WILLIAM A. GRAY

Mr. William A. Gray 83 passed away Sunday the 29th of December 1991. Funeral service Tuesday at 2 p.m. in Wilkerson Funeral Home Chapel. Burial in Winterville Cemetery. He was a native of Pitt County and grew up in Winterville. He lived in Farmville, N.C. for 31 years and in Greenville, N.C. for the past 21 years. He was a retired farmer and a member of Handcocks Primitive Baptist Church.

Surviving his wife Susie L. Gray, daughters Clarice G. Riggins and Sue Gray Stoneham both of Greenville, N.C., one son L. Gene Gray of Morehead City, brother Brunis Gray of Texas, sisters Ruth Flake, Bessie G. Gray and Joan Crawford all of Winterville, N.C. Ruby Gray of Goldsboro, N.C., Gladys G. Gray Nichols of Bell Arthor, 4 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

I hope you can read this I am 84 years old and I had not seen my husband's obituary in the Signs. Please print this in the Signs of the Times if you can read it.

Susie L. Gray
2482 Stantonburg Rd.
Greenville, N.C. 27834

CHARLES B. OSBORNE
May 24, 1901 - March 11, 1993

HAZEL OWEN OSBORNE
February 4, 1905 - April 19, 1993

To depart and to be with Christ is far better, and to die is gain; nevertheless, we that abide in the flesh hold in sweet remembrance the departed and we miss the sweet countenances of our elder brother and sister, their hospitality, love, fellowship and wise counsel.

Charles and Hazel observed their 54th wedding anniversary in 1992 having married August 23, 1938. They were remote cousins having a common ancestor in Capt. Enoch Osborne who commanded a frontier New River fort on the Virginia-Carolina border and a company of mountaineers that fought at Guilford courthouse during the Revolution. Survivors of this marriage are sons John D. and Donald L. of Quarryville, Pa. and daughter Ruth Ellen, wife of Donald McCullough of Peach Bottom, Pa., seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren all in Lancaster County, Pa.

Brother Charles was born in the Idlewild area of Ashe County, NC on May 24, 1901, the son of Isom and Rosa Miller Osborne. After extensive medical support and confinement as an invalid, in the providence of God death came March 11, 1993 at the onset of the blizzard of '93. Sister Hazel was born in White Top, Grayson County, Va. on February 4, 1905, the daughter of Arthur and Nancy Osborne Owen. Weakened by the stress of 24-

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 1 / 94
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.**

hour care of her beloved husband (with the help of her children, grandchildren and visiting nurses) Sister Hazel suffered injuries as a passenger in an automobile accident while visiting her sister. Recovery seemed apparent, but God's purpose differed and faithful Sister Hazel was called to join her husband in death on April 19, 1993 (just five weeks later) at the Fallston General Hospital, Fallston, Md.

Brother Charles and Sister Hazel have joined the Lord's humble poor to sleep in Jesus until He appears on wings of glory at the resurrection morning. At their personal requests, funeral services on March 16 and April 23 were conducted by Elder Raymond L. Goad of Gretna, Va. The services were well attended by friends, relatives and neighbors of several religious denominations indicating an humble walk and a good report from without the Baptist communion.

Charles and Hazel now rest from the pains and trials of this life and sleep side-by-side in the Rock Springs Old School Baptist Church Cemetery, U.S. Route 222, PA-MD line, having lived with that precious hope that anchors the soul.

Surviving Brother Charles are three brothers: Vaughn W. of Rising Sun, MD; Bliss Enoch of El Paso, TEX.; and Eugene F. of Westminster, MD; and two sisters, Brucie, wife of Wm. Teal, and Barbara Grace, both of Nottingham, PA.

Surviving Sister Hazel are a brother, Cody Owen of Kettering, Ohio and six sisters: Sybil Kilby and Alma White, both of Marion, VA; Margaret, wife of

Herbert Jones, Forest Hill, MD; Blanche, wife of Herbert Francis, Crumpler, NC; Ruth, wife of G.H. Cornett, Jr., Mouth of Wilson, VA; and Faye, wife of Charles Fluty of McDermott, Ohio.

Charles joined the Rock Springs P.B. Church of the Delaware Assn. He was baptized July 24, 1932 and was ordained Deacon, Sept. 24, 1933. Charles was firm in his convictions and beliefs in the Old School Baptist persuasion. He stood for unity and peace among the brethren, for like minds and the faith that was once delivered to the saints. He was concerned that the word of truth be rightly divided. He had compassion for sinners, but opposed popery in all its forms while standing for orderly practice within and among the churches and associations. He opposed those who would sow disorder among the brethren and churches heaping unto themselves the vanity of pre-eminence before men. During his long membership, absent the blessings of material wealth and formal education, he faithfully lived as a servant of the church and denomination in keeping records and maintenance of the cemetery and meeting house. He served as a trustee and officer of the Primitive Baptist Home and its successor - Old School Baptist Aid Assn. During his final years he felt forsaken by some of his brethren who chose to follow disorderly men causing divisions.

Being sanctified in her marriage to Charles, for many years Hazel faithfully attended the church. With such as the Lord provided she maintained a good home where travelers from near and far were welcomed with hospital-

ity, food and lodging. She was moved to confess Christ as her Saviour in 1984, was baptized and became a member of the Rock Springs Church. In our visits to their home, we always observed a manifestation of mutual respect and love from their children and grandchildren who I believe will long cherish memories of their grandparents.

During the final years as his flesh weakened Brother Charles composed poems which were set to music by Sister Connie Page and the late Sister Irene Setliff of Dan River Church, NC.

They have fought the good fight, they have endeavored to keep the faith.

Eugene F. Osborne, Sr.

PSALM 104: 33-34.

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.

ELDER BENJAMIN F. PRESTON



lder Benjamin F. Preston was born Nov. 29, 1911 at Madras, Oregon to Benjamin F. Preston, Sr. and Nancy Jane (Lee) Preston.

Elder Preston's Father passed away when young Benjamin was only five years old and his Mother moved to the Portland, Oregon area where she struggled to provide for her five small children. At that time and place Elder Samuel B. Moffitt served the Church as Pastor that young Ben was privileged

to attend and he grew to young manhood loving the doctrine of Salvation by Grace.

After being honorably discharged from the Army where he served during World War 2 worked as a surveyor for the State of Oregon Highway Dept. until his retirement.

Elder Preston asked for a home and was baptized in the Grande Ronde River at Elgin, Oregon on Aug. 25, 1968 by the late Elder David V. Spangler who made several trips to the Northwest to visit among the brethren.

God's gift to him as a speaker and expounder of the gospel was soon recognized by the brethren so he was called upon by the late Elder Ernest J. Attebery to help conduct the meetings as Elder Attebery's health was deteriorating and the burden of serving four widely scattered Churches was taxing his strength.

On Aug. 12, 1972 Pleasant Grove Church of Yakima, Wa. called for his ordination, a presbytery was formed and the charge was delivered by Elder D.V. Spangler. After that time Elder Preston was called to the pastoral care of three Churches that he faithfully served until his death Dec. 8, 1991. The location of these Churches required for him to give of his time in travel for they were all in excess of 100 miles from his home in The Dalles, Oregon.

In addition to his brethren and friends he leaves to mourn his sisters: Mrs. Margaret William and her husband Harold of Arizona, Mrs. Minnie Cunningham and her husband Ray of Portland, Or., nephews Charles

Cunningham of Portland, Or., Ralph and Larry Nelson of California, nieces Juanita Claflin of California and Shirley Reynolds of Portland, Or. Besides his parents he was preceded in death by his sisters Hester Dawson and Miss Jessie Preston.

Elder Preston's greatest love was in serving the Lord's people and on every occasion preached Jesus Christ and him crucified.

His funeral was conducted by Norman Wells of Grace Baptist Church The Dalles, Or. and was laid to rest in Mt. Jefferson Memorial Park Cemetery Madras, Or.

This notice is submitted in loving memory for publication in the Signs of the Times at the request of his family.

Lloyd C. Spikes

BROTHER FRED R. SIMPSON

Brother Fred R. Simpson was born June 15, 1907 in Iliiff, Colo. He moved with his family at an early age to Naches, Washington where he grew up and attended school.

Being a lover of nature he worked in the forests of central Washington for many years before being employed by Boise Cascade Corp'n. in Yakima, Wn. where he remained until his retirement in 1974.

He was united in marriage to Mildred (Dorn) Simpson who survives him together with two sons Fred O. and Jim D. Simpson both of Naches Wn., one daughter Eanne Blalock of Issaquah, Wn., and one sister Violet Rader of

Naches, Wn. Brother Simpson was preceded in death by one daughter Rosanne Alice Lindgren.

Elder Ernest J. Attebery told this writer, that when Brother Simpson first started coming to Church that they met in a home to hold services and that Brother Simpson would bring his wife (Sister Mildred) but would retire to an adjoining room while services were being conducted. After a period of time Elder Attebery said that Brother Simpson started moving his chair closer and closer to the door of the room in which services were conducted and before many meetings he joined the body in worship.

He soon ask for a home and was received and baptized by the late Elder Ernest J. Attebery into the fellowship of Pleasant Grove Church of Yakima, Wn.

He was a faithful Brother who loved the doctrine of Salvation by Grace and loved to entertain the Brethren in his home.

Brother Simpson passed away Sept. 13, 1989 and was laid to rest in Wenass Valley cemetery near Yakima, Wn. His funeral was conducted by the late Elder Benjamin F. Preston.

Submitted at the request of the family in loving memory.

Lloyd C. Spikes

ISAIAH 33: 5-6.

The Lord is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.

And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., FEBRUARY 1994

NO. 2

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

**Shepherds! rejoice, lift up your eyes,
And send your fears away;
News from the regions of the skies,
Salvation's born to-day.**

**"Jesus, the God whom angels fear,
Comes down to dwell with you;
To-day he makes his entrance here,
But not as monarchs do.**

**"No gold nor purple swaddling bands,
Nor royal shining things;
A manger for his cradle stands,
And holds the King of kings.**

**"Go, shepherds, where the infant lies,
And see his humble throne;
With tears of joy in all your eyes,
Go, shepherds, kiss the Son.**

**"Thus Gabriel sang, and straight around
The heavenly armies throng,
They tune their harps to lofty sound,
And thus conclude the song:**

**"Glory to God that reigns above,
Let peace surround the earth;
Mortals shall know their Maker's love
At their Redeemer's birth."**

**Lord, and shall angels have their songs,
And men no tunes to raise!
O may we lose our useless tongues
When they forget to praise.**

**Glory to God that reigns above,
That pitied us forlorn,
We join to sing our Maker's love,
For there's a Saviour born.**

Watts.

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EDITORIAL

For so many things we owe thanks to the subscribers of the Signs. Those who have taken time to write and tell us how they have enjoyed reading the good articles published, this encourages us to work even harder. There are those who request more articles of personal experiences. We urge you to write us and share your experience with others. This is a way of comforting each other.

I have never known a time when words of comfort are more needed than now. We are now living in a time of fiery trials and so many adversities. These have been promised by our

Lord and we have been admonished to think it not strange when they come. We know He will not put more burdens on us than he will give us grace to bear.

We have the following article written by the late associate editor Elder W.D. Griffin which has not been published before. We think it is very appropriate at this time.

Editors

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. (Psa. 34:19).

What a wonderful consolation is found in this statement. Of one thing we are certain, the Lord is not afflicting us because of our unrighteousness. This statement calls for comments in two ways at least. None of us feel that we are righteous, even Christ not excepting himself, And yet a wonderful meditation awaits he and she that has their mind staid on Him. As the sin bearer of His chosen flock, he was guilty by reason of our transgression on him; in His relationship with His father He was all fair, no spot in Him.

It is my own feeling that in the text, He is speaking of His people and the tender relationship that exists between He and them. In the outset let us ever remember that:

*Not from the dust afflictions
grows
Nor troubles rise by chance.
Yet we are born to cares and
woes;*

A sad inheritance.

***As sparks break out from
burning coals,
and still are upwards borne,
So grief is rooted in our souls
and man grows up to mourn.***

When called upon to watch during the trying hours of our often long night watches, we are inclined to feel that the reason of our afflictions is because that the Lord is displeased with us. Oh, no, no, not that. If His servants are righteous surely it is He that dwells in them as the Lord their righteousness. Whatever his dealing with us, it is then in righteousness. How bright the picture becomes as He teaches us that He loves us, and that all things given us are in love and in mercy given, and that not only are they given for our direct and immediate good, and that ultimately there can be no question, there can be no doubt but that it works together with every experience that we have for good and the glory of He whom we are His and He is ours.

I hope dear reader, that you have noted that these afflictions are many. How can that be? How is it that He esteems me righteous in that He gives me many of these tokens of His love. His messages that when each and every affliction has brought me to lose confidence in myself, then that He overwhelms me with His love by delivering us from every affliction.

I do not come to you in a scolding attitude. Oh, yes, my soul knows the sad lamentations of Jeremiah and Job. I have been hid behind the hedge when the sun has gone down, and the Lord has hid his face. I too have sent inquir-

ies to Him, Art thou the Christ or shall we look for another. I know the long flickering, grotesque shadows when He is seemingly gone forever. But that is why I desire to write to you poor afflicted saint. If I am not mistaken I have felt the dismal feelings when He is eclipsed from my peering eyes, and my heartstrings are seemingly broken asunder because He is not present. But such a thing cannot be. If he is ours and we are His, sores and losses and crosses may multiply on our body and in our mind, but He is not gone. That will never be that cannot be. Oh, yes He seems to go, He seems to hide Himself from us, but that is an affliction sent in mercy to teach us our frailness, our dependence on Him.

Everything pertaining to life and godliness has been freely given. The thorn to Paul was at first hard to be borne, but when seen as an affliction from His Elder Brother to teach him, to wean him, strengthen him, then it was not a token of His displeasure, but a remembrance of the everlasting love of He that had called him out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Wisdom has indeed built her house. The wisdom of God has given his children every affliction. Not one of them has come by satan's hand, nor has God nor Christ nor the Holy Spirit sent one of them as punishment. Perish the thought. God the Holy One, the Perfect Rock who never made a mistake never sent an affliction on a righteous man or woman to punish he or she for their transgression. My soul knows right well better than that. This is a righteous Father giving gifts to

His obedient children for their instruction and teaching.

To the afflicted saint it would not do to belittle or to minimize their afflictions. At the time of enduring them, as it was with Paul in regard to the thorn in the flesh, it seems oftentimes, that their afflictions are far more than they can bear. How wonderful that Paul learned the intent of His Lord and Master. This dealing with Paul continued (and with us, if we are subjects of His work) and becomes more glorious as we explore the amazing blessings that were taught him. He says to Paul, For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God, for which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more and exceeding weight of glory (2 Cor. 4: 15, 17).

As the Lord prospers our investigation may we rejoice and be exceedingly glad with unspeakable joy and full of glory at the difference between what David sang long years ago and what the apostle affirmed two thousand years ago. We are not calling in question the number of afflictions of the righteous. They came in great numbers upon every member of that righteous nation whose God is the Lord. However, there is a so called system of salvation that makes a spurious claim that God's children bring afflictions, adversity, tribulations upon themselves by a neglect of their Christian duties. David did not say,

many are the afflictions of the negligent and indifferent and careless. He did not say that. Why is it that in the face of the inspired evidence that this is not true, people continue to make this claim?

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (II Cor. 4:17). Did you listen carefully to that? Did it strike a note of praise to your Redeemer God? Yes, we all that are experienced in the dealings of God with us, can readily agree with David that the afflictions of the righteous are many. There are many trials (God sent trials); there is a fiery trial accompanying each child of grace, but the sweetness of the morsels of the feeding time for the sheep, the unity, the togetherness of each delivered child, leads them to join in union of mind and heart as we survey the shortness of those moments of holy ecstasy. They are many, and yet they are light when attended by whis-pers of His love.

Let us go over that again. This is worth repeating time and again. These numerous afflictions come as a dark and gloomy cloud at times, but there is not a frown in a single one of them. There is not a time when all that occurred in the life of Paul of sorrow and trials and persecutions and tribulations that anything was working against anyone at Corinth. Everything that occurred in the life of Paul, as he wrote these wonderful things that was against them. Perish that thought. Let it ring out loud and clear, as the song of the triumph in the hearts of God's

humble poor. Let Mount Zion say, The Lord afflicts His children in love, and that each one of them is in mercy sent, and that every one of them is in the hands of our kind and gracious Father too good to make a mistake and too wise to err.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And not only so but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us Rom. 5: 1,5)

What an array of covenant blessings. Yet, if I had a nation of people under my thumb that I desired to herd them into prison and to deal with them in a harsh manner because of their shortcomings, I would not seek any further. But to the contrary, instead of sending hard tribulations upon them, our kind and gracious Father works right opposite to that way of doing business with them. This gracious God tells us that He has justified them by faith which He has given them. These poor sinners in His charge have peace freely bestowed upon them. And that is not all. They have access by faith into this grace wherein they stand (are now standing), and their hope of better things to come is founded in the glory of God. No poor sinner would ever think of asking

more, but the good things the sweet mercy of God still comes stealing in upon us and we are indeed in wonderment and amazement. But there is more yet, Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also. Ah, dear brethren and sisters, What a great mercy it is to have Him on our side (Psa. 124). He is not the hard taskmaster that conditionalists would make Him out to be. Instead, behold how good and kind that He is to His poor weak children. Instead of sending tribulations for punishment for our shortcomings we have better news to tell you. God takes the things that seem so strongly entrenched against us, and we are found rejoicing in those things. Have you ever heard of anything better than that? Has any of the wild fire doctrines every had the allurement and captivation of your mind like the doctrine of God's sovereign care for poor sinners? Tribulations are not an enemy to the saints of God when they are heaven sent. We glory in them, not in they themselves, but in what God brings out with and by them. I am an impatient person. I am always in a hurry, always a minute man. But God has placed in my life, as I humbly hope and believe, tribulations, and they are as effectual to produce results, being sent, as I hope, by the Sovereign Ruler and in His hands they bring about, again, as I hope, some degree of patience. That much is good; no man has a better doctrine than that, but that is not all. The Lord always has supplied our needs, and He always will. With patience wrought effectually by the Strength of the Lord, any

problem ceases to be a stumbling block and becomes a stepping stone to higher ground. Ah, what triumphs are brought about through patience. She is indeed a virtue unexcelled. Of course, we have the full weight of resourcefulness working on our side, and for us, and in us. She works an experience in the children, and those wrought in and wrought out experiences are never forgotten. In exchanging interviews about where we have been, and what we have been taught, are the things we have discussed when we remembered always and all the ways through which He has led us on.

With the cluster of blessings, all in the hand of He that loved us unto death, green fields of living verdure will be opened to us. That lovely gift from God's dealings with us will be in His hands to give us additional beauty to enjoy. This is all the mighty, and yet tender love of God in brightening our little hope. That is the best news of all other messages. To have our hope revived; to have the borders of the kingdom of heaven enlarged to where we are not ashamed, but rather blessed to lift our feeble voices in praise to He that has delivered, and, by reason of this revival, not afraid, nor not ashamed to claim a hope in the merits of the risen Lord.

And when the borders of the land of Israel are enlarged to you by reason of shedding in our hearts by the Holy Ghost the love of God, our hearts will be melted together in love to God our Father, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and the Holy Ghost, who is the only

Teacher that Wisdom our mother has sent us.

Rejoice evermore, brethren.
Elder W.D. Griffin

VOICES OF THE PAST



DEAR BRETHREN: -- By request I will try to write an account of my experience and call to the ministry.

First, I will speak of my nationality: on my father's side I am Irish, and on my mother's side Dutch, but both of my parents were American born, and I was their fourth child. At the age of ten years, it pleased God to take my mother away from me, to her long home, and although it was forty-two years ago, I have never forgotten her kind words and christian like looks. The night she died she called us children to her bedside and bid us farewell. It seemed to me that my best friend on earth was gone; I can never describe my feelings. I had no mother to speak to, and O, how lonely I felt, yet I thought my mother had gone to rest.

Now while feeling so serious about the death of my mother, I resolved that I would try to live the life of a christian, so I set about it with all my might; I would slip off from the other children and try to pray to God to fit and prepare me for heaven, so that when I died I would meet my mother there, and after a few weeks I thought that I was getting to be a pretty good boy.

Then I thought that I would try to save my sisters that were older than I was. I approached them upon the subject of religion, and told them that they must quit their laughing and joking one another so much, and quit all their bad habits, and that I had done so, and that I felt a heap better. What a poor, deceived mortal I was, not knowing that I must have the life of Christ before I could live as a christian. But as young as I was, by my natural notions I was a complete Arminian. As time passed on my sorrow and care wore away. Now mark, it was not a godly sorrow which worketh repentance. Now I concluded that I would just lay my religion aside, and that I was too young to undertake to live such a particular life, and that it would be an easy matter to get religion again. I thought that a few prayers, and some good resolutions would put me in good shape again.

At the age of twenty, I was married to my first wife. During her life we were attending a meeting which was going on in the neighborhood held by the Missionary Baptists, and I was enjoying myself finely, playing pranks with the young fellows, and having a good time, as I called it. But one day, right in the midst of my sport, a fear took hold upon me which made me tremble, it appeared to me that hell was my doom, I slipped to the side of my wife and told her that I was going home. She said, "Wait till meeting closes." When we got started for home she asked me what was the matter? I told her that I could not tell her, but that I felt that I was going to die, and that hell, was my

portion; I had sinned away the day of grace. This was the first time in my life that I ever felt to be a sinner in the sight of God. I was here in a sin-cursed world, without God, or any well grounded hope after death. I thought, "O, that I had died when I was young, then this trouble would have never been on me."

Like many others, I fled then to the law, thinking to obtain righteousness by it, and feeling that I must work a work which would initiate me into God's favor. I would slip away into some secret place, where I thought no one would see me, and there would try to pour out my soul in prayer to God for mercy. For four long years I labored to do right in order to be saved. I lived in a neighborhood where they were principally Missionary Baptists, and they invited me to attend their meetings, and I did so; they preached the do and live system. So, with her fair speeches and enticing words, I went the way to her house not knowing the dead was there. I went to their social meetings, and they would tell how well they were getting along, and how determined they were to make heaven their home. O, how I wished that I could feel as they claimed to feel, but instead, I felt that I was a poor sinner, and with every effort I made, I only got worse.

About this time my wife was taken sick and died, and I was left with two little children. She left a bright evidence of her acceptance with the Lord. About twelve months after, I was married again. I was now laboring hard, clearing up my land, and nights I would

read my Bible, searching for comfort to my troubled soul. In my wife's sickness I had gotten in debt, and had sold the only horse that I had, so that season I was compelled to carry everything that we had to eat on my back, a distance of seven miles. One morning I started to go after some provisions; I had to go through the wood some two miles, and as I was walking along it appeared to me that I was the greatest sinner that had ever lived on the earth, and that I was bound for torment, which would only be just. In a moment a feeling took hold upon me so that I could stand upon my feet no longer, and

*While prostrate on the ground I lay,
Not knowing help was near me,
A heavenly whisper seemed to say,
"Poor sinner I have saved thee."*

I sprang to my feet feeling that God for Christ's sake had forgiven my sins; I praised my blessed Lord aloud; it seemed that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he had perfected praise. Here I saw the church of Jesus Christ saved and complete in him, and washed with the washing of regeneration. The time had come when I could say, He hath taken my feet out of the miry clay, and hath placed them on a rock, and put a new song in my mouth, even praise to my God. It seemed to me that even the twigs on the trees were wafting their praises to God. After some time I went on my journey to secure my provisions. I hurried

home so that I could tell my wife that my burden of sin was gone, and when I got to the door my little children met me, and then my wife came, and I began to tell her what great things the Lord had done for me, whereof I was glad. I went about my work feeling that I would have no more trouble. The next morning, however, I was in the yard cutting wood, when all at once, darkness seemed to shut me in. O, what oppressed feelings I had; I thought that I had grasped the shadow, and missed the substance. I stood there for a while with my head down studying about the peace which I had felt the day before. Just then a voice seemed to say to me, You must cry. I said, Lord, what shall I cry? The voice said, Cry unto Jerusalem. All at once light took place of the darkness. I began talking and crying. My wife and little children came to where I was. She wanted to know what was the matter with me. I told her the Spirit of the Lord was upon me, and that I could not help talking. She said, "You are going crazy, come and go with me to the house." Here was my first impression with regard to preaching. Now I tried to beg the Lord to put this on some one else, for I could not preach. I was slow of speech, and of a stammering tongue, and had no learning. Then the inward voice would say, I have made your mouth, and I can fill it.

I then thought I would let no one know anything about my impression to preach, but it was forcibly pressed upon my mind, day and night, that I must preach. My Missionary friends soon found out that I had professed a

hope, and that I was in opposition to them, that now I believed salvation was wholly of the Lord from first to last. They would gather up by the road, and wait for me, to attack me about my dangerous doctrine of election and predestination. They would say that Christ was the elect, and no one else. I would ask them if they believed that he was the head of the church? and they would confess that he was. "Well," I would say, "if the head is elect, is not the body equally so, with him? Can they be separated?" The Lord says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." His life is their life, and their life is hid with Christ in God.

Now I wanted to hear the people preach that I had once despised and hated; they were the old order of Baptists, but there were none in my neighborhood; I mean no members of the church. One man who lived about a mile from me was contending for that doctrine, his name was Melton, he was a son of Elder William Melton. I went often to his house to hear him talk, and he was much comfort to me.

The time of the Hopewell church meeting was the First Sunday in each month, and the Saturday before. I had by this time bought me a horse, and on Sunday I started to the meeting, a distance of ten miles. On my way I had to go by Elder Melton's. He with his wife came to the road, just as I came up, and we went together. We had not gone far when Mrs. Melton asked me where I was going? I thought that she mistrusted something, but told her that I was going to the meeting. Elder Melton took for his text that day the

words, "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities." O, how I was carried away in my feelings, and I went home rejoicing.

The next spring, brother Melton preached for a few members that lived at Melton Creek; I went, and at the close of his sermon he said, "O that it would please God to call some young blue eyed person to the ministry, as I am old, and feel that my time is about out." It appeared to me that he knew about my feelings, and I wondered why this was, as I had never told any one my feelings with regard to preaching. I went to dinner with a cousin who was a member of the church, and after dinner we were sitting talking of our hope in Christ, when his wife came in and joined in the conversation with us. All at once she turned to me and said, "Well, I think that the old man got close to you to-day." My blood almost run cold, I knew that I had never said anything about my impressions to any one, and wondered why she singled me out. It appeared to me that she and my cousin knew my feelings, so I soon started for home, feeling that I would wear that impression out.

One night I dreamed that I was standing in the presence of a great congregation. All at once a man came to me and handed me a chain and an ax. I thought he was the loveliest person that I ever saw. I thought he said the chain is the gospel chain, and that the ax was to score to the line, no matter where the chips may fly. After this I felt impressed to go to the church and follow my blessed Lord down into the liquid grave, if the church could fel-

lowship me; yet I felt too unworthy to be with them. I believed that the Primitive Baptists were the church of God, yet I stayed away eight years on account of my impression about having to preach. I thought in this way to wear out the impression, but finally I was made willing to go, and to relate a part of what I have here written, and was received, and baptized by Elder Wm. L. Melton. Now, I thought, perhaps this impression would leave me, but it was not so; the impression still remained. With Charley Melton, a son of the minister, I was on my way to the Friendship church to the meeting, when I concluded to tell him my troubles about this matter. I had the utmost confidence that he was as sound in doctrine as any Baptist that I ever knew. We had been together more or less all our lives. I said to him, "I have something that I want to tell you." He said, "Well, tell it, I want to hear it; they all know it, it is not hidden from the church." As I began to tell him my feelings, he burst into a flood of tears, and said, "You ought to confess it to the church, and not confer with flesh and blood." He asked me if I had ever said anything to his father about it? I replied that I had not. We both went on our way crying. He had a rich experience, though he never went to the church. Shortly after this he was killed.

I went to brother Melton's, and un-bosomed myself to him. He said that he would attend to the matter at the next meeting. So he called the church together after preaching, and then told me to relate my call to the church. I did

so, and they gave me license to exercise my gift in the bounds of the Pocatlico Association. This was done at the December meeting, and the next January I was ordained, and I have been trying to preach ever since. I travel over six or seven counties every season, and preach with the liberty that God gives me. I am now fifty-three years of age, and my health is not good. I often start away a distance of thirty or forty miles, leaving my wife and daughter by themselves. I have a feeling I cannot express; the call says, Go, while my mind says, Stay. I love to meet the dear children of God, and hear them tell what the blessed Lord has done for their souls. I love the doctrine of salvation by grace, and grace alone. It was grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.

From your brother,
J.W. McLanahan

From Elder Lamberts book,
"Tried In The Furnace".

CHARITY
May, 1947



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

It is alarming to me when I am given to meditate upon the strife and confusion that exists in Zion today! It is heart-breaking to find brethren trying to devour and subdue one another! It makes me shudder to note the coldness that seems prevalent in our

own midst. All this perplexity of mind has made me to inquire the Lord for an understanding of His Spirit of love. May He define charity for us and make manifest that spirit in us.

Let us now consider the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians where Paul was inspired to write to the Church at Corinth on this grand subject. I realize the modern usage of the word is the giving of alms, but the 3rd verse of this chapter states the possibility of bestowing all goods to feed the poor, yet be destitute of charity. I am persuaded to believe that charity is the love of God, love of Christ, and love to saints. God loves us with a godly love. This same love is reciprocated and also includes Christ and the brethren. We love God because He first loved us. God's children do love one another. I think that Paul in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians was blessed to treat upon the greatness of charity and its properties. He says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." To be enabled to speak with the tongues of men is a natural gift from God, but to be able to speak with the tongues of angels is a spiritual gift from God. Man naturally cannot learn the language of the truth as pertaining to God and the holy Scriptures. Though a man be spiritually blessed to speak fluently and eloquently of the doctrine of God our Savior and have not charity, he is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. If a person be blessed so that he can understand all mysteries and knowl-

edge and have all faith both believing and doing miracles and have not charity, he is nothing. Paul does not mean that these gifts are nothing but that the man possessing these gifts is nothing, destitute of charity. If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor in order to gain the reputation of men or for the purpose of obtaining eternal life it would be not profit to me. These deeds must be motivated by love to God or to Christ or to the saints before they could be rightly considered as profitable for me.

Now let us consider the properties and characters of love as Paul was inspired to note them. "Charity suffereth long." The person blessed with charity is patient. He is slow to anger, and not hasty to revenge. He is enabled to bear much; has the grace of forbearance, and is blessed to forgive. "And is kind." He does good to all men, even to his enemies. "Charity envieth not." He that is possessed with this wonderful grace of God's love does not envy the temporal happiness of others. He rejoices when he beholds a brother is blessed with gifts both temporal and spiritual. He does not envy the happiness of others even though they are decidedly more blessed than he. Joseph's brethren were not charitable when they envied Joseph because he had a greater share in the affections of their father. The charitable person does not envy one of God's children whose usefulness and success in spiritual undertakings are decidedly greater (seemingly) than his. "Charity vaunteth not itself." He does not boast of either his natural or

spiritual wisdom or possessions. He does not boast of what he does as his motive is love and not for the applause of men. "Is not puffed up." He is not swelled with pride but is humble. "Doth not behave itself unseemly." He is not unbecoming in his conversation or actions and has due respect for the aged and those of authority. "Seeketh not her own." He is not seeking to promote his own selfish ambitions and desires but his care and concern is to the glory of God and to the children of the kingdom. "Is not easily provoked." He is not easily offended. "Thinketh no evil." Not that he is free from evil thoughts such as are sinful and vain, for testimonies throughout the holy scriptures affirm to the contrary. God's children are forever desiring to be delivered from these sinful thoughts that are daily experienced. But I think that this character will forgive a brother his trespasses and will not try to find some way of revenge. He thinks not upon how to get even with someone who has wronged him.

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity." He mourns because of his own iniquities. He is grieved because of the sinfulness of professors. He is troubled when he meditates upon the profanity and immorality of the world. "But rejoiceth in the truth." He rejoices in the doctrine of God, our Savior, he is pleased when God is praised and man is set forth as nothing, yea less than nothing. Salvation by grace is his meat and drink. "Beareth all things." He feels that all things work together for good to them who love God, even the

suffering, persecution, and affliction is not in vain. He bears them without complaint, feeling that if justice were meted out they would be more intense. He does not feel that he should revenge wrong doing. "Believeth all things." Everything that exists is according to the decrees of God. All things are for the praise of God and for the perfecting of God's saints. None of the things existing is by chance. "Hopeth all things." All things yet future is predetermined so that nothing will frustrate any of the promises of God from being fulfilled. "Endureth all things." He is confident that all things are embraced in the eternal decrees of an all-wise and all-powerful God. He endures all the afflictions and persecutions for the elect's sake and for Christ's sake. The last to be endured is death.

"Charity never faileth." It may fail in the lively exercise of it. Selfishness and the cares of the world may be prevalent at times, but the love of God will not permit a child of God to fall finally into perdition. Charity is everlasting. It is ever the same. Prophecies will be fulfilled then cease to be prophecy. Hope will become a reality thus cease to be hope. Faith will terminate into a reality. Charity will be charity in the beyond the same as it was before the beginning of time. Every object of God's love is just as certain for heaven and immortal glory as before time began. There is no change in the love of God for His people.

Now, I feel that the Lord has blessed us with a few sweet thoughts on the properties and characteristics of

God's love as made manifest in brethren. Permit me to say, "By their fruits ye shall know them." I wish to suggest to the citizens of Zion, that you beware of impostors. Beware of those having a form of godliness but not manifesting the grace of charity. I believe the time has come to watch as well as pray. May God grant us the grace of charity and the eye of watchfulness.

Elder E.J. Lambert

Atlantic, N.C., Sept., 15, 1924



Dear Brother Vaughn: Why have you been in my mind all day? Are you a sunken island like me? All last week I was under a terrible heavy, dark cloud, and probably as full of grief as I have ever been at any one time in all my life. I saw myself to be a sunken island, with the boisterous billows of the sea over me and God's waterspouts all about me. This state of things continued until I saw that the sunken islands of the sea are only the tops of the hills and mountains in the waters, which God has placed beyond destruction, and that they go on downward until they all join in the one continent body, and that this continent is joined to continent, and island to island, to form the one body, the earth. Even so are the little ones joined one to another, and away down in these deep places is where we are so joined that we learn the sweet fellowship of the Spirit, and are led into the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ. There in much fear and great trembling we are led to desire

the will of God to be done. If we live it is the Lord, and if we die it is the Lord. He is the God of life and death. The light is but his revelation, and the darkness is his pavilion where he hides his face in sweet communion with his bride. There he teaches her the sweet lessons of his grace and shows her that in him is all her life and her salvation. Satan may be near, and roar as the fierce lion, and make the already troubled soul tremble, but he can do no more than our Father pleases. When our God has done his will with the typhoon he will say, "Peace, be still." It will obey his voice, for it is his faithful servant. Then the waters will cease to rage, and there will be a great calm, accompanied with the knowledge that that poor tempest-tossed one is delivered safe on the shore of divine mercy, and into the green pastures of the great Shepherd of the sheep. Here they are given to see that they are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. Here we can trust the Lord. Oh just now we could not trust him, even though the word said, Trust ye in the Lord, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Is that what we desire? Yes. Where do we experience it? Surely in trusting the Lord. Then why not trust him? The question repeats itself, Why? The poor soul has to answer, I would, but I cannot. That is it. I am as helpless to trust the Lord as I am to make a world. I would, but I cannot do it. It may be in a minute of time that all my confidence is in him, and I cannot see any reason why I had not done this before. It was on the third Sunday in August, 1878,

that I had walked ten miles to Old Blounts Creek, in Beaufort County, N.C. and had preached to the people. I ate dinner with one of the brethren, and was walking back to our humble home when I began to question why the Lord had required such hardships of me? There were others who were as able to preach his word as I was, and they had conveyances to go and come, but the burden was on me, who had nothing. I became very stubborn, and felt that the lines had fallen to me in weary places. Presently my mind was taken back through my experience from seven years old up to my deliverance at twenty years old, and through many of the mercies of God after my deliverance up to that time. When this meditation had ended my whole being was filled with love to God, and my soul was made to praise him for giving me such an easy task to perform. Then I questioned, Why could I not have looked back and remembered all these things before, and not have been so stubborn and rebellious, and angry at the Lord's dealings with me? Then these words came to me, If I go away I will send Him, and when he is come he shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Thus for the first time I was given a little understanding of God's sweet promise in giving us the Holy Ghost to be our comforter and guide, to keep us in distress and to shine in us when his blessed day should dawn in our inward parts. It is thus, my brother, that our dear Lord has taught me in all his blessed gospel which he has given me to see, and it is the only

way I have understanding in his glorious way. Therefore all the things of his kingdom are hid from me only as he leads me to them and gives me to taste the things he has in store for me. I am given to see that my dark days and the clouds are just as much the blessings of God to me as are the brightest of times and the gentle showers on the newly mown field. How wonderful is our God, and how sure is his blessed love.

I am glad to say that our church is in peace. We received one in December, two in May and one last Saturday. The next church to us has baptized seven this year. We desire to bless the Lord.

I do not want to tire you, so I will close, with lots of love to Sister Vaughn and to all the dear ones at Hopewell.

Your little brother in a good hope,
L.H. Hardy

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

THE CITY WITHOUT A TEMPLE

By H.M. Curry



d. Note: We are often amazed when one finds we are Predestinarian Baptists and responds: "Oh, you are one of those that do not believe in education." Where they got that foolish notion, we can't ascertain.

Elder H.M. Curry is listed as an important figure in laying the foundations of secondary education in the post Civil War South. Retained by the Peabody Foundation, he taught public school at the Rodger's School in Pike County, Alabama near Troy. Many of our old brethren at Beulah Church, and churches of the Conecuh River recall him vividly, and hold him to high esteem as a servant of God. Originally, he was from Lebanon, Ohio, where he gained great respect among the saints of God. We trust our readers will once again enjoy this selection from the SIGNS, 1964.

*"And I saw no temple therein."
 (Revelations 21:22)*

We have read this morning from the inspired record a striking description of the city of God; the city of which we have heard, and read, and sing from our earliest childhood; but we have heard that it was far away above the skies; we have sung that it is among the stars; we have read in popular religious fiction that it is the place where good people go when they die. All these notions are no better than the various fabrications of heaven, and are foreign to the true location

and nature of the city as the sensual paradise of Mahomet, or the happy hunting grounds of the American Indian. Our eyes have been so long blinded by tradition that we scarcely see the plainest facts of Bible truth; our ears have been so completely stuffed with fables from our early youth that we are deaf to the plain declarations of the inspired record; and our understanding is so darkened by material affections that it is indeed difficult for us to conceive the most prominent principles of the doctrine of Christ. May the God of all grace enlighten our eyes, unstop our ears and open our understanding this morning, that we may hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

First, let us have a proper understanding of the location of this city. It is not in heaven, for John saw it coming down from God out of heaven. It is declared to be the tabernacle of God with men; God dwelling with men, and not men gone above the sky to dwell with God. This city then is in the world, though not of the world; it is the present abode an inheritance of the saints, and not something they come in possession of at the close of their mortal pilgrimage. It is the new Jerusalem, arrayed in the splendor of the covenant of grace revealed in living contrast with the old Jerusalem, clothed in the blackness of legal servitude. It is the gospel church revealed in the perfection of her living worship, contrasted with all humanly devised and conditional systems of religion.

The jeweled walls, sparkling, gleaming and glittering with all manner of

precious stones; the new earth upon which it stands stretching away in all the beauty of its virgin landscape; the new heaven spread above like a tent of righteousness; the pure, peaceful, gladdening river; the tree of life in the midst of its street of gold, each furnishes a theme for a thousand volumes; but more significant to me than all these this morning, is the absence of the temple: "I saw no temple there."

What a novel sight to a Jew was a city without a temple! And what would a modern Arminian think of a city without a church? The religious prosperity, the state of morals, the degree of intelligence, and even the social and business advantages of a village, town, or city, are all estimated by the number and height of its steeples; and if a community could be found without a church, the unfortunate inhabitants would be stigmatized as heathens, notwithstanding they may have attained to a high standard of morals, intelligence, piety and virtue. But the gospel church, walking in the Spirit, is the perfection of society; and the perfect society is revealed from heaven under the similitude of a city without a temple, or, in modern parlance, a city without a church.

The absence of the temple suggests, first the complete removal of the law of Moses. The temple was a symbol of the law, and an almost necessary attendant of all law worship. Jerusalem was the pride of the Jews; and the glory of Jerusalem was the temple. The carnal Jews were less boastful of their temple privileges as a mark of special distinction, than of their fleshly

relation to Abraham. They saw nothing in the goodly stones of the temple but the gratification of their own pride; they saw nothing in the streaming blood and quivering of the evening sacrifice but the things which Moses commanded; they beheld nothing more in the gorgeous trappings and imposing ceremonies of the high priest than the pomp and splendor of an earthly priesthood. But to the remnant according to the election of grace, "who were born, not of blood nor the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God," the temple with all its service spoke a different language. They looked beyond the matchless pile of stones, to that temple that was to be thrown down and in three days raised up again; they saw beyond the blood that daily drenched the Jewish alters, the blood of the everlasting covenant that was to be shed for the remission of the sins of the many; they recognized in their high priest the type of Him who should "offer Himself without spot to God, and by that one offering perfect them forever"; they heard in the tinkling of the golden bells upon the high priest's garment the joyful sound of the gospel of their salvation.

They groaned under the bondage of temple service, and waited and longed for "the consolation of Israel". There was no hope for the flesh in the deeds of the law, and no rest for the spirit in the earthly Jerusalem. But God had provided some better things for them, and in the fullness of time the new Jerusalem was revealed from heaven, arrayed in bridal splendor, enshrouded

in gospel glory, clothed in vestments of peace, with gates wide open to receive all those predestinated to enter its walls of salvation, its towers of refuge and palaces of peace.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus spiritual Israel was redeemed from the law of Moses, having become dead to it by the body of Christ, and by Him were led out of bondage, and brought with singing unto Zion, which is the new Jerusalem. They saw from afar the heavenly city. Joyous welcome greeted them, written above the gates in letters of gold, "Come, ye blessed of My Father. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden." They gladly entered, and, to their increased delight, they find no temple therein. No more sacrifices, no more burnt offerings, no more Sabbath keeping, no more observance of new moons, feasts and holy days. Even the sun and moon which mark times and seasons, days and months, are obliterated from the sky. No Easter celebration, no Christmas frolics. Every vestige of the law removed, and no temple to bring these buried things to remembrance. The justified inhabitants find themselves possessing what angels have desired to look into, and what the prophets of their fathers had searched diligently concerning.

The absence of the temple signifies the perfect deliverance of the elect Gentiles from every species of vain philosophy and esteemed and cherished idolatry. The Gentile Christians (sic) were under equally a galling bondage as were the Jews, although they owed no allegiance to the law of

Moses. They were under the law of sin and death, and were by nature alienated from the life of God through their ignorance, and were brought into bondage by the lusts of the flesh and the wiles of their priestcraft. The temple is not only a symbol of the law of Moses, but is a universal attendant of every form of Gentile idolatry. Stupendous temples adorned the cities of Egypt five thousand years ago. These temples were the homes of Egypt's gods, sources of revenue to Egyptian priests, and the oppressors, enslavers and robbers of Egypt's people. Marble shrines of exquisite beauty brightened the cities of ancient Greece; massive temples of costliest design contributed to the imposing grandeur of the once mighty Rome; and gorgeous temples of gold, of fabulous wealth, dazzled the eyes of Spanish robbers in the far away mountain recesses of Mexico and Peru. The gigantic remains found in every quarter of the earth proclaim in tongues of crumbling stone, the universal reign of temple service over the benighted sons of men. The reign of grace has broken the reign of sin, and the Gentiles have seen the salvation of God. Grace searched the dark places of heathen idolatry, and brought forth to the light of the glorious gospel of the hidden objects of electing love.

Many of the saints at Ephesus had served in the bondage, in the temple of Diana; many of the "washed, justified and sanctified" ones of the Corinthian church had been gathered from the temples of Olympian Zeus, which adorned and burdened that

opulent city; and many of the called saints of Rome had been led out of the temples of Jupiter. When Paul declared to the Athenians of Mars' Hill that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, some who worshiped at the altar of the unknown god cleave unto him and believed. All the inhabitants of this city, whether Jew or Greek, bond or free, have learned that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but that He is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit. They have found to the joy of their hearts, that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. The truly spiritually minded seek no temple, but God Himself. In Him they live and move and have their being, and in this gracious environment they enjoy all the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

The absence of the temple signifies the breaking down of the "middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles." The Jewish temple was the great objective distinction between the Jews and all other nations, and stood as an outward evidence of God's favor to the Jews and rejection of the Gentiles. But, as an outward evidence that GOD is not a respecter of persons, and that the Gentiles are "brought nigh by the blood of Christ" and reconciled in the same body with the Jews, the temple of Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, completely thrown down, so that "not even one stone remained" upon another, as Christ had said before should be done. In addition to this outward evidence, the new Jerusalem was revealed to the eye of faith with no temple in it, so

that the believing Jew can no more be offended by bringing Gentiles into the temple. The grounds of disputes concerning Jewish prerogative have been completely removed from the church under the gospel dispensation, and now representatives of every nation dwell together in unity in this spiritual commonwealth, each esteeming others better than himself, all hearts having been purified by faith which works of love. All have God for their Father, having been born again; all washed in the same blood, and all possessing one life, live together in the unity of the Spirit and in the bonds of peace.

The absence of the temple signifies the absence of priestcraft. There is but one city in which priestcraft is not to be found, and that is the city of God. Priests have sought to rule the world; and are still seeking. A priesthood is a necessary element of all formulated religions, whether Jewish, Mohammendan, Catholic or Protestant. The priesthood of all will-worshipping idolaters has always pretended to stand between the people and their gods, and that in some way or other they are instrumental in bringing about reconciliation between offending men and offended gods. This important element is common to all carnal religious systems; it is found alike in heathen, Catholic and Protestant, and is plain evidence of the common origin and common interest of all religious enterprises. The Catholic priest assumes to forgive sins for a stipulated sum, and pray souls out of purgatory for wages. The different Protestant hirelings will not exactly

promise to do this, but they are equally cunning, and as little to be trusted. They hold out that men cannot be saved unless they hear them preach, and believe them; and some even go so far in their blasphemous presumption as to say that the heathen cannot be saved, neither can God justly damn them, until they preach to them. They array themselves in hypocritical robes of false christs, and profess to be commissioned to evangelize the world and bring it to Christ. They even ascribe the salvation of their children to their incantations, to penny tracts (Not now with billions of dollars collected annually...pennies are not welcome anymore! ED.) and religious fiction. They have invented hundreds of schemes and tricks to delude the people, and meeting in conventions from year to year to devise new fables, to send out their agents with new demands for money.

The absence of the temple implies the absence of all these workers of darkness and propagators of iniquity. The inhabitants of this city have been delivered from the base deception of both Catholic and Protestant priest-hoods. They have learned that there is but one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. They are themselves a royal priesthood in Christ, prepared by grace to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. In this new creation they worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh. They have no need of a candle, or the light of the sun or moon, all of which are emblems of worldly wisdom, as

claimed by the carnal priest-hoods; but the Lord God giveth them light, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Carnal worshippers seek a temple, but the spiritually minded seek no temple but God Himself; the carnal worshipper delights in rites and ceremonies, but the spiritual seeks the secrecy of his closet; the carnal worshipper seeks the intercession of priests, but the spiritual is satisfied with no intercession outside of the unutterable groanings of the Spirit Himself.

The absence of the temple signifies the absence of all fraud, deceit and violence. All the great temples of the world, from Thebes to Athens, from Athens to heathen Rome, from heathen Rome to Catholic Rome, from Catholic Rome to Protestant London, have been intimately connected with the blackest crimes of history; they have been the cradles of superstition, folly and vice, the nurseries of the antichrist in every phase and form, the despots of hypocrisy, the resorts of religious deceivers and oppressors; the sepulchers of liberty, prison house of saints, and the high seats of spiritual wickedness. The absence of the temple from the city of God is evidence that all the works of the flesh are unknown either to Jew or Greek in pure spiritual worship. This city is redeemed from all iniquity, and in this spiritual city, the true gospel church, no guilt is found. The deeds of the body are mortified, and the fruit of the Spirit abounds, The inhabitants are blessed with good and upright hearts and are in possession of charity which thinketh no ill of his neighbor.

The contrast was no greater between this city and old Jerusalem, than between this city and the communities of carnal religionists now. This is an age of extravagant temple worship. The chief ambition of the different sects is to surpass each other in temple building. Religious societies in every place from the country cross-roads to the metropolis of the nation, render themselves a pest to their neighborhood and a disgrace to the name of Christianity, in going beyond their means to gratify the foolish, wicked, antichristian pride in erecting fine places of worship. The huge piles of stone and stained glass, thrown together in all the fantastic forms of heathen architecture that adorn our towns and cities, are regarded with quite as much reverence and admiration by their benighted votaries, as the temples of any of the ancient heathen nations.

This city is the whole election of grace, as they in one body worship the Father in spirit, as they stand holy and without blame before Him in love. God Himself dwells in them and with them, and He is their temple, and they are His.

The glory of the city is seen only by faith; the carnal senses of the saints themselves have never seen it. But the time shall come when still more grace shall be brought to them. The city shall be unveiled until all shall see it plainly and all earthly cities with all their temples and idolatry shall be finally and forever overthrown, and

the city of God shall stand a living, enduring, eternal monument to the love, mercy and power of God, and the victory of Christ over all enemies.

H.M. Curry, May 14, 1893

(Copy from September
1980 Predestinarian.)
Sent to Signs by
Elder Noel Conner.

MATTHEW 5: 11-12.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR NOVEMBER 1993

Alton Goodwin, NC	\$2.00
Mrs. Kenneth H. Mathis, TN	7.00
Billy Weatherford, VA	2.00
Mrs. Ruth Dalton, VA	2.00
Troy Shepard, NC	2.00
Mrs. Coro Brinkley, NC	2.00
Thomas C. Nichols, VA	2.00
O.W. Parks, TX	7.00
Mrs. Reba Wise, TX	2.00
Mrs. Oza Hill, TX	5.00
W. Noel Lavinder, VA	7.00
Mrs. Mildred Plaster, VA	2.00

OBITUARIES

SISTER ODESSA DUDLEY BROWN

We have lost another precious sister at Gill's Creek Church, but we feel our loss is her eternal gain.

She was born November 7, 1927 in Franklin County, Virginia as the daughter of Thomas and Maggie McCall Dudley. She was married on November 7, 1947 to Warren Davis Brown, To this Union was born seven children: Chester Brown, Gary Brown, Betty Brown Perdue, Bonnie Brown Harlow, Danny Brown (Deceased), Earnest Brown, Janet Brown Hogan, 13 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Sister Odessa joined Sandy Level Primitive Baptist Church in February, 1967 and was baptized in March, 1967 by Elder Leonard J. Brammer and Elder Rufus Brown.

As Sandy Level's turn came to host the Pigg River Association, she and Sister Ruthie Walker were hosts to the Association. Being faithful to the Church and her brethren and sisters in Christ, even though she was suffering from cancer.

When there seemed no way to continue, Sandy Level Church disbanded and she moved her membership to Gill's Creek Church on May 9, 1993.

The love she had for her children, the Church, and her love for the Lord was her life. She fought a good fight and kept the faith. She was given grace to bear her afflictions, and when the time came, she was given grace to die.

Her children's love toward her could be seen by their care for her during her suffering and at her death. I found this very touching.

Only God can join his children together with the cords of his love. When death comes, we are separated for a while from each other. But there is a sweet rest for God's children until the Lord comes again to bring us forth in that glorified body and carry us home on the wings of his love to that eternal home in heaven.

I believe Sister Odessa had that precious hope, that someday she would see Christ for herself and be satisfied.

She fell asleep in Christ on September 29, 1993. Her funeral was conducted at Lynch Funeral Home in Rocky Mount, Virginia by Elders W.T. Conner and Larry Hollandsworth. She was laid to rest at Dudley family cemetery, awaiting the second coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Written by a brother in hope,
Elder Larry Hollandsworth

**GRACIE PAULINE
TOWNLEY NORRIS**

It is with sad heart to try to write the obituary of Gracie Pauline Townley Norris. Who God took from our midst on August 9, 1993. She was 79 years old.

Born March 19, 1914 in Tinsman, Arkansas. A daughter of Wylie Townley and Belle O, Mary Townley. She was a firm believer of the Old School Primitive Baptist doctrine. And

went to church as long as she could. Her health got bad, and she had to go live with her daughter.

She is survived by three sons. Douglas A. Norris and Dennis Ray Norris of Saldtna, Alaska, William Buddy Norris, Stockton, California. One daughter Dorothy Jean Norris, Cottage Grove, Oregon. Two brothers Troy Townley, Oxford, Alabama and Doyle Townley, Maysville, Oklahoma. Eight grandchildren and ten great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held in the Benton Funeral Home Chapel on Friday, August 13, 1993 at 10 A.M. by Elder Theron Jones. Burial was in Chapel Hill Cemetery by Benton Funeral Home. We will miss her so much in so many ways. But our loss is her gain in Christ Jesus. Written by her sister in law in love.

Mrs. John Clovis Townley
Frances Townley, Church Clerk

THELMA CLAY OAKLEY



It is with sad heart that I attempt to write an obituary of our beloved Sister. Our Lord and Savior called her home on September 12, 1993 at University Hospital at Little Rock, Arkansas at age of 86 years. Born on July 23, 1907 in Dallas County. A daughter of William C. Scraggins and Ada Wood Scraggins. She was a firm believer in the doctrine preached by all Primitive Baptists for many years. She asked for a home with the Church May 16, 1981. Was

baptized by her Pastor Elder John C. Townley on May 17, 1981.

She is survived by her husband Floyd Oakley of Fordyce, Arkansas also a member of Pilgrim Rest Church. One son Rayboro Oakley of the home Fordyce Arkansas. Two daughters; Sarah Jean Strankevitz of Little Rock, Arkansas. Reba Hibes of Southaven, Miss, and four Grandchildren.

Funeral was held in the Benton Funeral Home Chapel on Tuesday Sept. 14th at 10:00 A.M. by Elder Theron Jones. Burial was in McDonald Cemetery by Benton Funeral Home.

She will be missed by all that knew her. Family, Friends, Church Members. This was requested in Conference at Pilgrim Rest Church.

Frances Townley, Church Clerk

BROTHER CLEMMON WARREN SMITH



Brother Clemmon W. Smith, a lifelong member of North Creek Primitive Baptist near Belhaven, North Carolina, departed this life on August 11, 1993. He was born in Pamlico County, North Carolina in 1902 on the 19th day of November to Johnny W. and Bessie Potter Smith. While still young, he moved to Beaufort County where he spent the remainder of his earthly life first as a barber, store owner, and owner of a trucking company. Farming was always his favorite occupation, though, and he spent many long hours in the tobacco fields of Eastern North Carolina.

In 1925 he married Marjorie Moreslender, and from this union there were six children born, five of whom survived. His wife died in 1980. He had four brothers, now all deceased, three of whom were also members at North Creek. Three sisters preceded him in death and two are still living.

Brother Clemmon was strong in the faith and was always present at meeting when his health would allow. He spoke fondly of coming to North Creek by horse and buggy as a young child, and was, at his death, the oldest member of the church. He would speak without hesitation of the blessings that the Lord had given him and left no doubt that his faith was not negotiable. Surely the saints will rejoice upon his arrival, and those of us who mourn his departure from this earth will be comforted in knowing that God gave us so many wonderful years with him.

Elder J.T. Prescott, Moderator
Tom G. Thompson, Clerk

MARY HUNDLEY STRATTON



It pleased our Heavenly Father to take Sister Mary Stratton Home to Glory on October 7, 1993.

Sister Mary joined Strawberry Primitive Baptist Church on July 3, 1920. She was a faithful member and attended services as long as she was physically able. She loved Strawberry Church and was an active supporter.

Sister Mary was born April 23, 1902 in Dry Fork, Virginia to James Henry Hundley and Sister Minta Oakes Hundley. She was a graduate of Harrisonburg State Teachers College, and she taught school in the Pittsylvania and Henry County school systems for many years.

She met her husband-to-be, John Stratton, in Henry County and to this union was born three sons - John, James and David. The Strattons called Ridgeway, Virginia their home.

Her husband and two of their sons, James W. Stratton and David Lee Stratton preceded her in death.

She leaves one son, John H. Stratton, and daughter-in-law Sandy of Fairfax, Virginia, two grandsons, and a brother - Brother Guy H. Hundley of Dry Fork, Virginia.

Sister Mary believed in Salvation by Grace. She was a lovely Sister - to know her was to love her - and we miss her so very much.

She lived her last days at Roman Eagle Nursing Home in Danville. She had her suffering here - now she is resting from all her labors.

Her funeral was conducted at Swicegood Funeral Chapel in Danville by her Pastor Elder Thomas Soloman. She was laid to rest in Highland Burial Park beneath a mound of beautiful flowers to await the coming of her Blessed Savior to gather his jewels home. May the Good Lord comfort, bless, and give reconciling Grace to her loving family.

Written by a Sister in Hope,
Sister Gertie C. Holley

SISTER EMMA SWINSON

My request of Cypress Creek Primitive Baptist Church of Onslow County, I will attempt to write the obituary of Sister Emma Swinson, who was born October 15, 1907 and departed this life May 7, 1990. Her husband, Mr. Leslie Swinson, died in 1953.

Sister Swinson was received into the fellowship of Cypress Creek Primitive Baptist church, of Duplin County, on November 14, 1937 and was baptized by the late Elder R.P. Batchelor. In the year of 1970, she became one of the charter members of the Cypress Creek Primitive Baptist Church of Onslow County who's pastor was Elder Horace Bryan. Sister Swinson was truly a kind, humble, precious member.

On my first day of serving the Church as their pastor, I took special notice of this little sister in Christ. This was Saturday before the 2nd Sunday in November of 1982. I believe I saw that same little jewel as spoken of in Ezekiel, 16th Chapter 12th Verse, that was placed in the forehead of that little girl child that was cast out in the day she was born. We believe this little girl is symbolic of the Church, the Bride, that Christ died to redeem. This little gift was placed in the forehead where the subject of His grace could not see it, but brethren of like precious faith can most always detect this special gift. We also believe that Sister Emma was girded about with fine linen and covered with silk, verse 10, which we believe to represent the Grace of God.

Sister Swinson's life was clean and her walk was orderly. "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." Several times we took her home from Church meetings. She lived alone in a neat little house, well kept, both inside and out. A well groomed lawn and a clean little garden, well tilled, with flowers in her yard and some chickens in the lot. We feel that she desired nothing more than just to live a simple life, enjoying the sweet fellowship with her Church and friends, and most of all, sweet fellowship with God.

During the last few weeks of her life, she spent in declining health. While in the hospital for several days, some of the sisters, namely Sister Sarah Williams and Sister Inez Humphrey, would try to visit with her daily and would hand feed her hoping to encourage her to eat so as to gain her natural strength. But when God's appointed time came to call her home, and there, we believe, is the time when there comes a separation of the spirit from the body. We believe that Sister Swinson's Christ-like spirit took its flight back to the Father who gave it, and when Jesus comes back to call for the sleeping dust of his little ones, that were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, we believe that she will be included in that blessed number that the Bible speaks of as a certain number.

Her funeral was held at the family cemetery and a grave side service conducted by this unworthy writer.

Written by her Pastor,
Elder J.C. Carroll

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., MARCH 1994

NO. 3

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

AMAZING GRACE

*Amazing grace (how sweet the sound!)
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved:
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed.*

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.*

*The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.*

*Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the vale,
A life of joy and peace.*

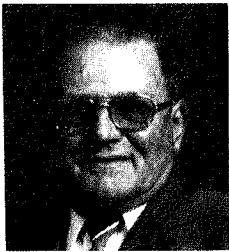
*The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.*

Newton.

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EDITORIAL



ELDER C.B. DAVIS, JR.

I came into possession of a book about the lives and experiences of many of the hymn writers that wrote the poems we use as our hymns in our churches. I feel that many church members and attenders would enjoy reading of the lives and works of these writers. The poems are expressions of any experience of Grace or some manner that God used to bless them with manifestations of His love and mercy.

I will endeavor to write what I read in the books and though not always quot-

ing give as best I can a view into the lives of the writers and the wonders in words they wrote. I trust I shall be Blessed to convey to those who are interested a measure of the dedication and love the writers had for their Blessings at His Hands.

Respectfully Elder C.B. Davis, Jr.

JOHN NEWTON

Newton was born in London, July 24, 1725 and was an only son. His mother was highly educated and devout in her belief in the church. She hoped her influence would have effect upon John that would make him a worthy citizen. She began teaching him very early in life and by age four he could read most any ordinary book. The happiness of life with his mother was short lived as she died when he was just seven and then his life of sin and wild ways began. His father, being a ship's Captain at sea, was very seldom seen by John.

When John was twelve years old and bitterly refused any and all discipline his father had no choice but to carry him to sea. This gave him a chance to learn the ways of seafaring men and especially their evil ways and wrongdoings. He learned the ways fast and at age sixteen he was ruthless and wicked enough that his father all but denied him as a son. He applied at that time for charge of a ship in order to begin the slave trade. He made many trips to Africa to bring to England and other countries many blacks as slaves even one ship load to Charleston, S.C.

He showed no interest in religion although his mother had attempted to instill in him satisfactory knowledge of Godliness when he was a young lad. John was intent in but one thing, that being to bring more slaves from Africa than any other captain. He made many trips and had no mercy on the crew or his load of blacks. There were times when there would be plots against him but (unknown to him at the time) God brought these plots to naught.

John was captured on one trip and was slave to a prosperous black woman. He was fed with just crust and crumbs from the table and came near starvation. He nearly lived the life of a dog until such time as his crew effected his escape. While a prisoner there he began to think about his mother's teaching and yet was not convinced that God was in the matter of happenings in his life.

God has His own way and time to deal with His people and that time came with John Newton on one of his voyages to Africa. He was returning with a load (one hundred and four) of slaves and a great storm broke upon them. The ship began to take on water where the sea had broken loose boards on the side. Newton and the crew pumped with all effort and baled water with cans, buckets and any other containers but to no avail. John began to wonder if God indeed was bringing this upon them to destroy all on board because of his wicked doings, his words I here quote; "I knew I was indeed a Jonah on the ship."

The boat seemed indeed doomed to sink with all its company for the storm seemed to worsen all the while. Newton tied himself to the wheel post with rope in order to try and control the ship. The sea swept across the deck with every wave carrying two of the crew to their deaths. There then happened the providential care of God as Newton suddenly felt a great desire to pray though never attempting such before. He first prayed for those slaves deep in the hold of the ship chained together, then for the crew and last for himself though feeling it would serve no purpose for himself for he now saw himself as a hell deserving sinner.

In a short time the sea calmed, the moon appeared and the wind changed to a favorable position for the safety of the ship. While Newton was there on his knees a piece of board that had broken loose in the storm floated against his leg. He took the board to his cabin and wrote the first lines of *Amazing Grace*, finishing it after he arrived safely in port. There was at this time a wonderous change in his life and he was Blessed to finish the course of life as one of the greatest ministers of the Gospel that England ever knew. He died on Dec. 21st, 1807 and just before doing so answered his niece who was attending him when asked if all right; "I am satisfied with the Lord's will."

Amazing Grace is considered one of Newton's greatest poems but during his years of writing he composed over two hundred. The hymns of this man have been sung and still are today by every denomination known. He

left with the world a treasure of the work of God within and the power of expression in his writings.

There is in the church in London that he served twenty-eight years a mural tablet that he wrote the words of himself and reads thus.

John Newton, Clerk

*Once and infidel and libertine,
A servant of slaves in Africa,
Was, by the rich mercy of our
God
and Savior Jesus Christ,
Preserved, restored, pardoned,
and appointed to preach the faith
He had long labored to destroy,
Near sixteen years at Olmay in
Bucks,
And twenty eight years in this
Church.*

There are many who never knew nor saw Amazing Grace as originally written so I am enclosing a copy from the library of London sent me by Elder Alex McCall of Canada some years ago.

THE ORIGIN OF THE HYMN, "AMAZING GRACE"

John Newton, the celebrated English preacher and hymn writer, realized that he was a trophy of divine grace. A while before his death, a brother minister came to have breakfast with him. Family prayers followed the meal. Mr. Newton's sight had almost failed him, and he was unable to read. He sat and listened to his friend

as he read the 15th chapter of I Corinthians. When the tenth verse was read, "By the Grace of God I am what I am," Mr Newton began to speak: "I am not what I ought to be. Ah! How imperfect and deficient! I am not what I wish to be. I abhor what is evil, and I would cleave to what is good. I am not what I hope to be soon. Soon I shall put off, with mortality, all sin and imperfection. Though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be; I can truly say that I am not what I once was, a slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle, and acknowledge, by the grace of God I am what I am."

John Newton could say that with conviction and joy. What had he once been? When he was seven years old, he lost his mother. A little later, he went to sea with his dad and learned all the evils of the seaman's life. Still later, he was forced into the Navy. He deserted, but was caught and stripped and beaten until the blood flowed from his wounds. He had now become a hardened infidel. He fell in with African slave traders. He went from bad to worse until he himself was sold as a slave. It was a Negro woman who bought him, and she gloried in her power over him. She made him depend for his food on the crusts she tossed under the table. He had fallen to the depths of human degradation. And yet the grace of God found him, and saved him, and made him one of the greatest ministers of Christ, and a writer of hymns that have stirred the hearts of men the world over. Truly, he could say, "I am not what I once was."

And truly he could say, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

Knowing this do you wonder at John Newton's message in the grand old hymn:

"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound.

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind, but now I see."

When we read this account of John Newton's life, we can understand why he wrote the nine verses (along with the regularly sung verses) which are so seldom used today. Read carefully the nine "missing" verses:

"AMAZING GRACE"

*In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear;
Till a new object met my sight
And stopped my wild career.*

*I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood;
Who fixed His languid eyes on
me
As near His cross I stood.*

*Sure, never till my latest breath,
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His
death,
Though not a word He spoke.*

*My conscience felt and owned
the guilt,
And plunged me in despair;*

*I saw my sins His blood had
shed,*

And helped to nail Him there.

*Alas, I knew not what I did,
But all my tears were vain;
Where could my trembling soul
be hid,
For I the Lord had slain!*

*A second look He gave that said,
I freely all forgive!
This blood is for thy ransom
paid,
I died that thou mayest live.*

*The Lord has promised good to
me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.*

*Yes, when this flesh and heart
shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease;
I shall possess within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.*

*The earth shall soon dissolve
like snow
The sun forbear to shine,
But God who called me here be-
low
Shall be forever mine.*

(Selected from the "Baptist Examiner," June 29, 1974, page 5.)

John 1:1

*In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and
the Word was God.*

CORRESPONDENCE

Signs of the Times:

I feel the Lord, once he has quickened us Eph. 2:5, chosen us, Eph. 1:4, predestined us Eph. 1:5, drew us John 6:44, called us 2 Tim. 1:9; He may very well use us as instruments or servants to do as He would direct us. I feel we must be directed and prompted to do His will and would never be able to do it on our own. A man's way is not in himself nor in a man to direct his steps Jer. 10: 23-24. A servant must do what his master says. Does an instrument or servant have a choice?

Once He has quickened, prompted, directed, touched, whatever word you prefer, then and only then, are we able, with the help of God and holy spirit to bear good fruit, do good works, etc. Noah and his family were spared by the grace of God, all men are sinners, God did not have to spare him and direct him to build an ark. They were told what to do Gen. 6:14.

Acts 9:1 Paul here breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. Paul thought he was doing a service to God and I don't think any man could have changed his mind. Did he or could he have chosen to do different of his own free will? No, the Lord had to reveal Himself to Paul and direct him to go to the city and there you will be told what to do. Acts 9:6 He was an instrument, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My

name Acts 9:15. A slave or tool or servant, so to speak, to do His will. Paul was under compulsion to preach 1 Cor. 9:16-17. No choice, willing or unwilling Ananias was directed and sent to Paul by the Lord Acts 9:10 and 9:17. He did not do this on his own, he was told, directed, chosen, whatever word you like, to do this by the Lord. You might want to notice, only after all this, was he baptized 9:18 God had already chosen him, baptism does not save. Cornelius and Peter were told what to do Acts 10:3-5 Peter did not choose to obey, he had to be told or directed what to do and said "no" at first. Acts 10:13-14.

Surely you don't think that David just happened to be at the battlefield with his brothers when he slew the giant? No, he was brought up to do this by God. Predestined to do this and be king. Everything about David was written in the book before David was born Psalm 139:16. Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.

The holy scriptures are for the men of God only. The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit 1 Cor. 2:14, but will choose darkness over light John 3:19. It does not depend on the man that wills or the man who runs, but on God, who has mercy Rom. 9:16 for this scripture says to Pharaoh, For this reason I raised you up 9:17 He has mercy on who He desires and hardens who He desires Rom. 9:18 The thing molded will not decide to be saved. Does not the potter have the right to

make one honorable and one to dishonor? Rom. 9:21 They have no choice. Some for destruction and some for glory Rom. 9:22-23 For all men? No, only to those who are chosen, Paul endures for these, 2 Tim. 2:10. And these who will go away to eternal punishment (goats) and the righteous to eternal life (the sheep) Matt. 25:46 All the Father gives me shall come to me John 6:37 All that He gives me I lose nothing John 6:39. Jesus came not to do His own will, but God's will John 6:38. Nothing can change God's will, not one name will be added to or taken out of the book of life. God said I will not take you out of the book of life Rev. 3:5

It is quite clear to me this choice was made by God before the foundation of the world, before any was born or did any works, good or bad, and was done solely by the grace of God and the good pleasure of His will, for we are His workmanship created in Jesus Christ for good works which God prepared before hand Eph. 2:10 sealed Eph. 1:13 Any good choice or good works, etc. must come from God, not of ourselves. Every good and perfect thing is declared a gift of God James 1:17 Repentance is His gift Acts 5:31 Faith is His gift. Love, hope, and faith and all Christian graces, the fruit of the spirit Gal. 5:22-23 Jesus Christ said to His disciples, you did not choose me, I chose you. Your salvation is secure and safe with God and as Paul said no power anywhere (that includes your puny and weak power) can change it Rom. 8:38-39 I will not take you out of the book of life Rev. 3:5

The antichrist would fool even the elect if it were possible. So as to deceive, if it were possible, the elect Matt. 24:24 It is not possible, show me anywhere the bible says have faith in yourself, trust yourself. I will show you where it says not to 2 Cor. 1:9 We should not trust ourselves, but in God who raises the dead and delivers us. Don't be a fool, we can do nothing on our own. No man can come to me except the Father in heaven draw him, not of him who willeth or runneth Rom. 9:16.

My eye tires of looking up scriptures so I will say a few words of my own. Of what shall you teach? Teach Jesus Christ, born of a virgin, scorned and crucified for our sins, raised from the dead, ascended to heaven and will come again on that glorious day for all of God's children. The chosen ones, the ones created to honor, and the ones created of dishonor to destruction. He will teach them to love one another, to forgive one another, and to help one another. Teach them of the patience and love of God for His chosen (not all men) as I have shown you with scripture.

He will teach them that not one name in the book of life got there by their own doing, not one of his own merit to have a place in heaven. He paid for it all, He and only He, nothing you could do will have anything to do with it.

I would have rejected all of this 10 or 15 years ago, I believed as you believe, but was never, for some reason, satisfied and I cried out almost daily for understanding. I hope the Lord unplugged my ears and opened my

eyes. I have been made to understand that I will never understand all. Now we know in part, but when the perfect comes the partial will be done away 1 Cor. 13:9-10 The Bible may seem to contradict itself, but it does not, we just don't understand all.

A servant of God; I hope and pray.

Russ Erbaugh
Rt. 1, Box 132 - Ipava, Ill.

Dear Editors of the
Signs of the Times:

I just felt impressed with a desire, to write a few lines of explanation to you, of my feelings, concerning your dedication of effort, in your editing, and correcting misspelled words (especially my own), in writings sent to you. My awareness of my poor spelling, along with that of being able to erase some of my misplaced words; are my reasons, for my use of pencil, instead of pen. I do feel very sure, that your efforts in getting the Signs out to us, must be tiring and maybe even frustrating at times; and so, I do wish to thank each of you, (I hope) from the depth of my heart; for I do receive much comfort from reading and re-reading those precious writings in the Signs; and especially, those that be a witness, to what I feel. But, while I do desire to thank you Brethren, for all your efforts in your endeavor: I feel it of uppermost importance, that I be enabled to thank our God, for giving you all a mind to do, and His furnishing you all things necessary, for its completion; and His

enabling this poor worm, to receive some comfort from its so being. So once again, thank you all so very much. As much as be, in accord with His Holy will, may His visits with you, and me, and all His children, bring comfort to our (if I could be one amongst you) souls, and brighten our precious hope in our Lord, and keep us ever loving both Him and our Brethren, and all this be in the name of Jesus Christ and for His sake AMEN.

Troy G. Shepard

To the Dear Editors of the Signs:

Question, - What could have been God's purpose in and for, having let sin into this world?; Well, do these, of His inspired words, not somewhat, give an answer; where sin abounds, grace does much more abound; and to His chosen vessels, - My grace is sufficient for thee; and By grace are ye saved etc.; and also, for to make His power known, in His school of grace, wherein all His chosen vessels, do become enrolled by Him, for their good, and for His glory; I believe so. I believe, all who have tasted of His greatness and goodness, would gladly agree, God is full of grace; and so, in light of that; were there no sinning in this world, by His chosen vessels; what part or purpose, would or could, His grace serve? again - by grace are ye saved etc; and further still, if none had ever sinned; from what, would or could any be saved? Now, it is surely not my intention here, to in any sense of the meaning of words, of trying to defend sin; nor to in any way or man-

ner, lessen the awfulness of sin in mankind; but only, to give my view, as to God's purpose in it so being here. For, as is my understanding, and my belief, and feelings; except for what God had and has a purpose in it being here, then there exists absolutely no possibility of its existence. Had the vessels of His mercy never sinned, what could have been His purpose, for having sent His beloved Son down upon this earth?; for, according to the Scriptures; His beloved Son Jesus Christ, came down for a specific purpose, that being, to save His people from their sins; of which, He did surely do. I feel and believe, and all whatsoever God does, is for a (His) purpose; and each and all shall surely serve that very purpose for as God is God and beside Him, there is no God, and that all power (the only source of all strength) that is, is only that ordained of God; and therefore is, entirely under God's complete control at all times; and therein, it would seem to me, to be firmly and unalterably established, that there could exist no thing or nothing, outside God Himself, what could alter or change any thing, from its set and established course; and furthermore, God is God and He changeth not.

As it has been with me in the past, so was it the same with me this time, concerning this writing; that question, as to whether I ought to, or ought not to write, whenever these things are bearing upon my mind and feelings; and also, these questions come to mind, just what or who do you (me) think you are, to even consider, writ-

ing upon so sacred a subject?; what is your motive or intent, while writing?; are you expecting some personal gain, or recognition from others, as might cause them, to boast of you in some way or manner? But I was just reminded, of what I heard an Elder say, many years ago; when some one or more came to him, after his discourse, wherein he was greatly blessed to speak; and apparently, were praising him; the Elder said, please do not pat me on the back, as if I had done some great thing, for I myself, will do more than enough of that. I do so hope and desire to be kept, so as my motive for writing, would not be, from a desire for self praise; for I feel, such would be, a most awful frame of mind to be in. Mark this, just so sure as flesh is flesh, its very nature is, to hunger for and love its own being praised. But satan or the devil, is no more unworthy of such praise, and is in fact the instigator of it. And whenever our fleshly nature, is desirous of this praise, that is what I call, walking hand in hand, with satan or the devil. Now even though, all that being true; (and in no part, giving any excuse to man, for his transgressions; nor any good marks to satan or the devil); and yet still, is it not true, that satan or the devil, is fulfilling to exactness, that very purpose for which God had in and for his being here? and also, is man's carnal nature, not reacting to satan's influence, in exact like manner, as God foresaw and knew that it would?; Yes, I believe so. Now, what rightful room does this leave, for man's boasting, of either himself, or any other

man or group of mankind? none, I feel. For no man of himself, can preach the word of God, than can he reach up to heaven with his arm, and bring God down from His throne. Therefore, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, the Three-in-One God; is the One and only name, ever worthy, of any and all praise, honor and glory, both now and forever more, AMEN: and yet, all that being true, does in no way shape or form, lessen that extreme importance, of that love, each of His children, ought to have for the others. For, if God loves us, that love wherewith He first loved us, will surely, in His time, work in us, that same love, for both Him and His; For it is all that same love, and from that same source, from God. There is no other source, from which such love could come; and that love is so effective, that there is not enough devils on earth or in hell, to take away that love entirely, from one who has received it. Now, what manner of love is this love, referred to here; it surely is not that natural love we have for parents, or relatives, or wife or husband, or our children, or any other natural physical love we may have; But it is (if we have it) a Holy Spiritual love, of which, was and is God's gift unto us; and therein lieth, that absolute assurance and certainty, that love could not possibly be for the fleshly body of a Brother or Sister in the church, but it is by reason, of having seen evidence, of the Holy Spirit having worked within One; for such love, extends to all that be Holy; and that love for one, is in no way or manner, influenced or effected by,

whether or not, that one's face be wrinkled, he or she be rich or poor in worldly goods; or they be (what we call) handsome, pretty or homely, in their natural features. For this love is, a God implanted inner love; and right along within that God given love, goes an eye, and an ear, that is enabled to see and hear Holy sights and sounds; therefore, that inner eye and ear, looks and listens, for that inner sight and sound, and not that outer sight or sound, that all the world can see and hear, with the natural eye and ear. And so, my belief of these things, as being Holy truths, and within my sweet and precious hope, goes a desire, that I might be kept in such a way, that my expressions of my love for the Brethren, might be understood, as not being for the outer man, but, for that inner man, or that inner implantation of God, of which I feel, I have seen outwardly expressed from them. Now, if what I have thus far written, be the Holy truth, then He has already blessed them; and if they not be Holy truths, they are already condemned; If the latter, may God have mercy on my soul; Nonetheless, may His name be praised AMEN: Now, what I have written thus far, may have somewhat, not kept directly to that subject purposed in its beginning; I can only say to that; I have written, as it came to my mind and feelings; and so, if it be in accord with the Holy truth; then, that is what is of the uppermost importance, to this poor sinning worm of the dust of the earth. And so I say to you, (if I be in that number), try to look over my many mistakes in spelling or otherwise, with

a mantel of charity. In as much as be, in accord with the will of God; may our love for each other, and all that be Holy, continue, throughout our remaining days here in this lowground of sin and sorrow, and ever after this world is no more.

Troy G. Shepard
103 E. Tateway Rd.
Kitty Hawk, N.C. 27949

33 Hillcrest Ave.
Roanoke, Va. 24012
Jan. 7, 1994

Dear Precious Ones in The Lord:

Enclosed is our check for two years renewal, and an extra \$2.00. It is a check of \$20.00.

We love and value the dear writings that appear in our Signs of the Times. And we sometimes realize that a lot of effort is put into it's publication from start to finish. Yet the Signs is from cover to cover its own expression of love and praise. It is sweet fellowship for each other and all praise, honor and glory to our Saviour. We are glad it has remained that way all through the years and we hope it always will! May the valuable truth as it is in Christ Jesus continue to be the source of loving encouragement to God's people. And though we do not know when, where or how, we are sure it will when our Saviour purposes it to be.

With Love and Fellowship,
Mrs. J.B. Ferguson,
Sister Mamie Rose
(for both) The Fergusons

ARTICLES

WHAT IS TRUTH? TRUTH IN ITS PURITY, POWER AND PRODUCTS

By J.C. Philpot
Truth in its Products

This brings me to my third point, which is, Truth in its products, or its fruits and effects.

I said that God had lodged His truth in three depositories: the Person of His Son, the Scriptures of truth, and the hearts of His people. Now, was His truth dead or dormant in His dear Son? Or is His truth dead and dormant in the Word of His grace? How, then, can it be dead and dormant in believing hearts? If, then, God has lodged His truth in the hearts of His people, it is His will that they should manifest the fruits and effects of His grace in their lips and in their lives. I have no opinion of a loose and careless profession, and I have a worse opinion of a loose and careless life. Depend upon it, a loose and careless walk, conduct and conversation never bore the stamp of God upon it. A man may slip and fall, and be by the grace of God recovered: but if there be anything more than another which has cast discredit upon truth in its purity, upon the doctrines of grace, it has been the loose, licentious, careless, ungodly lives of many of its professors. Therefore look to it. If you hope you know truth in its purity, and if you have felt truth in its power, look to it, and examine well

whether there are corresponding fruits and effects manifested in your lips and lives. Time and opportunity will allow me to name only a few of them.

1. What, then, is the first main fruit and effect of receiving truth in its power? Separation from the world. The first precept to which a promise is attached is this: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Where, then, there is no separation from the world, there is no manifested interest in that promise; and if you believe that you are a son or daughter of the Lord Almighty, and have not yet come out from the world, whether dead in sin or dead in profession you do but hold a lie in your right hand, if this be your faith. Such a faith and such a profession, if Scripture be true, are not of God, "for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

But how can we be said to have overcome the world unless we are separate from it? Separated from it, we overcome it; united to it, it overcomes us. Separation, therefore, full, lasting unqualified separation must ever be a fruit of God's work upon the soul - the sure effect of receiving truth in its power. I know what God's grace did for me in separating me more than thirty years ago from the world, and from everything dear to nature and the flesh. I know, too, what sacrifices this separation entailed upon me, and how

it compelled me to sacrifice my position in life and all my prospects in life, and abandon the prizes of all my studies and labours for many years at a public school and the university when just within my reach - prizes which were my just due, and on which my eyes had long been fixed. Yet I was compelled so to speak and act as to separate me eventually from all the cherished projects and prospects of my worldly ambition, and to give up everything through feeling the power of the truth of God in my soul. I always therefore contend that separation from the world and everything worldly is one of the first fruits and effects of the grace of God in the heart.

2. The fear of God, as manifested by the possession and actings of a tender conscience, is another fruit and effect of truth in its power. And O what a blessing it is to have the fear of God in a tender conscience! It is spoken of in the Scriptures as being "a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." If, then, you have the fear of God in your breast, you have a fountain of life; and what is that fountain but the "well of water" of which our Lord spoke as "springing up into everlasting life?" Having then that fountain of life, you depart from the snares of death; and as this fountain is not a muddy pool but a springing well, it will water your own soul, it will water the souls of others, it will make you fruitful in every good word and work, and will at last issue in all the bliss and blessedness of everlasting life.

3. Cleaving to the truth of God, His people, His cause, His ordinances,

His servants, His house, His promises, His precepts, and everything connected with God and godliness, and that in a spirit of love and affection from a deed sense of their value and a warm realization of their preciousness, is a mark also and fruit of knowing the truth of God in its power. Wherever the Lord by His own secret work upon the heart makes His truth precious, the very first effect is love - love to the Lord and to His people. "Whom having not seen ye love." "We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." There is such a love to the Lord and His people in that spring-time of the soul when Jesus first makes Himself known and precious. O there is a spring-time of the soul like our present month of May. How beautiful the country looked yesterday as I came up by the train from Croydon! Nature, like a young blooming bride, shone and glittered in all the greenery and bravery of her new apparel. So is there a spring in the soul when every grace of the Spirit shines and glitters with an unspeakable beauty and freshness - the day of its espousals, when it first embraces the happiness of its virgin love. And in that spring-time of the soul, what love there is to God's dear people, what love to God's truth, what love to everything connected with God and His Word!

4. Uprightness of conduct, integrity before God and man, honourable actions and transactions in our business (if in business), obedience to God's revealed, preceptive will, in all the various relations of life, are fruits

also of receiving the truth of God in its power. Where grace lays hold of a man's heart and comes into his conscience in purity and power, it must make him an upright, consistent man. He must be an honest man, or he is nothing. And if an honest man, he will carry his honesty into his business; he will carry his integrity into all the walks of life; he will make it manifest day by day by his conduct and conversation that uprightness and integrity are stamped upon him by a divine hand; and even the world itself will acknowledge it.

This recalls to my mind a good man, a deacon of a church in the country, though but a farm labourer, who was called under my ministry when I was in the Church of England. The farmer, and he was in a large way of business, came to him one day with tears in his eyes and said, "O, you are the only man I can trust upon my farm. They are robbing me in all directions. Will you take the oversight of the men?" He hated the man's religion, but the only one he could trust of all those by whom he was surrounded was this godly deacon now gone home. Was not that a testimony to a despised religion that its professor was alone worthy of trust? So if grace has laid hold of our heart, it will make us upright in our conduct, in the church and in the world, and influence our movements at home and abroad. And though in these days perhaps a man who truly fears God can scarcely live, or at least much thrive, when all around are engaged in dishonest or dishonourable practices, yet to part

with his integrity is to part with both his conscience and his hope; he will therefore and must be an upright man, come what will.

And so in the various relationships of life - as a father, as husband and a faithful friend. Thus you may follow him through the walks of life and say, "Here is grace; see one who fears God above many; it is stamped upon the man. You can see he is what he professes to be, and that the grace of God is in him of a truth."

Thus I have endeavoured in a feeble way to give you an answer to the question - "What is truth?" I have endeavoured to show you truth in its purity, truth in its power, and truth in its products, or its fruits and effects. Can you set to your seal that these things are true? Are they things, the life, reality and power of which you have felt in your own breast, so that you can say, "Yes, I do know these things, or some good measure of them, by vital experience; for blessed be God I have felt them in my soul, and I am glad to have heard this morning the answer to What is truth? so as not only to receive it from your lips, but to be able to bear witness that it is a right answer from God's own attestation to the power of His truth in my heart."

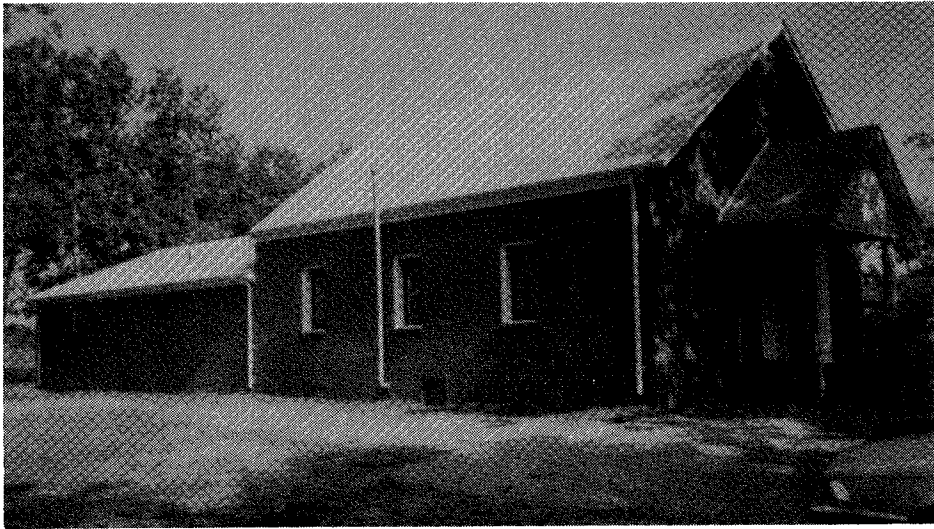
Gospel Standard: May 1993
Sent in by Elder Noel Conner

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." - 2 Corinthians iv. 17.

O ye suffering saints of God! ye tried and afflicted children of the most High! raise up your thoughts as God may enable you - lift up your eyes, and see what awaits you. Are you tried, tempted, exercised, afflicted? It is your mercy. God does not deal so with every one. It is because you are his children, that he lays on you his chastening hand. He means to conform you to the image of his Son in glory, and therefore he now conforms you to the image of his Son in suffering. 'O but,' you say, 'I cannot believe it is so!' No; if you could, it would not be much of a trial. This is the trial of faith - to go groaning on, struggling on, sorrowing on, sighing on; believing against unbelief, hoping against hope; and still looking to the Lord, though there is everything in nature to damp the hopes and expectations of your waiting souls. Yet all will end well with the people of God. Their life here is a life of temptation, of suffering and trial; but heaven will make amends for all. And if our faith is now tried as "with fire," it will one day "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." In that day when the secrets of all hearts will be brought to light, the faith of thousands will be found to be little else than presumption; but the faith of God's dear family will then be crowned with "praise and honour and glory;" and they shall see the Lamb as he is face to face, when all tears are wiped away from all faces.

J.C. Philpot

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



CANAAN PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

CANAAN PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Canaan Primitive Baptist Church was established on March 8, 1913. Land for the church was donated by Mrs. Pattie Thomas Dodd, Elder W. Robert Dodd's mother.

The first building's wood frame, constructed in 1913 was badly in need of repairs by 1956 so a cinder block building was erected on a part of the old foundation using some materials from the old building.

In 1990 with a generous gift from Sister Ruth Blain, in memory of her husband, Brother Ernest Blain who was a member of Canaan, an addition and renovation was added to this building, completed in Sept. 1992. Sister Ruth Blain is also a member of Canaan Primitive Baptist Church.

The records show that Elder George W. Hundley was her first pastor and Brother R. Y. Blain Deacon.

After the ordination of Elder W. Robert Dodd on August 15, 1914 he became assistant pastor and in 1925 was called and remained permanent pastor until June 17, 1939. Elder George Doss served for several years, next Elder Raymond Payne served from June 1944 until Sept. 1963. Elder Rufus Brown served the church for a few months following Elder Payne. Elder Robert A. May was pastor from 1964 until 1976 due to his failing health he was unable to attend meetings anymore.

On November 5, 1977 Elder Julian R. Williams was called and is our present faithful, beloved pastor. Deacons are Brothers Harvey Wood and Fred Murphy.

Canaan Church is located on State Road No. 844 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Meetings are held each second Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Communion services are held in June and November.

VOICES OF THE PAST

From Elder Lambert's Book,
"Tried In The Furnace."

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT
Old Faith Contender,
September 15, 1947



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

"What then? shall we sin because we are not under the law but under Grace? God forbid. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness." Romans 6:15, 16.

Before regeneration we were servants of sin. Our lusts were reigning over us. We loved it to such an extent as to be in full agreement and unity. In this charitable state lust is conceived and brings forth sin, and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death. In regeneration it pleased God to take from us this stony heart of flesh, which was so enticed by lust, and to give us the heart of flesh, which has no affection for lust. It pleased

Him to write His laws as commandments in this new heart which makes manifest this sin. "The commandment came, sin revived and I died" stated Paul. I believe Paul died to the enticement of this lust. After this time he no longer served sin willingly but loved righteousness. Yet sin dwelled in him. He was no longer so enticed by lust as to love it with his whole heart. His desire was to live righteously; but he was conscious of the presence of sin; for he expresses himself in Romans 7:17-20, "Now then it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me; for I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

We delight in the law of God after the inward man but we still bear about the body of death. We serve the law of God with our minds but with the flesh we serve the law of sin. This presence of sin in our mortal bodies is made manifest to us by the Spirit. The Spirit causes us to realize our wretched condition and enables us to pray for deliverance. When it pleases God to work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure we are made to realize it is solely by grace and we are blessed to be thankful to Him for these blessings.

Thence, after regeneration grace reigns over its subjects to produce the fruits of the Spirit. The greatest of these fruits is love, love of God, love

to God and love to the brethren. This same love that God loves us is reciprocal. It causes us to love Him with this same love. It also embraces the brethren. God's people do love one another. How can you love God whom you have not seen if you love not your brethren whom you have seen? Another fruit of the Spirit is joy. None but sinners who have experienced the exceeding sinfulness of their sins and their inability to extricate themselves from its penalty, power and consequences, can appreciate and realize the joy of being delivered from sin by God's amazing grace. What a joy for a chief sinner to be remembered and loved! It is joyful for brethren to meet together.

That Spirit produces peace. There is such rest experienced by that troubled soul which has been calmed by the still small voice that whispers sweet peace. What blessed peace to be remembered so graciously. One who has been convinced so thoroughly that hell would be his just abiding place realizes when a ray of hope of deliverance shines in his darkened and troubled soul. This peace flows from one to another. God's people strive for peace and are peacemakers because they realize the undesireableness of troubles. Those who are wrought upon by God's Spirit are longsuffering. They esteem each other higher than themselves, thus forbear one another's weaknesses. They forgive each other his trespasses realizing that God has forgiven so much. If God has been so gracious as to forgive me of my many transgres-

sions how can I not forgive a brother his trespasses, seeing his trespasses are so little and insignificant compared to my sins?

God's Spirit produces gentleness. God's people are kind to each other and to all with whom they come in contact. They are not harsh in conversation or dealings. They are not offensive even in rebuke. A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger. It were better that a millstone be hanged about your neck and you be drowned in the sea than to offend one of these little ones. May God grant us to be gentle and kind to each other.

When it pleases God to work in His people both to will and to do of His good pleasure they are good. Their walk and conversation are godly. They walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. Their conduct is upright and commendable, even though that it does not so appear to them.

This spirit produces faith. We are confident that God will fulfill His promises. We feel that God will finally save us in heaven. We trust in the efficiency of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and His righteousness. We have confidence in brethren of their sincerity and fidelity.

God's people are meek. They had rather yield than to cause trouble or confusion. They do not ride some particular hobby-horse or opinion of their own that they feel might bring discord among brethren. I do not like the expression, "I will stand alone before I will submit to such." That spirit is not

akin to meekness. A "holier than thou" attitude is not characteristic of God's people. Their life is tempered with these graces. They are not fanatical in practice or conversation and in their dealings moderation is practiced.

Paul instructs the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 5:3,4, "But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you as becometh saints: neither filthiness nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks." Is it then godly that our conversation run along these lines? May He awake us out of sleep and bid us rise and walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise!

Elder E.J. Lambert

THE VICARIOUS SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

The question often arises in our mind and seems to be of great importance, how God can be just, and the justifier of sinners, since it is written, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to God?" - Prov. xvii. 15. Yet in the sufferings of our Redeemer, we see one who is holy, harmless, separate from sinners, as the just and holy one of Israel, who is his own most sacred person knew no sin, who was immaculately pure, made sin for us, bearing the sins of many, numbered with the transgressors, condemned to die the just for the unjust, and the wicked freely justified through the redemp-

tion that is in him. Is not this a mystery that the angels desire to look into? This mystery is not obviated by the contemplation of the sovereign right of God to do all his pleasures; for justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. He is a just God, and we are told that he "will by no means clear the guilty." Yet we see the vicarious sufferings of the spotless Lamb of God, when "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, 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 opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment [or as in the margin, He was taken away by distress and judgment, but] and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." - Isa. 53: 5-10.

In all that we have thus far noticed of the divine testimony the sufferings of our dear Redeemer seem to have been vicarious, or substitutional. One who is just and holy suffering for others who were guilty and righteously condemned by the holy, righteous and just law of God; but unless we can find something more than substitution in the sufferings of our Lord, we shall fail

to discover the justice of the just suffering for the transgressions of the guilty.

Should a citizen of this world commit a crime against the laws of his country, no principle of common law or justice would allow an innocent person to bear the penalty in his room as a substitute. Such a substitution would be a gross violation of justice. Should a criminal convicted of murder, condemned to suffer the extreme penalty of the law, procure an innocent person to suffer death in his room and stead, it would not meet the demand of justice; and if such a substitute should be accepted and executed, it would be a clear case of murder, an outrage against law and justice, and would by no means make the transgressors any less guilty. Substitutions or vicarious suffering alone could never put away sin, meet the stern demands of the holy law of God, or answer the ends of justice. There must therefore be found a principle of relationship identifying the sin-bearing sufferer, before we can trace the justice of God in laying the iniquity of his chosen people on the sinless victim, who himself bare our sins in his own body on the cross. For this relationship let us search.

An owner or shepherd of a flock of sheep may in strictest justice be held for the trespass of his flock. He alone has the right to redeem them because they are his own sheep, and were his before they went astray and committed the trespass for which they are held by law. He is the shepherd whose own the sheep are, and the law justly

holds him responsible for expiation. So Jesus says, "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." - John x. 11. And the dread command is sounded from the throne of God, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd," &c. - Zech. xiii. 7. Here is justice and equity. The sheep have trespassed, and the unoffending Shepherd suffers. But, in the absence of this relationship where would be the justice? Had it been the sheep of some other owner, could justice have laid on him their iniquity? But now as we have seen, "All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Should a wife become indebted to the merchant, or to any other creditor, the relationship subsisting affords the only ground on which the husband is held responsible for the amount of the debt; but the law could not in justice substitute another woman's husband and make him responsible for the amount. In the absence of the relation of husband and wife neither law nor justice would allow the demand. Our Lord Jesus Christ claims his church as the bride, the Lamb's wife. He says he is married unto her, and in that relation holds himself responsible for her debts. And by his apostle he says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." But apart from this relationship is a husband bound to love, by substitution, and give himself for some other husband's wife, as for any but his own wife? Christ loved

and gave himself for his own wife, the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. - Eph. v. 25-27.

Children may be involved in trouble, trespass, or debt, and the father is held responsible, because he is their father; not merely as a substitute for them, but by virtue of the relation which he bears to them he is held in law; if it were only by substitutions, he might be held as well for the debts or trespass of all other children, as for his own. All whom Christ has redeemed are his children. He is there everlasting Father, and was held responsible for them as such. A surety is also held in justice for the payment of the bankrupt debtors for whom he has endorsed. But for capital offenses, in which life is required, and for which death is the penalty, still nearer and more vital relation is required; neither the husband for the wife, the parent for the child, nor the surety for the debtor, can be accepted. Should a wife or son or daughter be convicted of murder, no innocent husband or parent can be accepted as a substitute for the offender. A vicarious sufferer would not meet the demand of law and justice. But while Jesus sustains all the relations to his church which we have named, and in them all his sufferings may be regarded as vicarious, there is a more vital connection in which he is identified and

held to answer all the demands of the law and justice of God.

The church for which our Lord laid down his life, is his body, and he is her head, (Eph. i. 23) and as her head he was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Isa. 53:12. The transgressors of the divine law for whom he was stricken were all the members of his body. The iniquity of them all was demanded at his hand. If the members of a body commit a crime involving life, it can not be expiated by cutting off such members from body. Suppose a man's hand has plunged a dagger into the heart of a person, that hand if it were cut off would not satisfy the demand of the law which requires the life of the murderer. The hand could not have committed the murder if it were not connected vitally with the body, nor could the body without a head commit the act; therefore the head is justly held for the whole body of which he is the head, the shepherd for the sheep, the husband for the wife, and the parent for the child.

And thus we see the Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and express image of his person, in his mediatorial humiliation, made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, made flesh and dwelling among his members, demanding of his disciples who were slow to believe all that the prophets have written, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And responsive to that important interrogative, positively declar-

ing "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." - Luke xxiv. 26, 46, 47. The point to which we desire to call special attention is the necessity of a vital relationship between Christ who makes the sacrifice, and the church for whom the sacrifice was made, to make the sacrifice available to them. If all the holy angels of heaven had been offered for the transgressions of man, such a vicarious or substitutional offering could not have been accepted by the law of God, and must have utterly failed to redeem the transgressors from their sins. Boaz could not have redeemed the inheritance of Elimelech, if he had not been vitally related, as a near kinsman who by vital relationship had in himself the right of redemption. - Ruth ix. 1-9. If our neighbor's sheep have trespassed and are lawfully held for the damage which has been sustained, none but the owner of the sheep can, simply by paying the ransom demanded, make them his own sheep.

The spiritual, eternal life which was with the Father co-existent with his eternal being, was given to his children, in the Son, even that life which was, and is, and forever shall continue to be hid with Christ in God, and constitutes a vital relationship which secures to him the right to take on him the seed of Abraham, when that seed had in the flesh transgressed the law of God, and thus identify himself with

them in their flesh, partake of the same flesh and blood of which they are partakers, assume a body made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, in which to suffer and bear their sins in his own body, be put to death in the flesh, that he might redeem them from the sins of their flesh, and bestow on them that eternal life which is the gift of God through him. In his begotten and born of God, even as in his supreme, unbegotten and self-existent Deity he is One with the Father in the Godhead. In his begotten Sonship he is the Mediatorial Head of the church, and the "First born among many brethren." Of these brethren, it is written, "For it became him, for whom all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children [brethren of him that sanctifieth, and children which God hath given him, and whom he is not ashamed to call BRETHREN] are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise [or in like manner] took part of the same," &c.

Their partaking of flesh and blood no more made them the children of God whom he gave to Christ, than

Christ's incarnation made him the Son of God. Christ in his Mediatorial Sonship existed with the Father from everlasting, but was made flesh and dwelt among his children in the flesh when the fullness of the time for his incarnation had come; then, as he himself has declared, "I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." - John viii. 42. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." - John xvi. 28. Also, John xvii. 6-8, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee: for I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."

This record of the Son of God, as proceeding from, and subject to the will and control of the Godhead, we understand to relate to his Mediatorial, or begotten Sonship, and by no means in disparagement of his unbegotten, independent, eternal Godhead; for he is not only the Word which in the beginning was WITH God, but he is also the Word which in the beginning WAS GOD, and that is the most unlimited sense of the words. In his begotten Sonship we understand that he is the Elder Brother of all who are born of God, and the First Born among many brethren. In his Godhead undivided and indivisible, there being but One

God. The head of Christ is God, even as the head of the body or church is Christ. Therefore as the atoning sacrifice for his people we regard him as being infinitely superior to a mere substitute. The atoning sacrifice was made by Christ for his own body, the church, therefore he, in treading the wine press, says, "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. lxiii. 5. Whatsoever is done to any, even to the least of his members is done unto him.

(Editorial by Elder Gilbert Beebe July 1, 1881).

CONTRIBUTIONS

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PSALM 8

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Urbane Landers. He preceded her in death on July 26, 1976. She lived in Texas and Oklahoma before moving to Coleman. Mrs. Lauders was a homemaker and a member of the Primitive Baptist Church.

Survivors include four daughters, Sybil Lauders Berry, and Pauline Lauders Roberts Stanley, both of Coleman. Patsy Lauders Berry of Abilene, Tx., Nan Lauders Miller of Royce City, Tx. and a son, Charles Jack Lauders of Auburn, Indiana. 15 grandchildren, 33 great - grandchildren and 2 great - great grandchildren.

Serving as pall bearers were grandsons - Dewayne Berry, Douglas Roberts, Jack Roberts, Johnnie Berry, Tony Berry and David Lauders. Honorary pall-bearers were grandsons-in-law. Roy Rhoads, Benny Barker, Bill Scott, Dickie Reid, Ralph Moten, Brian Rogers and Matthew Russell.

OBITUARIES

LUCILLE LAUDERS

Lucille Lauders, age 91, of Coleman died Tuesday, Jan. 4, 1994 at Coleman County Medical Center.

Funeral services were held at 2:00 p.m., Friday, Jan. 7, 1994 at Stevens Funeral Home Chapel with Elder Lynwood Jacobs officiating. Burial was at Coleman Cemetery under the direction of Stevens Funeral Home.

Mrs. Lauders was born Nov. 1, 1902 in Stephens County, Texas, the daughter of the late J.J. and Belle Vick Sikes. On Nov. 2, 1921 she married Charles

FRANKIE JONES MARTIN

We, the Church at Banister Springs, humbly bow in submission to the will of Almighty God, in-as-much as it has pleased Him, to remove from our midst our beloved Sister Frankie Jones Martin. We believe, as Sister Martin believed, that there is a time to be born, and time to die. These times were established by Almighty God before the world began and as He thought so shall it come to pass and as He has commanded so shall it stand. God is unchangeable, He is just in all His works and ways

and there is none that can stay His mighty hand and there is none worthy to question Him. His will must be done both in heaven and in earth. He has given and He has taken away - Blessed be the name of the Lord God forever.

It pleased the Lord, by His grace and mercy, to deal with Sister Martin at a young age and on the 3rd Saturday in May 1941 united her with Banister Springs Church where she remained a good and faithful member for the rest of her life here on earth.

She was born into this world June 13, 1911, a daughter of Brother Joel Fletcher Jones and his precious wife Sarah Merricks Jones of Pittsylvania County, Virginia. She had one brother, Raleigh Jones, who predeceased her several years ago. She also has a surviving sister, Laila Dove of Danville, Virginia.

By the grace of God, Sister Frankie was united in marriage to Brother James Wesley Martin on April 18, 1927. To this union was born six children. One daughter, Dora Evelyn died as an infant. Five of the children survive: one son - Curtis Martin of Gretna, Virginia; four daughters - Sisters Ruth Taylor and Charlotte Hastings, both of Chatham, Virginia. She is also survived by 18 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren and 3 step-great-grandchildren.

True love, which can only come from the Lord, was manifested by Sister Martin for all, but especially her dear husband who predeceased her in death in 1969. She never ceased to

mourn her great loss of him but, her love for her family seemed to soothe her aching heart. She was always so glad when another baby was born into her family. She loved the Lord and the Church so much and all her many friends were precious to her. Sister Martin was in poor health for several of her final years. She became unable to stay by herself so her precious children took her to stay with them. She would stay with one awhile and then stay with another. They were good to her. It pleased the Lord to bless her to be with Sister Ruth Taylor at the time of her death. The Lord called for her and she obeyed in the night of October 14, 1993.

Sister Martin's funeral was held at Banister Springs Church on October 16, 1993, by her pastor Elder Melvin Shelton and Elder H.P. Somers, who she loved so much. Her body was taken to the Gretna Burial Park and laid to rest beside her precious husband.

We at Banister Springs Church commend the children, in-laws, grandchildren and all who assisted Sister Martin throughout her journey here in this world. May the Lord's grace and mercy be with all so that when that sweet day of the Lord appears, we shall be all gathered together with Sister Martin to meet the Lord and ever be with Him, like Him and be satisfied forever.

Written by one that she loved and one who loved her as a "Mother in Israel" - her pastor I hope,
Melvin R. Shelton

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., APRIL 1994

NO. 4

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

POEM

**Your tender heart is broken
There is but One who knows
No other one can measure
Just how deep it goes**

**The sorrow overwhelms you
And pulls you to the ground
You think your Hope has failed
you
No comfort can be found**

**But He will come and heal you
As time goes rolling past
And give to you the courage
For you to say at last**

**His will is truly perfect
His purposes are wise
His Way is far above ours
As high as are the skies**

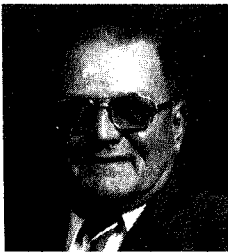
**The stream of grace and mercy
To you in kindness flows
No other one can measure
Just how deep it goes**

Anonymous

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EDITORIAL



ELDER C.B. DAVIS, JR.

Copy of a Sermon by Elder C.B. Davis, Jr. at the Smith River Association in 1993.

In October of 1968 the deacons of our home church asked me to speak. I made the attempt by using the 23rd Psalm and this morning it seems strongly on my mind.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters, He restoreth my soul: He

leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

David, as you Bible scholars are aware, was a shepherd from his early life, even when just a lad of a boy the care of the flock of sheep was in his hands. He writes this as if he were the sheep and he gives God all the praise, honor and glory as being the caretaker. And He is the caretaker of every sheep of promise, of every lamb of grace. So when he says, "*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,*" he means just that. He knows he is totally depraved as far as being able to care for himself - just as a natural sheep is. We know that he looks to the Lord as the source of peace and the source of comfort. Thus he shall not want. There is not a single one of you who - when God is manifest, and when you feel truly that He is your shepherd - has a desire left for anything except that His presence be with you and you desire that it come again and again.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." I don't know how many there are here in the sound of my voice that are familiar with sheep in the natural sense, but a sheep is a

strange and curious animal and so are we. We learn that in the spring of the year when the grass breaks out abundantly green and tender, the natural sheep will in just a few hours eat enough to bloat himself and die immediately. So what David is touching upon here is that He makes us willing to lie down in the green pastures of sin from which we have feasted throughout all the days of our time until such time as He shows Himself as our shepherd. He makes us willing to lie down right in the midst of that and be satisfied, knowing that indeed because He is the shepherd we shall not want.

"He leadeth me beside the still waters." Sheep will not drink from standing stagnant water. The only place that they will drink is a place where the water is trickling over the sand or gravel in the bed of the stream. Think about this, my beloved, in your own condition. Are you willing to drink, as it were, from the stagnant pools of the sins of this world? Are you willing to drink the stagnant fears and doctrines, if they might be called doctrines, that are set forth in this time world? No! You want to drink of the moving water. You want to drink of the living water. Last Sunday there was one down in the Staunton River Association who mentioned an occasion when there were two doves who were brought as a sacrifice and one of those doves was killed and the blood of that dove was sprinkled upon the waters. It was moving water, it was the evidence that because of the shedding of the blood there is the moving water, the water of life, on our behalf, every-

one of us, if I might include myself. And so we won't drink of the stagnant, sin-encrusted things of this world, in this life, for He has taught us that indeed therein there is death, just as He taught us that if we continually feast upon the green pastures of sin, it is nothing but death. And we know that death shall be upon us once. But there is another death that is promised - that is the second death and that is the death that we are so much concerned about. So we want no part of that. So we find Him then leading the sheep, leading me, beside the still waters. We know indeed that still water is deep water, dangerous water, and I say to you this morning that there are those pools of stagnant and contaminated theories of the world that indeed are dangerous and don't you forget it. If you take any part in it, you are dealing on dangerous ground. Thanks be unto God that because He is our shepherd, our great shepherd, that He has taken that desire away from us. And we can feel that, yes, *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."*

"He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." We know that indeed the sheep, the natural sheep is dependent upon the shepherd to lead him to the places where there is sustenance, to lead him in the path that is safe, to lead him in such a way that there shall be a time of rest when the end of the journey is over. We trust in His word in the self-same way that Christ has indeed restored our soul, for we know that with the transgres-

sion in the Garden of Eden, in essence, we were alienated from the very presence of God, never again to gain any sense of comfort and peace from Him until such time as He saw fit to send His son from the climes of glory to shed his blood on the cross and become He who would be between us and God as he sits today at the very throne of God making intercessions daily for his people. So it is in that sense that he felt that ***"He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake."*** A path of righteousness is a perfect path and though we ponder in our mind if we've ever had our feet thereon, yet we know as it pleases God He can direct our feet indeed to a path of righteousness. To a sheep it is that path that has been made smooth by those who traveled before, those who came the same way. If we are what we hope to be, my beloved, we trust that we are walking in the same path, the righteous path that Christ himself walked here on earth, that He has removed the stumbling blocks and that He has been our guarantee of a place of peace and rest when the journey is over. Thus we can lie down again in peace, knowing that ***"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."***

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." We know that, yes, we walk through the valley of the shadow of death every day as the sheep walk through the valley of the shadow of

death in nature - that which was above them on the side of the mountain in the form of the wolf and the bear and the lion. Indeed those things that are fearful we have on either side of us as we travel the journey of life. All of those things that are evil to us, if we should partake of them, we know indeed that again it would be nothing more than death, but thanks be unto God that He directs us in such a way that we fear no evil. As you heard in the foregoing, we are not afraid of each other but we fear the wrath of God. We don't have that fear that the world seems to have of mankind and we remember that Christ said on one occasion himself, ***"Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*** (Matthew 10:28). And so we have a sense of comfort and peace in this that in the end we shall find peace and rest and we shall be comforted.

And he said, ***"Thou art with me."*** What would we be, where would we be and how would we be if He was not with us this morning. We would all, each of us, be out in the world following after the ways of sin and transgression just as surely as we are breathing the breath of life today because except He keep us, except He be with us, we have no power to obtain merit with God. I know the world would have you believe and I had one to ask me sometime ago as I worked one day just last week, in fact - "I hear that you serve several churches." I said, "I am trying to by the grace of God, I do the

best I can, and that's all I can do, but I feel such a weakness." He said, "You shouldn't feel weak, you should rejoice because each time you go to serve one of those churches God is making a mark on the walls of glory on your behalf." And I wanted to say, "How foolish you are," but I didn't answer him as I was waiting on another customer. But I thought how frail, how vain is the mind of man to think that I, or he, or any other individual, could do anything to obtain merit with God because it all belonged to Him in the beginning and He chose His church, as you've heard, before the foundation of the world.

We find in the Book of Proverbs that the writer speaks of that in the 8th Chapter, I believe, when he writes that I was with Him even before the dust of the highest hill was laid; I was with Him daily rejoicing in his habitation, I was as one brought up with him. My beloved, we are the same age spiritually. It doesn't matter what age we might be when we come into the knowledge of the truth or when we can feel in some marvelous way to say, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." It doesn't matter how old we might be or how young we might be, spiritually we are the same age because God chose each of us, if I might include myself, at the same time before He ever created, as it were, this earth on which we dwell. We don't have to depend upon the vanity of our mind, the frailty of our bodies and our works. Think about it, my beloved, if an individual has to perform some work to enter the climes of glory, think about

those that are sick and infirm and not able to care for themselves as far as nature is concerned, where would they be? They'd be left as a sheep without pasture, but my beloved, it is not so. God has made all the plans, the arrangements have been certified in the blood of Jesus Christ and He has set us free. Christ himself said, "If you know the truth, the truth shall set you free and ye shall be free indeed." Aren't you thankful this morning that we stand on those grounds?

You heard Brother Sawyer say, "*My sheep hear my voice and they will follow me, but a stranger they will not follow.*" When I was a lad of a boy we had sheep at home and my Grandfather would have the care of the sheep so in essence he was the shepherd to those natural sheep. Oftimes they would get out and we children would delight in the fact that we could chase them and try to get them back in. But they would just scatter in every direction and he would come out when he would hear us laughing and screaming and he would say, "Stop, stop right now." He has a bucket that he used when he would feed those sheep and he always kept ground feed and he would take his pocket knife and knock on the side of that bucket. Those sheep would stop immediately where they were and you would hear one say, "Baa" and he would say, "Come on," and that's all he had to say. They'd follow him right to the gate and they willingly went in. They knew that sound and a stranger they would not follow. We couldn't do anything with them, but he could do anything with them

that he so desired to do. We think of the natural sheep and the only thing that looks to be worth anything about them is the wool on the body. It's that that covers them up. But there comes a time when they have to be sheared. My beloved, have you ever seen a freshly sheared sheep? It's one of the ugliest creatures you ever looked at and when you have been to the shearing time yourself and God has sheared you of your self-righteousness, of all of your covetous thoughts, of all of those things you term that make you worthwhile in this world, you are looking at the most ugly creature you've ever witnessed.

And so it is even with a natural sheep when that takes place, their own lambs don't recognize them. When we are brought into the knowledge of the truth and we have been sheared, our own children don't understand what it is all about. Our own children don't know us and sometimes ask why we drive hundreds and hundreds of miles, why we go so far to serve churches. They say, "You are traveling highways that are dangerous," but I have said to them, "If I am not deceived, the Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want." He has already taken care of me in one dreadful wreck that totally destroyed an automobile and yet I was not injured. Then I can feel to say, *"Yes, He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake."*

"For Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." The rod and the staff are just as nec-

essary, my beloved, to the life of a sheep. I am talking about spiritual sheep as it was to the natural sheep. Their rod was used as a tool of correction and except He give us that same rod placed upon us as a tool of correction we shall wander aimlessly as it were, but He indeed chastises us with the rod of correction just as the good shepherd chastises the sheep when there is an indication that they want to run amiss. And we find that the staff was a long piece of reed that had a crook on the end and when one of the aged or infirmed sheep or one of the lambs would slip from the pathway, as they traversed the mountainside from time to time, the good shepherd could take that crook and catch that sheep by the neck and lead him back to the path. When our feet stumble on the road of life, when we feel that, yes, we are slipping away, thanks be unto God that the staff of grace that is his arm of grace reaches out and is sufficient to pull us back and keep our feet on the path that leads to eternal life.

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." What kind of table is he talking about? He is talking about the table of communion and He prepares it in the presence of mine enemies. I say to you that the greatest enemy that He prepares in the presence of us is this individual, this earthly body, this body of clay. Not too long ago in the experience of one of the old hymnwriters, he said that he had more trouble with Mr. Myself than he ever had with anybody else that he ever met. It is thus with each of us. So we

find that He prepares the table of communion and He does it in the presence of this old natural body.

"Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over." We know, my beloved, that we beat our heads on the wall of time to such an extent that oftentimes we feel that we are injured just as the natural sheep would from time to time thrust his head into the thorns among the rocks to graze just a few morsels of food. We, too, thrust our heads into the thorns and into the rocks as we attempt sometimes on our own to find a morsel to eat. Thanks be unto God that indeed those sores that occur from time to time He anoints with the same oil of perfume that was poured on Aaron on top of his head that flowed all the way to the bottom of his garment. It is the same oil that was poured into that sin-encrusted individual that lay on the road to Jericho when the good Samaritan came by. He poured in that oil and it is the same anointing oil and it has the same effect. It is never used but what it has its healing qualities. I say to you this morning that nothing done is ever done that there is anything left that can be improved upon. There is no way to make the oil or the ointment any stronger and we find that under the old dispensation, I don't remember the book at the moment, but when the Lord gave Moses (Exodus, ch. 30:34-38) the mixture of that ointment, that oil of perfume, that oil of ointment, that should be used in the anointing process. He says that it is not to be used for anything else and he spoke of how dangerous it would

be for any individual to put some of it on his own body. What was he saying? It's a dangerous thing when man thinks that he can clothe himself in a portion of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that he can take it upon his body and it shall alleviate his pain, his suffering, his trials and his tribulations because it is not possible.

"My cup runneth over." The aged sheep and the little lambs are truly afraid of water for they know that their wool will absorb water immediately and they will sink if the water is deep enough to drown them. We find a few times when we knew that we would sink if left in that condition, but the shepherd carries a cup and he knows who those are who cannot care for themselves, so he fills the cup and they drink from the cup - they don't drink from the stream. We drink from the cup of the righteousness of God many, many times. With these sermons that we have heard this morning, we drink from that cup and indeed we find it running over.

If not deceived, I believe that because the "Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" and my hope is that "surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

We might take note of one other thing in the beginning of this Psalm. ***"The Lord is my shepherd."*** These are five words. Paul says, he'd ***"rather speak five words with my understanding than 10,000 words that have no meaning in an unknown tongue."***

May God bless you and keep you.

Elder C.B. Davis, Jr.

CORRESPONDENCE

SOME DREAMS AND TRIALS ON OUR JOURNEY IN OUR LIFE

My husband, Kermit Campbell, departed this life the thirteenth day of January in the year nineteen hundred and eighty-nine. He was involved in an accident on Highway 220, south of Martinsville, Virginia, and died on the way to the hospital. His funeral was conducted at McKee Funeral Home in Martinsville. Elders Raymond Goad and Lane Carter officiated.

Kermit was the son of Jake Campbell and Lee Hankins. He was raised up in a church of a different faith from mine but he seemed to love my church and we were blessed to go to church about every Sunday the rest of our life together. I think the Lord dealt with him and he seemed to enjoy going as much as I.

I dreamed a month or so ago, he and I were going down this rainy, muddy tunnel. We were in a hurry, I don't know why but he was in front, pulling me by the hand and when we got to the end of the tunnel it was like an underpass. He was in front and he could see around but I couldn't see, and he wouldn't let me look but he acted as if he saw the awfulest thing he had ever seen. I tried several times to look

around but he wouldn't let me. I believe the Lord was showing me I didn't have to see the awful thing that happened to him. He was dead when I got to the hospital.

About a year before he passed away, he started talking about religion and preachers explaining Scripture so well. He couldn't hear too well with his hearing aids but he enjoyed going to Norfolk Church. He could hear Elder Goad so much better than a lot of the other Elders. One night on TV someone was singing "Amazing Grace" and he said, "Well, they are singing 'Amazing Grace'." I said, "Most churches sing some of 'Amazing Grace.'" He said, "Well, no church nor anyone sings it as pretty as you all do." And I think he really meant it. He seemed to be really moved by it. Well, I didn't get to say "Goodbye" or anything. He has been gone four years now, and I thought it strange that I hadn't dreamed anything about him since he left. So a few weeks ago, I guess I was asleep about four in the morning, and I heard a door open, so I raised up and looked at the bedroom door, and he was standing there in the door, life-size, looking at me and smiling. I was not scared but I can't explain how I felt. I just got up. I think the Lord showed me that he is at rest and is or will always be happy, but I hope he is resting in God's love, and waiting to see Christ for himself and not another on that Great Day.

Ada Campbell

Member at Leatherwood Church

ARTICLES

THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH

In pursuing the subject further, I shall insist that where the conscience is once purged from sins, it can never again be contaminated with sins. Proof: "He bore our sins in his own body"; not part, but all of our sins. "He put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself." Also, "His blood cleanseth us from all sins." Certainly we are to learn from such passages that each and every sin of all his people was "borne" and "put away" by him; and, if put away by him, salvation to his people is the inevitable result; for what is there to condemn us when all sin is put away? To say all our sin is not put away, is to deny the bible, and to say that we can be lost, is to say we can be condemned when we are without sin. This great truth is set forth in type by the scape - goat, Leviticus, xvi:20, "And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, he shall bring the live goat and confess over him all of the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited." None I suppose can doubt this being a type of our Savior, and in it we see every sin and transgression, by this ceremony, put away. Then may we not reasonably

suppose that every sin of ours, great and small, in word, thought or action; yea, every transgression of ours over which the law has cognizance, were all laid upon the head of our Redeemer, and by him forever borne away? This thought, though poorly stated, is full of sweetness to every Christian.

If you can feel that Jesus bore all our sins, past, present and future, and made complete satisfaction for them, how can you despair; and what surer basis could our hope have, and what could so fill us with love to Christ, and so inspire us with obedience? No thought so encouraging as that "Jesus paid it all, all the debt I owe." Again, Hebrews, x:2, "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sin." Let us inquire of Paul about the text. If one's conscience is purged from sins, then what? "They have no more conscience of sins"; thus showing that whatever is washed by the blood of Christ remains clean eternally. Again, "For, by one offering, he hath forever perfected them that are sanctified." Certainly the sanctified ones referred to in the text are the saints. Query: By what are they perfected? Answer: By the one offering. Query: How long shall this perfection last? Answer: Forever. The word "forever" may be used in a limited sense, in some places, but evidently, in this, it is used in its most extended sense. The Savior gives us the same thought in the sixth of John: "This is the bread which cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die"; "If any

man eat of this bread he shall live forever"; "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day"; with many more such sayings. Now let us ask, what is the state of those that eat his flesh and drink his blood? They "have eternal life"; "They shall never perish"; "They shall live forever"; "I will raise him up at the last day." If one of them could be lost, would the Savior's words be true, when he says, "I will raise him up at the last day"? or, "He shall never die"? Or, could Paul's words be true, "They have no more conscience of sins"? Or, is it true that the "one offering" does "forever perfect"? And this is what the Holy Ghost testifies in every saint; and would the Holy Ghost testify correctly if he should breathe the sweet words in our heart that the offering of Jesus "has obtained eternal redemption for us"? Is that eternal redemption that is liable to be overturned, or reversed, any day? Can we eat the flesh of our Savior to day, and drink his blood, and to-morrow die, and be lost? Is this what our Savior calls living forever? Is this eternal life? Nay, verily, such was not in his mind when he uttered these words; but he saw and well knew the safety of all who "taste that God is gracious"; and he spoke these words for their comfort. First John, v: "For, whosoever is born of God overcometh the world." "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth them not." The Savior tells Nicodemus that he

must be born again, and that without it he could neither see nor enter the kingdom of God. I can not speak at length of the new birth, but I will venture a few things about it. It is not of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but it is of God. It is of the spirit; it elevates one to be a son of God. He can say, Abba, Father! He is an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ. Do not forget it; he is a joint heir with Christ. He is a partaker of the divine nature. The eternal God is his keeper; and more, he keeps him as the apple of his eye, and "that wicked one toucheth him not." He overcometh the world, because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

Oh for the evidence from day to day, that we are interested in this wonderful and secure plan of salvation - to feel that the strong arm of Jehovah is around me as a tender husband, and that I am a plant of his own planting that shall never be rooted up. If such thoughts as these would not encourage and comfort his poor tried ones of earth, then I confess I am a stranger to all the sweets of the gospel. David in his affliction would say, "Show me thy loving kindness, oh thou that savest by thy right hand them that put their trust in thee." "Keep me as the apple of thine eye." "Hide me under the shadow of thy wing." If David needed such a Savior, can we do with less than this? If he felt his need of being kept, do not we need also to be kept "by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time"? It is marvelous loving kindness in our God to be

so intent in saving us. Perhaps some objector would say, it is unsafe to set up the safety of saints in such strong terms; you will encourage them to be careless in their lives. Now, dear reader, if you feel that you are licensed to sin by the security that God has thrown around you, you have not been rightly taught.

Rom., vi: "What shall we say, then? shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Here, we have this objection named in the scriptures, showing that this objection was brought against the apostles; that their doctrines tended to carelessness and living in sin. The very fact that such an objection was brought against them, in evidence that there was something in their preaching that led many to think that they did not believe in obedience to God. But let us hear his reply: "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein," plainly showing that the Christian is dead to sin, and that this is the reason why he does and should obey God. He has lost his delight in sin - he is dead to it. Again he says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace;" you are far removed from the law with its curse, and you are under grace, and he asks, "Shall we sin because this is so?" Again, "And not rather as we be slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say let us do evil that good may come." Who can doubt from these passages that the apostles taught that salvation was wholly of grace, and not in any degree of works? We see now that those who teach

salvation all of grace, are charged and slandered just as Paul was in his day. Also, see First Peter, ii: 15, "For so is the will of God that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men as free and not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." These foolish men are those who say, "If I were saved as you describe, I would go my length in sin; if my works can neither make nor keep me holy, I shall not care how I live." But God's will is, that his people shall silence such nonsense by a godly life; showing to the world that we are the sons of God, and that it is our highest pleasure to obey him; that we feel grateful to him for what he has done for us in the past; yea, more, that sin has become exceeding sinful to us, so that we flee from and dread it as poison. We have found that all the misery that has ever been, was brought by sin, and all our happiness is the hope of being delivered from sin. The scripture exhortation is, "I exhort you by the mercy of Christ," not by the fear of hell or apostasy, but by the mercies of Christ. Your greatest incentive to obedience is to think of Christ on the cross; his groans and death. If this will not prompt you, it is not worth while to threaten you with "falling from grace."

When you review the whole history of the Savior in his life and death; his nights of care and prayer; his agonies in the garden; the fearful night he passed before his crucifixion; his despairing cry, "My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me!" Think how faithful he was to you; many nights

alone in some cold mountain he staid in solemn prayer to God - and all this for you. He suffered all this not for himself, but for you - you were ruined. It was for you he toiled all his life of care - it was your miserable sins that crushed him in the garden.

Oh, Christian! Christian! do not forget that you are not your own, but that you are bought with a price, and that price was the life of the Lord Jesus; therefore, glorify him in your bodies and spirits, which are his; fill your seats in his house; tell your wants often to him in prayer, and when you are vexed with care, tried and distressed, cast all your care on him, for he cares for you. His all-seeing eye is always upon you, and he never will leave nor forsake you. He feeds the sparrows that have neither barn nor store house. There is not a living thing but that he keeps it, and why should we fear that he will not keep us? The very hairs of your head are numbered.

Again, we have been created in Christ unto good works, and these good works God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Dear reader, I am sure we should love God all the more and serve him all the better, when we feel that he is a fire around us, and that he is engaged to save us, in spite of all our foes without or within. There is gratitude even in a dog when you give him no more than a bone. Then let us think that we were poor, starved rebellious dogs, who have been fed on the very flesh and blood of Christ, who has stooped to bind and heal all our wounds, and when we were lost, poor, starving and

friendless, he hunted us from every place where we had wandered, took away all our grief and made our eyes overflow with tears of joy, astonished us with tokens of his wonderful love, forgiving, sweetly forgiving, all our sins, and last of all, pointed our feet the way he would have us go. Yea, more, he showed us by example the way. Dear reader, have you forsaken him or left off following him? Are you tired of his service or company? Do let me exhort you, and may I suffer the same word of exhortation. Christians should never murmur; why should they, who are servants, murmur, when the master murmurs not, though his suffering be greater than all the suffering of all his servants? Let us learn patience by looking at the sufferings of Christ. Houseless, homeless, often fatigued and wearied, and yet not a murmur escapes his lips - these are the best thoughts to stir us up to duty, and not the fear of apostasy.

J.H. Oliphant

NOTICE

WANTED:

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VOICES OF THE PAST

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."
- Romans v. 21.

This is the mercy for mourning saints who are sighing and groaning under a body of sin and death, that God has decreed that grace not only may reign, but that it must reign. Were it left to us, we could not more rescue ourselves from the dominion of sin than the children of Israel could deliver themselves from the house of Egyptian bondage. But they sighed and groaned by reason of the bondage, and their cry came up unto God. He had respect unto his covenant, and looked upon them and delivered them (Exodus ii. 23-25). So God has determined on behalf of his people that sin shall not be their eternal ruin; that it shall not plunge them into crime after crime, until it casts them at last into the gulf of endless woe, but that grace "shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life." But it must reign here as well as hereafter, for by its reign here its eternal triumph is secured. It must then subdue our proud hearts, and never cease to sway its peaceful sceptre over them until it has secured in them absolute and unconditional victory. Now this is what every sincere child of God most earnestly longs to feel and realize. He longs to embrace Jesus

and be embraced by him in the arms of love and affection. As the hymn says,

*"But now subdued by sovereign grace,
My spirit longs for thy embrace."*

He hates sin, though it daily, hourly, momentarily works in him, and is ever seeking to regain its former mastery; he abhors that cruel tyrant who set him to do his vilest drudgery, deceived and deluded him by a thousand lying promises, dragged him again and again into captivity, and but for sovereign grace would have sealed his eternal destruction. Subdued by the sceptre of mercy, he longs for the dominion of grace over every faculty of his soul and every member of his body. "O", he says, "let grace reign and rule in my breast; let it not suffer any sin to have dominion over me; let it tame every unruly desire, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ!" Thus, he who truly fears God looks to grace, and to grace only, not merely to save, but to sanctify; not only to pardon sin, but to subdue it; not only to secure him an inheritance among the saints in light, but to make him meet for it.

J.C. Philpot

DEUTERONOMY 30:6.

And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

CORRECTION

The obituary of Lucille Landers is spelled incorrectly in the March 1994 issue of the "Signs". Please correct your copy on page 71.

Editors

ACCEPTABLE WORDS

October, 1947

"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth." - Eccl. 12:10.



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

It is my purpose to address this article especially to God's called and qualified ministers. May the God of heaven be pleased to so direct my mind and pen that His purpose may be served in this attempt. May the words written be God-honoring and "words easy to be understood." I trust that God will be pleased to bless the reader with an understanding heart to rightly understand the thoughts that I desire to convey in this attempt. I am persuaded that misunderstandings among God's people have prompted some divisions, strifes and confusions. Some confusions in the church have been the result of strife over words of none effect. Isaiah prophesied of a time when those "that make

man an offender for a word" are cut off (Isa. 29:21).

Solomon says, "A word spoken in due season, how good it is" (Prov. 15:23). Considering the many divisions in the churches of this country that hold to the same principles of doctrine, I am convinced that a treatise on this subject would be in "due season."

We read in Prov. 15:26, "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words." I believe God gives His people a pure heart that seeks to praise, honor and adore Him; and to comfort, console and edify one another. This pure heart enables them to see themselves so vile and sinful that they esteem one another so highly that it is not their desire to offend. I believe those who are meek and humble and inspired by the Spirit of God are gifted to use pleasant and acceptable words even in rebuke. I do not think, however, that words that are not upright and true are to be used in order that they be acceptable and pleasant words to the hearer.

We quote from Isaiah 50:4, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary:....he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." This prophecy especially concerns Jesus, but I believe that the same Spirit of God has the same effect upon God's called ministers. God blesses His ministers with the tongue of the learned to comfort and edify the wearied. The Psalmist

prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Ps. 51:12,13). When it pleases God to restore the joy of that salvation to one of His ministers, and blesses him with light of thought and liberty of speech; the result is that the minister is blessed to teach sinners God's ways. God's way of being merciful to their unrighteousness and His way of saving sinners by the merits of Jesus Christ, solely unmerited by the sinner, is comforting and edifying to such sinners that God pleases to waken His ear to hear. The result of the operation of God's Spirit upon the ministers and the hearers is the conversion of sinners.

According to Paul's letter to Timothy, a qualification of a minister is "apt to teach". I think it is just as certain that someone learns as it is that someone preaches. I do not think words inspired by the Spirit are spoken in vain but they find good ground in some heart that God has prepared. God's children are converted day by day, thus growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I believe God's called ministers are blessed to comfort, console and edify. It is their desire to do this rather than to establish some peculiar point in theology of their own conviction that is not believed by the brethren. Their desire is, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." Their desire is to please

the Lord, not to offend anyone. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air" (1 Cor. 14:9). If we use words or terms of which the meaning is controversial among the brethren I would consider them not easy to be understood.

Many times expressions are misunderstood among brethren because of difference of opinion concerning particular definitions of words used in these expressions. It behooves us to refrain from using expressions that tend to cause controversy among brethren. It is our desire to heed Paul's instructions to Timothy, to wit: "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker" (2 Timothy 2:14-17). Paul gives an illustration in the next verse of an expression of vain and profane babbling thus, "the resurrection is past already." Expressions as follows are misunderstood, thus misleading among the brethren: "God is the author of sin"; "God predestinated sin and wickedness"; "We will know each other there"; "This same body will be raised from the dead"; "I believe in eternal children" and "The creature

is not changed in the new birth." Difference of opinions on the words, "author," "predestinated," "same body," "eternal children" and "creature" make these expressions and many others not easy to be understood. "Foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:23-25). I think the traits of patience, gentleness and meekness are made manifest in God's called ministers. I have received more comfort from wrong expressions in the spirit of meekness than right expressions that are motivated by a haughty spirit. Before we accuse brethren of departing from the doctrine let us first be convinced that we understand their position, and that their position is decidedly contrary to the words that are upright and words of truth.

In meditating upon the aforestated thoughts we are mindful to pray to God that He bless us not to know anything among God's people save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. As Peter said to Christ at one time, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." His words were, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." So when we are blessed to speak words of truth, we are blessed to preach Jesus as our Savior. We trust that He speaks these words to us when we are troubled which results in sweet consolation and confi-

dence in God who saves to the uttermost by His amazing grace.

Elder E.J. Lambert

HEBREWS 13: 20,21.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Why is it that we always have a benediction at the end of our services? This is not a word that the translators gave us in our version of the Bible, but at the end of each letter (except James) there is a prayer or short benediction. At the end of all Bible prayers there is an amen. This word has a meaning that is not easily set aside. In fact, the theologian that would belittle the world or berate those that use the word, does not have the religion of Jesus Christ. It is a word that He used to verify his veracity, and it is a word that was handed down from the ancient people of God to express a wish. This is why that the end of prayer has the "amen" at the end of it; it is for the purpose of expressing a wish, to wit, So be it. The promises of God are all yea, and all Amen, unto the glory of God by us. (2 Cor. 1:20) There is not a single prom-

ise that is nay. They are all yea and amen through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Since all scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16), it would be sacrilegious and blasphemous to say that the use of this word is not of the highest importance in our preaching and writing on sacred topics.

“Now the God of peace.” O, dear child of God, what comfort is found in these words. To read that, to hear that, that he is the God of our peace is indeed rich. It abounds with much promise to him that has known the ravages of war. As far as God the lawgiver, there could never be any peace coming from him to us. If we could have kept all of God’s laws, we would have made peace with him. If this had been true, then this text would not have appeared in the Bible. God has always disproved of sin. I may end up in the housetop alone for saying it, but I’d much rather end up there than live in a house with a brawling woman who would hide behind the purpose of God for their sins. (Prov. 21: 9; Rom. 6:1,2) As long as the sins of God’s people remained unatoned for there could never be any peace. If this does not teach the warlike characteristic of God against sin I do not know what it would take. I have said this: If God is pleased with our sins, he perpetrated the greatest fraud in sending His Son into the world to die for sinners, and yet that He was pleased with their sins. For me, I know that this is not the truth. God, as our Lawgiver, was at war against all of his people. This war went on unabated until it was atoned

for. At no time, from the moment of our disobedience in the morning of time, until atoned for, did the wrath of God abate in the least degree. In our efforts to expound the beauty in the text, it is my desire to not leave a stone unturned in bringing out that **“God is our peace.”** He had been at war from all eternity against sin. I get lost when I get to exploring in the grandeur of the God-head, but it is lost in holy ecstasy, not in gloomy and dismal swamps.

As long as God has been, he has been the God of wrath, the God of war, the God against sin. If this had not been true, how could God have counselled to send His own Son to die to satisfy the wrath of God and the justice of God and to become the God of peace? Too, we must be just as emphatic that he is the God of peace as that he is the God of wrath or war.

For him to cease being a God of wrath, there had to be somebody to atone for the sins of those with whom God was wroth. This Atonement could not be found among the sons of Adam. If it could have been found there, our text would have said, **“Now the peace which is by Adam, etc.”** When the law was given it was given to be kept, not to be defiled, not to be despised, not to be nullified by man, not to have any mercy in it. Manifestly, from the time of its being broken, God has been at war against sin. There could not be any peace without a reconciliation. When man fell, he was depraved from the sole of the feet to the crown of the head. He could not keep from sinning; he could not bring reconciliation, seeing that he could not turn and do

good. (Jer. 13:23) This rule has never been abrogated by him that made it. Many people, the majority of the human race, have changed it (so they think) to suit their fancy, but God has not changed it, therefore all of the religion in the world that has come by efforts that the sinner conceived and carried out is not the truth; all the peace that man has brought, whether in the natural realm of existence, in the so-called religious world, even in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is all vain, all useless, all perishable, if it came about by the action of this dead sinning creature.

God moved to bring peace, therefore it is a wonderful text that embraces Him as being the God of peace. What a blessing it is to be given this all prevailing peace in our experience; what a high and exalted calling it is to be called of God, to preach and to write about the peace that passes all understanding, which peace keeps our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Phil. 4:7) It is not any small wonder that Paul was determined to know nothing among the Corinthians save Jesus Christ and him crucified. (I Cor. 2:2) God raised Him up and sent Him forth from His bosom to bring peace out of chaos. That was the beginning of the peace of God - the peace which God brought. It is presently the work of God's Holy Spirit to keep our hearts and our minds in this peace. If you understand this peace you will attribute it to men; if it passes all understanding you will attribute it to God.

"That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ." It is not a question of not bringing Him from the dead, but how could He fail to bring Him from the dead, seeing that He sent Him forth to redeem them that were under the law. Poor frail human beings will never be able to more than grasp the surface of the love of God in this bringing Him forth from the dead. But we must not get the last things first. Order is heaven's first law, and in no place is it out of place as much as it is in expounding the gospel. God sent Him forth to do His will. This will is that all given Christ must be brought into peace with God. God could not be at peace with his own Son had that Son failed in bringing many sons to glory. (Heb. 2:10) I have said, I repeat it here, that if the common idea about the work of Christ was true (that is, that he failed in saving those given him) that he would not have been received into heaven - yea, he would not have been raised from the dead. Here is that delightful order of heaven: God sent His Son to redeem the chosen people of God, to reconcile them to God and Him to them; to come as the One and only peace-offering, being named the Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6) While here, He brought peace to His people; and when He died, He brought peace to God and to all the heirs of promise. He did the work that His Father gave Him to do. How peaceful it was with Satan writhing in death, with all the enemies of God as dead men, with the holy and righteous and

good law filled to a jot and a tittle. God can not deny himself (Num. 23: 19; 2 Tim. 2:13), and, seeing that Christ was the mighty God and the Everlasting Father, all of God's power and glory and honor was pledged to raise and bring from the dead His Son and our Saviour.

"That great shepherd of the sheep." How lovely the scriptures set Him forth in this capacity. This shepherd, this Saviour, was set up from everlasting. (Prov. 8:23) The eyes of wisdom saw His substance from everlasting, and in his book all His members were written, yet they were unperfected, and not manifest, even as Jesus was not yet manifest. But he did not come to become a Saviour, not at all; He was born the Saviour. His delights were with the sheep before they were manifest sheep; he rejoiced among the sheepfold and its occupants before the world had an existence. (Prov. 8:31) Since it is the work of a shepherd to look after his flock, this Shepherd went about doing the work of his Father while it was day, while a Man could work. He did do His Father's work while here, and, at his departure, sent another Comforter who is continuing on the same line of work, taking the things of Christ and presenting them to the sheep. As the Shepherd, he found them all dead in sin. He gave unto them eternal life according as his Father had given him all power to redeem and to reveal unto them the redemption. (Matt. 11:27; John 10:28; 17:2)

This great Shepherd is often pictured in the saddest of terms. He is

often set forth as a hand-wringing shepherd. He is shown (?) unto us as a shepherd that would like to lead the sheep by still waters; that would like to have them lie down in green pastures; that would like to lead the sheep in paths of righteousness; that would like to comfort his people with the rod and the staff; that would like to prepare a table for them; that would like to anoint our head with oil; that would like for our cup to run over, but the sheep just will not let him do this. I do not know which is the most unreasonable and unscriptural doctrine, to not be able to make sheep manifestly, or to be able to make them without their help and then lose control over them after that He makes them sheep. It seems good to me to discard both.

"Through the blood of the everlasting covenant." The translators were not agreed about this word "covenant" some of them thinking that this was the better word, while others thought that the better word was testament. I do not know a word of Greek, but I am inclined to agree with the minority report in this case. The covenant is one thing, but the Testator of that covenant is another. It is true, however, that Moses referred to blood as being the covenant blood; but it would seem, from a careful reading, that this covenant was not the one that is in our text. Too, the writer of Hebrews tells us that sore punishment awaits him that treads under foot the son of God, and counts the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing. (Heb. 10:29) As it was with Moses, and as it seems certain the writer of Hebrews, they had in

mind a figurative sense; so it would seem that way here, to wit, that it is through the blood of Jesus Christ.

We do remember that Jesus is the Testator of a better covenant. Even the first covenant was dedicated with blood. It was the blood of calves and goats used in type for the blood of Jesus. Moses said, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. (Heb. 9: 18,20) As the types had to die in order for the comers thereto to have blood, just so did Jesus, the Lamb of God, have to die that the comers thereto be made perfect. (Heb. 10:1) A man's testament (will) is not in force as he lives. Only after his death does his will come into force. Thus it behooved Christ to die that his testament benefit his people. When he administered the supper to the disciples he called the wine the blood of the new testament.

"Make you perfect in every good work to do his will." Whatever the true meaning of the blood of the everlasting covenant, whether understood in a figurative sense, or that Jesus in sum and substance is the covenant himself, it does not lessen the force of the doctrine that is being taught in the text. The perfection prayed for is not of the creature. Whoever heard of praying for that which the creature can do? You haven't heard that? That is the common ignorance of mankind. Every religion except the Absolute Predestinarian Baptists believe that God is dependent on the creature for the success of his venture and church and kingdom building, and yet they pray like Hercules to God for help in

them doing it. This prayer is from the heart of a poor dependent creature. He knows that he must have grace to perform all the requirements of God; that his present salvation is based on God's saving grace. This prayer of the apostle comes to this: May the God of peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will. I do not intend to sell out my pen to anybody, and I will say to my brethren that it is not in evil works that God is to enable us to do his will. We are not doing the will of God when we do evil works. The writer did not pray for God to enable us to do his will in wickedness. He did not do that. Reason how we may, call our loved ones in the Lord what we may, the Lord does not forbid things in his written word and then influence us by his Spirit to disobey that command. God does his will in heaven and in earth, whether it is by the power of His Spirit in our hearts and minds, or by the wielding of His sword. Of one he is the direct and immediate cause, by the other he is simply taking that which is already wicked and using it as it seems good unto Him. Of one thing I am sure. We will never perfectly do his will until the perfect gift (James 1:17) is given to us. And I am sure that this perfect gift is given his people that they may perfectly do his will in every good work.

"Working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight." Let us go to another notable letter of Paul. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:12,13) How often have we heard it said that "God works the will and the do in you, but you must work it out." Only an ignorant one (letter ignorant as well as grace) would make an application like that of the work of God in his people. They either have forgotten, or they never did know, that God works effectually in his subjects. (Eph. 3:7; I Thes. 2:13) The prayer is seeking for God to make us perfect in every good work. How many good works? I did not say, dear critic. But the prayer of Paul begs for grace from the God of all peace that the children of God be perfected in every good work to do his will; not just begging for grace that will work it in the children of God, not that at all, but begging in every good work to do his will. That is the prayer. That is the prayer of every dependent sinner; but, regardless of the niceties of speech-making to God in prayer, the prayer of others do not mean that they are helpless and dependent. Now link up this prayer with Paul's charge to the Philippians. His charge to them is to work out that which God has wrought in, and this prayer is to the God of peace that he would make them perfect in every good work to do his will, working in them that which is well pleasing in his sight.

The text heretofore has set forth God as doing great wonders through the Lord Jesus Christ. However, have you noticed that it is God the Father that has done all this first for the Son?

He sent forth his Son, He sent angels to administer to him; He raised Him from the tomb. This was as the manifest Son of God. This is in keeping with the expression: Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. (Psalm 2:7) Earlier in this article it has been noted that the Son was ever with the Father. This being true, He could not have been begotten, but in His relationship with His people it truly can be said that He was begotten of God. Then the writer prays that the wonderful blessings of obedience be given unto the Hebrew brethren. He prays for that which is well pleasing in the sight of God. He does not ask God to make them perfect in every evil or sinful work, for this could never be well pleasing in his sight; and that would apply to him working it in them as well as after it is wrought in and by them.

I sometimes hope that I have a calling from God to preach the gospel; to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. I feel in my heart and mind that I have told you the whole truth in what I have said about this text. It is my hope that it was the God of peace that visited me more than forty years ago, breaking down my opposition to His rule over me, and reconciling God to me through my blessed Lord. The answer to this prayer was predicated upon the will of God being executed through the Saviour Jesus Christ. My will was not consulted in the outset, and thus I am not a sharer in glory with him there. Since that day, if this was the day of the Lord with me, I have been willing to follow him, to count it a joy in tribulations, to submit to all

the indignities that are heaped upon me; to know that our God is still the God of all vengeance as well as the God of peace, and that whatever it is, He will carry all of his pleasure out; and that now, and forever and forever, all glory belongs to Him.

As the shadows lengthen out and the end of day approaches, I would to God that I die with a hearty Amen upon my dying lips to all that his providence and grace has brought to me; that he has ruled over (not overruled) all his creation to where not a shaft has hit me to ruin, but rather for good; that He has supplied my needs, both natural and spiritual, that He has enabled me to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him," and that, As I have received good at his hand, I expect to receive the same kind of evil that Job did, and that whatever comes, whether good or evil, whether in giving or in taking, that His name is blessed forever more.

Elder W.D. Griffin

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JANUARY 1994

Miss Justine Alexander, AR	7.00
John & Alice Swilley, AR	12.00
Mrs. Velma Terral, TX	2.00
Whitley Mobley, NC	10.00
Mrs. John W. Mitchell, TX	12.00
John R. Copelin, TN	10.00
Eld. Robert L. Webb, IL	2.00
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Burnell Williams, VA	2.00
Mrs. Christine S. Payne, VA	2.00
Garlon Vick, NC	5.00
Mrs. Melvin Dalton, VA	7.00

OBITUARIES

SISTER EFFIE HEWITT DAVIS

In memory of Sister Effie I endeavor to write a few words. With God's help I'll have the ability to do so. I know all my power comes from him.

Sister Effie was born in Onslow County November 19, 1896. Her parents were Ella Morton and Jack Kellum.

She was first married to Stephen Hewitt. The Lord blessed them with six children. Three daughters; Ruby, Louise, and Minnie Lee. Three sons; Winfield, Mance and Jack.

Her second marriage was to Zennie Davis. They didn't have any children.

Sister Effie joined the Primitive Baptist Church at the age of thirty-five. For sixty years she supported her church; was a devoted, faithful and loving member; as long as her health would permit her to do so.

She was in poor health for about nine years. In the home and May 13,

1993 was admitted to Rest Home. Stayed there five months. Total years of confinement was about nine years.

Sister Effie passed away October 15, 1993. Preceded by three children; Minnie Lee, Mance and Wingfield. She is survived by two lovely daughters, Ruby Morton, and Louise Humphry. A devoted son Stephen Jackson Hewitt. Also twenty-two grandchildren and thirty seven great-grandchildren.

Her family has suffered a great loss. To them I say; Press Onward to the Mark of the High Calling; which is in our Lord Jesus Christ. Even though there's a vacant place in your hearts; I feel your loss is "Heavens Gain"!

Funeral services were conducted by Elder Jake Prescott. Burial was in the Jacksonville City Cemetery. Sister Effie was laid to rest beneath a mound of flowers.

By the order of North East Church. In conference the third Saturday in February 1994.

Written by;
Mary Lillie Hall
1597 Halltown Road
Jacksonville, N.C. 28546

BROTHER HENRY J. POWELL

I has been requested that I once again write a memorial for one of our special members of Roanoke Primitive Baptist Church, Brother Henry J. Powell.

Brother Henry was born August 5, 1900 in Pittsylvania County, Va. and passed away November 10, 1993 in Roanoke Memorial Hospital. He was

married to Sister Lutie Holly Powell August 7, 1926. She passed away February 2, 1977. They both joined Roanoke Primitive Baptist Church December 1, 1956 and was baptized the next day by their pastor, Elder Cecil E. Turner.

He was ordained deacon November 1, 1969 and was also a trustee and assistant clerk and these offices he served well. He was faithful to the church, always filling his seat unless providentially hindered. He was in the hospital only about six weeks before his departure to that "Better World". His mind was keen and he had a wonderful memory up until his death. The church has lost a faithful servant but we feel our loss in his eternal gain. His trials are all over now and at the coming of the Lord, he together with Sister Lutie and all whom the Lord suffered and died will be raised to ever be with the Lord.

He loved the song and requested it often, #452 in Lester Hymn Book:

*"When thou my righteous judge shalt come
To take thy ransom people home
Shall I among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I
Who sometimes am afraid to die
Be found at thy right hand?"*

He is survived by one son and daughter-in-law, Ray and Trilby Powell; two daughters and son-in-laws, Lois and Elbert Huddleston; Linda and Jack Guttman; 7 grandchildren; 12 great grandchildren; one sister and one brother.

His funeral was conducted at Oakeys North Funeral Home on Saturday November 13, 1993 by his pastor, Elder Leonard J. Brammer and his grandson, Mr. Gary Powell, after which he was laid to rest in Sherwood Cemetery beside his beloved wife of more than fifty years under a beautiful blanket of flowers.

May the Lord give grace to all who mourn that they be reconciled to their loss and truly say, "Thy will be done."

This memorial was written and humbly submitted by and unworthy sister,

Mrs. H.C. (Rlee) Houchins
Elder Leonard J. Brammer, Mod.
Bro. Hassel A. Hale, Church Clerk

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 4 / 94
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.**

BROTHER LOUIS SAMMONS

I will endeavor in my great weakness to write a few lines with the ability that God blesses me with. Brother Sammons was the son of John Sam and Josephine Sammons. Brother Sammons was blessed with three children Judy Sampson Dalton and Vernon Sammons and one Sister Gladys. Brother Sammons wife's Sister Ruffy is still living. Brother Sammons was born 1908 and died August 8, 1993 making his stay on earth 84 years and 9 months. He was

a member at North East Primitive Baptist Church for 49 years he joined in 1944 and he was a loving member and always glad to see members and friends come to visit him his wife stood by him to the end.

Brother Louis Sammons was appointed Clerk the third Saturday in May 1971 he remained Clerk until he got disabled.

Now to Family: Press on keep the good faith I know you all loved him but God loved him more. I know you all have a vacant place in your heart as well as in your home. I hope the good Lord will bless you all and keep you in his care and be a Father to you all in time of need.

Brother Sammons funeral was conducted by Elder Oliver Allen at Johnson Funeral Home in Jacksonville. He was laid to rest in Kellum Cemetery with a beautiful mound of flowers.

This filing written by the request of the church at North East Conference in November 1993. Three copies, one to family, one to church and one for the Signs of the Times. Written by one living in hopes of eternal rest in our Lord and Saviour.

Sister Effie Morton
1162 Wolf Swamp Rd.
Jacksonville, N.C. 28546

HEBREWS 8:10.

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.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

" *The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon* "

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., MAY 1994

NO. 5

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

FOREVER

*I learn as the years roll onward
And leave the past behind,
That much I have counted sorrow
But proves our God is kind;
That many a flower I have longed for
Had a hidden thorn of pain,
And many a rugged by-path
Led to fields of ripened grain.*

*The clouds but cover the sunshine,
They cannot banish the sun.
And the earth shines out the brighter
When the weary rain is done.
We must stand in the deepest sorrow
To see the clearest light,
And often from wrong's own darkness
Comes the very strength of right.*

*We must live through the weary winter
If we could but value the spring,
And the woods must be cold and silent
Before the robins sing.
The flowers must be buried in darkness
Before they could bud and bloom
And the sweetest and warmest sunshine
Comes after the storm and gloom.*

*So the heart from the hardest trial
Gains the purest joy of all,
And from the lips that have tasted
sadness
The sweetest songs will fall.
For as peace comes after suffering,
And love is reward of pain,
So after earth comes heaven
And out of our loss the gain.*

--Anon.

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EDITORIAL

PREDESTINATION



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

Fact or fiction; applies to some things or all things: Fatalism, or a planned, purposeful accomplishing of the sovereign will of an omnipotent, omni-

scient and holy God who created all things for himself and utilizes them according to his own will and purpose.

There have been many volumes written on the subject of predestination by learned men of all faiths and there

is no more agreement on the subject now, than there was in the beginning. No one has presented the evidence that will convince, all, of the validity of the doctrine and neither will I. My purpose is not to try to convince anyone of the truth of my convictions, but, just to put down in writing what I believe, for myself, and for others who may understand the subject as I do, that we may agree that this is what we believe and know that we are not alone. In the parable of the sower, the sower was just to sow the seed, not to cultivate it and make it grow, that is in the hands of the husbandman.

Fact or fiction - Predestination is a fact that has been in the old and new testaments and is, in fact, the foundation upon which the faith of the children of God rests. It is the assurance and confidence that the things promised will be the things received. It is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, as yet, with the natural eye. They are seen by the eye of faith, as through a glass darkly, but enough to keep them pressing on to the mark. The first Chapter of Genesis is a classic example of this doctrine, as it relates the creation of all things, by God, and declares the purpose of, and the reason for, each in his plan for the world, and the proof is in the fact that they are still fulfilling that decree today. This is predestination in its most graphic form and is a demonstration that the most avid critic must surely see is absolute proof of the facts of the doctrine of foreordination, and the determinative decrees of God. The sun is still coming up each

day, (never missed one) because its mission is to rule the day: it does not come up each morning because of a new command, it is still completing it's daily orbit in response to God's command when he set it in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth. The herbs, the trees and man are still replenishing and bringing forth after their kind in obedience to that command, given in the day they were created. This is the simplest, on going and often overlooked demonstration of this doctrine that is observed and experienced by all on a daily basis.

In God's judgement pronounced upon the serpent, in the garden for beguiling Eve was, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel." And I believe that this is most universally believed to prophesy of the crucifixion of Christ, as the bruising of the heel of the seed of the woman; and his resurrection triumphant over death, hell and the grave, as the bruising of the head of the serpent. This was all declared in the morning of time and yet the occurrence was thousands of years later but it occurred as decreed by the Creator. Can anyone actually believe that this was just a coincidence?

Joel 2 vs. 28. "And it shall come to pass, afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams. And your young men shall see visions." This prophecy was declared

by the prophet Joel under the law and was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the Gospel Church, as we know it was established, and men began to worship God in spirit and in truth. This experience was determined long before it happened, and it's coming to pass is evidence that it was not by chance or a random occurrence but rather ordained by the one who revealed the prophecy to Joel many years before. Acts 15 vs. 18 reads "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," so we can see that this too, being the work of God was known by him and therefore predestinated from the beginning of the world. God declared it by the mouth of the prophet, confirmed it by Jesus in his conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, brought it to pass as evidenced and it was witnessed to by the Apostles, to whom it happened and they went forth, in the Spirit declaring the fulfillment of the prophecy. Predestination in action.

These and many more of the scriptures establish the fact that the doctrine of predestination is taught in the scriptures by the inspired writers of the bible. Experience and revelation teaches it to those who have been given eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to understand the scriptures, in the same spirit that the writer was given to pen them down for their learning. One of the gifts of the spirit, according to the Apostle Paul, is to discern the spirit and the teachings of the scriptures. John, says try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out in

the world; the false prophets are set forth of the false doctrines to distort the truth. John is saying to try the spirits and the scriptures to compare with your experience to determine if they are from the same source. If they are both from God, each will agree with and will support the other.

The fiction regarding predestination is taught by the false prophets, who go forth as angels of light, when in fact they are the angels of the serpent and go forth declaring and teaching lies. Fiction on this subject is the doctrine of the gainsayers who contend that predestination is just a theory of man that would remove man from the equation altogether and therefore he is accountable for nothing. They proclaim that it is just in the imagination of man and formulated to excuse himself for his failures and mistakes and place the blame on God: making him the author of sin, and man but a pawn in a game in which he is but a passive participant with, no duty, no obligation, no sin and no reason to feel guilty before God because he is not accountable for his actions. This is as much in error as the pharisees who approached Jesus with the question of the seven brothers who had the same wife: and questioned whose wife she would be in the resurrection. Christ's response was, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God, for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage" even so the gainsayers do err not knowing or understanding the scriptures nor the power of God: they are using natural reasoning to attempt

to discern spiritual truth and all who do this are in the same dilemma. They must first have the spirit to interpret the scriptures and to see and realize the power and wisdom of God.

The doctrine of the gainsayers is that God wants to save everyone if they will just cooperate and let Him; He has made the way available to all and they can, at any time of their own will, get on the bandwagon and be assured that all of the promises of God, in Christ, are theirs. This is the doctrine that is popular with the world today, we have all heard it proclaimed, long and loud, all of our lives and the mystery to me is how they can declare this and use the bible as their reference book: the book that declares by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, Isa. 14 vs. 24. "The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying As I have thought so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand," And again in vs. 27. "For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disanull it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back." Where is the wanting, on the part of God, and where is the letting on the part of man, in this declaration? Fiction, pure fiction originating in the mind of the man in nature to supplant the truth with a doctrine that will sell to the seed of the serpent; the flood that went out of the mouth of the serpent, in the great wonder, in revelations, to overcome the woman, but the earth opened up and swallowed the flood. The world loves and thrives on this doctrine of the gainsayer, and always has.

Some things or all things. Most bible readers who study the scriptures will agree that some things are predestinated of God, but, refuse to believe that all things are. Some believe that God only predestinates the good things that happen in the world but that he does not predestinate the evil things in the world. This would severely limit the power of God since it seems that he would, not have control, over more things than he has control over, and if he does not determine or control them what is he more than man. Man in nature has no problem believing that God had a chosen people, in Israel under the law; that he led and directed them in their way, watched over them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillow of fire by night; told them where they would go and the things that would befall them along the way. These things they will acknowledge, but don't tell them that he is in control of their lives and disposes of their times as he did then. They will agree that Christ's coming into the world, his virgin birth, dying on the cross and arising from the tomb was foreordained by the determinate counsel and the foreknowledge of God, but, don't tell them that their race is set, their course is determined and that they cannot influence their destiny by their own actions or wills.

That God predestinates all things, is the only position that is consistent with the other attributes of himself; he is absolute and complete in all his ways and does not give his glory (control over his domain) to another. To

have things occurring at random and not in harmony with everything else would result in chaos and nothing would be certain. Isa. 46 vs. 9, 10, 11. "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; calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country; yea I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." This one scripture, if properly understood, should quench all the fiery darts of the doubters and silence the cries of the gainsayers. God is saying, by the mouth of prophet that he declared the end from the beginning and all things in between as they are all ever before him; declaring from ancient times the things not yet done, and saying his counsel shall stand and he will do all his pleasure. The things not yet done is an all inclusive statement, not some of the things, but the things, all of them, and the declaring that this shall stand. Yea verily he hath said it, and because of his power, it shall come to pass, as ordered.

The Apostle Paul in his epistle to the church at Ephesus states Eph. 1 vs. 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," There's that phrase, all things, again in the same sentence which is ascribing honor and glory

unto him for what he has done, not because of something or someone, but, according to his own purpose and plan. The entire first Chapter of Ephesians is declaring the power of God in determining the salvation of the saints, and in this verse he goes further and places all things in the category of what he has done. God's will is the only one involved in the creation of all things, the disposing of all of his creation and the choosing of a portion of his creation for his own peculiar treasure. Deut. 32 vs. 8, 9 "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. For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." This theme is to be found throughout the scriptures as this choice and election is being made manifest and the chosen vessels come onto the stage, run the race that is set for them in this time world. Whether under the law as was Moses, Samuel, David and Isaiah, or, in the Gospel day as Peter, James, John and Paul they were called out and chosen for a particular work; and the choice and selection was always by God, none volunteered, but all responded and did that which was required of them.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven; a time to be born and a time to die;" many will concede to this fact, but, Solomon went on to name many other things for which there is a time and a season set. Some of these are

important issues, such as life and death, but, others are small and trivial in the mind of man; such as a time to sew and a time to rend, a time to gather up stones and a time to cast away stones, a time to weep and a time to laugh. Since Solomon said at the beginning of this lesson, to everything there is a time, he is listing these to show that there is a particular time set for all events great and small; because it takes each and everyone of them to make the whole. As in the scheme of nature everything has a cause from former events and effects future things. One cannot be removed from the scene without affecting the balance of all events.

Fatalism of Design. Fatalism is a theory that all events are determined by blind fate and are therefore inevitable. They just happen without any rhyme or reason, no purpose or plan, no intelligence or power in the scheme of things. There is no organization of things and no way to know what will happen next. It is just nature gone wild with no control or guiding force. This theory, as ludicrous as it is, when compared to the scriptures is as reasonable as the theory that some have, that a God who created the earth and all the host of it, the forces of nature and the mysteries of the universe is subject to the whims and desires of his own creation; that he wants and is trying to accomplish a desired end, but must enlist the aid or consent of his creation. Man with all of his weakness and vanity is not capable of contending with his maker, much less have to let him have his way. One of

these theories is as incompatible to the teachings of the scriptures as the other and both are the products of the natural mind of man.

The truth as set forth in the scriptures is that God alone inhabited eternity before time began and of his own sovereign will and purpose created the heavens and the earth. And all the host of them. God looked upon the face of all his work that he had and declared it was very good. As he created the living Creatures; on the earth he declared the characteristics they would have and that they would perpetuate their species because they each contained their seed which would bring forth of their own kind as long as the earth stood. Man was created in the image and likeness of God, was given dominion over the balance of God's Creation, and told to go forth and replenish the earth and subdue it. God planted a garden eastward in Eden and there he placed man to dress and to keep the garden. He gave him to eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which he was commanded not to eat, for, in the day he ate of it he would surely die.

Man was made in the image and likeness of God but without the wisdom and knowledge of God, and he was also created subject to vanity which is completely contrary to the characteristics of God. This vanity together with the lack of wisdom and knowledge made him a perfect subject for the serpent who was more subtle than any beast of the field and also man. And through man the ser-

pent was waging war with God because his desire was to have the pre-eminence over God in the world.

The Vanity in man was not a flaw in the workmanship of God, but rather, the plan of God whereby man would love and worship him because of his care and love for them. In their created state without the fall into sin, from which they could not retrieve themselves, they would have no need of a savior; they dwelled in the presence of God and were given all things that were needful for life and happiness, so, where is the praise and adoration to come from, their life was perfect then.

In the fall and because of sin, judgement was pronounced upon the man, the woman and the serpent. The judgement on the serpent was that he was cursed above all the cattle and the beast of the field, he would crawl on his belly and would eat the dust of the earth all of his days; the judgement on the woman was that God would greatly multiply her sorrows and her conception and the judgement on Adam was he would no longer just dress and keep the garden, but the earth was cursed for his sake and he would live of it by the sweat of his brow. As a results of the fall, man was driven from the garden, lest he, put forth and take of the tree of life and live forever. A completely different scenario from before, not by accident but by design, and still part of the all things that work together for good to them that love the Lord, although it may be pretty obscure, at times, how this could be.

The serpent is relegated to his proper place in the scheme of things; the woman by virtue of the curse of multiplying of her original promised conception, will give birth to the seed of the serpent among others, and there will ever be enmity between them, the seed of the woman by promise, and the seed of the serpent, because of her yielding, to him in partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; now she will be the mother of both the good seed and the evil seed. (The bruising of the heel of the seed of the woman and the bruising of the head of the seed of the serpent) these are all, people, involved in the crucifixion of Christ; Christ and those who crucified him, and Eve is the mother of all living. Adam was driven from his paradise and made to work for his living in a hostile and forbidden environment as compared to the garden of Eden. Cherubs and a flaming sword was placed at the east of the garden to keep the way of the tree of life; not to keep man away from it but to keep the way of the tree of life, for those for whom it was reserved. See the wisdom and the providence of God as it is woven in among all of the other scenes and is just as much a part of the plan of salvation as the wrath and the judgments that the chosen vessels endure in their travels here in time.

Just as the first chapter of Genesis, this third chapter, is prophesying of scenes to come many generations in the future and the same power that is declaring them must have the power and the consistent resolve to bring

them to pass according to the described plan. This is the predestination which is so necessary to insure to the children of God that their faith is not in vain and that what was the intent at that time is still the same purpose in today's action.

Down through the ages of time God has raised up prophets to speak to the people and give them his word and counsel; revealing to the prophets his words of truth, of things present at the time, and of things to come; of judgments and of deliverances which they will encounter in their travels. All of these require the wisdom to reveal and the power to bring them to pass; this is the substance of the hope of the children of God and faith is their assurance of the fulfillment of the promises of God. Without this assurance there would be no peace and Jesus, in telling them of the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, promised, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This gift of peace, like all of the other blessings are not given, as the world giveth, they are permanent, they are everlasting and enables them not to fear with all the storms around them and the opposition to these truths that are so prevalent in the world today. This peace, in the heart and soul, thrives in the midst of chaos in nature because they know that these things too shall pass.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called ac-

ording to his purpose," Again we have the, all things, working together for the good of the saints of God: and since they are all working together, they are according to a master design to a determined goal, which is the salvation of the elect. The scriptures and the experiences of these chosen vessels harmonize and teach them that God is supreme, and perfect in all his ways, leaving nothing to chance and therefore all things occur according to his own good pleasure and they believe that the future promises are just as sure.

The doctrine of predestination is simply the belief of the saints of God that in the beginning God had a master plan of salvation which he has revealed down through the ages, by his prophets, and that no power in heaven or on earth can thwart or change the, all things, included in that plan.

In bonds of love,
Richard H. Campbell

PSALM 28: 1-4.

Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.

Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.

Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.

Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.

CORRECTIONS:

On Page 63 in the March 1994 issue - Church Of Our Faith. The name Blair was printed as Blain. Also Brother R.Y. Blair was their first Clerk instead of Deacon. Please make these corrections in your copy.

Also in the March issue of the Signs there was an error in the name of the person being memorialized and the address of the Donor.

As listed:

Ms. Janie Fanning, LA.....100.00
(In memory of Mrs. Minnie L. Atwood)

Should have read:

Ms. Janie Fanning, ALA.....100.00
(In memory of Mrs. Minnie L. Biggs)

1 PETER 2: 1-6.

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings.

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

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.

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



CANAAN PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Canaan Primitive Baptist Church was established on March 8, 1913. Land for the church was donated by Mrs. Pattie Thomas Dodd, Elder W. Robert Dodd's mother.

The first building's wood frame, constructed in 1913 was badly in need of repairs by 1956 so a cinder block building was erected on a part of the old foundation using some materials from the old building.

In 1990 with a generous gift from Sister Ruth Blair, in memory of her husband, Brother Ernest Blair who was a member of Canaan, an addition and renovation was added to this building, completed in Sept. 1992. Sister Ruth Blair is also a member of Canaan Primitive Baptist Church.

The records show that Elder George W. Hundley was her first pastor and Brother R. Y. Blair Clerk.

After the ordination of Elder W. Robert Dodd on August 15, 1914 he be-

came assistant pastor and in 1925 was called and remained permanent pastor until June 17, 1939. Elder George Doss served for several years, next Elder Raymond Payne served from June 1944 until Sept. 1963. Elder Rufus Brown served the church for a few months following Elder Payne. Elder Robert A. May was pastor from 1964 until 1976 due to his failing health he was unable to attend meetings anymore.

On November 5, 1977 Elder Julian R. Williams was called and is our present faithful, beloved pastor. Deacons are Brothers Harvey Wood and Fred Murphy.

Canaan Church is located on State Road No. 844 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Meetings are held each second Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Communion services are held in June and November.

VOICES OF THE PAST

“ FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS ”

The scriptures teach that God possesses the attribute of love: “ God is love.” Also, that salvation’s plan, in all its parts, is the fruit of that love. God did not give his son, to die for us, that he might love us; but he loved us, and for that love his son was sacrificed for us. “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;” so that his love toward us, even when we were sinners, was sufficiently intense to effect the putting to death of Jesus. We are not told just when this love began to exist, but it is said: “He is in one mind, and changes not “; “ Without variable-ness, or the shadow of turn. “ Therefore, God, who “is love,” has loved us as long as he has been what he is now; but, if he is unchangeable, we can not say he ever began to love us. Therefore the gift of Jesus, and the salvation that is inseparably joined to that gift, are the fruits of God’s everlasting love. But not only is it true that God’s love underlies the giving of Christ as a Redeemer, but it also produces and underlies our delivery from sin. “ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us, together with Christ; by grace are ye saved.” We are not quickened and saved, and there-

fore loved, but loved, and therefore quickened and saved.

“We love him because he first loved us.” God’s love to us has “ causative power,” and produces love to God in us. “ Love (in us) is of God,” and “ He that loveth is born of God.” We can not comprehend any one of God’s attributes. The thought that God loved us before the world began is incomprehensible to us; yet we have seen that the gift of Jesus is a fruit of that love; and as “grace” was given to us, in Christ, before the world began, so we know that God loved us before the world began; hence there is nothing older than God’s love to us. Thousands of years have fled away and gone, and yet it exists and bears the most precious fruit. No saint can say that he loved God and obeyed him, and that God loved him as a consequence; but certainly God loved us, and our loving God and obeying him is a fruit of that love. You can not believe that God’s love is directed by perfect wisdom, and yet believe that it will ever be taken off of any object. For instance: He loves you today; his perfect wisdom comprehends, not only what you are now, but what you ever will be; therefore he is not disappointed in what he loves. You never can become worse than he knows you will be; and, in fact, he loved you while you was dead in sin, and certainly you can never be worse than dead in sin. Therefore, to say that God will cease to love you is to impeach his wisdom, and charge him with misplacing his love, and attribute changeableness to God.

But, if it is argued that God loves character, and that he only loves persons as they produce that character, we would answer, that every grace of the Christian is produced in him by God; and it is simple nonsense to say that God clothes his people with every benefit of the cross, and then loves them for that dress. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," etc. Also, it is given to God's people to believe on him, and their love to him is a fruit of his to them. Hence he loves none of us for our good character, but our good character grows out of his love to us; if he had not loved us and given his son to die for us, and also loved us and quickened us, and wrought in us all that makes up the difference between our present selves and our former selves, we had never had a good character. You can not conceive of an immutable God, with mutable, changeable love, affectionately embracing an object today, and tomorrow casting that object down to hell; today calling one an heir of Heaven, beholding his name written in the book of life, and to-morrow erasing that name and disinheriting that heir. The bible gives no account of such a God; neither do we poor, sinful, erring beings need such a God. Reader, have you never, thought of the tenderness of a parent's love toward a prodigal son or daughter? Though that child goes away in sin and disgrace, until others have forsaken and cast it out of their hearts, yet that good father loves him still, and that mother wets her pillow

with tears, as she thinks, in the stillness of the night, of her erring child; and they both lift their petitions to God, to save the wanderer. Few children know how much parents love them till the parents are cold in death; so, few Christians know how much God loves them, and how carefully he watches them. We admire pure disinterested love in parents; love that floods can not drown, or turn away; that will follow their offspring as long as life lasts; love unchangeable, unalterable, constant. Is this the highest and noblest perfection of men, and yet God destitute of it? Shall we measure the perfection of creature love by this standard, and throw it aside as too glorious to measure God's love? If God's love to his children be fickle, changeable, dependent on changing circumstances, alternately given and taken away, then, to my mind, the case is made out; God's love is imperfect, and he is imperfect. But, if God loves those whom he loves at all, eternally, infinitely and perfectly, then is his love directed in wisdom, and God is perfect; and one sweet thought here is, that the evidence that God loves me now, or ever did love me, is a certain, unalterable, irreversible title to Heaven.

The Savior prays, John xvii: "That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou has loved me." He desires the world to know a great truth here, to-wit, that, as God loves the son, so he loves his children. And a little further, he says: "Thou lovedst me before the founda-

tion of the world." So, if God loves us as he loves his son, and loved his son before the foundation of the world, then he loved us before the foundation of the world; and as the son lives by the Father, even so he that eateth of the son shall live by the son.

God has said: "I will visit their transgressions, with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes, but my loving kindness I will not take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." Again: "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember against them no more." If any one is "Without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, he is a bastard, and not a son." The chastening rod is in the hand of a Father, and "Shall yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness"; it is for our profit that we are chastened, and not for our destruction. How delightful the thought that God never changes, and that, though we are prone to wander, God never forgets, nor forsakes us. Our own experiences will bear out this thought. We have left undone the things we should have done, and done many things we should not have done; yet God has not turned his back upon us, and we can sing,

*"Oh, Lord, thou never changest;
It is because I stray;
Lord, guide me by thy spirit,
And keep me in the way."*

The Christian may apply the following lines to himself:

*"So nigh, so very nigh to God,
I can not nearer be;
For, in the person of his son,*

I am as near as he."

*So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I can not be;
The love wherewith he loves
his son,
Such is his love for me.*

*Why should I ever careful be,
Since such a God is mine?
He watches o'er me night and
day,
And tells me "Mine is thine."*

James H. Oliphant

Taken from a sermon "MARRIAGE UNION" by, William Gadsby.

It has been justly observed, that the woman was not made from the superior part of man, that she might be thought to be above him: nor from any inferior part, as being below him. So allow me to observe, that she was not taken from his head, that she might not be supposed to reign over him; nor from his eyes, that she might not be supposed to see for him nor diligently search for his imperfections; nor from his ears, that she might not be supposed to listen to false accusations against him; nor from his mouth, for fluent as she may be in speech, she is not to be her husband's spokesman; nor from his arms, or hands, for she is not to fight his battles for him; nor from the front part of his body, for she is not to be set at the front of dangers and difficulties; nor from his back, for she is not to be treated with contempt, and set behind him; nor from his legs, or thighs, for

she is not to bear the principal part of his burdens; nor from his feet, for she is not to be trampled upon by him; but out of his side, and from one of his ribs, that she might appear to be equal to him; and from a part near his heart, and under his arms, to show that she should be affectionately loved by him, and be always under his care and protection. So that a wife is not to be tyrannized over by her husband, nor made into a slave, much less to be abandoned by a voluptuous husband, and exposed to all the frowns and enmity of selfseeking reptiles. No, beloved; she is designed, by the providence of God, to be a help-meet for her husband; "For the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help-meet. And if so, there is to be freedom and familiarity between a man and his wife; and there should be a mutual concern for each other's real welfare. Strictly speaking, their concerns are one, and demand a oneness of care and attention; and as far as either husbands or wives act contrary to this, they violate the laws of God, and dishonour their own persons."

Copy from page (202) Memoir
of William Gadsby.
Sent in by Elder Noel F. Conner

JOHN 4:7.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

**EXPERIENCE OF THE LATE
ELDER GILBERT BEEBE**

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (I Tim. 1: 15)."

We are acquainted with an individual whose history we will give in the following words, viz. He was (like all the race of which he is a member) conceived in sin and shaped in iniquity. He was born in the eastern part of the State of Connecticut. He was a religionist from his birth, yet an enemy to God and a stranger to grace during the first seven years of his natural life (for he was alive before the commandment came.) He had at this period been taught to say his prayers, but had never been taught to pray; he had made some progress in the "Westminister Catechism", and, in short, as touching the religion of the Pharisees he excelled many of his equals. It would have terrified him exceedingly to have gone to sleep at night without counter-balancing all the sins of the day by a repetition of his forms of worship. But on all occasions when he had paid his vows he had peace offerings at home. Up to about this period of his life he was led to suppose that as touching the righteousness of the law he was blameless. We cannot describe to our readers the mortification and disappointment of this young lad when being suddenly arrested by an arrow from the quiver of the Lord he was sum-

moned to stand at the dreadful bar of divine justice and give the reason (if any he had) why the tremendous sentence of the law of God should not be executed upon his guilty soul. Great was his consternation when he cast his eager glance around in search of those fancied treasures of personal holiness which he had believed himself to be in possession of. Alas, his stronghold failed him in this very critical moment, he felt that he was ruined, but like Edom, he said, I am impoverished, but I will return and build again my waste places. Great were his efforts, his labors, toils and pains to mend again that holy law which he had broken. He would have prayed, but he could no longer view the great, the dreadful God as a being that might be trifled with, or pacified by what he could do. He struggled, but the harder he struggled the deeper he seemed to be involved in an horrible pit and miry clay; these exercises continued for many days and weeks. Sometimes he meditated a retreat from this awful, wretched state, but whither could he flee? If on the wings of the morning he flew to the uttermost sea, God was there, everywhere present, beholding the evil and the good; there could be no retreating from God, before whose flaming eyes all things are naked and open. At length the day seemed to arrive when the dreadful sentence of the inexorable law of God must be put in execution. Now blackness and darkness and tempests gathered round his frightened soul, hell yawned before him, justice stood with uplifted arm,

and the flaming sword of vengeance was drawn from its scabbard and brandished over his guilty head; the books were brought, the arch accuser was also there, and what was to him more dreadful still than all, the piercing eye of God brought the black crimes of years to light, and what had been transacted in midnight darkness was now exposed upon the housetop. Chilled thus with horror, and pressed down to death with intense despair, remorse, guilt and keen anguish throbbing in his breast, tell us, dear reader, did he need an anxious bench, or knives, or lancets, to secure his conviction? Or would it have comforted him to have been informed by some "Universalist" that there was no hell, when the very pains of hell had hold of him? As well might he be told when writhing on a bed of embers that there was no heat in fire. The spell of such delusion was now broken, the Spirit had moved upon the face of the great deep of his inmost soul, and although all had been without form, and void, yet God had said, Let there be light, and light broke in upon him, and in this light that heart which he had thought was a temple meet for the Holy Ghost to dwell in, was now manifestly the habitation of dragons, etc., the hold of every unclean and hateful bird. It was thus when in or about his eleventh year he went to a distant barn, under an impression like that expressed by the post:

*"I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away I know
I must forever die."*

He fell upon his bended knees, but he could not pray; a rustling leaf, a turning straw, frightened his guilty soul and chained his speechless tongue; awful apprehensions and fearful forebodings pursued him back to his chamber, when despairing of mercy he threw himself upon a bed to die and meet his fiery doom. Worn out with labor and want of rest, nature sank beneath the load, he fell into a sleep. Unconscious of what passed while sleeping, he woke himself singing these words:

*"How glorious is our heavenly King,
Who reigns above the sky;
How shall a child presume to sing
His dreadful majesty?"*

*He seemed indeed in a new world,
his loss of guilt and sin was gone,
the love of God shed abroad in his
heart.*

*"His tongue broke out in unknown
strains,
And sang surprising grace."*

At the age of eleven years and four weeks, on the second Sunday in December 1811, he was permitted to be buried with his precious Lord in baptism, in the river Thames, in the city of Norwich, Conn., by Elder John Sterry, who has since fallen asleep. After remaining eight years a member of the Baptist Church in Norwich, he removed his relation to the church in the city of New York, then under the pastoral care of that defender of the truth, Elder Jonathan Van Velsen, who also has fallen asleep. While a member of the Ebenezer Church, in New

York, the subject of our narrative, when in his twentieth year, was licensed to preach the gospel. The peculiar circumstances of his call to the work of the ministry our present limits will not admit; let it suffice to say that being experimentally, he could not help being doctrinally a Predestinarian. For more than fourteen years he has been lisping the name of Jesus with such ability as the Lord has been pleased to bestow, without any of the polish of Gamaliel's school, and although it has been his privilege to suffer some persecution, yet he has not resisted unto blood, striving against sin; he finds by every day's experience that he is a sinner yet, his nature is evil as ever it was. To will is present with him but how to perform that which is good he finds not. He is still the chief of sinners, and if a saint, the least of all.

New Vernon, N.Y.
April 30, 1834.

(The above article was first republished in 1865 by request of Elder Beebe's daughters.)

Sent to the "Signs"
by Elder N.F. Conner

ECCLESIASTES 5: 18.

Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.

From Elder Lamberts book,
 "Tried In The Furnace."

PRAYER

January, 1948



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT



ne subject of vital importance to the child of God is prayer. True prayer is a sincere desire of the heart prompted by the Holy

Spirit. One prays sincerely for that to be done for him that he has learned by sad experience that he cannot perform himself. When you are brought down to feel your dependence and inability and you are sinking in despair, and God reveals Himself to you as being willing to save to the uttermost; then you are blessed to pray.

Hypocritical prayer would be an attempt to ask God to do something for you that you feel able to perform of your own strength, or to ask for something you do not believe He will perform. I believe all true prayer inspired by the Holy Spirit is answered. The promise is, "Ask and ye shall receive." Many times we ask in vain, but this is because our desire is prompted by a selfish spirit. We are so ignorant that we do not know the things we stand in need of, but our heavenly Father knows and the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

When we realize our infirmities we pray God to do according to His will and to reconcile us to our lot in the matter. Sometimes tribulations are

best for us even though we may feel they are against us. Afflictions are grievous to us while being experienced but afterward yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to God's people. Then we are made to "glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulations worketh patience, and patience experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."

I believe all the disciples of Christ pray the prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray in full faith that every syllable will be answered. They may not utter the words but when that Spirit intercedes they desire the essence of it and are confident of it being answered.

Now let us examine this prayer. "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." In the salutation we acknowledge Him as being supreme. Those who have been blessed to believe Jesus is the Christ is born of God. That Spirit in us makes us cry "Father." What a wonderful relationship to be enabled by His Spirit to feel that we are His children. We realize His name is to be hallowed rather than ours. No one who feels to deserve any credit or praise whatsoever can pray for God's name to be praised. Yes, all things praise Him. The things that would not be to His praise God will prevent. In Psalms 76:10 we read, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

"Thy kingdom come." We do not pray for our kingdom, but we pray for

His kingdom to come. There is a King who reigns over the subjects of a kingdom. God is King of this kingdom. He is the supreme Ruler. When He speaks it is done. When He commands it stands fast. The words that go forth out of His mouth shall not return unto Him void but shall accomplish that which He pleases and prosper in the things whereto He sends it. This King spake through His Son concerning this kingdom when He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." There is a kingdom of men and there is a kingdom of God. The kingdom of men is built by men and will come to naught but the sole builder of God's kingdom is the Lord and it will stand. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain." God's people are confident that His kingdom will not fail for He is the Builder and the Keeper and He makes His subjects obedient. He has the power to make them willing and enables them to perform. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." According to the scripture, "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 doeth thou?" He "worketh all things after counsel of his own will." Yes, He has declared "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." God's children are consoled with the fact that God

rules over all things. The devil with all of his hosts cannot frustrate or interfere with God's will and purpose. Those things that men and devils ordain for the ruin and destruction of that peculiar people of God - God has ordained them for the good of His people and for the ruin and destruction of men and devils!

"Give us this day our daily bread." If we feel competent to acquire this bread by the work of our own hands it would be hypocritical to ask Him for it. If we felt to deserve this bread we could only ask Him to reward us with it. But our feeling of unworthiness as well as our inability prompts us to ask Him to give us this day our daily bread. Our confidence, that He will never forsake His children but will give unto them daily the things they stand in need of, suffices us with faith to believe that He will administer unto our needs. God is not only mindful of our spiritual needs but is also mindful of our temporal needs. When treating upon the natural necessities of life Jesus said to His disciples, "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Luke 12:31). God will provide His people sufficiently with the natural necessities of life as well as the spiritual bread which is Christ and His righteousness in them.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." According to Luke the wording is, "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." God's children realize that they are transgressors of the law. They are made to exclaim,

“when I would do good, evil is present with me.” They realize that with the mind they “serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” We are made to acknowledge our sins. Faith and trust in the merits of Jesus christ and in the sufficiency of the atoning blood of Jesus to pay the penalty imposed because of our sins and to satisfy justice, emboldens us to believe that God with a forgiving heart. God has taken from us the stony heart and has given us a heart of flesh. This heart forgives a brother his trespasses. One characteristic of a child of God is to forgive. Jesus said, “Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother’s eye.” The fact that you can behold a mote in your brother’s eye makes manifest that you have a beam in your own. If God has forgiven me of so great sins how shall I not forgive a brother his trespasses seeing that they are so little and insignificant in comparison with my sins.

“Lead us not into temptation.” James says, “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: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” God does not lead His people into temptation. It is the agreement of man with the lustily desires of the flesh that produces sin. It is the enticement of the lust which is the temptation.

“But deliver us from evil.” When we would do good evil is present with us. This causes us to desire to be delivered from evil. Because of our many infirmities we are made to cry out as Paul, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Our trust in the efficacy of the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Evil is present with us yet, but we hope some day to be delivered from it. We trust that when this mortal shall have put on immortality and when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption then we shall have been delivered from evil. When this natural body shall have been raised a spiritual body then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” I believe it pleases God to deliver us from evil continually in this present life but the climax of that deliverance will be the resurrection.

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” In closing this prayer we acknowledge that the kingdom belongs to Him. We grant that He has all power to enforce His decrees concerning this kingdom. At last we think of Him as eternal. He is ever the same and changes not. The subjects of His kingdom will finally abide with Him forever and ever on the sunny banks of sweet deliverance where no one hungers for bread, no sin shall be there; no other kingdom to contend with, and no evils to molest a life of joy, peace and happiness.

Elder E.J. Lambert

Guthrie, Okla., August 10, 1903.

Dear Brother Beebe: - When I was in trouble I went an uninvited guest to the house of Elder John R. Respes, editor of the Gospel Messenger, and pastor of the Primitive Baptist Church at Butler, Ga. I found him seated with his son-in-law, in the spacious veranda of his fine old southern mansion. Being an utter stranger I declined a proffered seat until I told my name and the object of the coming, which was to get some information on religious subjects, and be shown the way of salvation; that I had come to him for this purpose at the suggestion of Deacon Digby, of Brownsville, Alabama. I told him I desired to ask some questions, but not to argue any point in theology, though not pretending to be an ignoramus in current denominational tenets and views; that I had heard he was "A guide of the blind, a teacher of babes, and instructor of foolish," and that I needed that kind of help, for I was in unspeakable distress on account of my sins and hopeless condition. The interview began at 1:11 p.m., and continued with intermissions for sleep and eating until 1:11 p.m. next day, when I took the train and left on my regular business.

Never before or since has it been given to me to hear the truth so plainly stated in its entirety, and so forcibly demonstrated as on that occasion. Somehow I asked just the right questions, and got just the answers my soul was hungering for. I saw the scheme of redemption as he ex-

pounded it. For the first time I understood the Old Baptist doctrine with the clearness of conviction of its truth. But the clearer the view of the infinite holiness of God, and the atoning blood of the Lamb of God, "shed for many," the more oppressive became my burden of sin and guiltiness, and the more depressed my spirits. For the next five days I was with Jonah in "the belly of hell," beyond reach of any life-line human soul-savers could throw out, and utterly helpless in myself. I, too, saw that "Salvation is of the Lord" only, and my deliverance came at nine o'clock Tuesday morning, Sept. 28th, 1886, but the manner of its coming was as surprising as the joy of it was heavenly, unspeakable by word of man. I hope to talk it over with many ten thousand years from now.

Elder Respes was one of those rare great thinkers whose names are kept alive through the centuries by some formula containing "the sum of the matters," sayings to which reference is made when it is said, "A knowledge of the best things that have ever been said is called learning."

To present to the church one of his demonstrable conclusions, is the object for which this article is written, and sent for publication in the Signs.

As stated, Elder Respes in this interview was very cordial and profound, treating of subjects in bulk, and by no means in a "katydid wrangle" sort of way. His was a peculiar mind in this, when once a subject or text came before him for examination, (he said it of himself) he was unable to get rid of it until he had made an exhaustive

investigation of it. He was once called to the charge of a certain church, and for a whole year preached on one text: "If I perish I perish." There were forty accessions to the church that year. There was little about him but mind. His bodily presence was not commanding, and for many years he was an invalid. He was a rich man, a graduate of the Georgia State University at Athens, and had served as a member of the State Constitutional Convention. But all there was of him in the days that I knew him, he was an Old Baptist editor and preacher, towering and thrilling in the pulpit, but greatest in conversation with friends, for when heart talks to heart, things find lodgment. He was a man of convictions, humble, yet positive and frank in his expression of them. It is safe to say he seldom sent any caller empty away.

This preamble, not without interest in itself, I am hoping, prepares the reader for a saying of the Elder, to whom the Lord, who has led me about and instructed me all my days, sent me for "sweet counsel" that twenty-second and twenty-third of September, 1886. After he had expounded to me the doctrine of salvation by grace, for which the Primitive Baptist Church stands representative, he said with the solemnity of the full assurance of understanding, "That is it, or there is just nothing of it all." Words that sank deep into my heart. I saw it then; I see it clearer the more I see of the goings on of the bewildered sects, teaching that repentance, baptism, contributing to missions, supporting societies and good works generally, are condi-

tions of salvation. For it is the organic constitution of the universe that "the soul that sinneth it shall die," or as not less graphically stated in Romans vi. 23, "The wages of sin is death." Not repentance, not reformation, not charitable deeds, not human endeavor, but death. A death must intervene; either the sinner must die for his sins, or as the Old School Baptists teach, Christ must die for him, the just for the unjust. "By his knowledge shall my righteous justify many." How? "For he shall bear their iniquities." That is the only "how." So taught Elder Respes, so teach the Scriptures in the law, the prophets and the Psalms; so taught our Lord himself, and God has raised up the Old School Baptists to keep alive that doctrine: the atonement, the experience of grace, the eternal purpose, foreknowledge, election, predestination, and as Jonah expressed it, "Salvation is of the Lord," and of which Jesus on the cross said, "It is finished." And now the reader will concur with Elder Respes, "That is it, or there is just nothing of it all."

Not satisfied with establishing the doctrine of salvation by grace, he fortified it, making it to his hearers look stronger, by contrasting with it the absurdity of conditionalism, a process of logic of which he was a master.

Sister R. Anna Phillips related to me an incident of a doctrinal import occurring in his last illness that will thrill the heart of every Old School Baptist that reads it. She was sitting at his bedside. He reached and clasped her

hand, and with great yearning of soul said repeatedly, "I want to love Jesus." She told him he did. "For have you not," said she, "as my pastor, often taught me from the pulpit, If in our heart we desire a thing spiritual we have it? Now you want to love Jesus, which is proof to me that you do love him." Thereupon they both broke down in tears.

All yours,
Wm. S. Speer

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." - Jeremiah xxix. 13.

After the Lord has quickened our souls, for a time we often go, shall I say, blundering on, not knowing there is a Jesus. We think that the way of life is to keep God's commandments, obey the law, cleanse ourselves from sin, reform our lives, and cultivate universal holiness in thought, word, and action; and so we go, blundering and stumbling on in darkness; and all the while never get a single step forward. But when the Lord has suffered us to weary ourselves to find the door, and let us sink lower and lower into the pit of guilt and ruin, from feeling that all our attempts to extricate ourselves have only plunged us deeper and deeper, and the Spirit of God opens us to the understanding and brings into the soul some spiritual discovery of Jesus, and thus makes known that there is a Saviour, a Mediator, and a way of escape - this is the grand turning-point in our lives, the first opening in the valley of Achor of the door of hope. And when the soul has

once seen that there is a Jesus, and once felt a measure of the power of his resurrection, it never goes to any other quarter for pardon, justification, and salvation. When the Spirit of God begins to open up with power in his conscience that there is a Jesus, that he is the only Mediator, that the Son of God has come down and taken a holy human nature into union with himself, and is now at the right hand of the Father, it is the first break of day, the first dawn of hope; and upon that bright spot does the shipwrecked soul fix his longing eyes till the Sun of righteousness arises upon it with healing in his wings. It is a great step in a man's experience to turn wholly and solely to the Lord, and renounce all creature righteousness, all forms and ceremonies as a way of salvation. It is a great mercy to turn away from them, as the shipwrecked mariner turns away from his sinking ship, and looks to the rising sun to shew him some way of escape, and thus afford him some gleam of hope.

J.C. Philpot

"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" - Romans vii. 24.

If the Lord the Spirit has implanted that piteous cry in our soul, "O wretched man that I am? !" this will follow as a necessary consequence - "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Where shall I look for deliverance? From what quarter can it come? Shall I look to the law? O no! that curses and condemns me, because I am continually breaking it. Can I look to friends? They may pity and sympathize; but they cannot remove the body of sin and death; it is too fast linked on for them to remove.

Shall I go to ministers of truth? I may hear what they say with approbation; but there is something more wanted to remove this chilling embrace of the body of sin and death. Shall I look to the Scriptures? They contain the remedy; but I want that remedy to be sweetly applied - "Who then shall deliver me?" What refuge can I look to? Whither can I go, or whither shall I turn? From what quarter can help or deliverance come? See the embarrassment! view the perplexity of an exercised soul! - looking here, and looking there; turning to the right hand and turning to the left. Yet from one quarter only can the deliverance come. And thus, when the Apostle was brought here - when he was sunk down to a low spot, and anxiously turning his eyes to every quarter to see whence deliverance could come - God blessed his soul with a view of his precious Son. God the Spirit wrought in his heart that living faith whereby he saw Jesus, and whereby there was a communication of the blood and love of the Lamb to his conscience.

J.C. Philpot

MEETINGS

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union meeting will be held, the Lord willing, on the fifth Sunday in May. The meeting will be held at Dan River Church with Greensboro Church being the host church. All lovers of the truth are invited to meet with us with a special invitation to all ministers of our faith and order.

Kenneth R. Key, Moderator
Wayne Edwards, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR FEBRUARY 1994

Ms. Dorothy Brooks, NC \$7.00
 C.B. Richardson, VA 2.00
 Alvis G. Beacham, NC 2.00
 W.W. Abshire, VA 2.00
 J. Cline Chandler, NC 2.00
 Ms. Joyce Farley, TX 10.00
 L.C. Hornsby, GA 2.00
 A.R. Elmore, NC 2.00
 Mrs. Carl R. Bryant, LA 2.00
 Dan Anders, AL 2.00
 John Collie, NC 2.00
 Phil & Joyce Pittman, TX 7.00
 Victor H. Laws, MD 50.00
 In memory of Mrs. Maud Truitt Laws
 Ms. Annie M. Pearson, MI 25.00
 Mr. & Mrs. Nummie Dickerson, NC . 2.00
 Enos Gingerich, NC 10.00
 Mrs. Lester Haning, WV 2.00
 Mrs. Ada Campbell, VA 5.00

OBITUARIES

SISTER JULIA METTS BROWN

We bow in humble submission to the will of our Lord who doeth all things well.

Sister Julia Metts Brown was called from our midst July 1, 1993. She was born February 1, 1898 to the late Thomas I. and Mary Bishop Metts in Franklin County, Virginia making her stay on earth 95 years and 5 months.

She was preceded in death by a son Wilbur Brown, husband John Brown, granddaughter Karen Shea and son-

in-law James Shea. She is survived by one daughter Doris (Dottie) Shea, one granddaughter Joyce Ann Shea, one daughter-in-law Dora Goad Brown, one sister Lucy J. Mitz and special friend Bill Collins.

Sister Julia united with Bethel Primitive Baptist Church June 5, 1965 and was faithful to attend the meetings as long as she was able. She manifested a love for the church and when unable to attend she would always ask about the meetings. I believe her to be a Mother in Israel, setting an example worthy to be followed. The welfare of the church seemed to be her greatest concern.

She taught school for many years, a profession she loved. She was active and instrumental in many respectable community activities, holding several state and national offices. She was loved and respected by those who love the way of truth.

Funeral service was conducted from Lynch's Chapel by her pastor Elder Junior Conner and Elder W.T. Conner. She was laid to rest in Franklin Memorial Park.

Written by request of the church while in conference.

Elder Junior Conner, Moderator
Elsie Poindexter, Clerk

PSALMS 116:14-15.

I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

ROBERTA SPANGLER WILSON

It is with a sad heart that I attempt to write a memorial for Sister Roberta Spangler Wilson.

Sister Roberta was born December 17, 1915, in Danville, Va. She was the daughter of Noah Spangler and step-mother, Mary Jessie Dixon.

She married H. Coleman Wilson and they were blessed to have three children.

Sister Roberta joined Dan River Church October 28, 1973, and was baptised by her pastor the late Elder David V. Spangler. She loved, attended, and supported her church faithfully until in declining health she and her husband moved to California to be near their daughter.

Sister Roberta departed this life January 9, 1994, in El Cajon, California. Her survivors include a daughter, Sylvia Floyd, two sons, H. Coleman Wilson, Jr. and Jack Wilson, several grandchildren, great grandchildren, six sisters and two brothers. Her husband preceded her in death. Her funeral was conducted January 15, 1994, in Dan River Church by her pastor Elder Kenneth Key and Elder H.W. Wray. Her body was laid to rest beside her husband in Dan River Church Cemetery.

We pray that her family may be reconciled to her passing and us to feel our loss is Sister Roberta's eternal gain.

Written by Phyllis Snyder

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., JUNE 1994

NO. 6

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

THANKS FOR SUFFERINGS

*I thank my God, for the flames of fire,
That burns out the chaff, of the fleshy
desires,
And made me look to my heavenly King,
For he gave me a hope, of the glory in
him.*

*I thank the Lord, for the fiery darts,
That shot like an arrow, through my
heart,
For the understanding, that he gave to
me,
So I might walk in faith, through eter-
nity.*

*I thank my Lord, for the chastening,
That brings me down to my Lord on
knees,
For though I am saddened, with grievous
sounds,
I know that his grace did much more
abound.*

*I thank the Lord, that he shook this clay,
Of this earthly creature, to make it obey,
Destroyed and condemned, sin in the
flesh,
And gave it a spirit, anew and afresh.*

*I thank my Lord, that he died on the tree,
To save such sinners and wretches like
me.
And preserved us for his purpose and
will,
For his counsel shall stand, his elect
shall live.*

**Katherine Mathews
Shreveport, La.**

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EDITORIAL

Matthew 17, Verses 1- 5.



ELDER J.R. WILLIAMS

tain 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."

First we admit these scriptures are too great for me, but we see we as humans must be taken to a high place, I think meaning thus. My thoughts and my ways are as high above your thoughts and your ways as the heavens are above the earth. Then we can't receive the things that be of God in our present surroundings. Also into an high mountain apart.

We must be taken, not go, he bringeth them up into an high mountain apart. We read many times of a mountain as a holy place, apart, separate from the world separate from other people, but we see this apart as also meaning separate from our worries of nature before we can see the power of God manifest.

Then and only then could they see Him transfigured before them. His face did shine as the sun. We cannot with natural eyes look at this brightness but shortly without blindness, as the Apostle Paul experienced, when struck down - Raiment white as the light, surely this event left them in a spiritual blindness as they wanted to make three tabernacles, each similar it

ARTICLES

FROM THE GOSPEL STANDARD,
NOVEMBER 1991: JEHOVAH - JERITH

Sermon preached at the Meetings of the Gospel Standard Societies at Rochdale Road Chapel, Manchester, on September 7th, 1991.

Text: "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireth: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" (Gen. 22.14).

Moriah was a mountain to Abraham, wasn't it? A dark, gloomy mountain, the place where God had commanded him to sacrifice his own beloved son. You think of it, beloved friends. This afternoon we know the end of it, we know what happened, we know the deliverance; Abraham did not. He had that solemn command to take his only son, and there to sacrifice him on an alter on one of the mountains of Moriah. There were very many things. There was not only his natural feeling, this being his own dear son whom he had to slay, to sacrifice, but hadn't he been delivered from idolatry and all those awful practices of human sacrifice? But more than that, more than anything else, what of the Lord's gracious promise, the promise made concerning Isaac, and not only concerning Isaac, but concerning the promised Messiah, concerning the promised Sav-

seems. They with us must see him with an eye single before we can see him as the only begotten of the Father, the only one to be adored, alone.

While he yet spoke, I think meaning before anymore natural speech or thoughts could be expressed, a bright cloud overshadowed them, covered their bodies as well as thoughts also hid them from the world, then let us consider a bright cloud.

Today as I write there are dark clouds, and many times black clouds surround us, can't see the brightness of the Sun or Son. On this occasion there was a bright cloud. It must be a bright cloud in my life, before I can see spiritual things. I hope today as I write, although in nature a black cloud, is there a bright cloud overshadowing my thoughts, if so, with us and all of His elect a bright cloud must be present to teach us the beauty of God in His glory. His apostles heard the voice they beheld his face shine as the sun, will not His people one day experience such, when all sight of nature is hid, the bright cloud revealing to them the true meaning of that voice out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

As we stated these things are too great for me. It is so large a picture my natural mind cannot frame it.

I continue to hope,
Elder Julian R. Williams

ROMANS 15 : 13.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

our? What of God's faithfulness? What of God's promises? What of God's eternal covenant purposes if Isaac were to die? Moriah was a dark, black mountain to Abraham. Yet we are told in Hebrews 11, he was blessed with faith, even to see that his God was able to raise Isaac from the dead.

So we see that humble, loving obedience. O beloved friends, was there ever obedience like the obedience of Abraham, unless it be the obedience of Isaac? Never forget Isaac. How easy for him to flee from his aged father! But that willing sacrifice! If it be God's will, Isaac was willing to die. I wonder sometimes if this was the best day in both Abraham's life and in Isaac's life. It is not often we have days like that. But that day when Isaac was completely surrendered to the will of God, and that day when Abraham was so blessed in his soul. You remember how the Lord Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." Wasn't it on Mount Moriah that took place?

Now this was a dark mountain, a dark gloomy mountain, but "in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." It almost seems from the way the context runs that this had become a kind of proverb in Israel, "As it is said to this day" - "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Well, it was not only said to the day when Moses wrote this passage, but it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

But you say, these dark, black, gloomy mountains - you cannot call them "the mount of the Lord," can you? Yes, beloved friends, we can.

God Himself does. He says, "They are My mountains." And then He makes that gracious promise, "I will make all My mountains a way." That has been a good word to me over the years: "I will make all My mountains a way." These awful, gloomy, black mountains which comes in our lives: you cannot get over them, you cannot get around them, there is no way through them, and then the Lord says, "They are My mountains, all of them, and I will make them a way. They are My mountains because I appointed them. They did not come by chance or accident. "They are My mountains because I am going to deal with them." "I will make all My mountains a way." I believe at last we shall look back from the swellings of Jordan: We shall see God's faithfulness to that promise, and we shall see every mountain made a way. O but these mountains! And yet, "As it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." It is in these mountains of difficulty, trial, temptation and sorrow that we see things we never saw by nature, we never saw before. Well Abraham did, didn't he?

"As it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Well then, what did Abraham see in the mount? What were these things that he saw? Of course, there were many things, but let me just mention three of them, three things that Abraham specially saw in the mount. "As it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

Now first of all, and most important of all, and above all, I believe he saw his dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus. O

what a revelation there is in Genesis 22 of a substitutionary atonement! Substitutionary may be a big word for some of you, in simple language it is this, and there is heaven in it: He instead of me. That is substitution. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." That is substitution. "Behold a scene of matchless grace, 'Tis Jesus in the sinner's place." That is substitution.

How was it revealed to Abraham? Well, there was Isaac laying on the alter, and there he was, ready to die, appointed to death, and there was that sharp knife raised to be plunged into his heart. But then something takes place. Abraham's hand is stopped. There is a ram caught by his horns in the thicket. Now that ram must be taken. Isaac is set free. The ram is laid on alter. The ram is slain. The knife does not smite Isaac, it smites the ram instead of Isaac, and Isaac is set free. That is substitution.

O, I believe Abraham by faith saw the day of Christ on Mount Moriah, and he rejoiced to see it, and was glad. Why did he rejoice to see it? Because as a guilty sinner, feeling his ruin and guilt, he saw "a Lamb as it had been slain," the Lamb of God that was, "slain from the foundation of the world." But by faith, Abraham went to Calvary, and there he saw an innocent Lamb, the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." O, do you believe it? Do you believe in substitution? Do you love substitution? Have you no hope, apart from substitution? Is this the ground on which you are

going to get to heaven? To see and painfully feel your sin and guilt, and the wrath of God that you deserve against your sin, and hell which is your just but dread desert; and then by faith to be led by the Holy Spirit to Calvary, to see that cruel cross and divine wrath poured out there, that is the place where you should have hung, where you should have suffered, where you should have endured divine wrath against your sin personally. Yet there - O the wonder of it - you see divine wrath poured out, not upon the guilty sinner, but upon the innocent Lamb of God, He who is God's dear, eternal Son incarnate. You see the Innocent suffering in the place of the guilty, sin laid upon Him, His people's sin punished in the Saviour, and for ever taken away. Sin must be punished, either in the sinner or in one who takes his place. And there you see the amazing transaction. You see the sword of divine justice drawn out of its sheath, and you see what Ralph Erskine solemnly said, that the sword of divine justice, once drawn from its sheath could never be returned unless drenched in the blood of God's incarnate Son. Now do you believe it? "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord: smite the Shepherd." So the Shepherd is smitten that the sheep might be free. The ram must die so that Isaac might not die. This is our only hope of heaven: a substitutionary atonement.

People sometimes speak rather carelessly about Christ dying for sinners. What does this little word-for-

mean? Our godly forefathers used to put it clearly. (You remember some of them, don't you?) They used to speak about Christ dying in "the room, place and stead of His people." That was good divinity. That is substitution. If you go back further, the old divines used to speak about Christ dying in the law-place of His people. But no-one put it more clearly than our dear hymnwriter:

*"He took the dying traitor's place.
And suffered in his stead:
For man (O miracle of grace!)
For man the Saviour bled."*

Now that will endear the Lord Jesus to you. Then by faith you will behold the Lamb of God. Then this will make Him precious to your soul.

"In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Well, that was the first, the most blessed thing that Abraham saw that day on Mount Moriah. Now the second thing he saw was this: the Lord's blessed ability to deliver. There did not appear to be any way of deliverance, did there? It was God's own commandment. The sentence had gone forth. Abraham and Isaac had travelled this journey, and now the mountain is pointed out, and the alter prepared. There is the knife and there is the wood. It all seemed too far gone. God Himself had commanded it. There just didn't seem any way out, any way of deliverance. "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" that the Lord is able to make a way where there is no way, that the Lord is able to deliver where there is no way of deliverance.

"Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." And He is an almighty Deliverer.

This is one of the great deliverances of the Word of God. But let us be clear, beloved friends, the whole of Scripture is a Book of trials and deliverances, and the whole experience of the people of God is an experience of trials and deliverances. So you will be brought into these mountains where there is no deliverance, where you cannot even see how the Lord can come. O but "the voice of my Beloved! behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." It is an easy thing for Him to come over all these dark mountains to command deliverance for Jacob. There will be many times when you need deliverance and you have to seek for it and pray for it-spiritual things, providential things - and perhaps this afternoon some of you are in some concern and you want the Lord to deliver, but you cannot see how he can. You cannot see any way out. "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." It shall be seen how the Lord touches the mountains and they smoke. It will be seen how the great mountain becomes a plain before Zerubbabel. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

"In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Well, some of you have seen it many times in the mount, haven't you, the Lord's blessed ability to deliver? Some of us have seen it over and over again in our darkest hour, haven't we?

"Then let our humble faith address

*His mercy and His power;
We shall obtain delivering grace,
In the distressing hour."*

Remember, child of God, you will not have one more trial than deliverance.

However many trials you have, you will be delivered from them all. O that word! On one occasion the Apostle Paul gave a great catalogue of trials, and he said: "Out of them all the Lord delivered me." I remember once in my life there seemed to be so many trials and problems and difficulties. I sat down and I scribbled them one by one on a piece of paper, and just looked at them, almost in black despair. There were so many. But months afterwards, it may even have been years afterwards, I suddenly found that scrap of paper. At first, I hardly knew what it was, and then I remembered. I began to read through the black, dark catalogue of all these trials, and as I went through them one by one, I could see how the Lord had been with me and brought me out of them. As I came to the last one, that word dropped in sweetly: "Out of them all the Lord delivered me." The apostle says, "Who delivered us from so great a death." Beloved, that is your past. "And doth deliver." That is the trouble you are in today. Now this is the whole or your unknown way: "In whom we trust that He will yet deliver us."

"In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." The third thing that Abraham saw that day in the mount was the Lord's ability to provide, and so he called that place "Jehovah-jireh" - the

Lord will provide. It was something he saw. Of course, really this third point embraces the other two: "The Lord will provide a way of deliverance and he saw that the Lord will provide a Lamb to suffer in the sinner's place. "He called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh." The Lord will provide, it means. "As it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

Well, then, what a beautiful title this is, isn't it - Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide?" Didn't our godly forefathers used to love this title of the Lord, especially in these terrible days of poverty? They had to live on it day by day: "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." No doubt many of you remember years ago in so many of the houses of our people there used to be a little poem hanging on the wall and the title of it at the top was, "Jehovah-jireh." This was the little poem:

*"Say not, my soul, from whence can
God relieve thy care,*

*Remember that Omnipotence hath
servants everywhere*

*His method is sublime, His thoughts
supremely kind;*

*God never is before His time, and
never is behind."*

Jehovah-jireh. "Abraham called the name of that place, Jehovah-jireh." There is such a beautiful suitability in it. It touches everything, doesn't it? It is suitable for a young person in whose heart the fear of God has been placed. It is suitable for a dying saint coming down to the swellings of Jordan. "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide."

Well, some of you may at present be having difficulties in your lives and in your circumstances. There may be providential difficulties. You do not know how you are going to manage. You do not know how you are going to go on. Now this is the answer: "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." "When, and where, and by what means, to His wisdom leaving." You may think it is going to be this way, but the Lord may work a completely different way.

Perhaps the best commentary on this point is I Kings 17, Elijah, the terrible dearth, the drought. "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide - provide the brook Cherith when all the other brooks are dry. Provide ravens: "But sooner all nature shall change, than one of God's promises fail;" supply all Elijah's needs, for, "When the Lord's people have need, His goodness will find out a way." You remember that Question after Elijah had ascended to heaven: "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" That is Jehovah-jireh, the One who supplies the ravens, the one who commands the brook Cherith. Where is He? He is still on the throne, still in heaven, He still cares, and He is still faithful to His promise. What about when your brook begins to run dry? Why, Jehovah-jireh is not dependent on one little brook Cherith. He has a widow woman to sustain you, a barrel of meal that will never be completely empty, a cruise of oil that will never be completely dry. "All creatures obey His command." Dear child of God, and in providence you will always have a handful of meal in the bottom

of your barrel and some oil in your cruise.

"Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." There may be some of you and you are having difficulties in the church. You may be having problems; it may even be trouble, or it may be needs you have. You cannot see how those needs are ever going to be supplied. Or it may be that you are seeking ministers to preach, or even a godly pastor. "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." You say, "How can it be?" "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." What about those godly women by the river at Philippi? They had not got a man to do anything. What did they do? They were not satisfied with some compromise or worldly device or some second best. They met for prayer, and the Lord sent the Apostle Paul.

"Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." Now there are a few dear ministers here today. What about us? You know, the Lord's day morning comes very, very quickly after Saturday afternoon and evening, and there is no discharge in this warfare. Week by week and year by year, and sometimes you have said everything you have got to say, and sometimes you cannot think of anything else, and sometimes you cannot find a text. "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." When you are at your wits' end, perhaps you will be able to say, like I so often have to do,

*"Thou hast helped in every need;
This emboldens me to plead;
After so much mercy past,
Canst Thou let me sink at last?"*

“Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide.” Then you see, there are family things. Some of you may have problems and difficulties and trials in your families, concerning those you love. You hardly know how to manage things. You hardly know what to do. **“Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide.”** No doubt a few of you, if not many, this afternoon are in trouble, in difficulty of one sort or another. **“The heart knoweth his own bitterness.”** If you are in trouble, you know it, and what is a trouble to one is not a trouble to another.

***“Did ever trouble yet befall.
And He refuse to hear thy call?”***

“Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide.” Then there is the unknown way stretching before you. What about tomorrow, and next week, and the coming days? What about those mountains that loom in your pathway? You cannot face them. You shrink from them. You are ready to flee, ready to turn back.

***“Jesus Christ, your Father’s Son,
Bids you undismayed go on.”***

“Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide.” Some of you may be crying, **“You are getting a bit too much on providential things. I am plagued with the conflict, and temptation, and indwelling sin, and fresh contracted guilt.”** Well this word covers every spiritual concern, every spiritual trial. **“Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide.”** There is your Pilgrimage you have to

walk out; perhaps you find the road is rough. There is the heavenly race that you seek to run. There is the conflict with sin and Satan and death and hell. **“The Lord will provide.”** A young pilgrim sets out, and in our foolishness we think we are somehow going to manage it ourselves. An old soldier once said that when a soldier is accepted into the army, there is only one thing to do—obey. We have to walk it out. **“Tis mine to obey, ’tis His to provide.”** But your supplies are sure for every step of your pilgrimage, like Israel’s manna. You and I would like the Lord to provide for next week’s trials today, wouldn’t we?

***“No stock on nature’s barren
ground,
My all is in Thy storehouse found.”***

It is like the manna, day by day: when you need it, it is there. He will not give you any stock in hand to make you independent. You have to go all the way leaning, hanging, depending.

“Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide.” So many things were said this morning about the state of the world and our church. If only the Holy Ghost drop this into our hearts, then this is the answer, that complete sufficiency that is in God, that fullness which dwells in His beloved Son. **“What’er we need in Jesus dwell.”** **“Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide.”** In Romans 8, Paul had such a beautiful view of it. He saw how the Father provide His dear Son as a saviour, provided Him to open a fountain for sin and for uncleanness; and pro-

vided Him to suffer such ignominy and shame and sorrow, even to death. It is very beautiful reasoning of the apostle. He argues from the greater to the less. He said, "He that spared not His own Son." Go to Calvary, beloved friends, and see that, He spared not His own Son. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." Now this is it: "How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" That is, if He sent His dear Son to calvary to die, then He will not fail to supply all your needs, whatever they are in your pilgrimage, all your way to heaven.

"Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." So may we view this especially in the Person of the Lord Jesus. William Gadsby used a delightful expression. He used to sing of Him as "Jehovah-Jesus." "Jehovah-Jesus is the sinner's Friend" "Jehovah-Jesus, we will Thee adore," I have never come across any other writer or preacher who used that expression, but it is a scriptural one-Jehovah-Jesus. "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." We can apply it to the dear Saviour of sinners, the wonderful fullness that dwells in Him. "What'er I need in Jesus dwells." Jehovah-jireh, Jehovah-Jesus, "the Lord will provide."

Now I am going to tell you something, beloved friends. Faith adds various bits and pieces at the end. Faith looks at a word like this: "The Lord will provide," and here is this sinner in all his felt need and emptiness and ruin and guilt and shame and helplessness, and faith looks at a promise like this and puts bits on the end.

Things like this. "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide" divine help. That is what I need. I am so helpless. But is His name Jehovah-jireh? Then He will provide that help I need, "Jehovah." What a beautiful expression that is, "His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"! That is what John Newton called "a never-failing treasury filled with boundless stores of grace."

"His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." They are inexhaustible, full, free, but it is according to. This is one of the beautiful Scriptures which is often misquoted. How often people say, God will supply all out of His riches in glory! That is true, but it doesn't say "out of His riches in glory"; it says, "according to." What is the difference? If a man is exceedingly wealthy, and you went to him in great need, he might give you a penny. That would be out of his riches; but it would not be according to his riches. If it were according to his riches; you would get a rich gift. William Gadsby seems to come right to the very heart of it. He says, "My every need He richly will supply." It is not in an unwilling way, not in a niggardly way. "My every need He richly will supply." There was a tried, tempted saint I knew once, and Satan came to him, and he could not tempt him out of his standing in Christ, but he came something like this. Satan said, "well you will get to heaven at last, but the Lord will do it unwillingly, and He will only do it because He cannot break His promises." Do you know what the old man said, he said "Satan, the Lord has said to me, "It is the Father's good pleasure to

give you the kingdom." That is the way grace works. That is the way the Lord Jesus deals. It is His good pleasure to give you the kingdom. It is His good pleasure to provide. It is His good pleasure to supply all your need. "According to His Riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

"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."

This article sent in by
Elder Noel Conner.

VOICES OF THE PAST

From Elder Lamberts book,
"Tried In The Furnace".

A FIRM FOUNDATION

*"Wisdom hath builded her house,
she hath hewn out her seven pil-
lars."*



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

The above scripture is found in the ninth chapter of Proverbs and if you will read the entire chapter you will find that two houses were under consideration. One house was the product of wisdom, and the other house was of the foolish woman. I think wisdom's house is figurative of the Church of Christ, and the other represents the false church.

All has been done to make the Church of Christ secure and firm, but the foolish will fall by the wayside. I believe this house to be composed of all the children of God as chosen in Christ before the world began. It is not our desire to consider the house at this time, but to consider the foundation upon which this house is built. Surely the foundation is Christ Jesus and all who were chosen in Him will finally be blessed to view the seven pillars or principles of the doctrine of God, our Savior. The abstract of the faith of God's elect may be summed up thus:

1. Sovereignty of God.
2. Total depravity of man.
3. Unconditional election.
4. Limited atonement or special redemption.
5. Irresistible or efficacious grace.
6. Preservation of the saints.
7. Resurrection or complete immortalization of the saints.

I believe these phases of the doctrine are experienced in the order named. The first six are experienced here in time and the seventh is to be experienced in the beyond.

This first lesson to be revealed to the child of God is His sovereignty. We are thinking in terms of seven so we think of God as eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, loving and triune. Yes, He is eternal. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. He is of one mind. He has never learned anything new nor has He forgotten anything. Everything that has ever taken place, is taking place, or that ever will come to pass is just as present and vivid in His mind as if it were (at this very moment) taking

place. Things that we experience are past, present and future with us because we are creatures of time and finite, but all things are as present with God. We wonder what the future holds for us and forget things that are past, but God being eternal sees it as now transpiring.

The second part of the first pillar of this firm foundation is the omnipotence of God. He is all-powerful. God says through the prophet, "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 Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass."

In the Scriptures it is said of God; "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?" God spake this world into existence. He only had to say, "Let there be light: and there was light." "As I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand." He is God "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

God is omniscient. He is wise to the extent that His knowledge embraces all things because He has decreed them and is abundantly able to bring them to pass. There is not a thought or act of man that God does not know about. "He is before all things, and by him all things consist." Though the

world seems to run at random, and events huddled together in blind confusion to our finite minds, God is so wise that He knows the outcome of all causes and effects, and so governs them that He makes perfect harmony out of all those seeming jarrings and discords. He is so wise that all things praise Him.

God is omnipresent. He is present at all places at the same time. He is at all times at the same place. There is no possibility of hiding from God. In Him we live, move and have our being. He fills the universe.

Another characteristic of God is His eternal love. God is love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." He loved His people even when they were dead in trespasses and in sin. This love of God is the basis of their salvation. It is the characteristic that is planted in the hearts of God's people by the Holy Spirit.

God is holy. "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (Psalms 145:17). There is no unrighteousness with God. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look upon iniquity, therefore He consecrates the wicked acts of men to His own glory and praise and to the good of His chosen people.

The seventh phase of His sovereignty is that He is triune. God, the Father; God the Son; and God, the Holy Ghost. God the Father, chose His people unto salvation before the foundation of the world. God, the Son, accomplished this salvation by performing the requirements of the law,

and suffered the penalty of sin and satisfied justice by shedding His precious blood on Calvary's tree for the remission of their many sins. God, the Holy Ghost, operates upon them here in time by taking from them the stony heart and giving them a heart of flesh; reveals to them the truth as it is in Christ Jesus; comforts and consoles them in this life; and will (in the resurrection) baptize them with immortality.

Now let us consider the second pillar of this firm foundation. According to my experience, I was given a glimpse of the sovereignty of God. This was the stimuli that made manifest the fundamental truth of the total depravity of man. Job had a similar experience as recorded in Job 42: 5,6, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Isaiah speaks likewise in Isaiah 6:5. "Then said I, woe is me for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." God, first, revealed Himself to each of these causing them, secondly, to see their depravity.

What a contrast! God is eternal; I am timely. God is all powerful; I have no ability. God is all-wise; I know nothing as God knows. God is everywhere at all times; I can be nowhere at any time upon volition of my own will, for I find myself a victim of circumstances over which I have no control. God loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sin; I naturally love no one but

myself. God is holy; I am unholy. God is triune in complete agreement; my natural desires war against the Spirit. I find myself totally depraved, not able to extricate myself from this terrible state. This experience agrees with Jer. 13: 23. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jesus expressed this incapacity of man to recover himself from this fallen state he is in when He said as recorded in John 6:44, No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day." As long as the skin of the Ethiopian is black and the leopard is spotted there is no reason to expect goodness to spring from man. It is just as possible for the Ethiopian to change his skin or the leopard its spots. We must look to some other source than ourselves for anything good. We are so naturally constituted that we will trust in our own ability until God sees fit to reveal to us our true condition by His Spirit. Then we are made to "cry unto God, the most high; unto God that performeth all things for me." In this state of mind it is with pleasure and heart-felt thanks to God that we view the third pillar of this firm foundation, unconditional election.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). Paul trusted in the power and amazing grace of God as stated in his letter to Timothy, 2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but accord-

ing to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Thus, it is not according to our works. Our finite minds would argue that surely it is according to our will even granting that it is not according to our works. The Spirit teaches us contrary to natural reasoning so let us see what Paul has to say about it in Rom. 9: 11-18. "(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will be hardeneth." Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." So we are unconditionally elected according to the good pleasure of God's will.

Let us further view this foundation by noting the fourth pillar or principle of truth, limited atonement. God's people were chosen in Christ Jesus.

Christ's life and death must have been for them only. Concerning Jesus before His birth the angel said, "And she (Mary) shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." The work of Christ was for God's people, not for the entire Adamic race. Christ said in John 10: 14, 15, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." Christ died for the sheep, not for the goats. Christ said in His prayer to God as recorded in John 17: 9, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Christ did not pray for the entire Adamic race. Paul tells the ministers of Ephesus in Acts 20: 28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." His blood was shed for the church, not for the world. Christ said in Matt. 20: 28, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." He gave His life for many, not for all.

The fifth pillar is that of irresistible or efficacious grace. The teachings of the Scriptures is such that we must say that man in his natural state is radically corrupt. He is spiritually dead and must be saved by Christ if at all. He does not desire God; therefore, must have a new disposition before he can love God. He loves sin, therefore can never desire to be redeemed

from it until he is wrought upon by the effectual working of God's mighty power. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). This inward change wrought by supernatural power is termed in the Scriptures as "Called out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). A passing out of death into life (John 5: 24); a taking away of the heart of stone, and a giving of the heart of flesh (Ezek. 11: 19); and the subject of the change is said to be a new creature (2 Cor. 5: 17).

We had nothing to do with our physical birth but received it as a sovereign gift of God; we likewise have nothing to do with our spiritual birth but receive it also as a sovereign gift. Each occurred without any exercise of our own power, and even without our consent being asked. We no more resist the latter than we did the former. Consequently, salvation to whomsoever it may be granted is entirely of grace. The ones so wrought upon are made to see "Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). There is no such thing as a "self-made man"; the highest type man agrees with Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am." God said through the prophet, Isaiah 56:11, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." When God says repent, you repent; when He says come, you come; when He says go, you go.

The doctrine of election and efficacious grace logically implies the cer-

tain salvation of those who receive these blessings. Therefore let us consider the sixth pillar, to wit: the perseverance of the saints. Those who have been brought to Jesus for refuge have a firm foundation upon which to build their hope of eternal life. The iniquities of their own hearts together with all the Satanic influences will never cause them to fail. The same amazing grace that has brought us thus far will lead us home. Paul said in Rom. 8: 29, "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." It is an evidence that God has predestinated the recipients of these gifts to be like Him in character, destiny and glory and that He will infallibly carry out His purpose. "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" (Phil. 1:6). This day of Jesus Christ will be the crowning work of immortality in the resurrection. Psalms 138:8 reads, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever." Paul states that "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." So God's dealings with His children are never ending, but will finally save them in heaven without the loss of one.

In this life God's people may experience a close view of the six fundamental principles or pillars of this firm foundation as God sees fit to reveal to them, but the seventh, or that of the immortalization or resurrection of the saints, is yet to be experienced in

reality. Now we see as through a glass darkly but then face to face; now we know in part but then we will know as we are known. Now we look forward with deep anxiety and precious hope toward the reality of the seventh principle, the resurrection, which is to be the crowning work of salvation and is yet to be experienced actually and really by all the children of God. I desire to close this treatise by quoting 1 Cor. 15: 51-58, "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Amen.

Elder E.J. Lambert

1 PETER 1: 24-25.

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

FAITH

Dear Sir: - Not having been a reader of your paper, I may in the following question repeat one which during your editorial labors you have often had propounded. It is on the subject of faith.

Will you, or some of your correspondents, be so kind as to give your views on the proposition whether the creature can or does have anything to do with the creation or operation of his faith, or whether it be the exclusive gift of God? If your time and space will permit, your answer in the "Signs of the Times" will be very welcome. Very truth yours, R.W. Monroe. Evansville, W.Va. Jan. 25, 1865.

By faith, we presume our correspondent means evangelical or gospel faith, that faith without which it is impossible to please God. According to Webster, and other standard lexicographers, the term may be variously applied, and the Scriptures speak of the faith of God, the faith of Christ, and faith of God's elect, and also the faith of men, of devils, or living faith, and of dead faith. The Spirit of inspiration has through the apostles particularly described the origin, nature, power and vitality of the faith of the gospel, as faith that works by love and purifies the heart, which subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens, etc.

From all that is said in the Scriptures of true, living and triumphing faith, we may infer that there is in the world a spurious, false, lifeless and deceptive faith, or what is called faith, and so received and regarded by the religious world. In the creation and operation of the faith of men and of devils, men and devils have much to do, and we need only to sum up their own testimony to show that it is a creature of their own; indeed, it bears their image and their superscription. So indeed they seem to understand it, and to speak of it as something which is required of and to be produced by ungodly sinners, as a price or condition of salvation.

As in their appeals to the unregenerate, they represent that however destitute sinners may be of faith, they can originate it if they will, and that, too, without much cost or labor. It has often been asserted by their preachers that it is as easily produced as for a man to turn his hand over. The very presentation of the appeal of our correspondent for our views affords evidence that the power of the creature to create faith, and when created to put it in motion and control its operation, is contended for by many, and it is well known to be a cardinal doctrine in every Arminian work mongrel creed. Of that kind of faith it would be folly for us to deny the power of creatures to create and manage. The machinery of antichrist is apparent to every intelligent observer.

History points us to ecclesiastical councils, in solemn convocation from time to time, under the protection of

human powers organized expressly for the purpose of making creeds, to be enforced by pains and penalties, flames and faggots, racks and tortures, upon the children of this world, and their humanly devised creeds are received by millions as saving faith.

In modern times, and in our own country, the machinery for the manufacturing of faith and piety embrace infantschools, Sabbath Schools, Bible classes, catechisms, scientific lectures, Theological Seminaries, and even our public district schools are almost universally used for the same deceptive purposes. All these, beside the drilling, forging and blowing, so common at excitement meetings, anxious are in requisition. The kind of faith engendered by the power and ingenuity of men, by whatever means, mode or machinery, like the idols of the ancients of which we read, is destitute of vitality. There is no breath in the midst of it, unless it be the inspiration of delusion, fanaticism and will-worship, breathing slaughter against the cause and people of the living God.

According to the solemn predictions of inspired wisdom the faith of antichrist in the last days should be greatly facilitated by signs and lying wonders, and by all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II

Thes. 2: 11-12) (See also Rev. 13: 12-14.) But the faith of which we understand our friend to inquire is as distinct and opposite to the faith of men and devils as holiness is opposite to and distinct from sin, as heaven is from hell. No creature can have anything to do, or in other words, can do anything in its creation or its operation.

First. No creature can have anything to do in creating it, because we are expressly told in the sacred record that Christ is the author and the finisher of it, (Heb. 12:2) This declaration leaves no room for creatures to operate in its creation. He who is the author is also the finisher. As in the creation of the world, God began and God finished the work, leaving no other beings room to claim that they had participated in its creation, so creatures are equally excluded from participating in the creation or production of the faith of the Son of God. HE did not merely begin, and leave creatures to finish the work, for all his works are perfect, and that which is perfect, and that which is perfect cannot be improved.

1. Creatures, or created beings, are natural, all their powers and perceptions are natural, and must fail to comprehend or perform spiritual things; and faith is a spiritual and vital creature agency. All the faith that men can create is like themselves-natural. As a spider cannot spin a web from any material that it does not possess in its own filthy bowels, so the faith produced by creature is not in whole nor in part the faith of the Son of God.

2. The faith of the gospel is spiritual, for it is the fruit of the spirit. (Gal. 5: 22) All fruits of the Spirit must be spiritual. That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit; (John 3:6) and the faith of the saints is born of God; (I John 5:4) and it must therefore be spiritual, for being borne of God, it must possess the life, power and immortality of God, and therefore is able to, and does overcome the world.

3. Creatures can have no part in the creation of the faith of Christ, nor can they even bring themselves into possession of it, or under its power, for the apostle positively declares that it is not of themselves, but it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph. 2: 8,9)

4. If it were the creature or production of men it would be the property of men, whereas the Scriptures declare that it is the faith of the Son of God. Gal. 2:20 says, "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." Paul had not therefore had anything to do in its creation. Again, it is called the faith of God, (Rom. 3:3) as it could not be called if it were of the creature.

The second inquiry submitted is, whether the creature can or does have anything to do with the operation of his faith? The answer to this, as well as the other inquiry, must depend on what is intended by "his faith." If the creature is a member of Christ, and, like Paul, living by the faith of the Son of God, then, as a member of the body of Christ, the faith of the Son of God is his faith, for of Christ's fullness has

he received, and grace for grace, because Christ in all his fullness is given to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, and the fullness of him that filleth all in all. In this relation the faith of the Son of God, as the life, righteousness, sanctification and redemption of Christ, is his, and he is the author and finisher of his faith. As there is but one Lord, so to the head and body of the church there is but one faith and one baptism, and the redeemed of the Lord shall all come in the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:5, 13).

Having already shown that the faith of human origin must be operated by the power which gave it being, we shall now consider the inquiry to be concerning the operation of the faith of the Son of God, as existing in the children of God. To answer the question then requires that we consider, What is faith? And what are its operations? And by what power are they controlled?

1. The faith of which we now speak is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1) It is that living principle in the quickened family of God which realizes and actualizes to them those spiritual things which no human power or discernment can comprehend, by which the saints "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (II Cor.

4:18). Even as Moses by faith endured as seeing him who is invisible. (Heb. 11:27). It is to the child of God what the eye is to the natural body. As our natural eye beholds natural objects which we could not see without the eye, so faith looks within the veil, beholds the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and makes real to us that which without vital faith would only be at best a vain speculation. It is through faith that the Spirit reveals all spiritual things to the saints; while here we live by faith, we walk by faith and are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; hence it is evidence of things not seen, things which the vulture's eye hath not seen, which God hath hidden from the wise and prudent, but hath revealed to the faith of his children.

2. The operations of faith are confidence in God, reliance on his counsel, wisdom, goodness and grace, perceptions of his power and glory, confident trust in his gracious promises, discoveries of his dealings, the revelation of Christ in all his Mediatorial fullness and glory, a clear apprehension of his truth, and of all things pertaining to his purpose and grace in the salvation of his people.

Faith also in its operation suppresses fear, triumphs over doubts and infidelity, strengthens and confirms the Christian's hope, overcomes the world and all worldly powers and influences which war against the soul. It glories in the cross of Christ, it discovers and points out the pathway of holiness, directs to the throne of

grace, inclines those who possess it to follow Christ in his ordinances, to obey him in all his precepts and makes them dearly love his service. It inspires courage to face the enemy, to endure hardness as good soldiers, to suffer the loss of all things and to count not their own lives dear unto themselves, so that they may finish their course with joy.

The operations of faith are most gloriously exemplified in the cloud of witnesses presented in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, in the patriarchs, prophets and men of God, from the days of Abel until the apostolic age, and from that period the subjects of this holy faith have known and testified of the power and triumphs of faith over all the opposing powers of darkness in their lives and in their deaths. How often have some of us witnessed the powerful operations of faith making the dying bed of the saints feel softer than the downy pillow, in disarming death of all terror and the grave of victory, lighting up the otherwise dark, dreary and gloomy passage with immortal radiance and refulgent glory. These are what we understand to be some of the operations of the faith of the Son of God, as it operates in and upon the saints until they shall need to walk by faith no longer; until

*“They shall see and hear and know,
All they desired or wish’d below,
And every power find sweet employ
in the eternal world of joy.”*

3. The power which conducts the operations of faith must be at least as

great as the faith its operations are. As we have seen that this faith of the Son of God, which is born of God, overcomes the world, if we believe the testimony we cannot admit that the world has any power to control its operations. As there is a divine power in faith, as it is the faith of the Son of God, the faith of God, as well as the faith of God’s elect, it cannot be governed or controlled by any power out of itself. Even the Christian who has often felt its power, labors in vain to control its operations.

God, its author, has ordained that it shall be tried, for the trial of it is precious, and shall result in its final victory and his declarative glory. The Christian would naturally desire to be always exulting in its victories, or rejoicing in its discoveries, dreads, but cannot prevent, the fiery ordeal by which it is to be tried. The Christian to whom God has given the precious faith of his dear Son, although he has no power to create or control it, yet has much to do with its operation; but let us understand, although he cannot govern its operations, he can and must be governed by it. *He cannot exercise faith, but faith can exercise him.* This much he has to do with the operation of faith: he has to feel it, to love it, to cherish it, to testify of it, to be led by it, to walk by it and to life by it. Yea, the children of God are called to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, and labor to suppress all their carnal corruptions of the flesh which are at war with it, by crucifying the old man with its affections and lusts, and when the powers

of the flesh seem to prevail, and doubts, and fears, and darkness and temptations make them tremble and faint, they then have something to do; they are constrained to cry out, in the full conviction of their own weakness and inability to exercise faith, "Lord, increase my faith." "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." Thus acknowledging that God's power in keeping them is through faith unto salvation.

In conclusion, we will give some discriminating marks by which the honest inquirer after truth, if God has given him an ear to hear, and a heart to understand the truth, may distinguish between the faith of the Son of God and that which can be produced by men. The true is born of God, and lives and abides with hope and charity in the hearts of God's quickened children; the false is a bastard, and shall dwell in Ashdod. (Zech. 9:6) The true is a living or vital faith; the false is dead, or totally destitute of spiritual life. The true conquers the sinner, and prostrates him as a willing and joyful captive at the feet of Jesus; the false is conquered by the sinner, and wholly under his control and management. The true humbles its possessor before the majesty of the Lord; the false inflates with pride and self-importance. The true is immediately from God; the false is from the devil. The true leads the child of God through great tribulations up to the paradise of God; the false leads down to the chambers of death. The true makes the penitent publican stand smiting on his breast; the false inclines the Pharisee to boast of his own works.

True faith inclines the heart to listen to what God the Lord has said, to believe what God has said to rely alone on what God has done for life and immortality. False faith leads men to reject the testimony of God, to trust to their own vain imaginations and rely upon their own works for acceptance with God. True faith works by love, and purifies the heart; false faith works by the carnal, depraved impulses of the mind, which is enmity against God, not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. True faith stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; false faith stands in the wisdom of men and in the power of darkness, of free-will and human agency. True faith relies on what God has done; false faith on what men intend to do. True faith looks for redemption, justification and acceptance with God, through the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, while false faith confides in human merit, self-righteousness and will-worship. True faith feeds on every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God, while false faith thrives upon false doctrine, false philanthropy, false worship and feeds and fattens on its own flesh. The faith of the Son of God leads those to whom it is given to his church, his people, his ordinances, his precepts and his examples, but false faith leads men to seek the society which is more suited to their depraved taste, and which they find in the various branches or departments of Babylon. True faith purifies the heart, but false faith vitiates the heart, and fills it with envy,

wrath, hatred, malice, revenge, murder, seditions, heresies and all that is vile and abominable.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Middletown, N.Y.
May 15, 1865.

(This article was sent in
by Elder Noel Conner.)

ROMANS 8: 10-11.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

MEETINGS

HOPEWELL MEETING

The good Lord willing, the nineteenth annual 5th Sunday meeting, will be held at Hopewell Church, Winnsboro, Texas, beginning on Friday, May 27th and continuing through the 28th and 29th. Hopewell Church is located about six miles west of Winnsboro. Go west on Coke Road (515) about four and one-half miles and follow the signs.

So often it seems like spiritual barrenness is the order of the day. How wonderful then, when the Spirit of Almighty God lays hold upon our

hearts and sweetly brings forth the same desires as the Psalmist had when he wrote, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." Psalm 63: 1-7.

It is our prayer that you will be given a mind to be with us and that together, we will be blessed to rejoice "in the shadow of Thy wings." Please remember us in prayer.

Elder Jimmy Hamrick, Pastor
John Hamrick, Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The Staunton River Union meeting will be held the Lord willing on the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in May. The meeting will be held at Union Church on SL Rd. 605.

All lovers of the truth are invited to meet with us, a special invitation to all ministers of our faith and order.

Elder Raymond Goad, Moderator
Silas Payne, Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

Ihe one hundred fifty-third session of the Staunton River Association will convene, the Lord willing, at Malmaison Church the second weekend in July 1994 which will be July 9th and 10th.

Malmaison Church is located in Pittsylvania County on state road 726 about 5 miles from Danville, Va.

We will welcome people of our faith and order.

Burnell B. Williams, Association Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MARCH 1994

Floyd Bryant, VA	\$5.00
Mrs. Carla T. Horton, VA	7.00
Clarence M. Kearns, NC	2.00
L.D. Goad, VA	5.00
Mrs. Catherine W. Combs, NC ...	5.00
Richard Stegall, VA	2.00
Gene Lupton, VA	7.00
Ms. Betty Nickelton, VA	
In memory of C.L. Underwood ...	5.00
Joel S. Miles, FL	7.00
James T. Howard, AL	7.00
Mrs. Mary N. Phillips, TN	2.00
Mrs. Virginia W. Gladding, MD ...	7.00
Mrs. Sara Collie, NC	2.00
Mrs. Wilma S. Jones, NC	10.00
James D. Whaley, NC	7.00
Bill Clinton, CA	3.00
Mrs. Patsy R. Mitchell, TX	2.00
Mrs. Bennie Clifton, VA	2.00
Mrs. Jean Moran, NC	2.00
Mrs. J.D. Marze, LA	2.00
Raymond Clayton, KY	7.00
Mrs. Florence D. Maxey, VA	2.00
Mrs. Myrtle T. Daniel, FL	2.00
Mrs. Betty M. Nutter, MD	2.00
W.P. Potter, VA	2.00

OBITUARIES

SISTER ROSA TANKSLEY DALTON

It pleased our Lord to call home, Sister Rosa Tanksley Dalton. Sister Dalton passed from this life January 17, 1994. She was born September 8, 1905; the daughter of Will Tanksley and Ida Pruitt Tanksley. She was married to Brother Ollie David Dalton, who predeceased her.

Sister Rosa was a member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church. She was received by experience and baptism August 12, 1962. Sister Rosa was a faithful member and always enjoyed coming to church and showed love for all her brethren.

Sister Rosa's survivors are four sons; Roy Dalton, Clifton Dalton, and M.T. Dalton all of Gretna and Lester Dalton of Hurt; three daughters, Alice Gatewood of Danville, Eva Woodson of Lynchburg and Jerlene Dalton of Gretna; 16 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

Sister Rosa's funeral was conducted by Elder Marvin Brumfield and Elder Raymond Goad. Her body was laid to rest in the Gretna Burial Park to await the coming of our Lord and Savior. May all that mourn her passing and love her memory be given to say, "Thy will be done."

Written in love and hope,
Sister Carol R. Pickral

Elder Marvin Brumfield, Moderator
Oscar Pickral, Clerk

IN MEMORY OF BROTHER
JAMES BOYD MINTER

Brother Boyd Minter was born October 25, 1903 exactly 50 years before my birth. He was a native of Henry County, Virginia and a retired Fieldcrest Mills employee. He was called home by his Lord on April 20, 1993. Surviving are his wife, Sister Irene Scott Minter; daughters, Lorene M. Mattox of Martinsville, Va., Helen N. Naff of Bassett, Va.; sons, James Melvin Minter of Chesapeake, Va., Joseph Clyde Minter of Eden; step-daughters, Millie Shumate, Inez Baynes, both of Reidsville, Brownie Toler of Ruffin; sisters, Lila McGuire, Alma M. Searce, both of Martinsville, Va., Ada Pulliam of Greensboro, Dorothy M. Corum of Eden; brother, Richard Minter of Ridgeway, Va.; 10 grandchildren; and 10 great grandchildren.

Brother Boyd was accepted into full membership of the Church on December 22, 1957 when I was four years old. He served Dan River Primitive Baptist Church as clerk from February 26, 1977 until his death and as cemetery trustee from September 27, 1980 until his death.

It is very humbling to be the one to write the memorial of someone who, I esteem to be of a certainty, a child of God. Though he was 50 years my senior, much wiser, and much more blessed with the fruit of the Spirit, I trust there was a God-given kinship between us. Some of the most wonderful memories I have are of taking my grandparents to visit him and Sister Daisy. I would sit on the front porch

and listen to him and my grandfather discuss the Scriptures. He read his bible often and it was his standard against which he measured all doctrine. Brother Boyd was a large man in stature and yet there was a gentleness about him that is only characteristic of the Lord's people. It could be seen in how he cared for Sister Daisy when she became unable to care for herself. After the Lord took her, He blessed him with Sister Irene. They were married in October of the same year that my husband and I were married in November. The Lord blessed them with about ten years before they both developed some health problems.

I did not get to see Brother Boyd before he died but Brother Bob Collie told me of his last visit with him. According to Brother Bob, one of the last things Brother Boyd said was "God has blessed me with a good life - so whatever comes, it will be all right." I believe with all my heart that he could say with Paul "I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith: Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." May his family be blessed with the consoling Spirit of the Good Shepherd.

Humbly submitted I trust,
Mary Hawkins

PSALM 62 : 8.

Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., JULY 1994

NO. 7

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

SONG

*How tedious and tasteless the hours,
When Jesus no longer I see;
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet
flowers
Have lost all their sweetness to me:
The mid-summer sun shines but dim;
The fields strive in vain to look gay;
But when I am happy in him,
December's as pleasant as May.*

*His name yields the richest perfume,
And sweeter than music his voice;
His presence disperses my gloom,
And makes all within me rejoice:
I should, were he always thus nigh,
Have nothing to wish or to fear;
No mortal so happy as I,
My summer would last all the year.*

*Content with beholding his face,
My all to his pleasure resigned,
No changes of season or place,
Would make any change in my mind;
While blessed with a sense of his love,
A palace a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove,
If Jesus would dwell with me there.*

*Dear Lord, if indeed I am thine,
If thou art my sun and my song,
Say, why do I languish and pine,
And why are my winters so long?
O drive these dark clouds from my sky;
Thy soul-cheering presence restore;
Or take me unto thee on high,
Where winter and clouds are no more.*

Newton.

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 EDITORIAL



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

"Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine own holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their

eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel."

We will notice here that these are words spoken by the LORD GOD and they contain many wonderful promises. They also tell us of our

own evil nature, our filthiness, our worship of idols, our cold and stony heart, etc.. These scriptures are recorded in Ezekiel 36:22-32, but I would suggest that you read the entire chapter and consider it carefully and prayerfully. In types and shadows the 'house of Israel' represents the whole church of God, from the beginning until the end of time, therefore all these things apply to the children of God today as well as then: and we know that, ***"All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*** (2 Tim 3:16)

God had brought Israel up out of the land of Egypt where they had been in bondage 430 years. He had caused them to pass through the Red Sea (representing the blood and water of Jesus Christ), and then had drowned their enemies that chased them (their sins and iniquities). He went before them in a pillow of a cloud by day and a pillow of fire by night. Their raiment waxed not old, neither did their feet swell during the forty years in the wilderness. They ate manna from heaven and drank water that flowed from the rock (Jesus) struck by Moses at God's command. When they complained of the manna from heaven, God gave them quail meat, but sent leanness into their soul. God gave them commandments to keep. (for they were under the old law covenant), and they said with one voice, "All that thou commandest us we will do," yet

they never kept one of his commandments, and walked in their own wicked ways. Jeremiah said later unto this people. ***"And now I have this day declared it to you:(the commandments of God) but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any thing for the which he hath sent me unto you."*** (Jer 42:21). Because they sinned and kept not his commandments God chastened them with a mighty hand. When Korah and two hundred and fifty princes rose up against Moses and Aaron, God caused the earth to open her mouth and swallow them and their wives and their children and all that they possessed. When the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way they were led, and would have gladly returned to bondage in Egypt, they spake against God and against Moses (who represented the law,) saying, ***"Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water: and our soul loveth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people: and much people died."*** (Num 21:5,6). The people were then made to see that they had sinned when they were bitten by the fiery serpents, (which, to me, represents their sins), therefore they came to Moses and admitted they had sinned, and asked him to pray unto the Lord for them. Moses prayed for the people, and the Lord told Moses to make a serpent, and put it upon a pole, and that every one that looked upon it after being bitten would live. This is a figure

of Christ upon his cross when we look unto him.

While Moses was upon the mountain to receive the law written by the finger of God upon tables of stone, the people caused Aaron to make a golden calf, and they said, *"These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."* And they offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings, and they sat down to eat and rose up to play. God saw this worship of idols, and his wrath waxed hot, and he would have destroyed all of them had not Moses interceded. I am sure this intercession was according to the will of God, for, *"he doeth his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."* When Moses saw the molten calf, and saw and heard the people, he threw down the tables of stone on which the law was engraved by the finger of God, and break them. He then burned and ground into powder the calf, and put it in their water and caused them to drink of it. Then with a "thus saith the Lord" he sent the sons of Levi to slay many men with the sword, *"and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men."*

There are numerous instances when God chastened Israel because of their sins and iniquities, yet he continued to shew mercy, and lead them through the wilderness, and fight their battles for them. Many times he caused their enemies to fall or flee before them, yet there was times when he caused their enemies to prevail and slay many of them because they kept not his com-

mandments. This was to teach them, as a father teaches his son. We read Deut. 8:5-6: *"Thou shalt also consider in thine heart that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him."*

God chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt - the land of darkness and bondage - and through the wilderness for forty years. It was through Moses that God made his laws and commandments known, therefore he typifies the law. They passed through the Red Sea, a figure of the blood and water shed by Jesus Christ. The waters of the sea stood up in heaps on either side of them, showing that half flowed toward the former sea, and half to the hinder sea, washing and making atonement for those who lived before the death of Christ as well as those who lived afterward. (Ezek 14:8). In a figure they were translated from nature's darkness into God's marvelous light, but they must continue under the law for a time, for Christ had not yet been made manifest. That is the way it is with a born again child of God today. Though dead in trespasses and sin, when Jesus speaks to one he lives. For Jesus said, *"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 is concerning the new birth that the children of God must experience, for Jesus had said unto Nicodemus,

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” After one has been given this life, the life that was hid with Christ in God; (Col 3:3), his sinful and lost condition in the flesh is revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, and finding himself condemned he tries to justify himself by the works of the law: but, ***“-for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”*** Try as he may to improve himself, a man finds that he only grows worse. He finds that the law demands every thing, but gives nothing. How long he stays in this lost and helpless condition may vary from a very short time to many years, and he almost gives up in utter despair, but at the appointed time of God Christ is revealed unto him as his Lord and Saviour, and that Jesus had already accomplished that which he could not do for himself. He is astonished that Jesus had given his life for such a vile, sinful worm of the dust as he felt himself to be; but a love is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit, and he falls upon his knees, and worships the true and living God. He is given faith to believe in Jesus as the Saviour of his people, and he is given a hope to believe that he is one for whom Christ died, that his name was written in the Lamb’s book of life before the foundation of the world and that Christ will come again on that resurrection day and receive him into heaven and immortal glory. Yet he also realizes that if this be not so, and he should be cast into hell, God’s righteous law approves it well. The law that he had

been kept under was only his school-master to bring him unto Christ, that he might be justified by faith, for we are justified by faith, and not by the works of the law. After that faith is come he is no longer under a school-master, for he is a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. This faith is not of himself, ***“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”***

Under the old covenant Moses represented the law, and because of this he was not permitted to cross over into the land that flowed with milk and honey which God had promised to give to Abraham and to his seed for an inheritance. This was because the old law covenant was to pass away and a new covenant made. There are some who believe that the crossing over here represents passing from this life into heaven, but I believe that the Israelites were, typically, leaving the law covenant and entering into the new covenant, for they would still be facing their enemies and have to fight. and they would continue to transgress the commandments of God, and be chastised. It was because they defiled and polluted this land of milk and honey with their idols that God scattered them throughout the heathen countries. There they would remain under the law until the death and resurrection of Christ when he blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. (Col.2:14). Jesus did not destroy, but fulfilled it to jot and to a tittle, and he brought in the new

covenant of grace and truth. In Hebrews 8:8 we read: *"For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt: because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 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 in their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be unto them a God, and they shall be unto me a people: 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."*

Brethren, the Gentiles were never under that old law covenant, for, *"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: BUT NOW in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."* (Eph. 2:12-13). The blood of Christ has washed all his children whiter than snow, freed them from the law of sin and death, and perfected them forever by the sacrifice of himself, but as long as they remain here in

the flesh they will continue to sin and God will continue chastening them, *"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).

Brethren, I ask you to receive this only as far as you find it to be in accord with the Holy Scriptures. Some of these things are only my views of what the scriptures say. I may be wrong, but the scriptures are always truth. May God forgive all errors.

Written in love to the household of faith.

Elder C.C. Wilbanks

VOICES FROM THE PAST

JESUS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Part One

Preached at Providence Chapel,
Oakham, on Lord's Day Afternoon,
June 11, 1865

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

John xi. 25, 26.

What a beautiful, what an interesting family picture has the Holy Ghost, by the pen of the apostle John, drawn in the sacred narrative of the gracious household which once dwelt in the little village of Bethany, near Jerusalem. In it we seem to see the rare spectacle of a family living together in happy harmony, united by the strong ties of nature, and united still more closely by the firmer and more enduring bonds of grace, - Martha, Mary, Lazarus. What an echo there is in our heart to these names. May we not also picture to ourselves our gracious Lord, when He had been at Jerusalem wearied - for we know He was subject to human infirmity and could be weary, for He sat weary once on Samaria's well - when our gracious Lord returned from Jerusalem, wearied in body and grieved in spirit, how He would come to this happy household, and there solace Himself with the company of these two gracious sisters and their no less gracious brother? for we read that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." (John xi 5.)

Our Lord went about doing good, and spent much of His time and exercised much of his ministry in Galilee; which being situated in the north part of the Holy Land, lay at a considerable distance from Bethany. But it would appear that at this time He was not in Galilee but beyond Jordan, in the place where John at first baptized, which lay at some distance to the east of Jerusalem. Now when He was thus absent, engaged in performing His gracious errands of mercy, a dark cloud began

to gather over this happy household. It might have been at first only as small as a man's hand, but it gathered thick and fast, and every hour seemed to hang upon them more and more densely. Lazarus had fallen ill. Now the first movement of his gracious sisters was to send a message to their dear Lord, that he whom He loved was sick. They knew His power as well as His love; and that as by the one He would at once come, so by the other He could at once heal. They naturally therefore expected that He would come speedily in a case so urgent as this, for in that climate disease makes rapid progress, and were doubtless looking out every day and almost every hour for His arrival.

But Lazarus gets worse and worse every hour. Denser, darker are the clouds which hang over the house. Jesus tarries; for we read that "when He heard that he was sick, He abode two days in the same place where He was." Jesus comes not. All hope dies in their breast. The disease gradually increases until at last Lazarus sinks under its pressure. Now what a mercy it was for these two sisters, and their brother too, that Jesus did not come; and may I not add, for the Church of God also for all time? What treasures of mercy and grace were involved in His delay. What a stupendous miracle gave occasion for Him to work. What a demonstration of His power it afforded that He was truly the Son of God, and what a lasting blessing has it been made to successive generations of saints. Though the Lord well knew, in His omniscient mind, all that

was transpiring in that little household, yet for His own wise and gracious purpose His footsteps tarried, and mercy made Him stay for a while as mercy made Him come at last.

I need not dwell further upon the features of this interesting narrative, though every part of it is pregnant with holy instruction, but shall come at once to that part which precedes our text. It is the interview of Martha with the Lord at Bethany. Martha, true to her character, could not stay at home; she was a restless body, for on a later occasion when she had obtained the Lord's company she could not be satisfied with merely listening to His gracious conversation. She must needs think about the dinner, nay come and ask Him to bid her sister help her to set it out properly, and not spend her time so - I will not say unnecessarily, but so long sitting at the feet of Jesus. Like many of our Marthas, she loved religion and the things of God; but being a bustling, active character, worldly business would intrude on her mind, and to this she would sometimes give a first place when it ought to have had but the second. Are you not sometimes like her, thinking more of business than of Christ, and even in the house of prayer, instead of listening to the word are thinking about the dinner?

Martha, then, true to her character, leaves Mary at home, praying, watching and waiting upon God in secret, and hurries out at the very first tidings of His arrival; but as soon as she meets Him, almost in the language of reproach not very unlike the way in

which she addressed the Redeemer with respect to her sister upon another occasion, says, "Lord if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Do not the words sound almost as if she was reproaching the Lord because He was not there? And yet the blessed woman, with all her infirmities, had faith in her soul, and this faith manifested itself in the midst of her complaint. "But I know that even now," - though the case seems so desperate - "I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." O, Martha, thy faith was somewhat lacking here. Thou shouldest have looked a little higher than this, and seen that he was the true God Himself who stood before thee, and that He had but to speak the word, and Lazarus would rise. Thou shouldest have seen that He held creation in His fists, and that life and death were at His supreme disposal. Jesus, in that calm, blessed manner in which our Lord ever spoke, unruffled, unmoved, in all the quiet dignity and glorious majesty of God-head, saith unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha still shows faith, and yet evidently mixed with much weakness. "Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Then the Lord uttered those words which I shall, with God's help and blessing, endeavour to lay open and bring before you this afternoon: "Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and

whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

I think we may observe three leading features in our text.

I. - "First, the gracious declaration, "I am the resurrection and the life."

II. - Secondly, the two gracious consequences which are connected with, and flow out of this declaration: 1, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;" and, 2, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

III. - Thirdly, the gracious appeal. "Believest thou this?"

I. - How blessed are the gracious declarations which the Lord has given of Himself, His own testimonies to His Person and work, such as, for instance, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me;" "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep;" "I am the bread of life." What grace there is in these declarations of Himself, and how He seems to unfold Himself in and by them to the Church of God that she may receive these words from His lips and exercise faith upon them. Let us then view this gracious declaration, and observe in it two things which our Lord declares Himself virtually to be - "The Resurrection and the Life:" Let us consider each of them separately.

I. "I am the resurrection." The Lord does not say "By Me shall men rise," or "I at the last day will raise the dead." But he declares of Himself, "I Myself am the resurrection." Surely, there is something deep in these words. Surely there is some profound

truth, if we can but penetrate into the bosom of it. Let us see, then, whether, with God's help and blessing, I can take you by the hand and lead you into the very bosom of this truth, that you and I may walk in it, feed upon it and know what it is to the joy of our souls.

1. The resurrection of Christ is, in the first place, the grand cardinal doctrine of our most holy faith. And why? Because on it our faith virtually rests. Our faith, if it be the faith of God's elect, is that Jesus is the Son of God. Now that our faith may not be a shadow but a substance, it must rest upon some solid foundation. What proof then have we that Jesus is the Son of God? His resurrection. We therefore read that He "was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i.4.) His resurrection was thus God's own attesting seal that He was his dear Son. He was put to death as a blasphemer, because He said "I am the Son of God." When God therefore raised Him from the dead, He set his own attesting seal that Jesus really was what He said He was - the Son of God. It is for this reason that the resurrection of Christ is the grand cardinal, fundamental doctrine of our most holy faith; for upon it hangs the substantial proof of His declaration, that he was the Son of God, and had come as the Son of God from the bosom of the Father to do the work which the Father had given Him to do.

2. But there is something more in the resurrection of Jesus Christ than the mere attestation of God and the declaration with power from on high

that He was His dear Son. When our gracious Lord rose from the dead, the whole Church virtually and mystically rose in and with Him. We therefore read in the epistle to the Ephesians, that God "raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. ii. 6.) How and why? Because the Church of God mystically and virtually rose together with Christ. No sooner did the Head lift Himself up out of the grave than all the members rose together with Him. It was with Him spiritually as with us literally when we rose from our bed this morning: every member rose with our Head. So the Church of Christ as members of the mystical body of the Lord the Lamb, virtually and mystically rose together with her rising Head.

3. But there is something in the resurrection of the Lord more than this. On the resurrection of Christ hangs what He now is to the Church of God. If He had lain beyond the due time, lifeless in the tomb, not only would there have been no attestation by the power of God that He was His dear Son; not only would the Church have lain dead and buried with Him in the tomb where He lay; but He could not have fulfilled those present offices which He now sustains at the right hand of the Father as "the Mediator between God and men." He could not have been "the High Priest over the house of God." He could not have been King in Zion, waiting "till all His enemies should be made His footstool." He could not have sent the Holy Spirit down to testify of Himself.

He could not commune with us from off the mercy seat, and unfold the glories of His lovely Person, the efficacy of His atoning blood, and the beauty and blessedness of His justifying righteousness. Our faith would have had no Object, our hope no anchorage within the veil; and where would our love have been without a Person upon whom that love could have been fixed?

Every grace of the soul, therefore, hangs upon the resurrection of Christ from the dead. If we believe, we believe in a risen Christ; if we hope, we hope in a risen Christ; and if we love, we love a risen Christ; for a dead Christ is no Christ to us who want a living God to fulfil the desires of a living soul. But blessed be God, Christ is risen from the dead; He is gone up on high: He is even now at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us. He has opened a way through the veil of His rent flesh, and our prayers, desires and supplications, with all our loving affections, may ascend to Him within the veil and enter into the holiest, even the presence of God, where He has gone as our forerunner, to sit down there until He comes a second time without sin unto salvation. Thus not only every doctrine of our most holy faith, but every experience of a living soul hangs upon the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Look at this in the light of your own experience. I was speaking this morning of the Son of God being come and our knowledge of it, and I endeavored to show that one way whereby we know that He is come, is because we

follow Him up by faith to where He is come, is because we follow Him up by faith to where He is at the right hand of God, and communes with us from off the mercy seat. Faith must have a divine Object on which it may fix its eyes, which it may embrace, to which it may cleave and round which it may twine. This Object is Jesus as risen from the dead, and now at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He says, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth." To Him therefore looking "as the Author and Finisher of our faith, we run with patience the race that is set before us" in the lively hope of His bringing us off more than conquerors over every foe and every fear. But if He be not risen from the dead, then of all men we are most miserable: we have no hope beyond the grave; no sins pardoned, no transgressions forgiven, no righteousness brought in, no present grace, no future glory. This is the reason why the apostles in all their sermons, as recorded in the Acts, preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ: "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." (Acts iv. 33.)

II. But our most gracious Lord is not only "the resurrection" - I shall bring that point to bear more fully upon your experience when I come to my second part - but he is also "the life." Adam had life, for God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul" (Gen. ii. 7), but he lost it in and by the fall; and the image of God in which he was created was

thereby thoroughly marred and defaced. He thus became dead in trespasses and sins; and as he begat a son in his own image, after his own likeness, and we all partake of this fallen, corrupt nature, we come into this world dead in sin. But what union, what intercourse, what communion can a soul dead in sin have with the living God? Will you take a corpse into your bed, and embrace it as a suitable wife for a living husband? Our blood runs cold at the thought. When death seizes the wife of your bosom, you say with Abraham, "Let me bury my dead out of my sight." A cold clay corpse is no longer the partner of your bed; the coffin and the grave are now its fitting place.

How then can you think that Jesus can take to His bosom a dead bride? Or how can a dead soul enter into the courts of a living God? What union, what communion can there be between a soul dead in sins and a God living in the light of His own holiness? Life, therefore, must be communicated and breathed into a soul before it can have union and communion with God here; before it can be fitted for His presence on earth, or enjoy the mansions prepared for it before time began in heaven. Now that this spiritual and eternal life might be breathed into, and communicated to the church, it pleased the Father that the fullness of this life should dwell in Christ: "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." This life, of which the Lord thus speaks, is not His life as the eternal Son of God, but His mediatorial

life, which can be communicated; for there is this difference between His life as the Son of God and His life as Mediator, that the one is communicable and the other not. Thus when Jesus says here, "I and the life," He speaks of His mediatorial life, that spiritual and eternal life which was treasured up in Him as Mediator, that it might be imparted and communicated to the members of His mystical body. We, therefore, read, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John i. 4.) So also, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." (1 John v. 11.) He therefore says of Himself, "I am the way and the truth and the life.

How often we are looking and looking in vain for life in ourselves. True it is that if God has quickened our souls we are partakers of life divine, of life spiritual, of life eternal, of the life that is in Christ and comes from Christ; and yet how often we vainly seek to find it warm and glowing in our breasts. If once given it never dies; but it is often hid beneath the ashes, and thus though it slowly burns and dimly glows, yet the ashes hide it from view, and we only know it is there by some remains of warmth. "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3); and therefore not only hidden as treasured and stored up safely in God, but hidden from the world, and even hidden from the eyes of its possessor. Christ is our life. There is no other.

To look, then, for life in ourselves independent of and distinct from the fountain of life is to look for that in the

creature which is lodged in the divine Creator, is to look for that in man which dwells in the God-Man; to look for that in self which is out of self, embosomed in the fullness of the Son of God. And observe that it is not merely that life is in Him, but He is the life itself. As the sun not only has light and heat, but is light itself and heat itself, so the blessed Lord not only grants life, but He Himself is what He grants. As a fountain not only gives water but is itself all water, so Christ not only gives what He is but is all that He gives. Not only, therefore, is He the "resurrection," centering in himself everything both for time and eternity which resurrection contains and resurrection implies, but He is "the life," being in Himself a fountain of life, out of which He gives from His own fulness to the members of His mystical body. But as He has to teach us what He is thus in Himself by lessons of personal experience, I shall now, with God's help and blessing, enter upon the second branch of my subject, in which I was to show

II. - The two gracious consequences which are connected with, and flow out of the Lord's being the resurrection and the life.

These two consequences are, 1, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;" and, 2, "Who-soever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." If you read these words with any measure of gracious understanding, you will see in them a bearing upon the two characters which the Lord claims for Himself as "the resurrection and the life," and will perceive

in them a remarkable fitness as a connecting link between His being the resurrection and the life and the two gracious consequences which arise out of it.

I. The first gracious consequence is connected with His being "the resurrection." He says "I am the resurrection." Now see how there flows out of this declaration a spiritual consequence, which very much meets the experience and feelings of God's family; and as such I shall unfold it. "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

1. What is resurrection? What does it imply? Out of what state does resurrection bring? A state of death. Death is necessary to resurrection. Was not our Lord dead when He was raised from the grave? So His resurrection, viewed with a believing eye, as pregnant with gracious fruits, carries with it this most blessed consequence, that it meets the case, is adapted to the experience, and embraces the spiritual state and condition of those who are dead. It will do so one day as regards the body. Christ is the resurrection both of body and soul. When then He comes again a second time without sin unto salvation, His voice will quicken the dead; the graves will burst open, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible; for His voice will call the sleeping dust of the saints out of the tomb, and they will stand up in all the glorious vestments of immortality. Do we not, therefore, read "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death,

by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming." (1 Cor. xv. 20-23.)

2. But His resurrection has also a spiritual import - a gracious fruit in this life, as well as that which is to come. There is a spiritual resurrection consequent upon His resurrection from the dead, as there will be a literal resurrection when the body is raised from the tomb at the great day. As, therefore, none can and will be raised but the sleeping dead, by virtue of His being the resurrection, so none can be raised from a spiritual death but by His power and influence as the same. But whom does the text mean by the dead? Let me open this. It does not mean the dead in sin; I will tell you why. The character pointed out in our text is said to believe, which no man dead in sin does or can do. Look at the words: bring to them your spiritual understanding. Follow me, if you have any confidence in me as a spiritual guide: see whether I cast any light upon the meaning of the words, and if you see with me then follow me on. I will lead you safely, if God give me ability. I would not deceive you, for I would not deceive myself. The dead spoken of in the text are not then those who are dead in sin or dead in a profession; because they are said to believe, which no man dead in sin ever did. "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." But how can one who is dead

believe? He can, or our Lord would not have said so. I will show you how. He is a living man as quickened into life by the power of the Spirit of God, and yet he is dead. How can we reconcile this mystery? It is one of those paradoxes which form a part of the great mystery of godliness.

(a) First, he is dead as slain by a killing law. He is alive unto God, and yet he is dead in law. The law has come; it has discharged its fiery contents into his bosom and slain him outright. Therefore, though he is a living man, has the love and fear of God in his soul, he is dead in law and dead also to the law, because he is slain by it as to any hope of justification. Thus he is dead.

(b) But he is dead in another sense: according to the verdict of his own conscience. Take a man upon whom the law has passed its condemning sentence. The judge sentences him to death; he is taken away from the bar, and shut up in the condemned cell. Though not yet set upon the scaffold, though not yet executed, he is virtually a dead man. The law has condemned him; he is condemned in his own feelings; he knows he must die; and therefore he feels to be a dying man. Thus when a man's own conscience seconds the verdict of God's holy law, and he falls down before the throne of God, slain by its condemning sentence, and this is ratified by the verdict of his own guilty conscience, he is dead as falling down dead before God. And yet he is a living man. The man in gaol is a living man, and yet the law pronounces him dead; for every

gloomy hour, and every gloomy hour, and every tolling bell, and every striking clock, falls upon his ear and strikes the deathknell into his soul, as knowing how soon he must before assembled spectators make an awful end.

(c) But he is dead also in a third sense: as to any exertion of his own strength, wisdom or power to do his soul any spiritual good; for he feels unable to raise up any living faith - and he knows that nothing but living faith will be of any avail - any gracious hope, or any warm, living love. So he is dead by law; he is dead by conscience; and dead by a sense of his own spiritual helplessness and inability. As Abraham knew that he was dead in body, so he knows that he is dead in soul.

Now see how suitable to this dead man is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is said to believe: mark that: "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." There is then in the breast of this dead man a living faith. This is the deep mystery, that though he is dead in law, dead in conscience, dead in helplessness, yet God the Holy Ghost has breathed into him and deposited in him a seed of living faith. By this faith he cries, by this faith he sighs, and by this faith he hungers and thirsts after righteousness: yea, more, by this faith he looks unto and believes in the Son of God. He scarcely knows that he has faith. His faith is so weak and so small in his own estimation, that he dare not say he has faith; and yet he has all the fruits of faith, all the marks

of faith, and all the evidences of faith. Take as a parallel case Jonah in the whale's belly. Had he faith or had he not faith? How low he sank when the waves were heaped over his head, when carried through the boundless deep in the belly of the whale. Yet even there he could say, "I will look again toward Thy holy temple." Had he no faith? Yes, he had; and by that faith he was saved, justified, accepted, brought out and delivered, and able to say, "Salvation is of the Lord."

Take Jeremiah in the low dungeon, when it seemed as though every hope was closed, and he sank deep into the mud and mire. Even there, when the waters flowed over his head, his prayer could enter into the ears of God and bring down a gracious answer. Does he not say: "I called upon Thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon? Thou hast heard my voice: hide not Thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon Thee: Thou saidst, Fear not." (Lam. ii. 55-57). Take Hezekiah upon his bed of sickness. Had he no faith? How then could he turn his face to the wall and pray unto the Lord? How could his eyes fail with looking upward, when he said, "O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me." Take David in his mournful journey, when he went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up barefoot, with his head covered, at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Had he no faith? How then came he to pray? "O Lord, I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." And

why did the Lord answer that prayer, if it were not the prayer of faith?

In all these men of God, sunk though they were almost to the last and lowest point, there was still the life of faith; and by that faith they called upon God. They looked unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed. Here then is the connection between the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and the experience of this seemingly dead soul. When Christ died, He bare the sins of this poor dead soul in His body on the tree, and thus atoned for them and put them away. When Christ rose from the dead, this poor dead soul rose with Him, as a member of His mystical body. When Christ went up on high, he ascended with Him. And when Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father, he virtually and mystically sat down with Him in heavenly bliss. Therefore, because Jesus is the resurrection, and because as such he has an interest in Him, he that believeth in Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

How often, dear friends, we sink into places where we are in our feelings dead men. Has sin never slain you? Have convictions never, so to speak, knocked the life of God out of your soul? Has Satan never come with his fiery darts, with all the artillery of hell, and sought to scorch up every gracious feeling and every living desire? And have you not sunk at times in your soul into such miserable deadness of spirit, that it seemed that not only there and then you were devoid of all grace, but that it was an impos-

sibility for grace ever again to renew and revive your soul? Here you were dead. I have been often here which enables me to describe it to you. Yet with all this there is a longing look, a heartfelt groan, a heaving sigh, a resisting unto blood, not an utter giving way, nor sinking down into miserable despair.

God the Spirit kept alive His work upon the soul, and Christ Himself as the resurrection dropped into our bosom, raised up and drew forth towards Himself some fresh movements of that life which is in Him. There was thus fulfilled that gracious consequence of His resurrection, "Whosoever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." O, amidst all our deadness, all our gloom and desolation, all our emptiness, barrenness and helplessness, if there be in our souls a longing look, a heart-felt cry, an earnest groan, a sincere desire toward Him who is the resurrection, our prayer will ascend into His pitying, sympathizing ear; and as He is the resurrection, He will once more raise up into life and feeling our dead and drooping soul. We have no other source of life. If we were altogether and really dead, we should always continue dead unless He were the Resurrection. But because He is the Resurrection, He can re-animate, revive, renew and requicken us by pouring into our hearts fresh life and feeling. It will be our mercy to be ever looking unto Him, hanging upon Him, believing in Him, trusting to Him, and giving Him no rest until He appears

again and again to the joy and rejoicing of our heart.

I fully believe that very many, perhaps I may add, the large majority of the people of God feel much of this death which I have been describing; and perhaps, though it may seem singular so to speak, those who are most lively feel it most. Were we totally dead, we should have no sensible feeling of our death at all, but should be like those described by Heman: "Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom Thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from Thy hand." (Ps. lxxxviii. 5.) Were we half or three parts dead we should feel it just in proportion to the amount of our life over our death. It is in spiritual things almost as in natural; the more a person is paralyzed the less feeling he has. Thus, though it may seem a paradox, the more life that you have the more do you feel your death. How light and trifling, easy and unconcerned most professors are. Why? Because they have not enough life to feel their death.

It is good then that we should feel our death; for it not only shows us more clearly and sensibly our wretched case and state by nature, but by driving us out of all help and hope in self, makes us to prize more dearly the life that is in Christ. How suitable then, how comforting, how reaching down to the utmost extremity of our case, are the words, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." When, too, we see and realize the connection of every gracious revival with the resurrection

of Christ, how sure and firm it makes those revivals to be, those visitations which preserve our spirit. This made Paul long so ardently to know the power of Christ's resurrection. (Phil. iii. 10). It was not the bare doctrine or the mere fact of His resurrection that he wanted to know, but the power of it as revealed and made manifest in his own heart. But it is by believing in Him that we receive these gracious revivals - not by looking to ourselves, but to Him who is the Resurrection and the Life.

J.C. Philpot

AS I WATCH THE SNOW FLAKES FALL

I arose this morning to see the fields covered with snow, even the rough places looked so white and smooth. I think of the scripture, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they be as white as snow." It was so pretty, I stood wondering if I would ever see the great white throne that John saw.

As I watch the snow flakes fall, I think of precious Brother Elder Harvey Smith, from whom the Lord called his spirit home only a few days since. I can see him in my mind as he spoke from a text he loved so well (Isaiah 55:10), "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from Heaven." And if not deceived, I felt the Gospel raining down and the snow covered the earth; for everything was beautiful.

These thoughts may be mine alone; but seeing the grieved hearts at our union meeting this snowy fifth Sun-

day in January has caused me to realize the mutual love and fellowship we shared for our beloved Brother. I wish that I could tell you the thoughts and precious memories I have as I think of his humble walk, and watch the snow flakes so softly fall.

I feel I shall never forget our last afternoon together. It was a Heavenly place to me, not knowing our earthly ties would soon be broken. We parted in love and fellowship and a better understanding than we had before. When we can feel the love that flows from heart to heart and breast to breast, we are drawn together as one people. The snow flakes fall together, and I cannot tell one from the other.

My heart was grieved when I heard the Lord had called his spirit home from his sleeping body, where there was no evidence that a muscle had moved in pain. I thought of his prayer I so often heard him say, "O Lord, give us a peaceful moment in which to die." Truly the sincere desire of his heart was answered.

As I watch the snow flakes cover the earth, my heart is filled with sympathy for his daughter in the flesh and sister in bonds of love, who awoke that sad morning upon the bed of affliction, singing praise to God and knowing in her heart that her beloved father had passed on to that peaceful sleep in Jesus, where it will be as but one night before the elect come into their inheritance of Heaven and immortal glory.

As I think of his lovely family who walk today with a heavy heart in humble submission to His righteous will, my prayer is that they be comforted be-

yond all the gracious deeds human hands have been blessed to do.

May all the honor and glory go to our Lord and Saviour; for I know if Elder Harvey Smith lived today, he would rebuke me if I attempted to give him any praise.

He preached the doctrine of election by divine grace with power that cometh down from heaven, as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven. This truth will stand when this poor mortal shall cease to watch the snow flakes fall.

Clifton C. Robertson

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

From Elder Lambert's book,
"Tried In The Furnace"

TAKE HEED TO YOURSELF
April, 1949

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28.



Paul had called all the elders of the church at Ephesus together to give them his last instructions before he took his departure to Jerusalem.

ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

He was aware that he would not see all of them again face-to-face so he was burdened of the Spirit to exhort them with spiritual instructions. He was prompted of the Spirit to warn them of the trials and persecutions that lay in store for them. He must also tell them that even some of them would rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. In Acts 20: 17:35 is recorded the full text of Paul's words to the elders of Ephesus in that meeting at that time. As these were appropriate words spoken to the elders of the church by Paul at that time of strife and confusion that was beginning to be made manifest in the church at that time, I believe they are just as appropriate to the elders of the church in this country at this time. This same exhortation and instruction is neces-

sary to the elders for the welfare of Zion today. When elders are blessed to obey these instructions Zion is not troubled. When elders take heed unto other elders to watch them and take a great interest in other flocks to dictate to them to the extent of not being mindful of their own condition nor the flock of their pastorate, Zion is troubled.

Paul said to the elders at Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves." He said unto Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself" (1 Tim. 4:16). Just before he said this to Timothy, he had enumerated some of the things Timothy was to watch concerning himself. He told Timothy, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." I am persuaded that elders will have plenty to occupy their minds and time to take cognizance of their walk and conversation without meddling into the affairs and critically watching the walks of others. Paul further added, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."

I am quoting to you some of the things that daily confront me. Do I manifest an humble or proud spirit? Do I believe in God's promises or do I just say I do? Do I realize the exceeding sinfulness and vileness of my sins or do I just take them for granted justifying myself because of my weak-

ness? Do I seek those things that are pure and from above or do I mind earthly things? Do I desire to live more godly and think more upon spiritual things or am I satisfied with my activities and thoughts as they are? Do I read the Bible and writings of the saints of God as much as I ought or am I satisfied with the puny knowledge that I now have? Do I exhort when I feel impressed to do so or am I afraid I will be dubbed as a Conditionalist if I speak anything pertaining to duty and righteous living in this life? Do I speak the words that are well-pleasing to God or am I seeking to please men? Do I press toward the mark of the prize of the high-calling in Christ Jesus or am I content to drift along the path of least resistance? All these questions and many more come into my mind daily to condemn me which causes me to cry unto my God for His amazing grace to sustain me and keep me from falling!

Paul told Timothy to "neglect not the gift that is in thee." May I say to the elders of the church of this time that God hath wondrously blessed you with a precious gift that has been so recognized by the church that you were brought under the hands of a presbytery and ordained to the officeship of an elder as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. Shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness. Paul says if a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but follow

righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. How carefully we ought to conduct ourselves as we sojourn here in this unfriendly world. This gift is sacred; our ordination is no light thing; and the confidence our brethren have in us as being vessels of honor is precious. The doctrine we are blessed to preach is God-honoring. Are our acts and conversation God-honoring? I am persuaded that if our acts and conversation in everyday living are lustful and ungodly, our preaching is hypocritical and vain. Your words from the pulpit may be in accord with the words spoken by the inspired writers and speakers, but if your life does not manifest the fruit of the Spirit, what evidence do brethren have that you have experienced the grace of God in your heart?

When brethren have so much confidence in the operation of God's Holy Spirit in your heart that they receive you into their fellowship embracing you in that precious faith; and, that confidence mounts higher to the extent of calling for your ordination as a minister of Jesus Christ; and, then you betray that confidence by ungodly conversation and lustful living, how great is their grief and hurt! It were better that a millstone be hanged about your neck and you drowned in the sea than to offend these little ones! May God give us grace to neglect not the gift that is in us and to enable us by His Spirit to take heed unto ourselves. May He enable us to watch our deportment and to profit by our mistakes.

Paul further adds: "And to all the flock." One who is called to the office-ship of an elder is instructed to take heed unto all the trophy of his grace. A true elder has the interest of the lambs as well as the sheep in mind. He is tender and patient in his dealings with them for fear of wounding one of the little lambs. He is just as anxious for the welfare of the insignificant and timid ones as he is of the bolder and more prominent ones. He does not devote his time and attention to just a few to the exclusion of others, but watches over the entire flock to shield each and every one of them. He is not to take heed to another outside of his jurisdiction. He is not to consider the goats to please them nor to score them, but his interest is to be confined to the flock. I do not believe that a God-called elder has any time to waste outside of the flock skinning goats or petting them. May God enable us to stay within our calling being attentive to all the flock.

"Over the which the Holy Ghost made thee overseers." Elders do not fill this place upon their own volition. They have not fitted themselves for this place by their own activities. Others have not called them into this noble position. Schools of men have not prepared them as overseers. The Holy Ghost is the agency that God has used in making them overseers of the flock. True elders are ordained by the Holy Ghost and this ordination is assented to by the laying on of the hands of a presbytery. This officeship was given you by the Holy Ghost. No man or group of men is able to ordain one

to such a high position. No school or university is able to qualify one and place him in such high position. If this position is given us by virtue of the Holy Ghost what a high and exalted calling it is! I am persuaded that the position of elder in the church is much more to be coveted than that of the officeship of President of the United States. People may elect presidents but it requires the election of God for a person to serve as a true elder. How thankful we ought to be that God has chosen us to this high and exalted position to be counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake!

"To feed the church of God." We are not left to guess or speculate upon the purposes of elders or to the extent of their work. Paul is very specific in this. We are not to dabble with anything or anyone outside the church of God under the cloak of an elder. I think it is unbecoming for elders to use the cloak of a minister of the Lord to gain worldly gain or to pursue some political venture. They are not to preach to the world for the world will not hear them. They are not to bring sheep into the fold for that is the work of Christ. They are not to add them to the church for that is the work of the Lord. They are to feed the church of God. They are not to prepare the food for that is the work of Wisdom. Yes, they are to read and study but not to think what they shall say, for it is given them by the Holy Spirit in the selfsame hour that it becomes them to speak. As all the writing of the saints, as recorded in the Bible, were addressed to God's children or the church, so all the

preaching and writing of the elders should be addressed to the children of God or to the church of God. I do not believe this church of God under consideration is any organization in its entirety, that it is visible here in this world to the exclusion of all outside the visible organization; but I do believe this church to be the invisible, complete kingdom of Jesus Christ including all the children of God. I believe many members of this church are not members of any organization here upon this earth. I do not believe that all of the members of any organization here upon this earth as the organized church are members of this church that Paul had under consideration as he defines it in the remaining words of our text.

"Which he hath purchased with his own blood." All for whom Christ died are members of this church under consideration. Your efforts nor the efforts of any other ordained elder has added any one or excluded any one from this church that Christ purchased with His blood. Christ did not try to purchase the whole Adamic world but He did purchase the church. God's called elders preach the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ in atoning for all the sins of all the members of this church. The doctrine of Christ includes limited atonement and special redemption with efficacious grace being applied continuously to the objects of His grace until the complete and ultimate salvation shall have been experienced by each and every member of this church. What great price was paid for your redemption.


My sins and your sins, if we be members of that church, caused the Holy One to suffer, bleed and die on calvary's tree that we might be freed from sin! If Christ suffered, was forsaken and died for us, is it a great thing that we should suffer persecutions here in this world? If Christ devoted His entire life to the service of others and was not even provided with a place to lay His head - as were the foxes and birds - is it a great thing that we should devote some time to the service of others, and not be blessed with some of the luxuries of this world?

May I conclude this script by stating that I have no apologies to give for the things that I have written in this epistle as I have been somewhat burdened along this line of thought. I have no person or persons in mind to profit from this other than myself. I stand condemned and guilty of treating the officeship of elder very lightly. I have been so concerned over my unconcernedness of late that I am made daily to cry to God for mercy. I have written this in the fear of God and not to please men. May God awake us from our cold state and bless us by His grace to earnestly contend for that precious faith. May He stir up our pure minds and enable us to walk and talk as we ought while we are in this earthly tabernacle of clay awaiting to be clothed upon with immortality when this life is over that we may be received into that heavenly clime where all will be perfect forever, Amen.

Elder E.J. Lambert

MEETING

OLD PINE CREEK CHURCH

 The annual Old Pine Creek Church meeting will be held this year on the 4th of July.

The church is located off Hwy. #221, 5 miles north of Floyd, Va. Those coming from Floyd, turn left on to road #682. Those coming from Roanoke, turn right on to road #682.

All lovers of the truth are invited and especially all ministers of our faith and order.

Elder Hale Terry

PSALMS 25: 12-15.

What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR APRIL 1994

Joseph Plaster, VA	\$2.00
Mrs. E.G. Wilson, VA	5.00
Mrs. Mary Banks, NC	7.00
Mr. & Mrs. B.W. Wade, WV	2.00
Mrs. Erby Dalton, VA	2.00
Mrs. J.D. Neely, AR	2.00
Mrs. Julia T. Sewers, VA	2.00
Charlie Alston, NC	2.00
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Mrs. Lois E. Cloud, AZ.....	7.00
Mrs. Clemmie Bishop, AR	4.00
Mrs. Roma H. Smith, AL	7.00
Mrs. Foye W. Cole, NC	2.00
O.P. Murphy, TX	100.00
Ms. Katherine H. Tucker, LA	
In memory Audrey H. Tucker	20.00
Lawrence W. Myers, VA.....	2.00

DANIEL 9:18.

O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.

OBITUARIES

JOHN MARK MUSGROVE

Brother Mark Musgrove was born in Rapides Parish, La. Feb. 11, 1913, and was called home by our heavenly Father Feb. 11, 1994 at the age of 81 years. Although Bro. Mark's name was never recorded on any earthly church book we surely believe, as did he, that his name is recorded in the Lamb's book of life. This was his professed hope in Christ Jesus.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Sister Inez Musgrove, and one daughter, Sister Genova Lucille Rushing. He is survived by 4 daughters: Phyllis Musgrove and Patsy Barton of Bastrop, La., Caroletta Ogima, Tickfaw, La., and Lucy Hutson, Archibald, La.: 6 sons: J.M., Jr., Terry, Phillip, Douglas and Madison Musgrove, all of Bastrop, La., and Juan Musgrove, Roanoke, Va.: one sister, Sister Geneva Pettis, Bastrop, La.: 2 brothers, J.J. and George Musgrove, Sr. of Bastrop, La.: 29 Grandchildren, 34 Great Grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Bro. Mark also had many friends, and every one who knew him loved him and will greatly miss him.

Services were conducted by Elders Theron Jones and Clifford Wilbanks, and he was laid to rest in Concord Cemetery to await the coming again of his Lord.

Submitted by
Eld. C.C. Wilbanks

**OBITUARY OF SISTER
DOVIE C. MARTIN**

With a mixture of both joy and sorrow in our hearts we record the passage from this life of Sister Dovie Cox Martin, at the age of 89. Sister Dovie was born in Patrick County, Virginia on December 25, 1904, a daughter of the late Charlie P. Cox and Sister Nannie Hall Cox. She was united in marriage in April 1944 to the late Elder Benjamin H. Martin, who was at that time a widower. Their union was blessed with two sons, Benjamin

F. and Jerry L. Martin, both of whom survive.

Sister Martin joined by experience at Goblintown Church on the 3rd Sunday in July 1922, at the tender age of 17. After her marriage she moved her membership elsewhere to accommodate the wishes of Brother Ben. She came to Liberty Church by letter in November 1967 and remained a faithful member until her death on February 25, 1994 at the Blue Ridge Nursing Home in Stuart, Virginia, where she resided the last few years of her life.

In addition to her sons, Sister Dovie was survived by four grandchildren; two step-sons, Willie and Harry Martin of Bassett; two step-daughters, Sister Ellen M. Adams and Sister Dora M. Adams, also of Bassett; sixteen step-grandchildren; two sisters, Sister Addie C. Wright of Martinsville and Sister Elsie C. Turner of Bassett; and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by all six of her brothers, Willie, Jessie, Frank, Joe, Paul and Silas Cox; and three sisters, Sister Gladys E. Haynes, Mrs. Loraine (Veva) Harbour, and Dollie B. Cox.

Funeral Services for Sister Dovie were conducted at Collins Funeral Home Chapel by Elders Kermit Via and John Wingfield. Her mortal body was laid to rest beside that of her husband in Old Center Church Cemetery to await the coming of the Lord.

Done by order of Liberty Church in conference on the 2nd day of April, 1994.

Elder John T. Wingfield, Moderator
Paul A. Puckett, Clerk

DELLA MAE SWAN

It is in sorrow and with a great feeling of loss as I write this obituary of our beloved Sister Della Mae Swan. Sister Swan was a faithful member of Union Primitive Baptist Church for the last ten years of her life although she was able to attend very little for the last three years because of poor health. Our most wise and merciful God called her home May 17, 1994. Although we are in sorrow because of our loss of our loved one we feel that our loss is her eternal gain. Sister Swan had often spoken of her hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we believe she had a true hope.

Sister Swan was born Dec. 13, 1911 in Butler County, Mo., making her stay on earth 82 years, 5 months, 4 days. She is survived by one son and daughter-in-law, Orval and Martha Swan of West Monroe, La.; three brothers, Chester Harwell, Dittmar, Mo., Edwin Harwell, Yakima, Wa., and Clyde Harwell, Poplar Bluff, Mo.; 4 Grandchildren, 9 great Grandchildren and a large number of nieces and nephews.

Memorial services were held at Kilpatrick Funeral Home, and she was buried in the Twin Cities Memorial Gardens in West Monroe, La. by her husband and youngest son. The service was conducted by this writer.

Elder C.C. Wilbanks

PROVERBS 4:1.

Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., AUGUST 1994

NO. 8

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

PRIDE - Prov. xxix. 33.

*Innumerable foes
Attack the child of God;
He feels within the weight of sin,
A grievous, galling load.*

*Temptations, too, without,
Of various kinds, assault;
Sly snares beset his traveling feet,
And make him often halt.*

*From sinner and from saint
He meets with many a blow;
His own bad heart creates a smart,
Which only God can know.*

*But though the host of hell
Be neither weak nor small,
One mighty foe deals wondrous woe,
And hurts beyond them all.*

*'Tis pride, accursed pride,
The spirit by God abhorr'd;
Do what we will, it haunts us still,
And keeps us from the Lord.*

*Thou meek and lowly Lamb,
This haughty tyrant kill;
That aim'd at thee, though thou wast free,
And grieves thy spirit still.*

*Our condescending God -
(To whom else shall we go?)
Remove our pride, whate'er betide,
And lay and keep us low.*

*Thy garden is the place
Where pride cannot intrude:
For should it dare to enter there,
'Twould soon be drown'd in blood.*

Hart

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 EDITORIAL



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

This scripture describes the blessedness that is the heritage of the saints of God and is a most precious consolation to them as they travel their journey here in this time world. They are blessings that are

sovereignly bestowed upon them by God because he loved them from before the foundation of the world and has displayed that love by providing everything to insure their eternal salvation. The heirs of these blessings can see the evidence of them in their brethren but when they turn their eyes within they are fearful to claim them as their own. The key is the fact that all of these blessings were bestowed upon them before the foundation of the world and are not the result of what they may, or may not, have done. All flesh is grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; so don't expect much when you turn your eyes within, if God judged on that basis, there would have been none saved. Just as man is of a particular race, has physical abilities and temperament; things beyond his influence, so these things are received simply because God loved his people and created them for his own peculiar treasure.

Ye are a chosen generation; a part of the whole of God's creation that he reserved unto himself as is declared many times in the words of the inspired writers, as Deut. 32 vs. 9 "*For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.*" And this is referring to a chosen generation. This was declared by Moses, when he was to die and is part of the song he was to teach the children of Israel, to influence them in the generations ahead, and in it he referred to generations before them who were included in this portion. They were not chosen because of any superior or unusual qualities that they pos-

sessed but because he loved them and made them lovely in his sight. Isa. 43 vs. 1, *"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel. Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."* The choosing, the separation of them unto himself, was done in the day of creation and will stand as long as God is God. He is of one mind and will never change his love and his care for them.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is given to the saints of God that they may be strengthened and comforted in this life of sin and sorrow, by the witness from within. This causes them to have hope in spite of the vanity and pride of the flesh and the vexation of the heart and soul with the filthy conversation and life style of the nations around. They have hope because of the witness within which was placed there by the spirit and they realize that this was not learned from man or by study; it appeared mysteriously and they began to see all things differently, they had a new set of values and loved their brethren above all others.

Jacob, whose name meant supplanter, was not the son who, according to the law, should have received his father's blessing yet he collaborated with his mother to obtain it by deceit. His mother had been told before Jacob and Esau were born that the elder should serve the younger and so it was. In looking at the facts in this set of circumstances according to the law Jacob should not have

received the blessing but God had determined that he should, and this is the same as the circumstances of the chosen generation above, the choosing was by God and the will and purpose were his own. God gave Jacob the blessing, led and directed him all the days of his life and blessed all nations through him. Jacob was a plain man, in the eyes of the world yet God chose him for his portion: Jesus came not to call the intelligent, or kings or men in authority, but he came to the poor the lost and the offscouring of the world and saved them from their sins. No cause or reason other than that it was his good pleasure to do his Father's will, the same as the reason for the chosen generation is being selected.

1st Cor. 1 vs. 26, 27 *"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things, that are mighty:"* Very different from the way that man would do it, and it is done in this way, I believe, that it should be made manifest that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. O, how many times these same fundamental truths are set forth, by the inspired men in all ages of time, to support and strengthen the weary pilgrim in his travels in this veil of tears. These scriptures are a great source of comfort to one who sees themselves

as poor weak, ignorant and unloved; and then to learn that these are the marks of the chosen generation and that they have been loved with an everlasting love, and this drawing that they feel is the lovingkindness of God through the spirit.

But, ye are a royal priesthood: under the law of Moses, which was to the flesh, there was an hierarchy set up by God through Moses for the orderly worship of God and for the systematic governing of the children of the kingdom. It began when God called Moses and began to tell him what was required of him and that he was to speak to Pharoah and tell him to let his people go. Moses began to excuse himself because he was of a stammering tongue and asked God to send someone else. God gave him Aaron as his spokesman, saying, he shall be unto thee instead of a mouth and thou shall be to him instead of God. When the law was given and the tabernacle and vessels were ordained God commanded Moses to take Aaron and his sons who were to minister unto God on behalf of the children of Israel; to offer sacrifices and the offerings required under the law for sin. The priests alone could prepare and offer the sacrifices, and that was according to specific guidelines; to be offered regularly, first for themselves and their sin and then for the sins of the people. The offerings did not put away sin but was typical of and referred to the true offering that would atone for and put away sin once for all time when this true sacrifice, Jesus Christ, came and finished his work in cleansing the

elect from their sins there was also a change in the priesthood and in the way that it functioned. Previously, under the law the priest offered yearly the same sacrifice for the same sin, not putting them away, but acknowledging them unto God; now that the perfect (actual) sacrifice was made Jesus ascended to the Father, is seated on the right hand of God, a high priest making intercession for the saints. The high priest is Jesus Christ Rev. 1 vs. 6 *“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”*

This is the royal priesthood as it exists today. There is the high priest, Jesus, over the house of God and the royal priesthood which is the entire household of faith who enter boldly into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for them through the veil, that is to say the flesh. They draw near, with a pure heart, in full assurance of faith having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and their bodies washed in pure water. This is because of the anointing of the Holy Ghost, at the time appointed of the Father and they become priests unto God, a holy priesthood which offers up sacrifices unto God continually, that is, the fruit of the lips rendering praise unto his holy name. Even as the incense flowed up from the altar in a cloud of a sweet smell unto God, so the prayers of the royal priesthood is an odour of sweet smell, pleasing unto God.

But, ye are an holy nation; Israel, the spiritual Israel, is this holy nation and

it includes all of the elect family of God, in Christ, both under the law and under grace. They are the holy nation because that the Lord has designated them as such, and for no other reason. They were anointed in much the same way as the judges, priests and kings were anointed under the law; the power was from the anointing and reflected the power of the one anointing them. They were anointed with oil but this holy nation is anointed by God with his Holy Spirit and they go forth with power and bear witness to him that hath called them. Even as Jesus told the disciples, Acts 1 vs. 8, ***“But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.”***

When God began to tell the children of Israel of the land which he would give unto them, he told them how they were to conduct themselves as relating to the nations that occupied the land. They were to smite and utterly destroy them and shew them no mercy; they were not to make marriages with them, they were to break down their altars, cut down their groves and burn their graven images with fire. These nations were greater and mightier than Israel, but the difference was that God was with his people and would sustain them in their battle; as he was, with David, against Goliath: the three Hebrew children and many others or as Paul said ***“If God be for us who can be against us.”*** Oh, the heritage of those that fear God, they cannot

fight the battle but there is one who can.

The reason that God gave, to the children of Israel was, Deut. 7 vs. 6,7, ***“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye are the fewest of all people.”*** There is the reason, pure and simple, he did not choose them because they were the fewest, he chose them because he loved them, he chose them because he had formed them for himself and had led them and kept them all the days of old as the apple of his eye. He had called them out of all nations, and that is the same way that the holy nation is designated today. They are chosen of God as his portion and they are still the fewest of all people: they are still commanded to come out from among the idol worshippers, or the nations around them and to be separate, and he will receive them. This is not speaking of nature, that you remove yourselves from everyone, but when the spirit comes into the heart, it separates, them in their allegiance to the things of the world and they are no longer yoked together with them is lusting after the sinful pleasures of the world. There's no difference in their physical appearance but there is a grand and glorious difference in their spiritual standing; they are kings and priests unto their God.

But ye are a peculiar people. The children of God are, and always have been, peculiar in the eyes of the world. They do not conform to the ways of the world and the world does not understand them; they have their own set of priorities and the things that the world seeks, is not the things that are important to them. They are even peculiar to themselves because they do not fully understand their way and walk by faith and not by sight. Their hope is in things of the spiritual realm and yet they see so much in themselves that makes them fear that they are just mistaken in their claim to a spiritual quickening, and wonder if their change has just been a figment of their imagination. They do not feel at home in the world because they can see that their desires are not the same as their fellow man, and yet they fear that they do not belong in the church because they do not feel worthy of claiming that heritage as theirs.

Many believe the doctrine and have followed it for many years, love the church and rejoice in the fellowship of the brethren yet do not respond and ask for a home with the Lord's people. This is peculiar, when you think of it; this is something that is the most important thing in a person's life, we are talking about eternity and yet they won't take a stand for what they believe. They say they do not feel worthy, well, they are not, and neither is anyone else. If they are waiting to feel worthy, then they don't need Jesus, because he is What makes all worthy; he, who of God is made unto his people, wisdom, righteousness, sanc-

tification and redemption, everything they will ever need. As the last phrase of our text says, ye are all these things, *"that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."* How does one show forth the praises unto God but in following him in all things, As Paul said, *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."*

The Apostle Peter begins his epistle, to the strangers scattered abroad, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit; strangers to the world yet elected of God to be a very precious possession unto himself.

The prophet said of this people Mal. 3 vs 6,7 *"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord harkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I shall spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."* Does this not remind you of the brethren as they come together in God's name and talk of the Glories of the kingdom? And he says when God comes to make up his jewels, (precious possessions) unto himself he will treat them as his own son. How much more could words be used

to describe the love of God for his chosen generation than to put them into the category of a father's love for his own son that serveth him. Many times, in the scriptures, the Son is mentioned in the relationship between God and his beloved Rom. 8 vs. 3 *"God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:"* and again Rom 8 vs. 32 *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not freely give us all things."* The bond between God and his elect is the strongest force in existence, there is nothing that can separate them from his love.

Chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, a peculiar people, all describing the children of God, and all are in terms that clearly demonstrate the fact that they had no part in causing it to be so. The reason declared was and is the sovereign work of God in their lives. May God in his infinite wisdom and purpose enable them all to see, from time to time evidences that they are included in these blessed categories, in spite, of what they see themselves to be in nature.

In bonds of love,
Elder Richard H. Campbell

ROMANS 8:28.

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.

ARTICLES

AN INFIDEL TURNS TO GOD

Joseph Hart spent the best years of his life denouncing the Bible and everything it stands for. Not content with merely being a non-believer himself, he devoted his marked literary talent to the spreading of propaganda against all religious faiths.

Attendance at church, with Joseph Hart, was for the sole purpose of finding fault and gathering themes for his venomous pamphlets. In the town of Sheerness, where he taught languages, Joseph Hart became so obnoxious that citizens demanded that he leave town.

While infidel Joseph Hart was being invited to leave a town in England, Swiss-born Frenchman Jean Jacques Rousseau was being expelled from France for his outspoken views on politics. No less an infidel than Hart, Rousseau was an egotistic misfit who seemingly could get along with nobody.

Failing at several enterprises, Rousseau is said to have dozed off one day in 1752 and dreamed that he heard beautiful music. Awaking, he tried his hand at composing an opera. Its success so inflated Rousseau's ego that he was never able to compose anything else worth mention. At sixty-six he committed suicide.

Expelled from the town of Sheerness, Joseph Hart returned to his native London. One Sunday afternoon in

1757, when he was forty-five years old, the infidel teacher-writer wandered into a church to find more fault with religion. The preacher's text was from Revelation 3:10. God and the preacher did a remarkable job that Sunday. "I had hardly got home," Hart wrote of the sudden change that had come over him, when I "flung myself on my knees before God." He said he felt as if a "heavy weight" had been suddenly lifted from his shoulders.

Joseph Hart never wrote another pamphlet against religion. In two years he wrote enough hymns to fill a book, and he published the collection in 1759. Then he started preaching in an old frame building in London. When, eight years later, he died, twenty thousand people attended his funeral.

The strange birth of a hymn! Written by a converted infidel - sung to the music of a suicidal atheist!

Jean Rousseau's opera has been forgotten. The only music he wrote that survives today is that part of his opera which is sung to this hymn by Joseph Hart.

This, incidentally, was a favorite hymn of financier Cornelius Vanderbilt. Requesting its singing at his deathbed, the multimillionaire reputedly remarked, "I am poor and needy."

*Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and pow'r;
He is able, He is able,
He is willing; doubt no more.*

Sent in by Larry Gibson

VOICES OF THE PAST

JESUS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Part Two

Preached at Providence Chapel,
Oakham, on Lord's Day Afternoon,
June 11, 1865

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

John xi. 25, 26.

But I now come to the other gracious consequence, connected, like the last, with the gracious declaration which fell from the Lord's lips, "*I am the resurrection and the life.*" It would almost seem as if the Lord divided His people into two classes. They are both believers, for you will find the same thing spoken of each. "*He that believeth in Me,*" and "*Whosoever believeth in Me.*" They are therefore both partakers of the same faith, for there is but "*one faith;*" and yet our Lord speaks of one class as dead, and the other class as living. How is this paradox to be explained? I will endeavour to show you. The dead I have described as those not dead in sin, nor dead in profession, but dead in feeling.

We have then to explain the living in a similar way. "*He that liveth*" is one

who has the life of God warm in his soul; one that knows something of the living experience of faith and hope and love; one who can and does rise by the power of God out of darkness and death, and knows something of living union and living communion with a living Lord; one in whose heart the kingdom of God is set up with a divine power; one who has righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; in whose heart the holy Dove nestles; over whose soul He sheds his gracious influences; whom He stirs up as the eagle stirs up her nest, and makes him alive and lively too.

You will find this striking difference among the family of God. There are some who scarcely seem to have, or at least to realize the life of God in their souls. You will find them almost always complaining of a body of sin and death; always full of doubt and fear, always crying out bitterly against themselves and mourning and sighing under the pressure of heavy burdens, constant trials and continual afflictions. Now and then it is true they get a little relief, a little lightening of their burdens, tokens for good, helps from the sanctuary, encouraging promises, and gracious gleams of light and life across their path. But for the most part their almost daily experience is to feel and bewail their own deadness. Now to these the resurrection of Christ is blessedly adapted. He who is the Resurrection folds them in His loving embrace, though they can hardly realize His sustaining arms. But who keeps them from utterly falling, or from time to time revives their drooping hope?

None but He who is the Resurrection. The gracious Lord who feeds his flock like a shepherd, gathers these lambs with His arms, carried them in His bosom and gently leads those that are with young.

But there are others of God's family, a small minority perhaps, who are more favoured, more blessed, whose souls are kept more alive and warm in the things of God. I have known a few of these in my time, though but a few, for we live in a dark and gloomy day when the Spirit of the Lord seems much straitened, and His gracious consolations little vouchsafed. But these are the most profitable Christians that we can have intercourse with; for sometimes they seem to warm us by the influence of their own warmth, are made instrumental in stirring up our sleeping graces, or reprove us in our consciences for our coldness and deadness.

Thus we get good from their company and find their society strengthening and profitable. Their prayers, too, whether in public or private are a blessing to the Church of God; and if they be ministers, as having life and power in their souls, they can speak with more unction and savour to the hearts of God's family than their brethren who are more borne down by a body of sin and death. Not but that the Lord makes use of both - His tried and tempted servants to feed His tried and tempted people, and those who walk more at liberty to feed that part of the family who are similarly favoured and blessed. And yet they are as dependent on the Lord of life as the others.

They have to believe and do believe in the same Lord, hang upon the same atoning blood, shelter themselves beneath the same justifying righteousness, trust to the same faithfulness, and cleave to the same blessed Redeemer as their less favoured brethren. But to them in an especial manner He is "*the Life*," as to the others He is "*the Resurrection*." Sitting in His risen glory at the right hand of the Father, He contains in Himself life in all its fulness; and as they feel and realize this, it draws them up into sweet communion with Him.

The Lord Jesus is first the Resurrection and then the Life, for necessarily He rose from the dead before He ascended on high. Each has its special power and virtue. By virtue of His resurrection He quickens the dead; by virtue of His life He maintains the life that He gives. Thus as dead, we both need and realize His resurrection; as living, we feel and realize His life. But it is by looking unto him and at Him, by contemplating His Person and work, by going out after Him in earnest breathings and desires and by receiving out of His fulness that we realize Him to be the life, and draw life out of Him into our needy and empty souls. As then those that live thus believe in Him, He indulges them with visitations of His presence and grace, communes with them from off the mercy-seat; keeps their souls tender in the fear of God; separates them in person, in heart, in affection from an ungodly world; makes them spiritually-minded, which is life and peace;

and draws them near to His bosom, where they find food and shelter.

And yet it is the same living faith, though stronger, which we have seen acting in those who are lamenting their death; and as stronger exposed to sharper trials, weighted down by the pressure of heavier afflictions, carrying a more heavy daily cross, and fighting harder against the world, the flesh and the devil. This may seem strange; but was it not Paul's experience to be "sorrowful yet always rejoicing?" So it is with these. None more burdened, none more blessed; none more afflicted, none more favoured; none fighting harder battles, none gaining greater victories. Thus their very afflictions are made use of as goads to urge them forward; their crosses though heavy to bear, are employed as means to make them move on, if more slowly, yet more surely; and those very circumstances which most deeply try them prove in the end their richest mercies. Thus, take the whole family of God, whether they be in the class which I have first described, dead in law, dead in feeling, as Berridge says, "Self condemned and self abhorred," scarcely able to trace the life of God in their own souls, and often sunk very low in gloomy fears, still they are believers in the Son of God; for He who is the Resurrection can and does raise up in their hearts some living faith in Himself. And yet for the most part they drag wearily on from this deadness of spirit and coldness of affliction. But the other class, fewer indeed in number, yet still partakers of the same

faith, and looking to the same Lord, enjoy more of His manifested presence and love.

Now see the two promises which are made to each. Of the first it is said that *"he shall live;"* of the second, that *"he shall never die."* How precious are these promises in themselves. How much more precious is, or should be, the Lord Himself who made and gave them, and who is Himself their sum and substance! I could wish for myself and you, to find their fulfillment in our daily experience; that we might prove the firm foundation on which they rest, and that as spoken by the mouth of Christ, they are spirit and life to our souls. We shall never get the least benefit by looking to ourselves; for all that we are and have is sin, darkness and death. We must look out of ourselves, come out of ourselves, live out of ourselves to find resurrection and life in the risen Son of God.

But we may stretch our thoughts a little further still. The promise has a future aspect as well as a present one, a literal as well as a spiritual meaning. One part of it embraces those who are gone before and now lie sleeping in their graves. As Christ is the Resurrection, these though dead shall live again when He comes to call forth their sleeping dust; for they will hear and answer His voice. As Job says, "Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands." (Job xiv. 15). And so speaks Paul: *"Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) The second part of the promise where the Lord declares that *"whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall never die,"* seems to have a reference to that change which will pass upon the living saints when Christ appears; for these will not die but be changed in a moment, death being swallowed up of life (2 Cor. v. 4), and they caught up together with the risen dead in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thess. iv. 17.) O that we could live in the daily experience and blessed enjoyment of these divine realities. What an effect they would have on our daily walk and life.

III. - But I come now to our last point, which is the gracious appeal which the Lord made to Martha's faith; and I would use the words of our gracious Lord as if they spoke individually to my and your conscience: "Believest thou this?"

Can you then by a living faith set to your seal that these things are true, for this was the meaning and import of the Lord's address to Martha? And you will observe that His appeal embraces the whole of His declaration, *"Believest thou that I am the Resurrection? Believest thou that I am the Life? Believest thou that he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live? Believest thou that whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die?"* How close the appeal!

How piercing the enquiry! How is seems as if the eyes of the Lord looked into her immortal soul. And those same eyes, which are "*as a flame of fire,*" now also read the thoughts of our heart. If, then, you have the life of God in your bosom; if you are amongst those who believe in Christ, in which of these two classes do you rank yourself? How shall I put my hand upon you that I may guide my fingers aright? Ephraim and Manasseh stood before Jacob, each to receive a blessing. God guided his hands aright, though his eyes could not see. I cannot see your hearts. God guide my hands aright, that a suitable blessing may come to each as I lay my hand upon you!

I. I will first take those who feel much of the state of death and darkness into which sin has brought them, and who for the most part are little able to rise out of it. And I would say to you, "*Believest thou this?*" Believest thou that though thou art condemned by law, condemned by conscience, condemned by the feelings of thine own soul, as being much shut up in darkness and death, there is in thee some living faith in the Son of God?

Dost thou believe that Jesus is the Resurrection? What evidence has thou that He is? Has He quickened thy soul? Has he convinced thee of thy sins and given thee repentance for them? Has he brought thee out of the world? Has he turned thee from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God? Has he raised thee from the dead - that death in sin or death in profession in which thou once

walkest? Dost thou ever feel any movements of divine life in thy soul, such as sighing, crying, groaning, hungering, thirsting, longing, panting and mourning? Hast thou any spirit of prayer in thy breast? Any earnestness, sincerity, self-abhorrence? Hast thou any contrition, brokenness, humility, softness of spirit and tenderness of conscience? Hast thou any godly fear working in thy bosom in buying and selling, in you daily walk, in your families, in your business, in the various matters and movements of your daily life? Do you find a fountain of life in you to depart from the snares of death, and some power and strength communicated to fight against your corruptions and overcome them? Has Jesus at any time or in any measure manifested Himself as a suitable Saviour to your soul? I say suitable, for that is sometimes the first view which we have of Him. Has He in any measure drawn out a faith in Himself as such, and in the power and experience of that faith you have received and embraced Him as the Son of God?

Believest thou that He is the Resurrection? Why do you believe it, and that Jesus has risen from the dead? What evidence have you of that cardinal doctrine of our most holy faith, that vital, glorious truth, which shines in the world like the sun in the sky to illuminate the whole page of revelation with its gracious and glorious beams? Is this your evidence that you have seen Him as such by the eye of faith, and life flowed through it into your soul? Then you have a real, ex-

perimental evidence, though perhaps not a very sure one in your own feelings, that He has quickened you into divine life; that He raised you up with Himself when He rose from the dead, and that you are a member of His mystical body.

Do bear in mind that these things can only be received and realized by faith. Your faith may be small and yet blessedly real. But you say, *"The law condemns me, my conscience accuses me, my sins are a heavy burden to me, under which at times I seem almost ready to sink, and I do feel such thorough inability to bring myself any relief, such complete helplessness and miserable impotency to deliver myself out of my state, that it seems as if I shall die in my sins. O that pardon would reach my breast."* But is there no longing look to the risen Son of God, no ardent cry, that He would manifest Himself and drop a word into your soul? Is there no breathing in your heart after Jesus that He would graciously come over the hills and mountains of your sin and shame, and break in upon you with some beams of heavenly light? Have you never seen Him suitable to your case? Have you never beheld his Person by the eye of faith as the great and glorious God-Man? Have you never seen the efficacy of His atoning blood, the beauty and blessedness of His justifying righteousness, and have you never heard some gracious words from His mouth? Has His holy word never been opened up to your mind so that you have seen light in God's light, and

believed what you read from the sacred, solemn power which attended it to your Soul? Have you never been blessed under the preached word, and found faith raised up to receive and believe what dropped with sweetness into your ear and heart? This was faith; for *"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

Then, though you feel dead, as slain by the sentence of the law and the verdict of your own conscience, yet if you find any living faith in the Son of God as the resurrection, you shall live. The Lord has declared it, and His word will stand when the world is in a blaze, "Thou shalt live." Thou shalt live here by a life of faith in the Son of God. Thy small faith shall be increased, thy hope be enlarged, and thy scanty love, which now steals through the weeds almost unseen, like a little tiny brooklet, will open into a stream, and before thou art laid upon a dying bed, or perhaps there, thy peace shall flow like a river. It is hard to believe this, for we look so much to self and so lose sight of the freeness and fulness of sovereign superabounding grace. But do weigh these things in the balance of the sanctuary, and especially by the word of the Lord in our text. Do you not find in your own bosom these two things - death and life? Your own death as a condemned sinner and your life which is hid with Christ in God. Then, by this death and by this life you have a manifested interest in the promise, *"Though he were dead, yet shall he live."*

II. But now I will take the other character, of whom the Lord says, *"Whoso-*

ever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." And may I not also say to you, "Believest thou this?" "Yes," you answer, "*I do believe it; for I feel the sweet assurance and blessed earnest of it in my own soul. I know that Jesus is the life, because I live upon him, and he sustains my life by daily supplies. Sometimes I get a sweet portion out of His word to comfort my heart; sometimes a touch of His soft hand to melt my soul; sometimes a smile from His loving face to cheer my spirit; sometimes a word from His gracious lips to instruct my understanding; and by these things I live.*"

"I find," you say, "that these things separate me from the world, make me live much alone, teach me to prize my Bible, bring me often to close dealings with God, favour a spirit of prayer in my breast, and make me feel that there is a blessedness in the things of God which nothing else can give. But I have my changes and these very many; for I cannot keep alive one warm or tender feeling. *'If two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?'*" (Eccl. iv. 11). When I am left alone I soon grow cold; and when the Lord suspends His gracious operations upon my heart, I sink down into carnality and death. So that I do believe He is 'the life;' for I am sure I have none in myself, and it is only because 'He lives that I live also'.

Then you can set to your seal that Jesus spake words of grace and truth when He said, "*I am the resurrec-*

tion and the life." Your faith, my dear friends, will ever be embracing Him in these two characters: sometimes dead and embracing Him as the resurrection; sometimes living and embracing Him as the life. But whether He be the Resurrection to raise up our dead and drooping souls, or whether He be the Life to maintain in our bosom the life He gave, we come to this one point, that the only life we can live worthy of the name, or attended with any fruitfulness in any good word or in any good work, is by a life of faith in the Son of God. And do bear in mind that the life of Christ within must be evidenced by a corresponding life without. Wherever there is faith there will, there must be the fruits of faith, and these will be manifested in a godly life, in the performance of every good work to which we are called by our station or position, so as to make it manifest that our faith is not a dead but a living principle, and that by it we glorify God in our body and in our spirit which are His.

I shall add no more. I have laid before you according to my ability the way in which the Lord for the most part leads His dear family; and if you can find any clear mark or blessed evidence of the grace of God being in your breast, thank God and take courage. Jesus lives at the right hand of the Father: He lives to save, He lives to bless, He lives to bring you off more than conquerors through His own blood and love and grace.

By J.C. Philpot

From Elder Lamberts book,
"Tried In The Furnace."

PREPARATIONS OF THE
HEART AND TONGUE
September, 1949

"The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord. All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits." Prov. 16: 1,2.



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT



The Natural Man who is born of natural parents, who is not yet born of the Spirit, reasons that all of his own ways are clean. He is confident that his walk is more

righteous than his fellowman. He is certain that he knows right from wrong, and that he is capable of choosing and pursuing the right course in this life. He glories in the idea that he can direct his own steps, prepare his own heart, and choose his own destiny. He justifies himself in every act he performs. All of his ambitions are motivated by selfish desires. He loves himself and strives to prove to his fellowman that he is superior. Any ideas contrary to these ideas are foolishness unto him and he will not receive them as truth.

The Bible contains many plain statements that are contrary to the ideas conceived by a natural man. I desire to quote just a few of these statements: *"Why callest thou me good? there*

is none good but one, that is God." - (Jesus) *"Are we better than they? No, in no wise."* - (Paul) *"There is none that doeth good, no not one."* - (Paul) *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."* - (Jesus) *"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."* - (Jeremiah) *"A man's heart deviseth his way but the Lord directeth his steps."* - (Solomon) *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."* - (Psalms) *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you"* - (Jesus). *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief"* - (Paul). *"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"* - (Paul). *"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"* - (Paul).

Considering the things that are written above, we realize the necessity of the direct operation of God's Holy Spirit in the heart of man in order for him to receive these things as true. No wonder that Jesus said, *"Ye must be born again."* There must be a change of heart before the natural man can receive the things of the Spirit. This changed heart must further be prepared by the Lord. The Lord does not stop with just one preparation but it is a progressive work requiring several preparations. *"The preparations of*

the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." We would like to consider some of these preparations.

Let us read from Ezekiel 11: 19-20 concerning the first preparation of the heart in man that is done, solely, by the work of God Himself. *"I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."* Many years ago, I begged people to give their hearts to God. I honestly thought that each human being was in possession of a heart that was sufficient as a sacrifice and worthy of acceptance with God. I thought we were capable of doing things for Him. Alas! I did not know Him; neither did I know my wicked and ungodly heart that I possessed! If it were possible for a man, upon the volition of his own will, to give his heart to God, what value would it be to God considering the wickedness of the natural heart of man? There is no scripture that intimates that the stony heart of man would be worthy of God's acceptance. God takes this old heart from man and gives him a new heart. There is heart-giving in the act of regeneration, but instead of the sinner giving his heart to God, God is giving the sinner a new heart. God is successful in this operation and has never lost a case. When we are on the operating table of God's amazing grace, and He is performing that wonderful operation, we are in close touch

with him. He is near unto us and may be found. We behold Him as all powerful, all wise, and most holy. It is while we are in this position that the scripture is applicable unto us which says, *"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."* This first preparation of the heart in man humbles him and gives him a desire for godliness.

God does not stop in His preparations, for we read in Psalms 10:17, *"Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart."* This initial operation has awakened the creature to his unworthiness, wretchedness and inability. As a new born babe it causes him to cry. He is crying unto the Lord to further prepare him. Let us read from Jeremiah 31:33, concerning further preparation of the new heart God has given His children: *"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."* Paul explains to the Corinthian brethren further concerning this writing as he says, *"Written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart"* (2 Cor. 2:3). The creature with the new heart is not dependent upon the study of the Scriptures to know the Lord or the law of the Lord. This knowledge is indelibly impressed by the direct operation of God's Holy Spirit. The Scriptures were not written to incite us to our duty but *"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through*

patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." The scriptures, *"Seek, and ye shall find," "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you," "Ask, and it shall be given you,"* were not written in order to exhort you to seek, ask, and knock for this is done by the Holy Spirit, but to comfort you with the thought of the results of this asking, knocking and seeking.

The command, *"Love one another"* is written in your hearts for Paul says, *"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another"* (1 Thess. 4:9). We quote from Christ's sermon on the mount to His disciples according to Matt. 7:12, *"Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."* Jesus said again as recorded in Matt. 22: 37-40, *"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 hangs all the law and the prophets."*

These are so indelibly impressed in the heart of each of God's children that *"His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night"* (Psalms 1:2). The child of God would perform it to a jot and tittle but realizes the infirmities of the flesh, and the thorn in the flesh so that he cannot do the

things that he would. Paul said, "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." This knowledge can only be experienced by those to whom it has pleased God to reveal the holiness of His law and the unholiness of man. All our righteousness appears as filthy rags when compared to the standard of that written law that has been so indelibly imprinted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We witness further with Paul when he said, *"For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."* (Read Romans seventh chapter.)

The heart is now well prepared for another preparation which we shall consider. The failure to comply with this law causes such grief and sorrow until we are without hope. Hungering and thirsting for righteousness that we cannot perform causes our souls to faint within us. We realize that the law is just and holy and that if we offend in one point we are guilty of the whole. We are made to exclaim with Paul, *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* We have lost all confidence in ourselves and cannot any more depend upon the puny arm of flesh to save us. Christ comes to us in this distressed condition and takes up His abode in our hearts. We

now quote from 2 Cor. 6:16, ***“As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*** This is the opportune time that Jesus says, ***“Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*** Jesus comes to us in the day of adversity and speaks sweet peace to our troubled souls! He tells us that He has brought us out from under the dominion of the law by keeping it in our stead to a jot and tittle, and that His obedience is accredited to our account. He informs us that He took our sins upon His shoulders and that they were nailed to the cross; that our sins were charged to Him; and that He satisfied justice by paying the penalty with His own blood on the cross of Calvary. He has stripped us of the filthy rags of our own righteousness and clothed us with the robe of His righteousness. He intercedes to the Father for us and blesses us with His great love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. He not only accomplished the law for us and paid the penalty for our sins; but, also gives unto us eternal life. ***“And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life”*** (1 John 5:11, 12). We hear Jesus saying to the Father as recorded in John 17: 22, 23, ***“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”***

Last December while everyone was celebrating Christmas in the customary manner of modern frivolity I was very much concerned about the right way and right time to celebrate such an occasion. While I was so perplexed my nearest neighbor, who is clerk of Bethel Primitive Church here in this community, asked me if I knew when God’s children celebrated the birth of Christ. Feeling that he has an appropriate answer I asked him to answer his own question. I want to pass his answer along to you and see if it does not fit in your experience as it did in mine. His answer was, ***“God’s children truly celebrate Christmas when Christ is born in them.”*** Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Jesus told His disciples, ***“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”*** He terms the Spirit of Truth as the Comforter. It soothes our troubled souls, heals our broken hearts, guides us into all truth, and glorifies Christ. This spirit dwells in us as Paul states in 1 Cor. 3:16, ***“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”*** If so be that the Lord has taken from you the stony heart and has given you a new heart, has written His laws in your heart and imprinted them in your mind; and Jesus has come to your rescue as your Savior; and the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, has taken up His abode in your heart; you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. Your heart has been prepared to receive and be comforted

by the following quotation: *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption" (Rom. 8:15).* Space will not permit us to consider the various minute preparations of the heart in man that are from the Lord as affirmed by the Scriptures. Let us now take up briefly, *"The answer of the tongue, is from the Lord."*

Paul said in Rom. 10: 9-11, *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."* God causes us to not be ashamed to own Him as our Lord. We do not have to be prompted by man to confess Him as our Savior for the Lord so blesses us. *"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God" (Psalms 40: 2,3).* God has put this new song into the mouth of His children, and I am persuaded that they sing it. They render praise unto God for all things. They realize that it is solely by the

grace of God that they are saved both in time and for eternity. *"No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:20,21).* God has never changed in His way of dealing with His children. I believe that it is just as true now that confession is made unto salvation by the promptings of the Holy Ghost as it has ever been. I do not believe it is in the province of natural man void of the Holy Spirit to even confess with the mouth. He may make statements that favors a true confession but I am persuaded his language will betray him.

It is natural for a man to want to take some of the praise unto himself and regardless of how much he may try to imitate the speech of a child of God, he will fall far short of speaking in this new tongue. In Luke 12:12 we find this statement, *"For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."* God is perfect in His work and does not only prepare our hearts but also gives the answer of the tongue. He does not depend upon us to search out what we shall say in advance, but relieves us by putting the words in our mouths by the direct operation of His Spirit at the time we shall say them. I am impressed that I have experienced that very thing in speaking publicly from the pulpit. At times words flow so fluently without any labor upon my part that I feel to know that it is the work of God. I have been blessed to speak upon texts

upon which I have not had previous meditation, with all ease and so true to scriptural teachings that it astonished me when I would be given to compare the things that I had said with the scriptures later. Prior to becoming affiliated with the Primitive Baptists I outlined the sermons beforehand and tried to deliver them in accordance. Now I study and outline them after they have been delivered.

I trust that I have been made to believe in the effectual working of God's mighty power which is far superior to the wisdom of this world. I have only hinted at this far reaching subject but now must submit it for your consideration. May God bless it to your comfort and be pleased to further prepare our hearts and give us the answer of the tongue as it pleases Him.

Elder E.J. Lambert

THE PURPOSE AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

God is known in the bible as a God of purpose, as working *"all things after the counsel of his own will."* Hence, what we see produced by the hand of God is not the product of chance or accident, but the fulfillment of purpose. All this universe, sun, moon and stars, the earth and its fullness, are now as God, before their being purposed they should be, and as he had no pattern to work by they are an exhibition of his wisdom as well as power.

It is said of him, *"The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, surely as I*

have thought, so shall it come to pass; as I have purposed, so shall it stand." *Isaiah, xiv: 24.* Reader, did God ever think he would save any one and yet that one fail of salvation? 27th verse, *"For the Lord of hosts hath purposed; who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out and who shall turn it back?"*

If God's hand is stretched out to save his people, is it not wicked to contend that his hand can be turned back? *"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning."* *Acts, xv: 18,* *"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."* The work, then, of conversion is God's work, and not the work of chance or accident; it is one of the works which he does according to his purpose. *"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons."* So that our being sons is the result, not of chance or human appointment or agency, but of predestination of God.

Our regeneration is an inheritance, which we have, not for our works, but as the end of God's purpose. *"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."* Here, our being born again is the result of our being predestinated; hence, we were predestinated to this end by *"him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."* Therefore, our being made to possess this inheritance, was in the mind of God long before; and just according to that mind we are blessed.

Now, I ask, will these be saved - whom God has appointed to salvation, and who in harmony with that appointment have obtained their inheritance? In Eph., iii: 11, "**According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.**" Here then, let us ask, what that eternal purpose is? "**And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing.**" So this eternal purpose, counsel, will, is, that all given to Christ shall be saved; and "**Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.**" Will he fail? Will God's eternal purpose be defeated, and his will unexecuted?

Falling from grace argues that he may fail; and, if he may fail to save all given him, and all his people, he also may fail in his blood, and the cross may be a failure. God's purposes, counsel and will may be a failure, and the holy spirit may fail; and there might well be a song of triumph in hell; and all heaven might be clothed in sack cloth and mourning; and Christ might be mocked, saying, "**This man began to build, and was not able to finish.**" *Luke, xiv: 28.*

We also learn that God possesses foreknowledge, to the highest conceivable perfection; hence all his works are in perfect harmony with perfect wisdom, love and power, and where he has begun a good work, he will perform it until the day of Christ. I would argue the truth of the final perseverance of every saint, upon the grounds of the covenant of grace.

Psalms, lxxxix: 18, "For the Lord is our defense, and the holy one of Israel is our King. Then thou speakest in visions to thy holy one, and said, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people." And of this chosen one he says: "**Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Isaiah also says, liii: 5, "And with his stripes we are healed."** 6, "**All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned, every one in his own way, and the Lord hath laid, on him the iniquity of us all,**" 8, "**For he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.**" "**When thou shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed; he shall prolong his day, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.**" 11, "**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.**"

The many justified are the many whose sins are born; the bearing of sin results in justification. These two things are tied together so inseparably in each of these passages, that any one willing to see truth can see it. While his soul is being offered, he shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. The end and object of his death shall be seen by him, and he be satisfied; and what would satisfy him but the ultimate salvation of all his people? It is the stripes that heal; or

we are healed because he is striped. In all these passages we are presented as one, with Christ in the covenant. So that our release from suffering is a necessary consequence of his suffering.

Psalms, lxxxix: 27, "Also, I will make him my first born; higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep forever more, and my covenant shall stand fast with him." "His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven."

Acts, xiii: 34, Paul calls Christ the sure mercies of David; and this covenant was confirmed before, of God in Christ which the law could not disannul, or make the promise of none effect. Now, if the children of this covenant "*forsake my law, and walk not in my judgment; if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments*" - shall they fall from grace, and be lost? No. "Then I will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless (mark this), my loving kindness I will not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."

Now, does God's faithfulness to his Son demand that his children, redeemed by his blood, shall be saved? Unquestionably it does, and God's word for it, he will not suffer it to fail, and he will not utterly take his loving kindness from him. "*My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips; once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David, (Christ), his seed shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before me*" Paul refers to the same

when he says, "*But God willing, more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor both sure and steadfast.*"

Now, I ask, is this covenant mutable, changeable, or is it immutable? Can it be altered or changed? No; it is secured by the oath of God and all is confirmed in Christ. Hence, the blood of Christ is called "*The blood of the everlasting covenant,*" and this covenant is called the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Titus, i:2. God, who can not lie, promised eternal life before the world began, and also, grace was given us in Christ before the world began, and we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. All of which proves the existence of an everlasting covenant, which related not only to the crucifixion of Jesus, but to the eternal salvation of all his children; not only is the death of Jesus a subject of appointment in this covenant, but the result of that death. So David could say, "*It is ordered in all things and sure.*" Everything appertaining to that death, as to its time, and manner, and as to its object - nothing left to uncertainty. So, all "*Israel shall be saved in the Lord; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.*" *Isaiah, xlv:17.* Here is a salvation certain that shall reach even to eternity. "*Can a woman for-*

get the child she bear that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" (Think what a forcible figure is here used.) *"Yes, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold! I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."* Do these words look like falling from grace is possible? No, not till God is foresworn, nor till the everlasting covenant is disannulled, nor till Christ, who is one in covenant with us, is dragged down from his throne of power and hurled into hell. *"Christ is made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec"; also, "Over the house of God"; "And after the power of an endless life."* As a priest of this order and over this house, he procures endless life. He is the captain to bring many sons to glory, and for this work he is made perfect through suffering. He is the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption of all his people, and he will be to them a God, and they shall be to him a people. From what we have seen, the salvation of God's people depends on the success of Christ as the surety of the better testament, and as he can not fail, the salvation of all his people is certain.

Elder J.H. Oliphant

MEETINGS

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union meeting will be held, the Lord will, on the fifth Sunday in July. The meeting will be held at Dan River Church with Moons Creek Church the

host Church. All lovers of the truth are invited to meet with us with a special invitation to all ministers of our faith and order.

Kenneth R. Key, Moderator

PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

220 North, or South to Route 40. Take 40 East about 3.6 miles to Route 655, turn left. Go about 4 miles to Route 834. Turn left and to about 4 miles to church on right.

From Gretna take 40 West to Route 834. Turn right and go about 8 miles. Church is on right.

If coming 122 to Burnt Chimney, turn on 670 and go to Dick's Food Center. Turn right on 834. Church is on left. August 5th, 6th and 7th. Please bring chairs.

Hope to see you there!

Jamie Cooper, Association Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MAY 1994

Mrs. Connie Page, NC	\$5.00
Mrs. Edith Sewell, FL	2.00
William Edwards, NC	2.00
Eld. G.D. Shipman, TX	2.00
Graham Lovitte, NC	2.00
R. Vernon Furr, NC	2.00
Mrs. Eunice Thompson, NC	10.00
E.R. Graves, AL	5.00
Tom G. Thompson, NC	2.00
Mrs. French Hogan, VA	2.00
Eld. Richard Campbell, TN	7.00
Mrs. Julia H. Ada, MD	2.00
Mrs. Helen M. Womble, NC	2.00
Mrs. S.L. Walker, VA	7.00
Eld. Leonard Brammer, VA	2.00

OBITUARIES

SISTER VIRGINIA HORSLEY

At the request of Old Mt. Church, I will try, with the help of the Lord to write an obituary in memory of our dear Sister Virginia Horsley, who the Lord called home, Feb. 2, 1994, while in Duke University Medical Center, Durham, N.C. After a decline in health for two weeks. Sister Horsley was born in Pittsylvania county Nov. 19, 1914. The daughter of John H. Holley and Jinnie Holley. She lived her entire life in the Whitmell, and Mount Hermon area. She was married to Brother Edgar Samuel Horsley, Dec. 8, 1934. To this union was born two daughters.

Margaret H. Munford, of Dublin, Ga. and Jone H. Wyatt of Wilmington, N.C. Six grand children and five great grandchildren.

Sister Virginia and Brother Edgar joined Old Mt. Primitive Baptist Church May 19, 1984. They were baptised July 15, 1984. Sister Virginia was a faithful member, always there unless sickness prevented. A firm believer in pre-destination of all things. She loved caring for her church, cooking and entertaining Primitive Baptists in her home.

Always preparing food when a friend or neighbor was sick or had a death in the family. She used a cane to walk, because of a broken hip years ago, but that never kept her from doing for others in need. A devoted wife and

mother, grandmother and neighbor. She will be greatly missed by all.

May the family be reconciled to the will of the one that never makes a mistake. One that can fill the void in their heart with the finger of his love.

Her funeral was conducted at 2:00 p.m. Sat. Feb. 5, 1994 at Old Mt. Church by her pastor Elder C.B. Davis and Elder H.W. Wray.

Her body was laid to rest in the Holley Family Cemetery, beneath a beautiful mound of flowers, a token of love, from the family and many friends, to await the resurrection morn, to meet Christ in the air and be carried home to be with the Lord.

Written by one who loved her.
Sarah Barker

PSALM 93.

The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.

Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.

The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.

The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., SEPTEMBER 1994

NO. 9

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

IN THY HANDS

***In thy Hands are all things;
All things whatsoever
Exist for thy purpose.
Plan, creation and fulfillment
Are thine alone.
Omnipotence is thy attribute,
All power anywhere
From eternity to eternity
Belongs to Thee.
Omniscience is thine,
Thou has no birth, no death;
All times are plain before Thee.
Thou art omnipresent
Throughout the universe art
thou Forever.
Laced like a silver cord
Through the dark fabric of time
Thou hast a people
Who manifest thy fruit
At the touch of thy Hand.
O Infinite God
Great and holy
Beyond our finite comprehension,
Look in mercy upon us
Who have no hope
Except in Thee.***

Florence A. Gibson

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EDITORIAL

WALK



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye

turn to the left.” Isa.30:21.

There are many ways that the word 'walk' is used. One way that Webster defines it is, to follow a certain course of action. Whatsoever one does or says is his course of action, or the way in which he walks; and there are only two ways in which he will walk; either in wickedness or in righteousness. There is no other path for him to follow. Either a thing is right and just or it is wrong and unjust, either good or evil. Unless God works in us to do righteousness we will always do evil, for in the flesh all

men are sinful and evil. *“Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.”* When God made man (Adam) he knew no sin, for he knew neither good nor evil. Adam and Eve were naked and knew it not, but as soon as they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil their eyes were opened, and they saw they were naked, and they tried to hide their nakedness with fig leaves. They had disobeyed the commandment or law of God and sin therefore entered the world; for sin is the transgression of the law. Adam fell from his pure and upright state to a state of sin and death; and he being the federal head of all mankind we all fell in him, for we are only Adam multiplied.

Before Adam sinned he walked and communed with God there in the garden of Eden, but he died, (was separated from his standing with God,) and God drove him forth from the garden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. God cursed the ground for his sake, and told him that in sorrow he would eat of it all the days of his life. It would also bring forth thorns and thistles, and that he should eat of the herbs of the field. In the sweat of his face he would eat bread, till he would return to the ground from whence he was taken: for he was dust, and to dust he would return.

Adam was not deceived as was Eve, but he ate of the forbidden fruit because of his love for her. Adam was not deceived because he was a figure

of him that was to come (Christ). Christ also loved his bride (the church) and he came into the world to redeem her from her fallen estate, and take her to heaven and immortal glory to be with him eternally when time shall cease forever.

There are those who say that God has two wills, one revealed, and the other secret, and that Adam disobeyed the revealed will of God, but obeyed his secret will. This is utterly impossible, for these are opposites and would clash head-on. Adam did as all men do; he disobeyed the commandment or law of God, but did the will of God, for the scriptures tell us that, "*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.*" (Dan. 4:35) Also we read Phil. 2:13: "*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" Although God had given a commandment or law unto Adam that he was not to eat fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil it was in his will and purpose that Adam should disobey, and he knew that he would, for he said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." He did not say, "If ye eat of it - but in the day you eat of it." No man has ever kept the commandments or laws of God except Jesus Christ, and he kept it to a jot and tittle that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law. The apostle James wrote, "*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty*

of all." Therefore we must conclude that his commandments are not always his will, but only if they are in complete accord with his will; and then he works in us to will and to do them.

Adam was fulfilling the will and purpose of God when he transgressed the law. We know that God has a holy hatred of sin, and all of his wrath is against it; yet he had a just and holy purpose for its presence in the world or it could not have entered. God made man according to his own will and purpose, making him subject to vanity; he placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden; he commanded Adam to not eat of it; and he formed the crooked serpent to deceive. Had any one of these things not been done sin could not have entered the world. God is omniscient, therefore he did not do these things in error, but according to his own holy purpose. Had Adam never sinned he would still be in the garden of Eden in his pure and innocent state, but he would still not be a fit subject for heaven and immortal glory. We know however that Adam walked the path laid out for him before the foundation of the world, for the scriptures tell us, "*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps.*" Also: "*A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.*" Why do the scriptures tell us that Jesus stood as a Lamb slain before the foundation of the world if God had been unsure that his chosen children would need

redemption? After that he was driven out, Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived, and bare Cain, and gave God the praise, for she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." And she again bare his brother Abel.

Before the foundation of the world God chose a people in his son Jesus Christ and blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love. Able is a type or figure of the chosen children of God, and Cain is a type or figure of those who were not chosen. Cain was a tiller of the ground and Abel was a keeper of sheep. In the process of time Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord, and Abel offered the firstling of his flock and the fat thereof. The fruit that Cain offered was from the works of his hands, therefore God had no respect unto it nor Cain, but the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering, for the offering Abel made was not of the works of his hands, but of the sheep the Lord had given him to be the keeper of. Does not Cain and his offering set forth the way the world is today? Many people are begging money daily in their efforts to evangelize the world and save sinners from hell, not giving credit nor praise unto the Lord for what he has already accomplished; and not knowing that they themselves may be in need of a Saviour.. The poor soul who has been made to know his ruined and lost condition, and that he has nothing with which he might save himself, but that Jesus has already offered himself

unto the Father in his room and stead, and by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified, offers nothing except his prayers, supplications and praise unto the One that has given him faith to believe in the work that the Saviour has already accomplished and a sweet hope that he is one of those for whom christ died. He is made to understand the meaning of David's words when he said, "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: and a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*"

In his wrath, because that God had no respect for his offering and had respect unto Abel's offering, Cain slew his brother. Cain's offering, as we noted before, was of works, but Abel's by faith; and "*Without faith it is impossible to please him.*" (Heb. 11:6) *Faith is the gift of God, "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). Does not the world follow after Cain? All of God's chosen people would be slain by them, (if it were possible,) simply because they believe and preach the truth. The world cannot tolerate the truth, for it condemns them. They sought to kill Jesus himself because he preached to them the truth. They continue to work to justify themselves, attempting to put God under obligation to save them, and they send missionaries into all the world to save lost souls. What did Jesus say unto these? "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypo-*

crites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more a child of hell than yourselves." And, "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Enoch, the son of the unrighteous Cain, was a chosen child of God, for we are told in Gen.5:24 that *"Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."* And in Heb.11:5-6 we read, *"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him."* As we have quoted before, faith is the gift of God. Elijah was also given faith in God, and God took him into heaven in a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and a whirlwind." (2 Kings 2:9).

In the 6th chapter of Genesis we find that *"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."* Therefore he said he would destroy man whom he had created, and all beasts, creeping things and fowls of the air; for it repented him that he had made them. Yet God bestowed his grace upon

Noah, and he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Because of the grace bestowed upon him Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. God commanded Noah to build an ark, and told him exactly how it was to be built, and blessed him with faith, knowledge, and perseverance to do all that he commanded, for it took many years for it to be completed. Peter tells us that Noah was a preacher of righteousness, but it is evident that none believed him, for there were none called into the ark by God when it was finished, other than Noah's wife, his three sons, and their wives. Only eight persons were saved to again begin the repopulation of the earth. In Heb.11:7 we read, *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house: by the which he condemned the world, and became the heir of the righteousness which is of faith."* It is only through God given faith that anyone shall ever walk in the commandments of God and become an heir of righteousness.

I believe all of you know something of the faith and walk of our father Abraham; not our heavenly Father, but the father of all them that believe.(Rom 4:11, James 2:21.) And in Gal.3:7-9 we read, *"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham, And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham,*

saying, *In thee shall all nations be blessed, So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*" If we be what we hope to be, then are we the heathen (Gentiles) who are justified through faith and are blessed in Abraham.

By faith Abraham obeyed the call of God and went out of his native land, from his own people, seeking a place that he should after receive for an inheritance, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. I believe that every child of God, when he is born again of the Holy Spirit, leaves his native land (the world) and seeks a new city made not with hands. This new city is the church of Jesus Christ, and he is the builder and the foundation thereof; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. He not only seeks the church here on earth, but by faith he looks for the second coming of his Lord and Saviour who will take him to heaven and immortal glory. The strangeness of the land in which we sojourn is only because we had not walked there before; but, as we walk through it, it becomes more and more beautiful and blissful as God reveals it unto us.

We dwell here in an earthly house of clay (our bodies), and we suffer trials, tribulations, afflictions, etc.; but we must suffer these things if we walk after Christ, for he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we are told that, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only

to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake." This is part of the cross we must take up every day to follow him. But as we suffer, let us consider this - ***"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*** Our earthly house shall be dissolved, but this we desire, ***"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."***

Dearly beloved brethren, seeing that you have hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, I would beseech you as did Paul in chapter 4 of his epistle to the Ephesians: ***"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherein ye are called, with lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unit of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."*** And when you hear that word behind you saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it," do not resist, but walk willingly; for it is God working in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Dearly beloved brethren, it is my sincere desire to walk with you in love and peace in the sight of our most holy God.


Elder C.C. Wilbanks

ARTICLES

“Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.” Zech. LL:14.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”, 2 Cor. 13:5.

To the militant (visible) churches, to the sanctified in Christ Jesus, and to the saints that lament in Zion:

he breaking of brotherhood is a serious event deserving the attention and concern of the saints for they are admonished to be of one and the same mind, a mind like unto the mind of Christ, they are to dwell together in unity, and are commanded to mark them who cause divisions and avoid them.

It is with fear, dear Reader, that this attempt to write may be presumptuous of me, yet I am moved to encourage professed Baptists to search the scriptures with me and to seek that unity of the spirit of Christ that accompanies brotherhood among the saints who are to judge the world and small matters that pertain to this life, 1 Cor. 6: 2-5. The motive is that God be glorified and that order prevail in and among the churches so that ye may be comforted.

As pertaining to “those things which are most surely believed among us”, in the preface of his Gospel, St. Luke

declared, Chap. 1: 1-4, that “It seemed good.... to write..... That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.” For the militant denominations of churches, our fathers in Zion have published landmark documents as their banners of truth and belief. From the era of dissent and civil strife in England we have the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647 which was a pattern for the later London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689. More recently we have the Kehukee Declaration of 1827 and the Black Rock Address of 1832. For a time thereafter it seemed that Old Baptists were blessed with prosperity, yet within the lifetime of this writer the candlestick has been removed from many Old Baptist churches. Meetinghouses across the land sit desolate while others are occupied by adversaries to our cause. The scriptures read of “wolves of the evening” that would devour us, of “cunning foxes” that will spoil the vines (churches), and the “boar of the wood” that would break down and waste the hedges about Zion so that the “wild beast of the field” doth devour the vine. These members of God’s creation are ample reasons for the command to prove all things and try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. God does, in his displeasure and according to his purpose remove the candlestick, Rev. 2:5, also Gal. 5: 12-16.

The psalmist prayed, Ps. 19:13, that he be kept back from presumptuous sins. But David, being tempted by

Satan, forced Joab to number Israel at the displeasure of God and for his sin David was compelled to choose between the three pestilences, 1 Chron., Chap. 21, and 2 Sam., Chap. 24. O Brethren, does Satan likewise tempt us to look about the land to number the members among Old Baptist congregations and then conclude that surely we must be his chosen remnant? God forbid such presumptuous pride! The Lord knows the names and the number of his chosen but to us the book of life is sealed. Would you agree, dear Reader, that the falling away prophesied for the last times is quite different from a removal of a candlestick?

Needful instructions, admonitions, ordinances, and precepts are recorded in the inspired scriptures both for comfort and for profitable guidance of believers, churches and denominations of like believers. The apostle Paul sent epistles to the church at Corinth and "to all that are called to be saints in every place". But after his departure from Corinth, that church being influenced by false teachers became contentious and disorderly with divisions and schisms - not unlike the history of professed Baptist churches. At Ephesus the whole city fell under confusion and idolatry as certain craftsmen in the church, for material wealth, insisted on making shrines to the goddess Diana. After the uproar subsided Paul took leave to go into Macedonia. Traveling through Ephesus on the way to Jerusalem Paul called the Ephesian elders to meet.

The record in Acts 20: 28-38 contains Paul's admonition: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Beloved saints, is it not so of all religious persuasions few if any have suffered more than Baptists from those within who would seek power or money or both to establish preeminence over their peers by drawing away the membership after themselves? As God permits, Satan works even yet among Baptists to establish petty popery, cultism and idolatry under brutish pastors causing divisions and scattering of the flock, Jer. 10:21.

But God's universal Church is fitted together "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all rejoice with it", 1 Cor. 2: 24-26. The Apostle was persuaded "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord", Rom. 8: 38-39. Has not Jesus said "If ye love me, keep my

commandments”, John 14: 15? “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another”, Gal. 5:15.

Thoughtful Readers, may I entreat your consideration of the shortcomings and the conduct which has brought, in the providence of God, so many divisions and such great desolation in many regions of the United States among Primitive and Old School Baptists. “Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord”, Lam. 3: 40 and “Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.”, Lam. 5: 21. So, if God wills “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves”, Cor. 13: 5. I know that I daily stand in the need of personal self examination and repentance. But, dear Readers, does not the plural language of these passages require plenary examination by the whole body of every organized militant church and by the full denomination of like believers for their common benefit?

However, to try ourselves there must be standards for the measurement of our condition. Some members believe that these standards are embodied in traditions established by our recent fathers while some reject all of the rules of men for orderly behaviour in church assemblies and use their thought freedom from the law as a license for mischief. Some believe that the standards are found in the New Testament alone - that the Old Testament no longer applies. Agreeably, the rule of life for God’s children,

“to love God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind” and “to love thy neighbor as thyself” is stressed in the New Testament, but it is not exclusively absent from the Old Testament, Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18. But we are a frail and backsliding people. If on examination of ourselves we find error should not corrective steps be taken? Are there broader instructions, precepts, or commandments for the organization and practice of militant church assemblies?

In writing to the Corinthian Church, 1 Cor. 10: 1-12, Paul declared “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; (6) Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted (11) and they were written for our admonition, ...” In Rom. 15:4 we read “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”, See also Ps. 48: 12-14. Thus, does not peace and tranquility in the orderly administration of a militant church and a denomination of like believers require all scripture, 2 Tim. 3: 16-17? A proverb of Solomon reads, Prov. 25:2, “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.” What in your view, O Beloved Reader, has God revealed within the mysteries of the scriptures in the matter of fellowship and brotherhood?

In Zechariah, Chapter 11, God has revealed that the Lord, the Good Shepherd, for his purpose and pleasure in feeding the flock, has taken two staves that are called "Beauty" and "Bands". The staff called "Beauty" was cut asunder that God might break his covenant with all the people. Unless deceived, I believe it was the covenant of works made with Adam and his posterity that stands broken. This broken covenant with all the people is superseded with a new covenant of grace - an everlasting covenant that shall never be broken for it is sealed by the precious blood and the resurrection of Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer, our Shepherd who sits at the right hand of God the Father making intercession for the saints of His elect chosen ones whose names are written in the sealed Lamb's book of life. This new covenant of grace is based upon better promises of mercy through the loving kindness of God, of the immutability and eternal faithfulness of God to his promises, and of an effective government upon the shoulders of a risen Christ. With a staff of grace the Lord has fed and continues to "feed the flock of slaughter". I believe the staff called "Beauty" was cut asunder in the garden of Eden, that Adam did fall from a state of perfect righteousness that original sin should enter and a portion of Adam's posterity should be cut off and not be fed, Zech. 11: 9-11.

The mystery continues as to the second staff, called "Bands" and how the cutting asunder, verse 14, of it broke the brotherhood between Judah and Israel which were favored Hebrew

nations of God among men. The marginal reference of the Bible gives "Binders" as an equivalent of "Bands". It was noted above that in the mystical body of Christ, i.e., in the universal Church of God, separation from the love of God and schisms or divisions are impossible. Let us pray that God will give us understanding and wisdom in the application of "Bands" to the feeding of the flock of slaughter as it is scattered among the militant churches in this age of the gospel dispensation. Without an unbroken brotherhood can there be fellowship? Without an orderly and defined assembly of saints in church brotherhood can there be an effectual feeding of the flock by the preaching of doctrine alone? Does man live by bread alone? There is comfort as well as life in the feeding.

The 23rd Psalm of David reveals that the Lord has a "rod" and a "staff" that comforted him and that the Lord prepared a table for him in the presence of his enemies. A rod is symbolic in one sense of an office of authority and in a second sense of an instrument for discipline by punishment or chastisement. We know from civil life that disaster awaits anarchy. So, is there a relation between "Bands" and the "rod" of the 23rd Psalm?

Though it may seem a diversion from the subject at hand we have the report of Paul that the Lord "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of

Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;...", Eph. 4: 11-16.

In significant contrast, Paul also reports that "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues", 1 Cor. 12:28. Why the difference? God is not confused nor will his purpose(s) be frustrated. "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: ...", Eccl. 3:14. Our Father knoweth what his militant churches have need of and the promise is that through Christ Jesus he shall supply all our need, Matt. 6:8.

In comparison of these verses from Ephesians and 1st Corinthians one may see that God has provided for more than the work of the ministry for perfecting the saints and edifying of the body of Christ. It is to be noted that it is not one government or one help or one tongue but it is plural helps, plural governments and diversities of tongues that are set in the church. Furthermore, it seems significant that helps, governments and tongues are identified and listed separately from the ministerial offices of pastors (prophets) and teachers. It is to be recognized that the ministry of the

apostles stands complete, 1 Cor. 4:9; that the government of the Church (universal) of God is on the shoulder of Christ our Lord, our Priest, our King, and our Judge, Isa. 9:6; and that the Holy Ghost is our Teacher, John 14:26. In an application to militant churches and denominations, if any part of that which God has set be lacking due to omission through ignorance of God (see Hosea, Chapter 4) or through negligence, or lacking by dismissal by men as being unnecessary then how can such a militant church or denomination claim favour as a portion of the elect body of Christ? Will they come to the bridal chamber with essential elements missing as did the five foolish virgins? Is it a presumptuous sin to deny the need of helps, of governments, of teachers, and diversities of tongues in militant Baptist churches or do you, dear Reader believe their presence and role to be insignificant?

O praise the Lord for our heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him. His love and compassion works through the Holy Spirit to effect the miracles of rebirth and the healings of sick and sinful souls. Among the "Bands" by which brotherhood flourishes and is preserved are the helps and governments that have diversities of voices (tongues) active therein. But what are the characteristics and scope of the helps and governments that God hath set in the militant churches? Shall we pray for spiritual understanding and guidance in the matter of Bands that are acceptable unto God? For Jesus'

sake let us pray that God enable enlightened servants to do the work of evangelists by publishing for our better understanding adequate definitions of those helps and governments that are pleasing to God.

As I attempt this writing I feel a great inadequacy for the task which is great. Should I stumble, dear Reader, I hope that you can forgive my errors. We as poor worms of the dust cannot help God in the unfolding of his creation, in the exercising of his providential guidance and care, in the eternal salvation of lost sinners chosen from the beginning, etc. God helps (works) and men receive unmerited gifts and from time to time his adopted children receive well deserved chastisements. Saints will give thanks and all praise and honour to God for every blessing comes down from Him.

But there are helps set in the militant churches that are to be exercised by saints who have received the gift of faith which is the substance of their hope of eternal life. By these helps, as we have opportunity, we are to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.", Gal. 6:10. In the exercise of these helps "whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31, and let us not boast in our works for God will not give his glory to another, Is. 42:8. Helps set in the churches flow within and without the fold; they flow from brother to brother for they are to care one for another and bear one another's burdens; they flow from the members to maintain the pastor and officers who have the rule of the

church; They flow from the church to members that are afflicted, to the fatherless, and to the widows who are widows indeed; and, they flow among militant churches of like precious faith and persuasion. Thus there are a multitude of helps. There are spiritual helps and sacrifices and there are material helps that serve to glorify God.

Should we examine and prove ourselves as we are commanded to do, in what state or condition will we find our Primitive and Old School Baptist Churches? Will we discover a gift or unction (religious fervor) or a state of apathy? The Apostle has written "He which soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.", 2 Cor. 9:6. J.C. Philpot, a Strict Baptist of England has written that the pathway for the journey of God's children has the ditch of pride to one side and the ditch of despair to the other side. Without the guidance of our Lord where do you suppose our journey will end?

As examples related to helps in the churches what are your experiences and observations? Do the members share their burdens and care one for another or do they disappear between scheduled church services? Does the spirit of the Good Samaritan prevail or do we pass by on the other side when we see a dear member of a church of like faith in difficulty or in disorder, giving the excuse that it isn't our problem and we mustn't interfere or become involved even though the problem may bring reproach upon the good

name of our churches and denomination? It is reported, Acts 11:26-30, that the disciples at Antioch determined to send, according to their ability, relief to the brethren in Judea. Again, in Macedonia and in Thessalonica the Philippians sent necessities to Paul, Phil. 4:15-16. Are these examples repeated or commonplace in Baptist churches?

Are the churches prepared to provide relief to them that are widows indeed, 1 Tim. 5:16? Do our deacons generally understand that it is a function of their office to care for the needy and the widows, Acts 4: 35 and 6:1-6, and do they understand further that the examples of Stephen and Philip, Acts, Chapters 6-8, require them to assist the ministry in preaching? Let every "help" be acceptable and such as will glorify God.

But what about the material support of the Churches? "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day", Deut. 8:18. Ah, dear Reader, in addition to personal and ministerial helps, God has set material helps in the militant churches. How can the churches operate without hymnbooks to assist us in singing praises to His holy name, without bibles for searching the scriptures, indeed without highways and vehicles to enable face-to-face assembly of the saints, yea, and without money for heat and water and for making it all effectual? Though the forces of Satan shall despise the gospel and the saints,

nevertheless the militant churches must have a good report from without the camp. The properties of the churches must not bring ridicule or reproach, Luke 14: 27-30. The meetinghouses and grounds should be adequate, well kept and consistent with the communities in which they are placed. As a minimum "there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covering from storm and from rain", Isa. 4:6. The beauty of the house of the Lord is pleasing to God, Isa. 60:13, Ezra 7:27. To repair the house of the Lord will be right in his sight - read the full account of the procedure given in II Chron. 24, and again in II Kings 12 for the gathering of money for the repair of the house of the Lord, which act of Joash is reported as "right in the sight of the Lord". How many Primitive and Old School Baptist meetinghouses do you know of that exist in the need of beautification and repair? To sow sparingly is to reap sparingly! Let us pray that God will give us wisdom and understanding of his use of wealth, which he has given us power to get, in his establishment of his covenant.

And God has set governments (plural governments) in his church. For the universal (or catholic) Church the government is on the shoulder of our Lord Jesus who rules from the throne at the right hand of God, the Father. But what do we find among the militant Old School and Primitive Baptist churches? As we examine ourselves do we find effective governments?

We have from ages past the traditions of our fathers and assorted outlines of militant church governments, however as a denomination of the like believers Old Baptists lack a universally accepted constitution. Now at the end of this century one merely needs to observe the rampant confusion, disorder, disobedience and apathy that prevails. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so...", Jer. 5:31. "By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.", Eccl. 10:18. But the saints shall, each and all, reign on the earth for they are "unto God kings and priests," Rev. 5:10.

O woe are we! It is a fearful and treacherous task, if we haven't divine guidance in searching the recorded word of God, for an individual or any small group of individuals to define the form of the government set by God in the militant churches. For as there are false professors of religion, and false prophets (or preachers) so also there are false governments set by "the prince of this world" and "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience", Eph. 2:2 - that are set by none other than Satan "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it", Job 1:7. The soldiers of the cross will rejoice in the salvation of the Lord and they will set up their banners, Ps. 20:5. "... lift up a standard for the people." Isa. 62:10; "Set up the standard toward Zion...", Jer. 4:6; "Declare ye among the na-

tions, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not...", Jer. 50:2; and "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations...", Jer. 51:27. So the task falls upon Old Baptists to prepare and publish a document setting forth in unambiguous terms detailed provisions for the government(s) of the denomination!

The task requires knowledge, understanding, and wisdom - gifts to be received in God's time and according to his purpose. From the prophet Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." From the proverbs of Solomon: "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." Prov. 29:18; "Where no counsel is the people fall: but in a multitude of counsellors there is safety.", Prov. 11:14; and "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in a multitude of counsellors they are established.", Prov. 15:22. Beloved Readers, may the good Lord bless you and move you to counsel one with another that the purposes of Old Baptist churches be established in a manner that shall glorify God's attributes of Love, Mercy, and Compassion, that the churches may escape His displeasure and prosper, Rev. 2. In contrast to the safety that is to be had in a multitude of counsellors, inspired of the Holy Spirit, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.", Prov. 12:15 (See Luke 18:11). Also,

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts,” Prov. 21:2 and 16:2. The Lord has commanded otherwise: “Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man Whatsoever is right in his own eyes.”, Deut. 12:8. A prior chapter reads thus: “And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers.”, Deut. 6:18. Thus if purposes are to be established multitudes of counsellors are essential among the governments that God has set in his church, for as individuals we are prone to err, rebellion, and frequent backsliding.

One may observe some congregations where the membership seems to place the entire burden of church government upon their pastor who may in some cases come to believe that is his sole privilege: then there are other cases where deacons believe that privilege is theirs. Certainly such practice is inconsistent with establishing purposes by the actions of a multitude of counsellors.

Once there was a man of great ability and competence called of God to lead his people out of bondage. This man, for a time, sat alone in judgment of the peoples' matters from morning unto evening. His father-in-law told him “Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and the people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.” And, “Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men,

such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over the, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, ruler of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons:.... and they shall bear the burden with thee....,” Ex. 18: 13-26.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.”, Num. 11:16-17. “Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.”, Deut. 16:18. (See also 2 Chron. 19:5-10, Rom. 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-6; Is. 1:26)

As you know, after the death of Moses the mantle fell upon Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel.”, Josh. 24:31. And so the elders of the people sat at the gates of the cities to rule upon the matters of the people. We read of Boaz, Ruth, Chapter 4, approaching the elders at the gate to purchase and redeem the inheritance.

It is apparent that representative forms of governments were set by

God in the early congregation. These governments were of the people, by the people and for the people: governments for the smallest of communities, governments for cities, governments for tribes, and a government for Israel. The rulers were elders of the people - not of the priesthood. After the deaths of Joshua and the elders that overlived him the people of Israel forsook God and followed gods of the peoples round about them. The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers and enemies, nevertheless the Lord raised up a number of judges to deliver Israel from the spoilers and enemies, yet the children of Israel continued whoring after other gods (read Judges, Chapter 2, etc.). "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes", Judges 21:25. Ah, dear reader, did not the Lord command "And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the Lord hath spoken.", Deut. 6:18-19. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments", John 14:15.

Perhaps you may question - What does this have to do with the government of the militant church in the age of the gospel dispensation? Let us recall 2 Tim. 3:16, Rom. 15:4 mentioned above herein. Contrary to popular belief that the church dates from the day of Pentecost, Stephen in an-

swering the accusation of blasphemy declared, Acts 7:38, "This is he (Moses), that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:" (note Rev. 12:6, 14).

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, do you or your church believe your pastor to be more capable than Moses, that you may cast the burden of judgement of the multitude of small matters that arise in the affairs of today's church upon him? Pastor, do you presume your mission in the ministry includes autocratic rule - that you may do that which seems right in your own eyes and thus be lord over God's heritage?

Again from the old scriptures, during a period of repentance the Lord raised up Samuel who judged Israel all the days of his life, 1 Sam. 7:15. When Samuel was old he made his sons judges over Israel but they turned aside for lucre. All the elders of Israel (pride having entered) demanded of Samuel, "now make us a king to judge us like all the nations", 1 Sam. 8:5. The people had rejected the Lord that he "should not reign over them", verse 7. They refused to obey the protest given by the voice of Samuel, verse 19. And so, as you know the Lord directed Samuel to anoint Saul, a man that "was higher than any of the people" as king over all Israel, 1 Sam. 10:23. As king, Saul did foolishly having failed to keep the commandment of the Lord then offering a sacrifice as an afterthought. But to obey is better than sacrifice. Saul rejected the word

of the Lord and the Lord rejected Saul from being king over Israel. The Lord sought a man after his own heart. He made David king with an everlasting covenant to establish his throne in his seed to all generations, 2 Sam. 7:13, 23:5 and Ps. 89:3-4 and 28-37.

The throne of David passed to Solomon, his son of Bathsheba, who desired of God "an understanding heart to judge the people, that I may discern between good and bad". The Lord was pleased and a great gift of wisdom was given of God along with riches and honour that there should be no king like unto Solomon, 1 Kin. 3:9-13. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. The heart of Solomon was turned from the Lord when he was old. He had taken many strange wives who turned his heart after other gods for whom he built high places where his wives burnt incense and sacrificed to their gods. Now the Lord was angry with Solomon, 1 Kings 11, because he had not kept the covenant and statutes as commanded. The Lord said to Solomon, "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen", verses 11:13.

Among the adversaries that the Lord raised to oppose Solomon was Jeroboam, a mighty man of valor, which Solomon made ruler over the

house of Joseph. Ahijah prophesied that Jeroboam would be given a kingdom over ten tribes of Israel therefore Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam fled to Egypt until the death of Solomon and Rehoboam reigned in Solomon's stead. It came to pass that all Israel, bringing Jeroboam as a spokesman, came before Rehoboam to request "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." Rehoboam consulted the old men, the elders, that served Solomon while he yet lived as to how he should answer Israel. The elders advised him "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever." But Rehoboam had sent Israel away to return after three days. Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders and went instead (in today's parlance) to his pals - the young men that grew up with him. When the people returned the third day Rehoboam answered the people roughly following the counsel of the young men, saying "My father made your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men and would not listen to the cries of the people for the cause was of the Lord so that his promise to Solomon and the prophesy of Ahijah unto Jeroboam might be fulfilled. (Have we forgotten the promise to Abraham that he should be the father of many nations?)

When the people heard the saying of Rehoboam ten tribes of Israel rebelled against the house of David. The tax collector sent by Rehoboam was stoned that he died. Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem where he reigned over the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Jeroboam was called to the congregation and was made king over all Israel. This was the beginning of a separation of the Hebrew peoples into two nations, i.e., the house of Judah and the house of Israel. Now Rehoboam, upon reaching Jerusalem assembled the warriors of Judah and Benjamin to fight against Israel to restore the kingdom but the Lord intervened, "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me."

The bulk of the peoples of the house of Israel lived to the north in the area of Samaria. Jeroboam, fearful that the people might return to Jerusalem to sacrifice in the house of the Lord and turn again to Rehoboam, made two calves of gold for gods which the people did worship. He made priests of the lowest of the people which were not of the sons of Levi and a house of high places. At a later time in the history of the Hebrew peoples these ten tribes of the nation of Israel were carried into captivity by the Assyrian nation from whence they were scattered to the north and west. For the report of the breaking of brotherhood read all of Chapter 12 of the book of 1st Kings.

The Lord cut asunder his staff, called Bands, that he might break the broth-

erhood between Judah and Israel. From the history of this great division in the Lord's chosen people, are the "Bands" that unify the brethren and make impossible schisms in the Church of God revealed to us? Perhaps there are many bands that have been or will yet be revealed to the saints. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.", Isa. 33:20.

Dear brothers and sisters of the faith, may I offer for your consideration at least the following three bands which may be cut asunder to break our brotherhood in the militant church. First, there is the cord, or band, of charity which is the love of God that is spread abroad among the saints by which they are knit together rooted and built up in Christ to share one another's burdens and provide the "helps" that God hath set in his church. I believe the cord of love was cut asunder that the Lord might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel for there was enmity between Solomon and Jeroboam, between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, and between the children of Israel and the children of Judah. I further believe that in the days of the gospel dispensation every breach in our brotherhood is accompanied by the cutting asunder the cord of love and though professors of religion may continue to proclaim with the tongue and voice their love for the brethren

their walk and their deeds discover them, 1 John 3:18.

Second, I offer for consideration the cord of faith, which is the gift of God to the saints, given from time-to-time as needed, that they believe in the resurrection and the power of the redeeming blood of a crucified Jesus for salvation and eternal life; a faith to believe and worship only the true and living God, a Triune God; a faith that brings repentance and cries for mercy when the saint is left to his own lust to be tried by fire, 1 Pet. 1:7, and is taught by the law that he is a sinner; a faith that is capable of seeing the spirit of Christ dwelling within each brother and sister upon which fellowship and brotherhood flourishes. In the breaking of the brotherhood between Judah and Israel I believe the band of faith was cut asunder as when left to their own lusts both Solomon and Jeroboam worshiped false gods without evidence of repentance.

A third cord offered for your consideration as a "Band" effecting brotherhood of the saints in the militant church is the governments that God has set in the church. Governments provide the rod of discipline, which is not grievous to them that obey, which establishes and maintains order so that members of the assembly are assured of righteous judgment and comfort. Effective governments are like fetters in that they restrain men left to their own lusts from wicked practices, see Psa., chapter 2. Was the government of the Hebrew nation cut asunder for the breaking of the brotherhood between Judah and Is-

rael? I believe the government was cut asunder. Rehoboam rejected the legitimate counsel of the Old men who had proper credentials as elders of the people, having served Solomon, his father. Instead Rehoboam sought counsel of novices, young men who had no standing in governing the congregation of Israel. Rehoboam refused to hear and righteously judge the appeals of the people. The cutting asunder of the government was further compounded by the rebellion of the ten tribes that rejected the authority of the throne of David to kill the tax collector and to establish a separate government under Jeroboam. Disorder prevailed in the congregation.

These bands: charity or brotherly love, God given faith, and unambiguous effective government form a three-fold cord that if present in the militant churches and denomination they shall be most difficult to break. We can be confident that in the true Church of God it is impossible to break God's love for his little chosen ones, to break his faith for He is the source of all faith, or to break His government which rests on the shoulder of Jesus - the eternal Son of God. But man was made only in the image of God. We are not gods by nature children of wrath even as others. Likewise, I believe the militant church can be no more than an image of the true Church of God and thus an imperfect body for if the "tools" of men touch it we shall surely pollute it.

Regarding this great division between Israel and Judah, perhaps you

may have noticed the word of the Lord in 1st Kings, Chapter 12, verse 24, sent to the house of Judah, etc., "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me." God had a purpose in the breaking the brotherhood and this division. This division was required that prophesy might be fulfilled and that God might be true to his promises. God had promised Abraham, Gen. 17:4 that he had made him the "father of many nations" and that he "will make thee exceeding fruitful." So Abraham was not to be the father of one nation called Israel but of many nations. Thus it was necessary that there must be first two nations called, the house of Judah comprising the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and a remnant, and the house of Israel comprising the twin tribes of Joseph (Ephriam and Manasseh) and the remaining nine tribes of the sons of Jacob. The identity of these ten tribes of Israel had to be "lost" from the knowledge of mankind but never from God for a thousand years later Jesus sent the twelve apostles "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Matt. 10:6. The nation of Israel was carried captive and made slaves by the Assyrians from whence they were scattered to the "north" and "west" and to the isles of the sea," that is, throughout the continent of Europe.

Significant today in the militant church as in ages past are the words of the Lord given through Jeremiah 10:19-25, wherein he has said "For the pastors are become brutish and

have not sought the Lord: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered". (the dictionary gives the definition of brutish as irrational, stupid, or gross.) Yes, we know from history, it has been and continues to be the brutishness of kings, popes, and indeed ordinary pastors that scatter the flocks. Most notable were the religious wars and persecutions of the middle ages that led to vast migrations of peoples out of Europe in the 17th-19th centuries to colonize the continents of the Western Hemisphere, Australia, and to a lesser extent Africa. Thus the seed of Abraham and Jacob, Gen. 22:17 and 32:12 that were promised to be as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude are found scattered throughout the earth and the gospel is preached not so much by missionaries trying to convert heathen as by the plantings of God of his people within every kindred, nation, and tongue.

In the militant church God does have a purpose, which may not be understood by carnal men, for the breaking of brotherhood and divisions. He has created the wicked for the day of evil. He sends the waster to destroy. God requireth that which is past, Eccl. 3:15. For a breaking of brotherhood there must have first been a unity in the belief and understanding of the doctrine of the gospel and a fellowship of brotherly love among the saints. To "let brotherly love continue" assumes that it did previously exist. The saints of the militant church must not be "unequally yoked with unbelievers:

for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?", 2 Cor. 6:14.

Our beloved Saviour, Jesus, has said, Matt. 18:7, "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe unto that man by whom the offense cometh!", (See also Luke 17:1-2). In the letter of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 11:18-19, "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Dear reader, does Paul's explanation comfort you and satisfy every occasion? Just perhaps as we view ourselves approved we might have the mote in our own eyes. We should take note, of course, that the word Paul uses is "approved" and not "saved", which we shall not know in this life. The brethren are admonished by Paul, Rom. 16:17-18, to "mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

From time-to-time there are men, often sincere, who attempt a reversal of the breaking of the brotherhood and bring about a reconciliation to repair the militant church or the denomination. Prior to a division and the breaking of the brotherhood such effort is commendable for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there

is no law, Gal. 5:22-23. And "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.", Gal. 6:1. But however, if the division and the breaking of brotherhood has been consummated and the church or denomination is rent asunder then prudence which is the companion of Wisdom suggests that "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him," Eccl. 3:14. And let us remember the words of the Lord sent to the house of Judah which desired to reunite the twelve tribes by force that "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me," 1st Kings 12:24. Paul has admonished us to redeem the time. In the words of Jesus, Matt. 15:13-14, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

Dear brothers, dear sisters, if it is God's will to turn a division about, it shall be turned. For at least 100 years there have been sincere men among Primitive and Old Baptists who have sought to repair the breaches among the factions claiming the name, yet without success to date. Though grievous and painful as it may be, it is with much prayer and supplication that we must wait upon the Lord for it is he alone that can heal a broken fellow-

ship and restore brotherhood. We might do well to read again the book of Lamentations where Jeremiah prays, at 5:21, "Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.

Jesus has promised to send a Comforter. The saints shall be comforted and shall rejoice as "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose", Rom. 8:28. (I believe also that all things and events work to the glory of God, his glory that he will not give to another, Is. 42:8) May we ever be thankful to Him and pray that he will lead us in pathways that are pleasing to him and that will glorify his attributes of love, tender mercies, and compassion and deliver us from behaviour that glorifies his wrath and vengeance.

Dear brothers and sisters of the faith in Christ please understand that this has been written that it might encourage the saints to study the scriptures that my errors may be found and that some enlightened ones of the flock may witness those things that have been revealed to them so that we may all be edified. It has been written with much hesitation and fear for I know nothing as I ought, except that I know myself to be the chief of sinners and fear, as Paul, that indeed I may be a castaway. If the Lord so wills pray for me.

In hope that I am one of the flock,
 Eugene F. Osborne, Sr.
 3000 Old Taneytown Rd.
 Westminster, Md. 21158

PSALM 110.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

CONTRIBUTIONS

- Ms. Earnestine Sharp, LA \$7.00
- Walter Griffith, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Mary Stanfield, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Lillian Wood, NC 2.00
- William E. Mitchell, VA 2.00
- Julian Ray, NC 2.00
- A.J. Griffin, AL 5.00
- Mrs. Marta Coleman, KY 10.00
- Mrs. H.R. Toney, MS
- In memory of Eld. G.W. Jones . 50.00
- Larry Gibson, NC 7.00
- Mrs. Minnie Barrett, AL 2.00
- Gladsten Newman, TN 2.00
- Mrs. Margaret Quesenberry, VA. 2.00
- Mrs. B.T. Hollandsworth, VA 3.00

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEDICATION

Valley View Primitive Baptist Church will hold a special all day dedication service on Saturday September 17th with singing at 9:30 a.m. and services beginning at 10:00 a.m. An invitation is extended to all ministers, members and friends of other churches of our faith and order to attend the dedication. From Roanoke take Interstate 81 South then take Exit 114 Christiansburg turn left

to Riner on Route 8 then about 5.5 miles turn left on Rustic Ridge Road then right on Valley View Church Road. From Bristol take Interstate 81 North then take Exit 114 turn right and follow same directions to Riner as 81 South.

Elder Raymond Goad, Moderator
 Vance Duncan, Deacon
 Donald Agee, Deacon
 Members of Valley View

VALLEY VIEW PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

MEETINGS

3604 Blackberry Lane
 Northport, Al. 35476

Dear Elder Key,



For several reasons the Buttahatchie and Hopewell Associations will meet together. Would you please put this announcement in the Signs.

“The merged Buttahatchie - Hopewell Association will be held at Zion Church October 14, 15, & 16, 1994. Zion Church is North of Gordo, Al. just off Pickens County Highway 59.”

Charles P. Hayes,
 Moderator Buttahatchie Association
 Kenneth Evans,
 Moderator Hopewell Association

CONTENTNEA PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the next session of the Contentnea Primitive Baptist Association will be held with Goose Creek Island Primitive Baptist Church, Lowland, North Carolina on October 8-9, 1994. All who believe and love the doctrine of salvation by grace are invited.

The Church is located in Pamlico County. From the Greenville area, take NC 33 East to Hobucken, cross the draw bridge, travel 0.7 miles and turn left on Lowland Road SR1230. Travel 3.5 miles and turn right on Middle Prong Road SR1231. The Church is on the right.

**Gene Lupton,
Association Clerk**

We invite all who believe that salvation is by the grace of God to come and be with us.

**M.W. Lupton,
Association Clerk**

SOUTH OUACHITA ASSOCIATION

The South Ouachita Association will be held, the Lord willing, on Saturday and Sunday, September 24, & 25, 1994.

The meeting, sponsored by Rehobeth Church, will be held at New Hope Church, located at Spearsville, La. All lovers of the truth are invited to come and be with us.

**Ned Barron,
Association Clerk
(318) 778-4217**

EASTERN KEHUKEE ASSOCIATION

God willing the Eastern Kehukee Association will convene with Flat Swamp Church on Saturday the 1st of October and continue on through Sunday October 2nd. Service will begin at 10:30 on Saturday and 11:00 on Sunday. The church is located on Package Craft Road off Rt. 11 in Bethel, N.C. For those traveling North toward Bethel on Rt. 11 go right on Package Craft Road just past F&D Ford Motor Truck lot. For those traveling South on Rt. 11, turn left on Package Craft Road just before F&D Ford Motor Truck lot. The church is about 4.5 miles on the left hand side.

SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Smith River Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Knob Church the first Sunday in September and Friday and Saturday before.

Those coming from the North on 220 exit right on route 605. Those coming from the South on 220 exit to the left on route 605. Follow route 605 to state route 798 and turn left to the church.

All lovers of the truth of our faith and order are invited.

Elder Hale Terry

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

" The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon "

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., OCTOBER 1994

NO. 10

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

HIS SAVING GRACE by Charles B. Osborne

***His saving grace! His saving
grace!
By love of God to men;
Though they'll not run a perfect
race
And have their guilt in sin.***

***By saving grace he chose his
own,
A remnant to the end;
The born again - their sins con-
done -
Their life in Christ defend.***

***Their names are written in his
book,
The Lamb's own book of life;
And may his truth be not for-
sook
By thoughts of fear or strife.***

***No boast of works, but God of
love
Can ever enter in;
No salvation but from above,
His saving grace to win.***

***O, praise him for his saving
grace,
Ye children here below;
O, come, dear souls, and run
your race,
Your God does love you so.***

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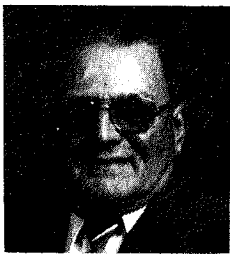
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EDITORIAL

GOD'S PLAN



ELDER C.B. DAVIS, JR.

In the beginning of the writing of St. John, first chapter, read thus: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was*

with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shined in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Then we go to the beginning of the Book, which possibly I should have read first, and we find virtually the same language. The time of creation. *"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. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day and the darkness He called Night and the evening and the morning were the first day."*

As I mentioned a few moments ago that my thoughts this morning, and I trust that they are worthy, I think of all that God created and all of the work that He accomplished, not only through Himself but through Christ, His Son, and I want to call it a "Plan."

The word, Plan, is not in the Bible. But it is a plan. God had a plan for everything that He did, no matter what it was. The world would deny that He planned hell as well as heaven, but He did. He planned hell for the wicked and He said that they were made for the day of evil. He said they have their reward already here on earth. They delight in the things of the world, in riches, and so on. So they already have their heaven. There is no heaven awaiting them. But as we think of the plan of God and how it was perfect in every sense of the word; How He made the earth and the moon and the sun and the stars and He placed them

in their orbit and they exist today just as He placed them. The wonder that I have beheld, and many of you have, in His creation is to think that He filled the seas with water and He set those seas in motion and they run in waves, as we use the terms of the beaches of the world today, just as they did when He started it so. That He divided the Day from Night and He gave us the sun as the light of the day and the warmth thereof and He called it the greater light.

The lesser light he called the moon and the moon has no glory of its own. It is indeed a borrowed light. It borrows its light from the sun. If we have any light that attains unto love of God unto salvation, it is borrowed. It is borrowed from Christ. He loans it to us through this time world. We have access to it by the Grace of God and it is what causes us to cling tenaciously to the truth and to the gospel, knowing that it has merit, knowing that it is sustenance for a hell deserving sinner when we come into the knowledge of the condition that we are in.

God had a plan when He grieved at his heart that He had made man and placed him in the Garden of Eden and he, in essence, became a disappointment. Don't misunderstand me. God knew what would take place. God knew that Adam and Eve would transgress, or He knew that Eve would transgress. The scripture relates that Adam was not deceived, but rather Eve was. For He used the expression when he admonished them about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, He said "*In the day thou eatest thereof*

of the fruit, thou shalt surely die." He didn't say "*if you eat of that fruit.*" He said, "*In the day that thou eatest thereof.*" So His wisdom caused Him to know and that was a part of His plan, because without the transgression in the Garden of Eden there would have been no need for our Saviour to come. Think what a condition we would be in today had Christ not come and suffered and bled and died on Calvary's Cross to cleanse us eternally from the scourge of sin that began in the Garden of Eden.

God had a plan to fulfill His wrath because of the wickedness of man and to bring about the destruction of all things on earth that breathed air. He had a plan and He gave that plan to Noah, because Noah was a part of the eternal plan of salvation. He was, in essence, typical of the very person of Christ, because he performed the work that God gave him to do. God gave him an architectural plan, if we might use that term. There are those of you brethren this morning who have worked in the construction business, and you know you need a plan. You need something that is devised that you know what direction to turn and what to use and how to accomplish that which is necessary to fulfill the plan. God gave that plan to Noah. There is nothing in the scriptures that ever refers to any document being drawn up, but He gave it to him in his mind and in his heart.

If we are what we hope to be this morning, we are a part of His eternal plan of salvation through Jesus Christ and we don't have a document except

this Book that we can read that clarifies that plan on our behalf. But He has taught us in our mind and our heart and the very depths of our beings that indeed in some marvelous way we are part of His plan of salvation. As you know, He destroyed all living creatures on the face of the earth that breathed air. And yet He had a plan of compassion, a plan of mercy, a plan of love and because Noah had been found devout in the beginning, and had found favor in the sight of the Lord, so the scripture says; let's not relate how he found favor, but the favor came through the person of Jesus Christ in the covenant that was made between God and His Son Christ before He made the earth and the heavens thereof. A part of that plan, that eternal plan! But we find He had compassion upon mankind and He commanded Noah and his descendants to go out and replenish the earth.

We find that He had a plan for Moses and Moses was carnal, as are we, and when He expressed His plan to Moses that he must go down into Egypt to save His people from the bond of slavery, Moses began to, in essence, complain. He said, "I am slow of speech and stammering tongue. I can't go down there." But God's plan is forever. Man does not change it, though man, now today the world over, is striving to change the plan of salvation. Ofttimes we hear over the radio and we read in the newspapers of the great and magnificent works that man is performing and that God is going to reward him greatly or her greatly be-

cause of what they have done. I can say to you that the reward in this time world, as far as salvation is concerned, is the gift of Grace that brings us into the knowledge of His perfect plan and gives us to believe and trust by faith that we are a part thereof. We find here something that is symbolic with the inner spirit that we have, that God has touched, that new birth that He expressed to Nicodemus, because that spirit that is within belongs to God. It is the only thing about us that is perfect, so God told Moses not to be concerned with his weakness, (He has told us that also, our weakness in nature) not to be concerned about that weakness and about his affliction. He said, "*I will send Aaron with you and he'll be a mouth-piece.*" Aaron typifies the spirit. If we go to church or we go anywhere else and if any minister stands up and he tries to get away from the fact that the only thing that can give him any utterance that is worthy is that spirit that God has given him to go with him, or if you have assembled here this morning and He has not given you the spirit of unction and love to come, you may as well be on the lake fishing. That sounds like a strong statement but that's the truth, My Beloved. But that's not His plan that it be thus. So you are here according to His plan.

He had a plan also for David. And David didn't realize that, just as we in our time don't realize what His plan is. We are not blessed to see it until He makes it manifest. David started out as a young individual, a keeper of the sheep, which is symbolic of being a

type of Christ or a minister to the Church, a part of God's plan. In time he became a saviour for Israel. He walked out to meet this giant of a man with the most primitive weapon known at that time, a sling and a stone, symbolic of Grace. The only weapon that we have that will subdue satan (and that is what is under consideration there) is Grace. And except God's plan has already won the battle for us, it is a futile battle.

We can't of our own power overcome the wiles of satan. Let us remember that in the beginning of the Book, God Himself said that he is the most subtle of all the beasts of the fields, meaning that his conniving ways are considered the wisest and that he knew where to go to bring about the transgression. He went to Eve because she was made of the flesh of Adam. He knew the flesh was weak. He didn't go to Adam, because Adam was a spiritual individual. Let us remember what the scripture says and that is God's plan. The first man Adam was of the earth, an earthy creature and the second man Adam, a quickening spirit. So he didn't approach Adam. He approached the flesh and that is what he comes to time and time again. And except God has made the plan that we can stand steadfastly against the powers of satan, we stand no chance whatsoever. Oh, I know the world would tell you, "Oh, you have a chance. All you have got to do is make a decision. Just make a decision that you want to be a Christian and that is all that it takes." There are multitudes in that condition because they don't

understand that the plan of God is to save His people. And those of the world are not known unto him in the spiritual sense because even in the end, when He said, "*Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you,*" He knew them as creatures of the earth just as He has known us as creatures of the earth, but according to His marvelous plan, He has known something else about us and that is the spiritual man. That is the spiritual man that shall stand justified around the throne.

Last night, and I wouldn't attempt to improve upon what Elder Brumfield said, but last night, as he spoke, he spoke of the experience of Lazarus and of that rich man in the depth of hell and how the rich man looked over that great gulf and he beheld Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham and how this man in his urgency of thought, because of the condition he was in and the eternal fire of hell, he cried out that he had five brothers and he wanted somebody to go and warn those brothers lest they fall into the same condemnation that he himself had fallen into. We talked about that after we went to his home. I feel that those five brothers are the five books of the law, because he had trusted in those five books. He had trusted in the law. He had trusted in nothing else. Therefore, he was not of the eternal plan of salvation. You will remember that even Abraham said, "*There is betwixt us and thee that great gulf between which we cannot come to thee and thou cannot come to us.*" He was begging for just a dip of a finger in

cool water to touch his tongue. Think of what a condition he was in and one reason I believe his five brothers were the five books of the law, when you go to the Book of Revelation, you will find there that when the books were opened (It's plural. It doesn't say how many, but I believe there are five. I think they are the five books of the law there at that throne.) When those books were opened, those who are of the world their names are read from those books of whatsoever they have done and they are judged out of those books by their deeds. And God says to them, *"Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity"* and so on, and they are cast into the burning lake of fire and the books are cast into the burning lake of fire.

But there is another Book that was devised in the mind and according to the will and purpose of God and that Book is the Book of the Lamb, the Book of Life, and it is sealed. It was sealed a long, long time ago. Christ, with the indelible blood of Himself, wrote the names in the Lamb's Book of Life, and when He breathed out His last breath on the cross and said, *"It is finished"* that book was sealed, never to be opened until such time that it is opened in the climes of glory. Those whose names are read from the Lamb's Book of Life stand justified in the sight of God. John writes on the same occasion, that those whose names are read from the books stand as dead men around the throne. We shall stand alive as living spirits. They stood as dead individuals never hav-

ing their spirit awakened, never experiencing a new birth.

We think again as we think of a plan of God and how, as I touched upon David a moment ago and then my thoughts seemed to wander, as you know that in due course in time, that David became a murderer. He became a very wicked man, and yet he must be preserved because God's plan was that Jesus would come through the House of David. The prophets wrote about it. Isaiah, especially, mentioned many times the coming of Jesus through the House of David. And David had to be preserved even though the world would say, *"There was no justification in him being preserved and he was not justified, even to be a part thereof because of his wicked and evil deeds."* But God told him, because of what he had done -- that he had Uriah slain in order that he might take Bethsheba for his wife -- God told him, *"That sword is going to remain in your house forever."* What God was telling him was that He also had a plan of wrath, and He has that plan of wrath today, and He was going to pour out that wrath upon the family of David, and He did. David saw murder within his own home, rape, incest. Most anything you can think of, he witnessed it in his own children, his own family. Yet he must be preserved in keeping with that eternal plan that God so arranged before time was, because he was a part of that covenant of love that He made with Christ. And as you know, had David been slain, had God dealt with him as the case was with others, as it

was with Cain, had David been banished never again to have any part in that, where would that have left us, because Boaz was a descendant of David. So coming through that house must be Jesus Christ. Do you see the eternity of these plans that God had made before the foundation of the world?

There are those things that we have become a part of, not because we are worthy, not because of something that we have done or our ancestors have done. Somebody said to me one time, "I believe you became a member of the Old Baptist Church because your grandfather and your great-grandfather were." I said, "I became a member in spite of what they were." Paul wrote, *"By the grace of God, I am what I am."* That's the only thing I feel that can justify me, if truly I'm justified; if I'm a part of that plan of justification, it has come about by the Grace of God. There is no other way, My Beloved.

The world has many different ways. The world has many different plans, many avenues they say that lead to salvation. But our God writes through the hand and mind in the gospel, "that the way is straight and narrow and few be they that find it." That's the way of eternal life; that's the way to stand justified before the throne of God. The other way is easy to find. "Broad is the road that leads to death" and so on.

So God has a plan. He has had from the very beginning. And each act along the way, the acts of the priests, that deliverance of Jacob and Esau that expresses the two nations, again the

just and the unjust, the birth of Isaac and Ishmael, still touches upon the just and unjust.

We go back to the beginning of the Book, God speaking a plan to the serpent after he had beguiled, as it were, Eve, He said, *"I will put enmity between her seed and thy seed and it shalt bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel,"* talking about mankind. And we can find that they were a part of a plan, and you can go through the scriptures and there are several references made to that very thing.

When Christ was assembled with those disciples and the preparation was made to partake of the last supper, Christ Himself said, "My own familiar friend has lifted his heel against me." This was an expression of that plan that the time was at hand when He Himself would be tried to the utmost extent and that though Judas, I am sure, didn't know at that time that he would be the individual that would have a part in the betrayal of Christ, and then here is the part of the plan that is hard to understand. I am not supposed to understand it. In the old dispensation the priest was considered one of the most important individuals as far as religion was concerned. Christ had not come. The church had not been established. Baptism was not an ordinance. It was the duty of the priest to admonish Israel and to make sacrifices daily on the alter for those who had committed some sin. So they were indeed considered the greatest, as far as religion was concerned, but have you ever

considered the thought of God's plan, that when the agreement was made between an individual and another person to betray the person of Christ to his captors that he went to the high priest. When Judas bargained for the price that would be paid, the price was agreed upon by the priest, the high priest. Think about that! But this was a part of God's plan. When Christ said to those disciples (this is the essence of the scriptures), "*That one among you shall betray me,*" they began to question each other and themselves, "*Is it I?*" They asked Christ Himself, "*Am I the one?*" He said, "*It is whom I will dip with*" and He dipped and He gave to Judas and the scripture relates that instantly satan entered into his heart. I don't believe until that moment that Judas knew that he would be the one to betray Christ. God's plan!

We find that Pilate and Herod were the two who had power to reign over those things that might be called the necessities of law and order. And so Christ was carried to them. Pilate could find no fault and he said so, but the cry was by the people to crucify Christ. Pilate sent Him back to Herod and Herod didn't want to have anything to do with the situation but he agreed that He would be stripped of His clothes in the judgment hall and be whipped with the Roman whip. Then He sent Him back to Pilate and Pilate still could find no fault. He said, "*I find no fault with the man. He has done nothing amiss unto death.*" But God's plan must be fulfilled, so He was turned over to those who would

place Him upon the cross and crucify Him. But there is something about what Pilate did on that occasion, when he wrote an inscription on a slab of wood and placed it over the head of Christ on that Cross and it said, "*This is Jesus Christ, King of the Jews.*" He was reprimanded because he had written this, one said you should have never put that there. And he said, "*What I have written, I have written,*" and so it stayed. That was a part of God's plan.

We also find that being a part of His plan, we can see that in evidence today in mankind. Pilate and Herod had been enemies from the very beginning. I mean great enemies, great battles had been fought between the armies of the two individuals, but in the coming together in the condemnation of Jesus Christ, the scripture says they were made friends, made friends! A part of that eternal plan!

I've witnessed a few times the evidence of this. That there are individuals who oftentimes have no use for each other, but God begins to work within their hearts and their minds and in due course of time, you see them embrace in the aisles of a meeting house. Because of their condition of sin and the fulfillment of God's plan, they have become friends. They have become friends in grace, friends in salvation, friends in hope and faith. I witnessed some few years ago the coming back to the house of an individual who had caused a problem in a church down in our area. When she was brought before the church and the charge was read, she called the

clerk a liar and they excluded her. About 20 years later I was present when she came back. She said, "All these years God has whipped me." She said, "*I had to come back. I don't want to spend the rest of my days and die in this condition.*" They accepted her back and she and the clerk of that church embraced in front of the book board. My beloved, God can make peace. He has the plan of peace and He has a plan of wrath.

He can make peace regardless of what man says or thinks, and yet I am appalled at some of the circumstances that are taking place in this nation today, and the world over, to some extent. On the Continent of Asia there has never been peace. Think about it. Go back to this Book. It began in the Garden of Eden; started with Cain and Abel; Ishmael and Isaac; Jacob and Esau; there is no end to that enmity that God placed between the serpent and Eve. It existed all the way to the last act when Christ would die on the cross. That brought an end to that enmity. But there are those who are the leaders of this nation and other nations of the world who think they have a plan. They have a plan that by sending soldiers over there and loads of money over there and loads of food over there and missionaries over there, that they are going to make peace on the Continent of Asia, but I feel I can tell you of a sure truth, that it's absolutely impossible. Don't misunderstand me. God can make peace over there this instant if He wants it over there, but it hasn't been His will so far.

It hasn't been a part of His plan to have peace on the Continent of Asia since the beginning of time.

There shall be peace in the climes of glory. It is the only peace that we shall ever know. I am talking about absolute peace. Christ said, "*My peace I give unto thee, My peace I will give, not as the world giveth, giveth I to thee*" and so on. That is peace of soul, peace of spirit, and it is the only peace we have here because life indeed is perplexing (I don't know the term to use) but it is indeed a plague, so to speak, with what we have to put up with, not only of ourselves, but of the world. So it is a perplexing situation to go through life and think how much more so it would be if we had not been blessed by the Grace of God to know what we are by nature and what we must be by Grace and that we have been a part of the plan that has brought that about.

So we thank God that indeed through His loving kindness and tender mercy, we became a part of His plan of salvation and justification and so on. But we think of the futile efforts of mankind since the very beginning of time. There were those early who wanted to work themselves into favor with God, but God's plan was that the favor had already been there through the person of Jesus Christ. That is why Noah was considered a devout man, and many others in the scripture.

The time of pentecost, in the days of Paul, when Israel was admonished to seek out (I believe is the wording) or choose from among you seven men,

full of the Holy Ghost and the Spirit, devout individuals and to set them apart as deacons. They were the first deacons in the church. To set them apart to perform the work of deacons and those deacons were given the liberty in the same sense that ministers today are given a liberty. Go back and read it, it is in the Book. They went about preaching and healing, raising the dead, healing those who were lame from birth, those who were blind and so on. And if you go to Hassell's History, you will find recorded there by those most eminent men, as far as gospel truth is concerned, that deacons in years past were instructed to administer all of the ordinances of the True Church of God. It made no difference, they were to preach, they were to baptize, whatever became necessary. When there was not a minister present, they were instructed to administer those things themselves. So God had a plan, working it through Paul.

And let us always, in our minds, be mindful of the plan that Paul had, a plan similar to Jonah, that he was going to go his own way. God had a plan with Jonah. Jonah said, "*I am not going to Nineveh, over there with those wicked people.*" He didn't think it would be any use to go and preach to those individuals that he knew were so sinful and wicked. And I can see him in my mind's eye, going down to a dock and making his way to get on a ship and going his own way, and thus we are in the same state that Jonah was. We begin to feel, "*just*

cast me aside. Let anything happen that will, I am guilty." But God has a plan to forgive that guilt through the person of Jesus Christ.

Paul had a plan that he thought he was verily fulfilling the will of God, persecuting the so-called Christians, having papers that were similar to warrants that we use in this term to arrest those who called upon the Name of Christ, and put them in prison and bond and even put them to death. Let us remember that he watched those who stoned Stephen to death. But God has a plan. On that road to Damascus, He struck Paul down to the dust of the earth and a light shined about him brighter than the noonday sun, and it so blinded Paul that he had to be lead the rest of that journey by the hand, because he couldn't see. When we are brought to view, as it were, the majestic miracle of the Glory of Christ, it is indeed the whitest thing we have ever seen. It takes a spiritual eye to see it. And we have to be lead the rest of the journey, because we are blinded, as it were, to the lusts of the things of the world. That's what was under consideration. Paul was blinded to the devices and cunningness of his own mind. He was blinded to those plans he carried in his pocket. Blinded, to be lead the rest of the journey.

So are we. God, if it is not His plan that He lead us and direct us to the way of righteousness and the paths of salvation and the love and the fellowship that is expressed in us for each other and the fellowship of the church, we are lost worlds without end. It

makes no difference what kind of plan we have, it won't work. We can't devise any plan whatsoever that shall carry us to the climes of glory. But thanks be unto He who hath the power, He has devised a plan and has set that plan in the person of His Son and that plan was magnified on earth through all of the so-called miracles that Christ performed and that plan was perfected when He bowed his head on the cross and said, "*Father, it is finished!*" The work of salvation was complete then. The fullness of the plan had been magnified.

There were those who stood nearby and saw with their own eyes what happened and yet didn't understand. There was a thief on either side of Christ and one of those thieves was embodied in the plan of salvation and the other was not. Those soldiers that came to take those bodies down were part of a plan. It had been prophesied thousands of years before this happening that He would keep all His bones, talking about Christ. A psalmist on one occasion said "*Not a bone of His body should be broken.*" When those soldiers came and took those bodies down from the cross, which they were required to do. A body could not hang upon the cross until sundown, a Jewish law. They came to Christ and they said, "*He is dead already,*" so they break not His bones, but the scriptures said on that occasion that it was not the fact that they knew He was dead already, but that the prophets had written that He keepeth all His bones and not a bone of His body should be broken. And

that is where we stand today, My Beloved. If we are in that eternal plan of salvation, we are bone of His bones. Let us go back to the beginning of the Book and God's plan with Adam and Eve. He said, "*She is now flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone.*" If we are what we hope to be in that body of Christ, and that is what we are if we are of the true church, we are bone of His body. He has kept us until this time and we shall not be broken off in the final calamity of the destruction of all things. Be assured of that, My Beloved, because this thing is sure.

May God bless you and keep you. I feel like my thoughts have more than wandered this morning. As I said initially I didn't know whether what I would say and my thoughts would be a text, but it seems it has pressed on my mind for several days. The majestic wonder of God's plan! And if I should live a hundred years, I could never touch on all the aspects of the perfection of His plan that He gives to His people that He loves through Jesus Christ. May God bless you and keep you is my prayer.

Sermon by Elder C.B. Davis, Jr.
North Fork Primitive Baptist Church
Sunday, November 14, 1993

ROMANS 8: 24, 25.

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

CORRESPONDENCE

Margaret H. Quesenberry
Rt. 2, Box 101
Willis, VA 24380

Dear Brethren:

Please renew my subscription to the "Signs of the Times" for two years. Since I am afflicted with M.S. and confined to a wheelchair, I do a lot of reading. I look forward to getting my "Signs" each month.

The Lord is yet blessing me to be able to attend meetings at my home Church and other places occasionally. I don't get to go as often as I would like to but I hope He will keep me wanting to go even when I can't. If God makes me to hunger and thirst after the things that be of Him then He won't let me starve. He even knows what I need.

I am becoming more disabled in body but He still, from time to time, gives me a mind to be thankful and want to praise Him from who all blessings flow.

Many of the brethren live with affliction, pain and sorrow, as I do. Dear ones this is as it should be. In Psalms 34:19 "Many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." This is what we hope for and look forward to. Sometimes I am made to anticipate and long for that day when this will all be over and we will see our Saviour and be with

Him where He is and be able to praise Him as we ought. Until that day let us keep looking up and remember each other in love and prayers.

I would like to hear from anyone who loves the things that be of God and has a mind to write.

I hope you will all remember me in prayer when you have a mind to pray.

A sister in hope,
Margaret H. Quesenberry

To the dear members and friends of
Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church:

Iwish I had the time to write to each of you individually but I am afraid I would not if I tried. Phil and I enjoyed being with you at the Staunton River Association so much. It was so good to see your sweet faces and hear your dear voices once again. You are all so precious to me. It cheered me to see how you so lovingly labor to host the association in your care of the church building, the grounds, in the food you provided, in taking care of visitors in your home and all of the unseen and maybe even unnoticed work behind the scenes. Your labors of love are appreciated. I feel so unworthy of the love and fellowship of such warm, loving, zealous people. I missed the absent members who were sick and unable to attend. We also missed those who have been called home. Yet, how thankful we are for you who love the dear saints of God and desire to be assembled with them. Your love for

one another and for the entire household of faith and your zeal in laboring on behalf of the comfort of the Lord's people are gifts of God for which we are thankful. May the Lord ever keep us close in Spirit although we do not see each other as often as we wish we could. May our Lord stir up His love within us and draw us ever closer to one another in sweet fellowship as we are drawn nearer to Him.

You will always be dear to my heart and I still think of Malmaison as my home church although I am more unworthy than ever of your love and fellowship.

I miss seeing you and wish I could be closer. Yet, I feel that my lot is to be here in Texas now. I am blessed with the love and fellowship of dear Brethren here and feel that I am doubly blessed to have two groups of Brethren where I feel especially at home. If we feel the love of God for someone, there is a closeness to them that distance cannot sever.

May the Lord keep you and us until we meet again.

In bonds of love, Joyce
(Elder Julian Williams &
Sister May's daughter)

Elrin, Oregon 97827
July 3, 1994

Dear Elder Williams:



After Mother's passing: Among her things we found a copy of a letter that she wrote to a beloved, Aunt who in growing old had suffered the loss of her sight. Although this letter was written sixty years ago

the beauty of the theme of the subject has in no way diminished. Therefore if you deem it worthy of space you may publish it in the Signs.

In bonds of Love,
Lloyd C. Spikes

Dear Aunt Susie;

I have been wanting to write you ever since I heard of your blindness and in my mind have written you many letters. As I wanted to write some little word of comfort I kept putting it off as I am a poor hand to express my thoughts. But today I have been thinking and thinking about that pure river of water of life spoken of in the 22 ch. of Revelations and hope I may be enabled to express some of the beauties of that great and wonderful river and of that tree that stood in the midst of it and on either side. Such a marvelous and wonderful tree which stood in the midst of the river of water of life and on either side. Can you see that?

Christ in the midst of the river for he is the head and fountains of that great river which is the waters of salvation. And that great river comes down to us who were captured and led into condemnation of sin, and it extends on either side of the river. What a glorious thought that is, or rather what a wonderful truth that his mercies and waters of salvation extended just as much to those who worshiped under the law before the crucifixion as to those on the other side which are those who worship in this the Gospel day. This one great sermon if only we have the eye of understanding, with all it's connecting thoughts cover the

whole great plan of salvation which our Lord wrought there on Calvary.

I see Christ coming in the midst, right between the law and the gospel and his one atonement for the whole family of God who were captured by the old serpent who is the devil and led into condemnation. But thanks be to God that one atonement gave us Sure salvation.

This great tree of life bare twelve manner of fruit and yielded her fruit every month and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nation. In this one figure if I could just find words to tell it, is the salvation of the Lord's people brought to bear in a beautiful manner. As the putting forth the buds of the leaves is the first manifestation of life in, a tree, such is the case of this great tree when we first hear and see with the spiritual eye and hear with an understanding heart. Then is the first signs of life manifest in our hearts and we are born to the knowledge that we have been healed of our sinful ways, such are the leaves. After the leaves are manifest then all those who are hungry can partake of the fruit of this great tree which is meat to them. What a wonderful thing it is to sit in that banqueting hall eating and drinking. What is the banqueting hall? Whenever the children of God are gathered together partaking of the truth which is the word and the word is God and if we are partakers of the truth we receive our fruit or meat or bread from this tree which is never without fruit for it bears fruit every month.

Aunt Susie what a great and wonderful thought that our salvation is sure

and steadfast, that Christ paid the debt for our sins and that it doesn't matter what trials and tribulations we are called to pass through, that it is with the assurance that his everlasting arm is underneath and when the time appointed comes we will be taken home and be with him in glory.

No matter how low we get in spirit or how far we have wandered astray there is always one great thing that we know, that being that by the blood of Christ alone we are saved. Many times we may think that we have lost our way for God has purposed that often our eye of understanding become dimmed, but the Lord said, "I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people". Old satan can't quite deceive the elect of God. He will try but it is not possible.

We may even think that we have lost sight of our Saviour. Would it be anything to wonder about when John, after he had baptised the Saviour, got so low in Spirit that he sent word asking, "Art thou the Christ or shall we look for another? The Lord sent word back to go tell John again the things you have both seen and heard, and not only that, but told them what we had seen and heard, and that being, that the deaf ears were unstopped and the eyes of the blind were opened ect. That is the reason it is necessary for us to hear again and again the wonderful truths concerning Christ and he being a risen Saviour.

None of us can foresee the trials that we will pass through but we do have the assurance that he will be with us and there will be no trial which shall

be to great for us to bear for he will give us strength to hold on our way.

Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, thy rod and thy staff shall comfort me. I have no doubt that when we are at last brought to the place where we can say, Thy will not mine be done, we shall then be pure Gold all the dross shall be burned away and we shall be taken home.

Dear Aunt Susie I hope you receive a little comfort from some of these wonderful truths in Christ Jesus. May God bless you Dear Auntie and keep your mind on his wonderful mercies is the prayer of your niece.

Elva (Spikes)

ARTICLES

" For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."



he children of God are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ but rather are made to love it and embrace it, to uphold it and defend it and to hope in it as the promise of God unto them.

They are made to be ashamed of the wretchedness of the flesh and the

things it produces but are in no way ashamed of the glorious gospel of the grace and mercy and love of God.

This gospel is good news from a far country. It is a drink of cold water to one about to perish in the wilderness. It is food to the hungry soul. It tells us of the clothing given to hide our nakedness. It reveals the remedy for sin, the fulfilling of the law, the perfect sacrifice by which the sins of the children of God are atoned. It shows the great love of God for His people and tells of His power and wisdom and majesty.

This gospel, the sentence of death to all false religions of works, is therefore hated by all who hope in the works of the flesh. The world hates the true gospel of Christ because it brings the hidden works of darkness to light and makes it plain that all who hope in the flesh will be disappointed.

The gospel is good news to the children of God because it reveals that our God is over all, that He is all wise, all powerful, all knowing and is in full control of all things to such an extent that He works all things together for good to them that love Him, to them that are the called according to His own purpose and grace. It reveals that He loved them with an everlasting love and chose them in Christ before the world was, and that He also wrote their names in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world.

The gospel is good news because it reveals that His work is a finished work. Nothing can be added unto it and nothing can be taken away from it.

It is a perfect work lacking nothing. When Christ was asked "what may we do that we may work the works of God", His answer was "This is the work of God, that you believe upon me whom He has sent".

The work of God is to believe on Him and one can only believe by faith and faith is the gift of God. So the whole matter is with God. Christ said "No man can come unto me unless my Father which sent Me draw him," and "He that cometh to Me, I will in no way cast out." The gospel is good news because the whole matter is taken out of our hands. God loved His people, chose them, called them, gave them faith to believe and come to Him and will keep them forever.

Some say that God has saved us in eternity but it is up to us to obey Him in order to secure the blessings of God. This is bad news because we are made to know that we can do nothing good of ourselves. The apostle Paul said "how to perform that which is good I find not" The good news according to the true gospel is "He which has begun a good work in you shall perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. "He is our obedience. According to this glorious gospel "by one man's obedience many were made righteous" He is all and all to the little weak and trembling children of God. His strength is made perfect in weakness. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

This means that all their days they will be led about and instructed of Him and kept as the apple of His eye. This means that their idols will be

taken away and like Jacob of old there will be no false god found with them. This means that sin will not have dominion over them and that they will be given to be faithful unto death that they may receive the crown of life.

To be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation means to be kept until the Lord comes again in power to receive His own into glory. The good news of the gospel of Christ reveals that the children of God will have part in His resurrection, that they are given the victory over this world, over Satan, over sin, over death, hell and the grave. Christ has conquered over all and has given to you the victory.

The children of God are made to rest in this wonderful gospel of the perfect, finished work of God. Jerusalem's warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned and she has received double at the Lord's hand for all her sin. *"By grace are you saved through faith, not of works lest any man should boast, for you are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before ordained that ye should walk in them."*

The conclusion of these things, if there can be any, is that all the promises of God in Him are yea and amen, all things are for you. there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus who walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh, none that trust in the perfect finished work of God will be disappointed at that day.

"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 did also 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. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 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. 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."

Submitted in love, I Hope,
Elder J.B. Farmer

VOICES OF THE PAST

From Elder Lambert's Book,
"Tried In The Furnace."

AS AN EAGLE
January, 1950



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." Deut 32: 11, 12.



Elder Williams of Decatur, Mississippi, has requested views on this scripture. May God bless us with light of thought and liberty of expression to comfort God's little children with some thoughts on the wonderful care God exercises upon His own. We enter into the discussion of this Scripture with a deep felt sense of inability. We fully realize our dependence upon God to stir us up at this time to properly meditate upon this Scripture.

Jacob, who is the "lot of his inheritance" is the object of these expres-

sions. As God dealt with Jacob, He deals with each and every one of His children. Read the context and you will find that Jacob was passive in the hands of a merciful God. It was God who found him; it was God who led him about; it was God who instructed him; it was God who kept him; and it was God who made him ride on the high places of the earth. Jacob could not claim any credit for anything, but must bow to God and realize that it was by God's mercies that he was so wonderfully delivered.

In this text God is likened to an eagle in some of His dealings. The kings of Assyria, Egypt and Babylon were likened unto eagles for their power and dominion. The Chaldean armies were likened unto eagles because of their swiftness. The Edomites exalted themselves and made their nests high as the eagles. It is said that the eagle builds its nest in high places in the tops of the rocks -- in the highest rocks which no man can reach. Of course the outer part of the nest is constructed with rough, jagged, coarse and thorny material. The innermost part is lined with smooth, soft matter that affords the eaglets a place of sweet repose. This is certainly a comfortable place of refuge until the nest is stirred up. The soft down that interlines the eagle's nest typifies the seeming righteousness of the flesh and the confidence that the unregenerated child of God has in his own cleanness and ability. He is content with himself and with his place of abode. He is at ease and does not care

to venture from this sweet place of self-righteousness and carnal affections. *"All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes."*

As the eagle stirs up this soft nest and makes it a bed of thorns to the eaglets, so the Lord stirs up the souls of His people, and makes bare the thorn in the flesh so that their place of sweet repose becomes a miserable place of abode. When God begins His work there is a stirring in the soul that nothing can still, silence, quench or quell. When this begins with you, you become very greatly alarmed and anxious. This anxiety becomes so miserable that you try to rid yourself of this condition by your own activity. You become just as restless as the eaglets with the same results-- the thorns prick you more every turn you make. You are pricked in the heart as those spoken of in Acts 2:37. As the God of Israel stirred up the spirits of the kings of Assyria and prompted them to action, He awakens and disturbs you and causes you to become much concerned over your miserable condition.

Have you ever been awakened to the fact that you are a sinner? Have you made resolutions to better that condition? Have you tried to deliver yourself and found that all your trials availed nothing? Have you been shown that all your righteousness is as filthy rags in God's sight? Have you lost confidence in your own self? Has there been a time that your soul fainted in you and you had no hope in this world or that to come? If you can answer the above questions in the

affirmative, (I am persuaded) God has stirred up your nest and has fluttered over you. You have been shaken from that nest and you are falling toward the abyss below. What a fear accompanies this fall! You have nothing to rely upon! You fear the consequences of the jagged rocks and the abyss below which surely means sudden destruction to you! I experienced this falling for many miserable months. I could see nothing before me but this blackness of darkness forever. I was afraid to live and afraid to die. I cried in anguish of soul, "Woe is me! for I am undone!" As the eagle watches the young eaglet as it falls toward the abyss below, I trust that God was watching me. As the eagle swoops down beneath the falling eaglet, "Spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings," I feel that God so dealt with me. What a glad surprise when He came to my rescue!

The thought that God watches us and protects us before regeneration brings to mind that He was the God of Jacob. Jacob is the unregenerate name of Israel. Who is this God of Jacob? The God that gave him the blessing of the birthright though he was a junior; the God that delivered him from the murderous hand of his brother in the day of trouble; the God that protected him and manifested Himself to him; his covenant God. God sometimes says, I am the God of Jacob. This means I am your God before regeneration, as well as after when you attempt to supplant me with proud free will and blunt my sover-

eignty with your rebellion; when you took my covenant name in a covenant character, I am your God still.

Yes, it was a day of rejoicing when God came to your rescue to prevent you from being utterly destroyed by the jagged rocks and the abyss beneath. He rescued you on His wings of love. He whispered to you, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." He informed you that He was a merciful and gracious God. He restored your soul. Jesus informed you that He had fulfilled the law to a jot and tittle for you. He told you that He had taken your sins upon His own shoulder and had paid the penalty, satisfied justice by shedding His own blood for the remission of sins and had died in your stead. He spoke sweet peace to your soul that He had wrought out eternal salvation for you. He put a new song in your mouth that praised God and confessed Jesus as your Savior. You are resting in the sweet embrace of His love. Your soul is absorbed in this experience. You are blessed to exclaim, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." You can say with one of old, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." You feel that your worries and fears are in the past and that you will ride forever upon His wings. You can see the Father, Son and Holy Ghost enacting, determining and covenanting for, and mutually swearing each to each for the accomplishment of your salvation. Did this sweet experience continue? No, if your experience coincides with my experi-

ence, it did not continue. It was of short duration.

After the eagle rescues the young and bears them comfortably upon her wings for awhile, she tilts her wings and permits them to fall again toward the abyss below. Did God deal with you as the eagle deals with her young? While you were riding joyfully, upon His everlasting love and sweet promises, all was well with your soul. You said, "my God reigneth," and "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Then, all at once, you realized that you were again falling toward destruction. The sweet embrace of that love was gone. Your former experience taught you that there was One who did rescue you, but would He rescue again? You looked for Him but you could not find Him. You sincerely asked, "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? Doth His promise fail forevermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? (Psalms 77:7-9.) You are falling down, down, down! You yet have a faint hope that almost vanishes away. Just before you would die in despair, God rescues you again from destruction. The wings of God's mercy and love comes underneath you and raises you up, and soars high above the cares and troubles of this world, and you again rejoice because of His amazing grace that can descend low enough to prevent you from dashing your head against a stone. It is our lot to be

shaken many times from the wings of God's manifest love and mercy, but He yet cares for us and carefully watches over us.

It is necessary that we be taught again and again of our infirmities and weakness in the flesh and our total dependence upon Him. We are made to cry out so often to Him to be merciful to our unrighteousness. We shall have tribulations and suffer trials and afflictions here in this world, and to realize that, "here have we no continuing city." These joyful experiences are not continuous but are mixtures of joy and sorrow.

We trust that the grace of God enables us to "Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). At the time when He shall take us upon His wings it will be forever. All will be joyful forevermore. No more trials and tribulations. No more heartaches nor fear of falling into utter destruction. When He takes us upon His wings and carries us into the Holiest of Holies where Jesus dwells we shall forever be satisfied.

Elder E.J. Lambert

MEETINGS

October 30, 1993



The New Dan River Primitive Baptist Church called for a presbytery to meet on Saturday before the fifth Sunday in October to look into the qualifications of Brother

J.L. Cassell for the full work of the ministry.

The presbytery was organized by electing the following:

Elder Paul Hopkins, Moderator

Brother James L. Shelor, Clerk

Deacon Raymond Vipperman, Spokesman for the church and to deliver the candidate into the hands of the presbytery Elder Leonard Brammer to question the spokesman of the church. Elder Leonard Brammer to lead in questioning the candidate. Elder Clarence Stone, to pray the ordination prayer. Elder Hale Terry, to deliver the charge.

Elder Leonard Brammer made some remarks and questioned the spokesman. The spokesman answered that Brother Cassell met all the requirements as outlined in the third chapter of II Timothy.

Elder Brammer asked Brother Cassell how he viewed the difference of the doctrines of the world as compared to Dan River Church. He answered the world tries to bring God into obligation unto them, but we can do nothing that would bring God under obligation.

Elder Brammer asked Brother Vipperman if the church was in favor of taking Brother Cassell into its membership when he asked for a home. Brother Vipperman stated that the vote was unanimous and no one objected. Elder Brammer asked if the church was satisfied with Brother Cassell's

baptism. Brother Vipperman stated yes. Elder Hopkins stated that for everyone's understanding, Brother Cassell came to the church when it was in sorrow. The baptism was performed by two of the deacons of Dan River church, Deacon Raymond Vipperman and Deacon Donald Scott.

Article # 8 of the Pigg River and Smith River Association was read. Elder Hopkins asked if there were any objections to please raise them now in love. All were satisfied with Brother Cassell's baptism. Elder Hopkins referred to the scripture of Phillip (who was only a deacon) baptizing the eunuch. Elder Terry stated when New Dan River Church was taken by all for fellowship, any questions concerning this baptism should have been addressed then.

Elder Brammer asked the candidate did he believe that the whole body or just the spirit would be raised in the resurrection, he answered that the whole body would be raised.

Verse 28 of the 20th chapter of Acts was read by Elder Clarence Stone concerning the undershepherd and overseer of the church and asked the candidate his views. Brother Cassell stated that this church is a body of Christ, independent, that the pastor should lead and guide but not lord over the members.

Brother Cassell asked Brother Brumfield and Elders of Independent Churches for comments. Brother Brumfield stated he hoped he loved Brother Cassell for Christ's sake. Brother Davis asked Brother Cassell how he stood on election. He an-

swered that he felt that the children of God was elected in Christ Jesus before the world was formed. Brother Cassell asked the Brethren if they saw any shortcomings in his actions that they would teach him correctly. The Brethren felt this was a good spirit.

Brother Brammer asked Brother Cassell about his calling into the ministry. He stated that he felt and feared for over forty years that he would have to stand and defend the word of truth. Brother Cassell related some of his experiences that has led him to where he is today. He told of his first attempts to speak in public. He was shown that he had to be, shod with the preparation of our Lord or he could not speak.

Brother Cassell removed his shoes the first few times before entering the pulpit to speak.

Brother Hopkins asked for other questions. Elder Noel Conner asked about absolute predestination. The candidate stated that he felt that men would do all of God's will but God would not cause man to sin. Nor would the elect fall away from the graces of God.

Elder Larry Hollandsworth asked if Brother Cassell felt he had been relieved of any of the burdens placed upon him. He stated sometimes for a few hours or a few days he felt to be relieved, but it soon left him.

When asked about good works by Brother Stone, he replied if anyone does good works it is by the grace of God.

Brother Conner made comments on our general views of marriage and

divorce, and stated there was no separation with God, therefore he viewed the one who seperated as the offender. Brother Cassell stated that he believed that Deacons and Elders should be the husband of one wife. Also the church was espoused to one husband, brothers and sisters alike. All agreed this was spiritual application. Brother Stone asked if Brother Cassell would lay hands on a candidate with two living wives, he replied he didn't think he could. When asked as to receiving members into the church that had two living wives or husbands, he stated he would advise the church to take the matter under consideration before making a decision.

Elder Clarence Stone prayed the ordination prayer, and all ordained authority present administered the laying on of hands upon the candidate. Elder Hale Terry delivered the charge.

Then being found qualified, Deacon Raymond Vipperman delivered Brother J. L. Cassell back to the church as Elder J. L. Cassell.

Elder Paul Hopkins, Moderator
Brother James L. Shelor, Clerk

Ordained Elders Present:

Leonard Brammer

Clarence Stone

Wm. Hale Terry

C. B. Davis

Carl E. Terry

Marvin Brumfield

Larry N. Hollandsworth

Paul W. Hopkins

Ordained Deacons Present:

- Donald Scott
- Andrew Agee
- Wilford G. Parsons
- Hassell Hale
- George Conner
- Hansel Conner
- Tiras Conner
- Wade M. Poff
- Alan Terry
- Howard L. Peters
- H. D. Ingram
- Donald L. Agee
- Vance V. Duncan
- A. L. Shelton
- Edwin F. Dyer
- Joseph J. Cahill
- Grover Semones
- Raymond Vipperman

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JULY 1994

- Mrs. Harold May, AL \$7.00
- Mrs. Ina Hendrix, TN 2.00
- Mrs. Frances Jarvis, MD 2.00
- Mrs. Pearl H. Pendleton, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Ora Adams, VA 3.00
- William R. Adcox, AR 2.00
- Mrs. G.B. McAdams, MS 2.00
- H.C. Ellwanger, SC 2.00
- Mrs. W.N. Tilley, NC 5.00
- Mrs. Fannie D. Wiles, VA 5.00
- C.N. Barron, LA 2.00
- Mrs. H.C. Houchins, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Mannie A. Carter, NC
- Memory of Mildred Strader 25.00
- Wallace E. Harvey, WV 2.00

OBITUARIES

IN LOVING MEMORY
ASYLINE DAVIS HERSHMAN

It is with a sad heart that I attempt to write the obituary of another one of our Dan River members. In the past several months God has seen fit to call home some five or six from our church family and all of them will be sorely missed.

Sister Asyline Davis Hershman was called to her eternal home on July 17, 1994. She was a daughter of the late James Robert Davis and Susie Ayers Davis, affectionately known as "Rob" & "Sue".

Sister Hershman was born in Danville, Virginia on August 4, 1920. Her family later moved from Virginia to Rockingham County, North Carolina (Mayfield area). She attended Rockingham County Schools and graduated from Ruffin High School.

On June 17, 1939 she married James Howard Hershman, Sr. They were blessed with a good marriage and became the parents of one son, James Howard Hershman, Jr.

Sister Hershman was received into the fellowship of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church on December 21, 1985. As long as she was able she enjoyed attending her church and visiting other Primitive Baptist churches. She believed in the doctrine of election and salvation by grace. She was in declining health for a number of years and

for the past two and on-half years was in a Nursing Care facility.

Her funeral was on July 19, 1994 at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church. The service was conducted by her Pastor, Elder Kenneth Key. She was laid to rest in the church cemetery to await the coming of her Lord.

Sister Hershman is survived by her husband, James Howard Hershman, Sr. of the Home; Son, James Howard Hershman, Jr. of Leesburg, Virginia; Sister, Hazel Turlington of Newport News, Virginia; two grandchildren.

May all who mourn say, "thy will be done", and may the Lord grant the family grace to reconcile them to His will.

Written by request of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church in conference.

John Collie

Elder Kenneth Key, Moderator

Brother Bob Collie, Clerk

GERTRUDE DALTON MYERS

With much sadness in my heart, the Dear Lord willing, I will endeavor to write a few words in memory of one whom I loved, and not only me, but I believe she was loved by her brethren and friends.

Sister Gertrude was born in Pittsylvania County on July 22, 1915, daughter of the late Charlie A. Dalton and Sister Molly Yeatts Dalton. She was married to the late Robert Lee

Myers and to this union two sons were born; Oscar Lee Myers, Sr., deceased; survivors include one son and daughter-in-law, Donald Myers and Linda M. Myers of Hurt; five sisters, Sister Irene Myers, Vivian Dalton and Sister Reba Myers all of Gretna, Pearl McCracken of Lynchburg, and Frances Marsh of Chatham, Va., one grandson and one great-granddaughter.

Sister Gertrude was in the hospital for eight weeks having a long hard struggle. I feel her suffering is over now. During her stay in the hospital, the family did all hands could do for her. Linda stood by her like a daughter.

I feel we have been highly blessed of God to have had Sister Gertrude's fellowship and friendship. May we all that mourn her loss be reconciled to the will of our Heavenly Father who does all things well and never makes a mistake for it is He that giveth and He that taketh away.

Sister Gertrude was received by experience July 24, 1949, and was baptized August 28, 1949. She was a faithful member at Weatherford Church as long as her health permitted.

Funeral services were conducted at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church by her pastor, Elder Raymond Goad, and Elder Marvin Brumfield. She was laid to rest in the church cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the second coming of our Lord and Savior.

Written by, Elder Marvin Brumfield
Elder Raymond Goad, Moderator
Phyllis Goad, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., NOVEMBER 1994

NO. 11

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

In Memory Of My Dad

Elder Noah E. King

March 1901 to June 1974

*My dad was a special kind of man,
A God called preacher on this land,
When the Lord first began knocking at
his door,
He wanted to run and hide, forevermore*

*He even thought if he moved away,
He'd leave the burden that was in his
way,
As he plowed in the field through a flood
of tears,
The bib of his overalls showed his fears.*

*Sometimes he would stop his mule out
in the field,
It appeared he was making some kind of
appeal,
From afar, I couldn't hear what he had
to say,
Only the Lord knew then, and knows
today.*

*As I learned, he didn't want to yield to
the Lords command,
To feed His sheep in a wayfaring land,
He felt inadequate, not knowing what to
say,
But as long as he could resist, he had to
pay.*

*The debt grew larger, and became so
great,
He had to give in and face his fate,
Tho his long hard struggle had just
begun,
He had to face every enemy under the
sun.*

*He had no transportation to take him far,
Tho he had served time in a seminar,
The kind Jonah served in the belly of the whale,
No, he didn't graduate from a school called Yale.*

*So, he would start out walking with a prayer
in his heart,
Feeling uneducated, and not very smart,
Leaving his family far behind,
He'd soon catch a ride, and arrive on time,*

*His family felt the brunt of his burden too,
Our weekends with him were very few,
My mom worked hard to keep his clothes ready to go,
She seemed to understand his burden, and his woe.*

*But he answered his call, and served to the end,
He delivered every sermon which God did intend.
In later years he was blessed with a car,
Then, his family traveled with him near and far.*

*In the year 1974, having served his mission of love,
The Lord called him on to his home up above,
His trials and troubles he had finished with grace.
There can never be another who can take his place. "Fathers Day" 1994*

*I love you dad,
Abilene McBride*

EDITORIAL



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

"To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven."



his short verse of scripture, as recorded by Solomon, is the sum and substance of the whole book of Ecclesiastes; and is the conclusion reached by him as a result of the wisdom, which was a gift of God, his experiences which it seems exceeded those of any man who was king before or after him. He had sought and searched out, by his wisdom concerning all things that are available to man in nature and to learn what was good for the sons of man, which they would do all the days of their lives. He wanted to learn and to prove, for himself the reason for and the profit in all things in nature; and to teach the children of Israel that they might know and benefit from the wisdom that had been given him for that particular purpose.

Solomon was the son of David, by Bethsheba, who was raised up and set upon the throne of his father by God according to his promise to David and made a wise and benevolent ruler over the kingdom of Israel. The Lord appeared to Solomon, in Gideon, in a dream shortly after he ascended the throne and told him to ask what he should give him. His response was, "And now O Lord my God, thou hast

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made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out and to come in, and thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 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?" Solomon seemingly already possessed wisdom because he saw himself as he was in nature and realized his need for the task that lay ahead of him. *Isa. 65:24* "And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Oh the depths of the wisdom and the counsel of God. He gives them the realization of their need so that they pray for the things he is going to give them. This request was pleasing to God and he granted Solomon's request for wisdom and also told him that he would give him much more than his petition in that he would grant him riches and honour above any of the kings of the earth all his days.

This wisdom, given to Solomon, was not just the natural intellect or knowledge that all men possess, in some measure; this wisdom excelleth the intellect and knowledge of the man in nature as far as the spiritual realm exceeds the realm of nature. This wisdom includes the ability to apply knowledge and is an understanding of the reasons and the underlying truths in all things, and this is only received from God in a very spe-

cial way as it was by Solomon. It was given him for a very special reason and that was for the benefit of the whole household of faith; in his ruling of the kingdom of Israel at the time then present, and as a teacher of the generations to come as he left on record the truths as revealed unto him; words of comfort to strengthen them as they encounter the afflictions and trials in their journey through this life. *Eccl. 12:9, 10, 11* "And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge: yea he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find acceptable words: And that which was upright even words of truth." Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pictures of silver and are precious treasures to God's children in all ages of time as they run their race.

Man wrestles with his lot here in time world trying to see what is good in his travels and to discern the reasons for it all. It is then a great comfort to learn that the wisest of men, in all of his travels and searching came to this conclusion; "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and that he should make his soul enjoy good in all his labour. This also I saw that it was from the hand of God." Man does not stray or wander outside of the bounds of their habitation as set by their creator and whatever they may find their lot to be, at any given point in time, it too, is among the all things that work together for good, which is to their everlasting salvation. "The lot is cast into the lap;

but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord," and therefore be ye reconciled to it.

The text, "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven," is one of the stronger support scriptures for the doctrine of predestination to be found in the bible, because it covers everything and the purpose of it. This is the testimony of one who was given wisdom above all others, except Christ, and he declares that the seasons and the times for all events, not some of them, are set and concerning all God declares they are beautiful in his time or realm. The only questions remaining are; did he know what he was talking about? and did he mean what he said? We must concede that the answer is, yes to both questions. As to knowing what he was talking about, the scripture states "the preacher sought to find acceptable words, and that which was written was upright even words of truth," and they were written by inspiration of God. And carries the full authority the godhead as to the doctrinal truth; and as to meaning what he said, this truth is in harmony with all of his other teachings and the inspired teaching of others unto whom the word of God came in all ages of time.

Solomon sought out and set in order many proverbs and he sought out acceptable words to teach basic truths in terms that the people would understand, realizing that they are only to those who have been given wisdom from the same source. Jesus taught in parables using natural illustrations to set forth spiritual truths but it took

the revelation of God for the truth to be discerned. As Paul wrote *1 Cor. 2:13* "*which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*" Man can read or hear the parables or proverbs and understand gramatically what is being said but unless they have been born of the spirit they cannot compare spiritual with spiritual. This is experienced and understood only by those who have read and heard the scriptures with a natural understanding, and later, with a spiritual understanding. The scriptures are but history with no revelance to current times, to the natural mind, but they cease to be history and are the key to the future and eternal life through Jesus Christ their Lord and savior. to those who are given spiritual discernment.

In the text above Solomon is declaring that there is a time and season for all events and that they shall occur on schedule. Time is but a measured portion of eternity, set aside to accomplish all of the things that were declared from the beginning and each event occurs in its allotted sequence. They are each a necessary part of the whole plan designed to produce the desired results in the end just as each member of the body of Christ is necessary for the completion of the whole household of faith. All things are ever present before God who sees the end from the beginning and all things in between but man sees and experiences them as separate incidents and does not realize the completeness of the scheme of things.

God said, in the beginning, let there be lights in the firmament to divide the day from the night and be for seasons and days and years and man uses these constant occurrences to measure what we call time; to identify the occurring of the all things that are determined to be, both those that have been and are yet to come. *Eccl. 3 vs. 11* ***"He hath made everything beautiful in his time; also he hath set the world in their heart so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."*** Man can only live in and know the present and soon forgets the past, while God is always seeing, as present, all things from beginning to the end; therefore all these things are determined and of necessity will occur in their proper sequence of events. With God they already are, not, will be.

Eccl. 7 vs. 14 ***"In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider; God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find out nothing after him."*** Solomon learned that in spite of his wisdom and experiences in the things of the world, time and events happen to all men, and where then is the wise in any better circumstance than the fool; as one dieth, so dies the other. A man may live long and accumulate much of earthly treasures yet he dies and leaves it to another who may be wise or may be a fool; so what is the profit of all his labor, except in the beholding of it with his eyes. Solomon saw not the riches as an evil because they were God's gift to him, for his plea-

sure and enjoyment of them. Any evil would be if they became an obsession with him and his desire being for the gift and not the giver of it, because man cannot serve God and mammon. Solomon served God and was given great riches but he used his riches and wisdom for the good of Israel and was happy in prosperity. Adversity also is a gift of God and works together with prosperity in the lives of God's children, lest they forget from whence their help comes, as they are made to seek his face again in their time of need. Without adversity they would soon forget God and become so absorbed in their prosperity and themselves that there would be no fear of the Lord in their lives. *Prov. 15 vs. 33* ***"The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom and before honour humility."*** Wisdom enabled Solomon to learn the balance of these forces in his life, fear, humility and honour; and these fruits of wisdom are the characteristics of all who have been called into the glorious light and liberty of the kingdom of God. *James 1:3,4* ***"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience, but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."***

Wisdom and patience are pearls of great value to the weak and weary travelers as they journey thru this wilderness of sin; and they are born with neither. They are received from the giver of gifts to ease their burden and strengthen their faith.

In bonds of love,
Elder Richard H. Campbell

 ARTICLES

WHO MAKETH THEE TO DIFFER

1 Cor. iv. 7.

The following is the writing of a greatly blessed minister; Elder Gilbert Beebe, Editor of Signs of the Times; dated March 1, 1839.

That there is a difference in the condition and future prospects of the children of men, but few, if any, will pretend to deny; but in what the difference consists, and by what power it is established, is a matter of great contention and strife with the theologians of our age. That this difference does not consist in our relation to or creation in Adam, is very fully demonstrated in the scriptures. *"For God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."* - Acts. xvii. 26. And that all are alike condemned in their relation to Adam, is plainly asserted in the words: "Death has passed upon all men, because all have sinned." Nothing is more clearly revealed or fully demonstrated in divine revelation than the fact that we are all by nature on an equal footing, as to original purity and subsequent depravity and condemnation. *"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* - Rom. iii. 25. *"And every mouth is stopped, and the whole world is guilty before God."* We inquire then,

where is the difference, seeing that in regard to sin and human depravity all are alike? We conceive a vast difference in regard to the spiritual condition of mankind. Some there are who have been delivered from the curse of the law, the guilt and consequence of sin, and made the subjects of regenerating grace, redeeming love, and living faith; they are made to love God, to love holiness, to understand, believe and rejoice in the truth as it is in Jesus. These have Christ formed in them the hope of glory. These being the sons of God, are heirs of him, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; heirs to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that cannot fade away. These are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, &c.

Widely differing from the people of God, there is another class of the human family, described in scripture as a generation of vipers, a seed of evil doers, of their father the devil, cursed children that cannot cease to sin; these know not the way of peace, they neither know nor love the truth, but delight in sin, error, delusion and falsehood. These stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. These shall die in their sins, go away into everlasting punishment; be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God.

Here is certainly a difference, a very wide difference, in the spiritual condition, prospects, disposition and final destiny of the two classes described; they are known by different names. The former are called children of God, dear children, sons, Bride, Lamb's

wife, a peculiar people, chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, elect, &c., while the latter are called children of the devil, cursed children, aliens, strangers, serpents, vipers, dogs, sorcerers, &c.

The questions returns, Who maketh thee to differ, or who makes them to differ? As those who are saved are by nature children of wrath, even as others, we are sustained by the infallible testimony of truth in saying that every soul that is raised from the lowest depths of sin and depravity is raised up by the power and grace of the sovereign God. There is salvation in no other name, hence the true difference consists in what God has been graciously pleased to do for his people, in a way of grace, for nothing short of grace could rescue them from awful wrath and fiery indignation.

The question why God has not bestowed the same grace on all men that he has on some men, is about as reasonable as the question why men are not angels, or angels are not gods. He has been pleased only to inform us that he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. The saints of God cannot believe, that wherein they differ from those who go down to perdition is based on works of righteousness which they have done, or that they have made themselves to differ. By grace they are saved, through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God; not of works &c.; hence their anthem of eternal worship shall be, *"Not unto us, not unto us, O God, but to thy name give the glory."*

On earth, not in heaven, not in heaven, not in hell, but on earth, among infatuated mortals, the question is agitated, whether God, as a sovereign, did, according to his own eternal counsel and immutable will, fix the destiny of beings and of worlds, according to his unsearchable wisdom and goodness from the ancients of eternity; or was he by some law of necessity or unforeseen event or events driven to the necessity of making the children of men to differ? In the discussion of this question, dear reader, you are engaged on the one side or the other; none can be neutral on this subject. Trifling as this inquiry may seem to some, in it is involved the grand controversy between sin and holiness, truth and error, predestination and Arminianism, the doctrine and practice of Old School Baptists, and that of the New Schools in divinity.

The word of God assures us that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; and challenges an infatuated world to declare *"With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" - Isa. xi. 14.* And that his purpose was mature and complete, appears not only from the immutability of his nature, but also from his *"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. xiv. 10.* Hence

the apostle says, "We are bound to give thanks unto God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." - 2 Thess. ii. 13. Chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world; predestinated us to the adoption of children, &c. Eph. ii. 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. 2 Tim. i. 9.

Of the other it is written, *"These were of old ordained to this condemnation." - Jude 3. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruptions." - 2 Peter ii. 12.* "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." - 2 Thess. ii. 11-12. From the scriptures above quoted we prove that every link in the chain of causes and effects is placed and secured by an unerring hand, and that all the wheels of the (to us) complicated machinery of creation, providence and grace, although their revolutions may seem to us to be in direct opposition to each other, yet all are wisely supplied, and every movement was determined before the machine was put in motion.

He who will deny this will deny the foreknowledge of God, his truth, holiness and immutability, and finally his being, and at last unite with the fool and say, *"There is no God."*

This subject opens a field to our contemplation, but we have not room to enlarge. We have merely glanced at some important things in connection with the sovereignty of God, and with the following reflections on the subject we close this article:

FIRST. God having made mankind to differ, and that according to his eternal counsel and sovereign will, is it rational, reasonable or scriptural for men to get up and organize societies, powers, armies, or anything of the kind, for the express purpose of obviating that difference which God has made? Is there a prospect of success in their heaven-daring enterprise? What mad infatuation! As well might men attempt to annul the everlasting decrees of God, abolish the difference between light and darkness, cold and heat, seed-time and harvest, beast or men, or men and angels; let them change the skin of the Ethiopian, and the spots of the leopard; change and equalize according to their standard of wisdom the laws of nature, and then think of altering the things which have gone out of the mouth of God.

But let not the saints forget the principal design of the apostle in his use of our text. This question is calculated to humble the redeemed people of God in the dust; all they have they have received, and all that makes the saints on earth or those perfected in glory differ from the most abandoned

wretches on earth or in hell, is alone what God has done. End quote.

A few remarks about the above:

In the hope I could be a brother in spirit and in truth, I say; if what Brother Beebe was blessed to write in the above; not be in accord with the Holy truth as it is in the Lord Jesus Christ; then, I have no knowledge of what be that Holy truth; for in reading it, I found it to be a desired witness to what I believe and feel to be that truth; and therein received much comfort, that seemed to brighten my hope. And that was my reason for sending it to you Dear Editors, for your consideration, as whether or not to insert it in the Signs; and that if you do decide to print it; may it serve to be some comfort to one or more of His little children. For that was and is my only purpose in and for sending it to you.

May His and only His name be praised, both now and forever more, is my heart felt desire, if, in truth, I am aware of what be my feelings are. The Lord knoweth.

In hope,
Troy G. Shepard

PSALM 33: 1-5.

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.

Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth.

He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

**THE PIGG RIVER DISTRICT
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
THE ONE HUNDRED
SIXTY NINTH SESSION**

Dear Brethren,

I desire to greet you in the name of the Lord. I would like to call your attention to Matthew 10:16, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Then I say, who am I to even think of preaching? For to be wise as a serpent is the gift of the Lord, because he slips through the grass and weeds and blends in this the leaves, until the human eye does not behold him, sometimes he is under your feet, sometimes over you head, or lying across your path. God has given him wisdom to watch for his own livelihood, and most of the time will not bother human life unless provoked.

The Dove is natured altogether different from the serpent. I have never seen two doves fighting. It is not any wonder then that King Solomon said in *Solomon 6:9*, "*My dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice of her that bare her.*"

The preacher must be bold as a lion also, *Luke 10:3 and 4*, "*Go your ways, behold I sent you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way.*" John came preaching repentance, dressed in camel hair and girded with a leathern girdle. I wonder what people

would say today if one should come dressed like John, eating locusts and wild honey. But Christ himself came preaching and was called a wine bibber and he ate with publicans and sinners.

After Christ rose from the dead, before he ascended in the clouds; Mark 16:15, 16, 17 and 18, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils. They shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

I love the writing in Matthew 28:18, 19 and 20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 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. Amen."

Now I desire that the Lord will bless this meeting that the Gospel may be preached and that fellowship may abound. May we all feel our inferiority, also feel our infirmities, confessing that we are nothing but poor pilgrims and strangers in the land, seeking a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Amen.

With love and fellowship,
Leonard J. Brammer

Alpha Sears of Randolph, Ohio requests views on the following subject. Reprint from "Signs" Jan. 1988)

"Mine heritage is unto me as a SPECKLED BIRD, the birds round about are against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour." Jeremiah 12:9.

I cannot see to read the Bible anymore, so I asked my wife, Ruby, to look it up for me. She did and read it to me. I felt already that the Lord had revealed to me sometime ago that the SPECKLED BIRD is a type of the church, Christ's, the Son of God's, inheritance. And lo and behold, it read, "Mine heritage is unto me as a SPECKLED BIRD, the birds round about are against her," with the beasts of the field ready to devour, etc.

Heritage is defined as that which is inherited; inheritance; God's chosen people, or Israel, or the church of the true and living God. This is evidence enough that the scripture is referring to Christ's own who are His inheritance whom His soul loveth so much that He was willing to leave all the glory He had with His Father in the high court of glory, to condescend to the low estate of His heritage, who being lost in sin, shame, misery, degradation, darkness, death and eternal gloom, whom His Father had given Him before the foundation of the world, to purchase it with the shedding of His

own blood and for His eternal and everlasting love for them He was made willing to do it.

Christ referred to this heritage as a little child. They are humble even so much that when we see one, it makes us want to take them up into our arms and kiss them. So it is with one of these little ones of the Lord's people. Christ said, *"Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."* Luke 7:28. Who is the least one? The Lord's people are made to feel little.

In the 18th Chapter of Matthew is recorded where Christ set a little child out in front of the people and said, *"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* Matt. 18:3,4 When God has truly humbled one in His sight, that person, be he man, woman or child, is surely the least in God's kingdom. Little children are humble, and if they become angry, it does last only a few minutes. They do not nor will they hold a grudge.

This heritage of the Lord, which is the church, greatly feels her black spots, even also as the speckled bird. They are put on this bird in nature, but these little ones to whom Christ has referred to feel that their many sins have put them on them, and they cannot erase them anymore than can that

speckled bird. The fact that all the other birds and beasts of the field are against her and are ready any minute to devour her gives one of these little ones, His little children, whom Christ has referred to as the least but also greatest, even more evidence. All that one has to do to get one of these big ones to walk away with a devouring spirit is to tell just how little he feels and what he believes. In most instances they immediately take off and their humor is not good. Paul is a good example. He said he was the chief of sinners and felt to be nothing, yea less than nothing. One often wonders just what is the size and measurement of this garment, "less than the least," in which His heritage is robed and attired.

A good example of some of these beasts, assembling and coming together, as mentioned in the text, was when they placed Paul and Silas in prison. They whipped them with many stripes because they had been preaching just what these little ones, of whom the SPECKLED BIRD is a type. Paul said that he even fought with these beasts at Ephesus. See 1st Cor. 15:32. Paul felt those black spots on him of which the spots on this bird are a type of. Let us remember that the Old Testament scriptures are written in types and shadows.

That speckled bird cannot help being speckled. Neither can we help being sinners. Paul wrote, *"For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I no; but what I hate, that I do."* *"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which*

I would not, that I do.” “Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelt in him.”

The spirit of the greatness of the little ones that comes through their meekness is recorded in Samuel where David sent for and fetched into the King's palace Jonathan's son who was lame in both feet to eat at the King's table. David did this because of the love he had for Jonathan whom he loved as his own soul. This is a type of the same love that Christ has for His heritage of which this speckled bird is a type. It is not just any bird. It is a SPECKLED BIRD and those black spots represent the same ones on this heritage. Anything that is speckled contains specks and spots. Christ had to come and remove those black spots from off the ones His Father had given Him for an inheritance. Those spots and specks serve a good purpose for the knowledge of their existence upon them keeps them down at their brethren's feet because the feet are the lowest part of the body that one can get to. That is the reason Christ told Peter that He need only wash his (Peter's) feet.

Jonathan's son, who was lame in both feet, certainly showed how little the Lord's people are by type and example because he referred to himself as a "dead dog". He sat at the table in the King's palace in a way so that his lameness could not be seen. Here is the church, the SPECKLED BIRD. We may look out at a congregation of believers, collectively as an audience while in worship, and yet not literally behold this lameness, al-

though it is there in large proportions. God sees this lameness in the hearts of His people. The world cannot see it. It is hid from them.

Even when it came down to it. His chosen disciples, yet being under the law of sin and death in their experience, fled and forsook Him. Peter denied Him three times, cursing and swearing that he had never known Him. This is the way all those other birds fly off and leave this SPECKLED BIRD. The very spirit that was in Christ is also in His people when He visits them and causes that Spiritual wind to blow. All the other birds will fly away when that Spiritual wind blows upon the Lord's people. May the Lord comfort us when those other birds fly on and leave us. Surely, it strengthens one's hope when they fly away.

Those birds that fly off and leave this speckled bird are a type of those who had gathered once at a place called Calvary saying, "*He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.*" Luke 24:25. The one just to his left said, "*If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.*" Luke 23:29. *These are the ones who are a type of the birds that fly off and leave the SPECKLED BIRD. The one just to His right had the same humble spirit as the poor publican who smote upon his breast saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."* Luke 18:13. The one just to His right, like the poor publican in God - given humbleness declared, "*Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation. And we indeed justly; for we*

receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." Those who fly away are a type of those who spit in his face, struck (slapped) Him, nailed His hands and His feet to the cross, pierced His side, mocked and scoffed at Him until He said, "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*" Then one named Joseph, whom the scripture says was "*a good man, a just man,*" (See Luke 23:53).

Now concerning the resurrection, recently being burdened, I begged the Lord to give me some evidence that my hope might be strengthened. One night in a dream I was shown a body lying in a coffin in a grave with the man's head cut off even with his body. That worried me very much for a while. Finally, it was show me that the headless body, lying there in the grave, is a figure and type of the body collectively of all the Lord's people, the chosen, elect church and family of God, awaiting the first resurrection of the just at Christ's second coming. The Head that was missing was Christ, the great Head of the Church, who has risen from the dead and is now at the right Hand of the Father in Heaven.

The Lord has blessed me to see that truth of the resurrection many times since Paul wrote in *II Thessalonians 4:14*, "*Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.*" Christ said to the thief on His right, of whom the speckled bird is a type, "*Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*" Luke 23:43. Christ referred to the soul and spirit of that thief that was about to leave the body

of that thief. This body of the thief is also a part of the same headless body that was shown to me lying there in the earth, peacefully awaiting the time when that great Spiritual Head, the Lord Jesus, will, as He promised, come back again to raise the sleeping dust of that same body and reunite it with soul and spirit in the same Paradise. The bodies of His saints are only asleep now in the grave or tomb or in the sleeping dust, awaiting the fulfillment of their election and redemption at that eternal day of endless life when the soul and spirit, now resting in the Paradise of God our Saviour, will again be reunited with that same identical body in which they resided while in this natural life and world.

When Christ was here in the flesh and upon earth, He restored life to the twelve year old girl. See Luke 8:42. The power of the same resurrection was made manifest in Elijah's day when the widow of Zarephath's son had died. It says, "*His sickness was so great that there was no breath left in him.*" *1st Kings 17:17*. Her prayer to God was answered for the return of his soul and life when Elijah, at the command of God, stretched himself upon the child three times and cried unto the Lord, "*O Lord my God, I pray thee, let his child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; AND THE SOUL OF THE CHILD CAME INTO HIM AGAIN, AND HE REVIVED.*" *1st Kings 17:21, 22, 23*. Here is proof that the soul, as well as the spirit (for the soul cannot live without the spirit) returns back to the

body. Christ also raised Lazarus from the grave after he had been dead four days. All of these cases illustrate and illuminate the glorious truth in the resurrection of the body in the Trinity of God and of the trinity of man as taught by the Apostle Paul. He said, ***“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole SPIRIT and SOUL and BODY be preserved BLAMELESS unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.” 1st Thess. 5:23.***

There is much discussion as to the kind of body with which they shall be raised. Paul made that clear. That same corporal body that was shown to me, lying in that grave, will be changed to a Spiritual Body when reunited with the great Head in the first resurrection. ***“It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a Spiritual body.” 1st Cor. 15:42, 43, & 44.***

The little birds here in time sin with all their power each clear morning without clouds just after the breaking of day when the natural sun is rising out of the east. But on that happy Morn of all mornings, these glorified ones at the coming of their Spiritual Son, the Lord Jesus, shall rise when He comes from the east to carry that Heritage of God, that GREAT SPECKLED BIRD, home with Him for whom He gave His life as a ransom. She will give a shout of praise and hallelujah

to Him, resounding into that glory land, to Him who give her home of eternal rest and final victory over all her enemies, sin, death, hell, the grave and the devil. John tells us what that song of praise and triumph will be in a hallelujah chorus that man never composed as He opens the gate and portal of immortal glory where He will present them to His father” without SPOT, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” **WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN TO RECEIVE POWER, AND RICHES, AND WISDOM, AND STRENGTH, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY AND BLESSING, “forever and ever Amen. (Revelation 5:12.)**

The following verses come to my mind as I close this article concerning that great SPECKLED BIRD. I heard them quoted many years ago:

THE GREAT SPECKLED BIRD

***What a wonderful thought I am thinking.
Concerning a Great Speckled Bird !
You remember her name is recorded
In the pages of God's Holy Word.***

***All the other birds flock around her.
And she is despised by the squad,
For the Great Speckled Bird of the Bible,
Represents you, the great Church of God.***

***Always desiring to lower her standard,
They watch her every move that she makes;
How they long to find fault with her teaching,
But really they find no mistakes.***

***She is now spreading her wings for a journey,
That she is going to take by and by,
When the great tribulation is over,
She will meet her dear Lord in the sky.***

*I am glad I have learned of her teaching,
Yes, I'm glad to hope my name's in her
book;*

For I want to be on/ never fearing

*On the face of my dear Saviour to look.
When He comes descending and shout-
ing from Heaven,*

*On a cloud as He writes in His word
We'll be joyfully carried to meet Him ON
THE WINGS OF THE GREAT SPECKLED
BIRD.*

Geo. A. Fulk
January 15, 1987

(Reprint from Zions Landmark)

AARON'S ROD THAT BUDDED

(Numbers 17:8. Hebrews 9:4)

It has been requested by an Elder that we write upon the above subject, which we shall do, the Lord enabling us.

Aaron was the elder brother of Moses and is first mentioned in Exodus 4:14 as "Aaron the Levite, thy brother," God Himself saying. "I know that he can speak well." A God that works at both ends is here seen, giving Aaron a mind to set out from Egypt to go and meet his brother Moses, whom God had commanded to go down into Egypt. God said to Moses, "Behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart."

In Exodus 4 we see that God had instructed Moses, first his rod turning into a serpent, then at God's command he took it by the tail and it became a rod again. God then commanded Moses to put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out,

his hand was as leprous as snow. Again God commanded him to put his hand into his bosom and when he took it out, it was turned again as his other flesh.

When Aaron met Moses it was at Horeb, in the Mount of God, where Moses had seen the Angel of the Lord in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush. Exodus 3. In this lovely, but awe-inspiring place, the favoured brothers met, here they greeted one another with a holy kiss, here they were united in a common cause, to walk in God's command even though it meant to face a frowning world. They went from the Mount of God to visit the people and elders of Israel, where Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. "And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped." Exodus 4:31.

In Exodus 7, the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." In the same chapter, verse 10, we find Aaron casting down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants and it became a serpent. Pharaoh then called on his wise men and the sorcerers: "Now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments and their rods became serpents."

We do not believe that they could by their magic produce the same effect,

but we do believe that our God caused the same result in their effort, so as to harden Pharaoh and his people against letting God's people go. The wonder to us is that Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods, it brings to mind that *"God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are."* It shows that before God's authority every false way was to disappear. We see in this instance in the purpose of God, that the magicians could do as Moses and Aaron did in the first three miracles, but in the plague of lice, they could not bring forth lice by their enchantments and they admitted their failure and said, *"This is the finger of God."*

Aaron, the spokesman and prophet, seems to be set before us as standing between God and His people, chosen of God. *"No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."* Aaron, the Levite, who had dwelt in Egypt, and witnessed the distress and enslavement of his own people, and was acquainted with their grief and sorrow, was a suitable companion for Moses, his brother, even though we see in him weakness, a man subject to temptation. In the office of High Priest which he was later on to fill, his brother would be a strength to him, for had he not heard God's word and seen the burning bush and the Angel of the Lord in the midst of the flame? After

events prove that Aaron, left to himself, could turn to the ways of men to worship gods of their own making.

When Israel had encamped before Mount Sinai and Moses went up the mountain to receive the Law from God, in his absence the people murmured and said to Aaron, *"Up, make us gods which shall go before us, for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what has become of him."* Exodus 32:1. Aaron said, Break off the golden earrings of your wives and sons and daughters and bring them to me, and of them he made a molten calf, and they said, *"These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."* Aaron, the good talker, the one whose rod had swallowed up the rods of the magicians of Egypt! O Aaron! How couldest thou fall so low? No doubt this was God's way (as in Peter's terrible denial of his Lord) to banish self-confidence and to cause a self-loathing. What a failure he must have felt himself to be, how ashamed he must have felt that he, who had seen the power of God to sustain them before Pharaoh and his wise men, should so forget the power of Israel's God, as to foolishly make a molten calf and listen to their rebellion, becoming a leader of them in their false worship.

Aaron, chosen of God, in his confession to Moses (on his return) exposes his own weakness when left to himself, and his putting the blame on the people, saying that they wanted it so, did not fail to heap upon himself

self condemnation that would affect his walk all the days of his life. How shocked Moses was in Deuteronomy 9:16-20. *"And I looked, and behold, ye had sinned against the Lord your God, and had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the Lord had commanded you. And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands and brake them before your eyes. And I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the Lord was wroth against you to destroy you. But the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also. And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him; and I prayed for Aaron also the same time."*

The intercession of Moses which was effectual, and the humbling consciousness of his errors, made Aaron, under God's abounding grace, a fit man to stand before Israel as their High Priest.

Israel did not travel for long after that distressing experience before they began to murmur and find fault with Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them, wherefore lift ye up yourselves above

the congregation of the Lord?" Read Numbers 16 to see what awful rebellion showed itself, and there we see that the earth opened and swallowed Korah, Dathan and Abiram and all that appertained unto them. Aaron stood between the dead and the living and made an atonement for the people and the plague was stayed. Then a long-suffering God commanded them to take each one a rod for the house of his fathers, and Aaron's rod was to be the rod for the house of Levi. Thus twelve rods were brought to the Tabernacle with the name of each man upon his rod, and Aaron's rod was amongst them.

These rods Moses laid up before the Lord in the Tabernacle of Witness. *"And it came to pass that on the morrow Moses went into the Tabernacle of Witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms and yielded almonds.... And the Lord said unto Moses, bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony to be kept as a token against the rebels and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me that they die not."*

Aaron's rod that budded and blossomed and bare fruit was therefore kept in the Ark of the Covenant, it was there as an everlasting testimony against rebels who would ever dare to do contrary to God's ordered way, a proof in all ages that God, the God of Israel, had established His worship, chosen Aaron as His High Priest and the house of Jacob as His chosen people.

What were these rods but dead sticks that man had cut down, sticks with

no life in themselves? Nothing that Aaron had done by nature made him to differ from the other eleven. The office of Priesthood was bestowed on him by his God, and the life manifested in that rod while in the Tabernacle of Witness that night (the night being a type of the night of the legal dispensation during which time the Aaronic priesthood flourished) was from an entirely different root than the natural root of the tree from which the rod was taken. This of course, was in God's purpose. Our Lord, coming from the tribe of Judah, could not be a priest under the law, the rod of Judah remained a dead stick when Aaron's rod lived, yet we are told in Matthew 2:2 that the wise men said, "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." He must live and die, becoming a dead stick, cut off from the land of the living for the sins of His People. God was His Father, though He was also the seed of the woman, yet there was no sin found in Him, only by imputation. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." This was in obedience to the law to produce a righteousness that would fit us, and to cleanse us from all sin by His precious blood.

In Aaron there was a God revealed, living testimony, he, in his person, had to be a man without blemish. Before the Lord he must carry the twelve tribes nearest to his heart, as the breastplate had twelve stones enclosed within it, also the Urim and Thummim, shedding light and beauty over them all. He must sprinkle the whole tabernacle with blood, he must make the various sac-

rifices. We see him performing his many duties faithfully, surely there were evidences of life in his authority. In all he did, even to his going once a year into the Holy of Holies, we see, as in the rod that budded and blossomed, promises of better days to come. When he returned and Israel rejoiced in sins forgiven, we see the fruit of his intercession, forgiveness was felt by the whole of Israel at the High Priest's return. It was felt by some when they laid their hand on the victim's head, (the lamb about to be offered) when blessed by faith to see Jesus, the innocent dying for the guilty.

Not only Aaron, the High Priest, but the prophets all spake of Jesus, His sufferings and the glory that should follow. Like the bud and the blossom they carried promises of fruit to come. The joy to which they gave vent when feeling the favour of God showed that many were given to taste of the fruit of God's love and mercy. Under those types and shadows they were encouraged to speak of a day to come when One would come as King and Priest, who would give even the stones of their temple a glory beyond the glory of Aaron and those who followed him in the same office. Thus the testimony of Aaron, his offerings and all that he did, testified of Jesus. If Jesus had not come, the budding and blossoming would have been of no value. The fruit being seen showed the certainty of His coming. No wonder Moses prayed "*And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.*" Psalm 90:17.

To accomplish this that had been a mystery hidden from those of old but

revealed in the Gospel, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

*"Almighty God sigh'd human breath!
The Lord of Life experienced death!
How it was done we can't discuss,
But this we know 'twas done for us."*

Our Lord must die, as the Lamb of God, to bring forth much fruit. He must come alive again to be a High Priest for ever, He, who was not of the tribe of Levi, but of Judah, whose rod remained dead, arose from the dead and was declared to be a Priest for ever after the power of an endless life. He has gone, as our High Priest, by His own blood, into the Holy of Holies, which is Heaven itself, and has poured out His blessed Spirit upon us, enabling us to walk in love and do those things that are well-pleasing in His sight. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is spoken of as the firstfruits, and Christ Jesus' body is the firstfruits, for He only hath immortality, but when He appears the second time, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Through the Spirit's work we cry Abba Father, His Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

*"To all eternity our King
And Priest shall be adored;
Sinners from Satan's power released
Shall ever praise the Lord."*

Elder George Ruston

From Elder Lambert's book,
"Tried In The Furnace".

DEVILS' BELIEF VERSUS
PERFECT FAITH
May, 1950

"The devils also believe and tremble." - James 2:19.



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

I have tried to write for many hours, weeks and months in vain. I have become so exhausted and nervous in the many attempts, that I am thoroughly convinced that I am just as dependent upon the direct operation of God's Holy Spirit to write as I am to preach the gospel of the blessed Son of God. I am making the attempt again with fear and trembling, trusting that God will be pleased to lead my mind into a fruitful field of thought, and give me the words to comfort, console and edify God's little children.

I am now reminded of a request made by P.L. Kenly of Roanoke, Virginia, to write upon James 2:19 especially the last part, to wit: "The devils also believe and tremble."

James did not say that the devils had faith. No place in the Scriptures do we find any statement that would intimate that the devils trusted in God or were in possession of faith. We are forced to admit that the devils gave assent to the fact that there is but one God, even to the acknowledging of Jesus - the Holy One of God - as we shall find when we consider certain Scriptures. We would like to compare and contrast belief and faith to further clarify that expression of Scripture.

Belief is the mental assent to a statement, proposition, or existing condition of things. Belief is simply an act of the understanding, but trust and faith are

active moving principles of the mind. Belief does not extend beyond the assent of the mind, but trust and faith compel to action. Belief is speculative while faith and trust are operative. Belief is common to all religions, trust and faith are peculiar to those who believe in divine revelation and salvation by the grace of God. Theorists substitute belief for faith. I trust that the reader will be blessed to keep this in mind as we further meditate upon this expression of Scripture.

Yes, the devils believe there is one God. They do not choose to believe this just because it is pleasing to them, but because that God exercises power over them. No man or devil can believe anything without evidence. God sets the bounds of the devil's maneuvers and they can go no farther. This is proved in the case of Job when the devil had to secure permission from God each time he chose to hurt Job. Each time the devil was told how far he could go and where he must stop. The devil was forced to believe that he was absolutely controlled by Almighty God. It could not be said of the devil that some people proclaim that he believes in God because their devil has free-will sailing and is so powerful that even though God is trying to save everybody, the devil will be victorious in getting the largest number. A devil with that kind of power could not believe in God. Remember that James says, "The devils also believe and tremble."

I want to call your attention to the eighth chapter of the gospel according to Matthew 29, "And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou

come hither to torment us before the time?" The devils were forced to recognize Jesus as the Son of God. They cried out unto Him fully aware of His power over them. Let us consider their question, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God." They had nothing indeed to do with Him. They had no interest in His grace, blood or righteousness. He was no Savior and Redeemer for them. But contrary to this they realized that He had to do with them. They trembled at His presence and knew they would have to obey His all commanding voice, though terribly against their wills. They knew He had power to cast them out, "so the devils besought Him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine." Jesus bade them go and they went into the devils to the extent that His word returned not unto Him void, but accomplished that which He pleased, and it prospered in the thing whereunto He sent it. It was astonishing to the observers to see a character who exercised such power and authority that He could command the unclean spirits to come out of men and they would come out.

Let us now notice Acts 19:15, "and the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Paul had been disputing daily in the school of Tyrannus for two years. During this long time both Jews and Greeks were privileged to hear the word of the Lord. God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul in healing diseases and casting out evil spirits. This became so well known that even exorcists at-

tempted to imitate. Some vagabond Jews, who were exorcists, attempted to imitate Paul and Jesus in casting out evil spirits. They would say to the evil spirits, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." These evil spirits recognized this false claim of power as evidenced in their statement and question. "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" They knew that Jesus had the power to cast them out because He had done so in many instances. It was an intimate knowledge because they had heard His command and had been forced to obey Him. They had come in direct contact with Him in the demonstration of His power over them. They had also come in direct contact with Paul and He had commanded them to depart from individuals and they were forced to obey His command. They knew Paul to be a servant of the Lord because He was given power over them. The question, "Who are Ye?" suggests that they did not believe that these vagabond Jews were given this power over them. The evil spirits proved that their surmise was true when they that were possessed of the evil spirits pounced upon these Jews, overcame them, and were victorious over them so that these exorcists had to flee wounded and naked.

I am of the opinion that those who are possessed of these evil spirits today may and do fight among themselves, but they are made to tremble when they came into contact with the true servants of the all powerful God. The devil is as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). He is made to know that some he cannot devour. Those who resist the devil are

empowered to do so by Almighty God, and the consequence is that the devils flee from them (James 4:7). It is indeed comforting and consoling to me to think that the devils are subject to the power of God and can do no more than what my Father pleases. They must bow to Him and tremble.

May we now consider the subject under discussion by James when he made this statement, "The devils also believe and tremble." He was treating upon the subject of the perfect faith. He was exposing the folly of those who boast of faith without works. He was insisting that true faith was made perfect by works. He makes the statement in James 2:17, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Not only are works without faith dead works, but it is just as true also, that faith without works is a dead faith. The faith that is a gift of God is a living faith. It is not that works are the life of faith, but that good works are the second act necessarily flowing from the life of faith. It is not that we exercise faith by our works, but that faith exercises us into the performing of good works. It is a vain booster who boasts of his faith in God and by his works denies him. The faith that God gives is not dead, but produces good works. Faith is to works as cause is to effect.

James uses two characters to prove that works accompany faith. He cited the works of Abraham and of Rahab, the harlot; and asks if they were not justified by works. As you recall, Paul used these same two characters in his treatise on faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. He is contending that faith prompted them to do these things. Paul says that

faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. This substance and evidence comes only from God as a gift to His children.

There are no contradictions in the writings of James and Paul concerning the subject of faith and works. We would like to examine *Eph. 2:8-10*, ***“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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”***

Salvation, both for time and in eternity, is the gift of God. Through His mercy, goodness and gifts we are saved here in time. This is proved by the tense of the verb used in the expression, “By grace are ye saved.” We are saved through faith, and not of ourselves. This faith is not to be obtained through our merits. It is not as a result of any good works of ours, but it is the gift of God. It is not an offer or proposition conditional upon any acts of man, but it is the gift of God. “Not of works lest any man should boast.” Boasting is excluded. No man can rightly glory in himself nor boast of his goodness. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.” God is the workman, we are His workmanship; God is the creator, we are the creatures. “Unto good works - not by good works. It is not that good works beget faith, but faith begets good works.” It is by the grace of God that we are enabled to walk godly in the present world. “Which God hath before ordained that we should

walk in them.” God said through one of His prophets, “As I have thought, so shall it come to pass; as I have purposed, so shall it stand.” If this be true, surely, if He ordains something it will be just that way. We find the word “ordained” as being rendered “prepared” when we consult the marginal reference. I believe God prepares His people to walk in good works by working in them. He works in them “both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” The good works are just as certain as is the faith, and is as much the gift of God as is the faith. “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.” Your walk and conversation will be godly in this world. We conclude that James and Paul contended that faith and good works were characteristic of God’s little children.

A child of God need not boast of his faith and love for these are manifest in his deeds. He feels little, insignificant and unworthy, and much of the time wonders whether or not he be in possession of this faith and love. If you watch his walk and listen to his conversation, you will find him doing good deeds for his fellowman, and preferring others above himself. There is a change wrought upon one in which it has pleased God to implant this faith and love. It affects his actions and stimulate his conversation. His desires are to obey the commands of Jesus Christ, do the will of God and to praise Him from whence all blessings come. Because of the infirmities of the flesh - the thorns that buffet him about lest he be exalted above mea-

sure - he is not able to do the things that he would. This forces him to be constantly in prayer to Almighty God to be merciful unto his unrighteousness and to forgive him of his sins. This character boasts not of his faith nor of his works. Paul exposed the vanity of those who boasted of their works. James called those who boasted of their faith, "vain men." We see then that boasting either of faith or works would be erroneous, and does not characterize God's little children.

May God grant us this living faith and enable us by His grace to walk worthy in good works. May He bless us to give Him the praise for it all. May we look forward and press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus when we shall be called from this low ground of sin and sorrow up into that heavenly realm where and when we shall perfectly praise Him in that endless eternity. May He add His blessings to this writing as edifying to the household of faith. Amen.

Elder E.J. Lambert

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR AUGUST 1994

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Mrs. Cora J. Hunt, VA	2.00
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OBITUARIES

IN MEMORY OF SISTER
LUCY HERSHMAN DAVIS

My heart is filled with much sadness as I try to write this obituary for dear friend and sister in Christ, sister Lucy Hershman Davis. She died in her home in the Mayfield community on June 9, 1994.

Sister Lucy was born on December 26, 1908 in Chase City, Virginia, one of eight children of Jessie Howard and Emma Wilson Smiley Hershman. She graduated from high school in Chase City, Virginia and attended Averett College in Danville, Virginia.

On April 19, 1930 she married John Marion (Alex) Davis who predeceased her in September, 1971. They had no children. She and her husband operated the Chevrolet automobile dealership in Gretna, Virginia for a number of years before moving to the Mayfield community near Ruffin, N.C. in 1937 where she resided until her death. After her husband's death she continued to manage the farm.

She was a much respected citizen of our community and a member and past president of the Happy Home Extension Homemakers Club.

She was received into the membership of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church in November 1945. She loved her church and was strong in the faith. She was a faithful member and attended the services regularly almost up to the time of her death. She was always concerned about the well being of its members. Although her physical health deteriorated, her mind remained very alert.

She is survived by one sister, Rosa H. Troutt, and one brother, James H. Hershman, both of Ruffin, N.C. and a number of nieces and nephews.

Her funeral was held on June 11, 1994 at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church by her pastor, Elder Kenneth R. Key, and Elder Julian R. Williams, and her body laid to rest beside her husband in the church cemetery there to await the second coming of our Lord. May we who mourn her be made to realize that our loss is her gain.

If I may add a personal note, I would like to say that my husband and I were away on vacation at the time of her

death. We are sorry that we could not be here for her funeral. We would have liked so much to view her face one last time. We were deeply moved, however, that the family asked our two sons to be pallbearers to help carry her body to its final resting place.

Written by one who loved her and misses her so much.

Connie M. Page

BROTHER RALPH POTTER

We have lost another of our precious members at Chapel Church.

He was born May 15, 1910 to Lewis and Nannie Potter. Brother Ralph was married to Hester Bousman Feb. 15, 1939. To this union was born four sons and one daughter. Kenneth, Dennis, Joe, Calbert and Betty. He was blessed with 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Brother Ralph joined Chapel Primitive Baptist Church in April 21, 1968 and was baptized in May 19, 1968 by Elder O.K. Tench.

He was given grace to bear his afflictions during his sickness with cancer.

Brother Ralph died at the age 83. His funeral was conducted by Elder Thomas Solomon and Elder Raymond Goad at the Flora Funeral Chapel. He was laid to rest September 20, 1993 in the Potter family cemetery to await the second coming of the Lord.

We miss Brother Ralph dearly at Chapel Church.

Written by a brother in hope,
Elder Thomas Solomon

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 162

KEELING, VA., DECEMBER 1994

NO. 12

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old Baptist Cause

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, box 420, Keeling, Virginia 24566

SONG

Love of Jesus.

**LOVE divine, how sweet the
sound**

**May the theme on earth
abound;**

**May the hearts of saints below,
With the sacred rapture glow.**

**Love amazing, large, and free,
Love unknown, to think on me;
Let that love upon me shine,
Saviour, with its beams divine.**

**Better than earth's gilded toys,
Or an age of carnal joys;
Better far than Ophir's gold,
Love that never can be told.**

**Better than this life of mine,
Saviour, is thy love divine;
Drop the veil, and let me see
Rivers of this love in thee.**

**While in Mesech's tents I stay,
Love divine shall tune my lay;
When I soar to bliss above,
Still I'll praise a Saviour's love.**

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 EDITORIAL



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it."

There are many ways to approach this marvelous text to which there is no end; but it is my desire to dwell upon one word within it, if it be pleasing to the One who spake it. That word is "word". Words spoken or written are the principal, but not the only ways, that God and men communicate. Paul wrote, *"Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air"* Surely it is my desire to speak and write so as to be easily understood; for misunderstandings lead to confusion. Neither do I wish to deceive, but to speak the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Jesus said there are false Christs and false prophets, (I hope I am not one of them,) who would deceive the very elect if it were possible. The elect cannot be deceived, but those that perish will be, for God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; because they received not the love of the truth; that they might be saved. *"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born. speaking lies."* Paul wrote, *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy: having their conscience seared with a hot iron."* These same spirits are among us in these latter times, and when possible we should avoid them. The expressions of their eyes and face and the tone of their voice

often give evidence of the lies which they speak.

In the beginning the world was of one language, and of one speech, but the people then, (and they continue to do so to this day,) thought to build a tower that would reach unto heaven. (See Genesis chapter 11.) But the Lord came down and confounded their language so that they could not understand one another's speech, and in this way the Lord scattered them abroad on all the earth. That is why we have many languages in the world today, and why the scriptures had to be translated from the original language. The bible which Old School Primitive Baptists use and believe is a translation by renown scholars appointed by King James and is believed to be the best translation ever written, and when rightly understood every single verse is in complete accord with all the others. The revised versions of today have changed the words to what some think they should be, and thereby they have changed the meaning of many scriptures. We are told that these revised scriptures only make them easier to interpret and understand. What does the Holy Scriptures tell us? *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* Even the prophets of old did not know what their prophecy did signify, therefore they searched diligently for what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ

which was in them did signify when it did testify beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister these things. (1 Peter chapter 1). Jesus himself taught his disciples, yet they did not understand what he taught until they had received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Jesus spake many parables unto the multitudes; *"And without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, saying, I will open my mouth in parables: I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."* Jesus revealed the meaning of the parables to his disciples, and they asked him why he spake unto the multitudes only in parables. *"And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they might see, and not perceive; and hearing they might hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven."* Can we not see from this that the scriptures are not to the world at large, only to his elect children?

In the parable of the sower Jesus explained to his disciples that the seed sown is the word of God. It is sown in many places, but only in good ground, which is an honest and good heart, does it bring forth fruit with

patience. This honest and good heart is one that God promised to give after he had taken the cold and stony heart out of our flesh: ***“that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”*** (Ezek.11:19-20). There is obviously a people who do not receive a new heart: are they not the same ones who are not given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God? And God said of them, that he will recompense their way upon their own head. (verse 21). The non-elect will say, This is a hard doctrine: who can believe it? Paul said, ***“What then, are we any better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.”*** (Rom.39-10). But we read in Rom.15 & 18, ***“For he saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”*** ***“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.”***

In the beginning God spake into existence the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. ***“For he spake, and it was done: he commanded and it stood fast.”*** ***“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”*** Before he did any of these things he chose a certain people in his Son Jesus Christ,

that they should be holy and without blame before him in love. They are the ones whom Jesus came into the world to save. He did not come to save every man, nor to offer them anything, for nowhere in the scriptures can we find that he offered eternal life or anything else to any man: but we do find that he offered himself without spot unto God: ***“and by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”***

The children of God are called sheep, and in John chapter 10 we find that Jesus told certain Jews, ***“But ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life.”*** Jesus gives, but does not offer eternal life to his sheep; and he does not give eternal life to any which are not his sheep: and the life that he gives his sheep was in him before the foundation of the world. How did God choose his children in Christ before there was any of them? God is an eternal being, having no beginning and no ending. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent: having all power to do all things as it pleases him; having all knowledge, for he knows nothing now that he did not know eternally; and he is everywhere present and nowhere absent, for he filleth eternity. God knew every being that he would give life to in the world, and he gave a portion of them life in Jesus Christ, a life that can never perish. These are the ones described in Ps. 139:16-17: ***“My substance was not hid from thee,***

when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, being yet unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them." Paul tell us "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." "And he is the head of the body, the church." No man has the power to add himself to God's book, which is the book of life. This book of life is, I believe, Jesus Christ, "For in him we live, and move and have our being." It is written in Rev. 20:15, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This is the second death, which God's elect shall never suffer, for they have been given eternal life, and had a part in the first resurrection which is Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the WORD of God. "In the beginning was the WORD and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God." John 1:1. In Rev.19:13 we read, "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name was called The WORD of God." In 1 John 5:7 we find, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the WORD, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Therefore when we speak of God's word we speak of Jesus and also of the spoken word. These are synonymous, and they bear the same power. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher pow-

ers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." In Heb. 4:12-13 we read, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." In Ps.139:1-4: "O LORD, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and my uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether." When Adam transgressed God's commandment and died, all of his posterity was in him and all died in him. This was not a corporeal death, but a separation from God. (Death is but a separation from something.) This being true, all men are born dead to God, for we are only Adam multiplied. We are earthly and have the sinful and depraved nature of our earthly father, and Paul tells us, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The non-elect do not, and cannot, understand this, and they say that a man must do

something to be saved; but how can a dead man do any thing? He cannot; therefore something must be done for him if he is to ever see God in peace. He must be quickened out of his dead, alienated state and given life, for life must precede action. Jesus said, *"The time is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."* And, *"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."* Also, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."*

The non-elect understand passing from life unto death, but they cannot understand passing from death unto life. Jesus did not say, He that wants everlasting life must hear and believe, but if he hears and believes he already has life everlasting. One must have this life if he has an ear to hear spiritual things, and 8 times in the four gospels, and 8 times in the book of Revelations it is written, *"He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."*

The two-edged sword mentioned before can cut with both edges. The word of God also cuts in many directions; for it can kill and make alive. *"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."* Deut.32:39. When many of the people heard the

words preached by Stephen, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed upon him with their teeth; they cried out and stopped their up their ears; they cast him out and stoned him to death: and Saul, who would later be converted and given an ear to hear, gave his consent unto it. But on the day of Pentecost those who heard the words of Peter were pricked in their heart and said, Men and brethren what shall we do? Peter was not speaking to the non-elect, but unto those who had been given to hear and had been called of God. Therefore he told them to repent and be baptized, *"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."* Not one more nor one less, but even as many.

From the day that we are born everything that we hear, see, taste, smell and feel has an effect upon us, imperceptible though it may be, and these things shape our lives, our every thought and action. Being made subject to vanity we follow the desires of the flesh; but Paul tells us, *"For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."* Most men believe they have complete control over their own lives and destiny, but they know not that God is in complete control of all things. We read, *"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. Did he leave out any of the things not yet done? Certainly not. In Prov. 16:9 we read, "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps." Jer. 10:23 said, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps." These scriptures, as well as many others, should prove beyond all controversy that no man controls his own way and destiny, and I am glad that it is so; for if left to myself I would quickly perish, and my destiny would be in hell: but by the grace of God I am what I am.

We know that no man would choose to suffer, but if we are led by the Holy Spirit to follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Saviour then we must suffer; for he was a man despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. *"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."* No man can suffer as did the holy Son of God, yet his elect children do suffer, *"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."* We are also told, *"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by*

the things he suffered." We must also learn obedience by the things we suffer: not the suffering that is common to all mankind, but sufferings that the non-elect know nothing about: such as fiery trials, persecutions, temptations, afflictions and tribulations, and many of these are imposed upon us by the non-elect. We know however, *"that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."* If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. We read in 1 Peter chapter 1 that, *"if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."* James said, *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."* Jesus said, *"- but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."* Our afflictions are appointed unto us as Paul wrote, *"That*

no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

Beloved brethren, God has given us the Holy Scriptures, which are his written word; and, ***“All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*** He has also given us his holy Son whose vesture was dipped in blood and whose name is called The WORD of God. His word shall never fail. May God bless us to always praise, honour, and worship him who hath appointed us unto salvation. ***“Christ was once appointed to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him shall he appear a second time without sin unto salvation.”*** May we always be looking for him.

These are only a few of the many thoughts I have had concerning this marvelous text, but may God bless them to his praise, honor and glory, and to the comfort, and edification of his beloved children. May he bless the truth and pardon all error. Pray for this poor sinner when at the throne of mercy.

Elder C.C. Wilbanks

ST. JOHN 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

ARTICLES

THE OBLIGATION OF CHURCH MEMBERS

The privilege of membership in the church of Christ is a great one indeed. The church furnishes a safeguard against the temptations of the world when its privileges and obligations are understood. Having the association of the people of God and hearing the gospel preached, is a great comfort. That this privilege may be continued and enjoyed, certain obligations are assumed by those who become members of the church.

ATTENDANCE: The church could be of no benefit to the members, nor to the world, if the members did not meet together; hence arises the obligation of attendance at the regular meetings of the church. Paul gives a rule which should be observed by all the members of the church. ***“Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.”*** (Hebrews 10:25). Neglect of this duty is discouraging to the church and to the pastor. We should consider that this is a service we owe; and when we are ***“making”*** excuses for staying away, we should consider whether it is valid, and to remember that the Lord knows the very thoughts and intents of the heart would He have approved it? The searching test, would the Lord excuse me? ought to be ever before us.

We may be tempted to stay away because of what someone has done,

or not done. but are we justified in treating the services of God with contempt because of what someone in the world does? We are not serving men, but God; and what we do should be done as unto Him, and not as unto men. It is a matter of great importance that churches are justified in requiring their members to attend the meetings; or that they have justifiable grounds for staying away. If the members have the right feeling about it, they will be willing to let the church pass on their reasons for missing the meeting.

THOUGHTFUL OF EACH OTHER: It is the duty of members to be thoughtful of each other. We should think more of the members of the church than we do of the people of the world; and we should show it by our actions. If one of the members is sick, other members should at once show their love and kindness by doing whatsoever may be needful to be done for the comfort of the sick. Jesus showed a sympathetic nature, and helped and comforted the sick. They were glad to see his face and, hear his voice. His followers should walk in his steps.

Let the sick see your face and hear your voice, and feel the willingness of your hands to help them.

RESPECT FOR THE PASTOR: The church members should show proper respect to the pastor of the church. While he is not to be considered infallible, yet if the Holy Ghost has made him "overseer" of the church, and the church has recognized that appointment by a "call" to the pastorate, his counsel should be sought and his

instructions followed, unless positively contrary to the teachings of the word of God; and in such case the matter should be discussed with him seriously. It is contrary to the word of God to treat the pastor lightly, and to pass his advice and instructions by with contempt. No doubt in many cases neither the pastor nor the church has given the office the consecration they ought.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS: Every member of the church should realize that there is expense connected with the keeping up of a church and its services, and to be honorable with the other members in bearing such burdens. It is not any more honorable in a member to let others pay in the church what he himself should justly pay, than in a business way to fail to pay his just debts. None can bear more than he is able, and we should not expect all to bear an equal amount, but we should not expect others who are in no better circumstances than ourselves, to bear more than we do. We should make it our business to know that we are bearing our share; it does not show a becoming interest in the church to be indifferent in this matter. The following question should be asked by each member, and he should not be satisfied until he is informed on each of them:

Am I bearing as much of this according to my circumstances as other members are according to their circumstances?

Not to desire to share equally with other church members according to our ability, is to shrink the responsi-

bility which we solemnly assumed when we asked the church to let us become members. If we are not willing to bear the obligations of membership, we should hesitate to take the privileges and comforts of membership. It is so easy and pleasant when the members consult one another, and all are willing to do what is right. We should meet our expenses cheerfully. A church home is what the members make it. If they are selfish, contrary, covetous, and peevish, and do not bridle their tongue, it will become unpleasant and a burden instead of a joy. If they are loving, kind and forbearing, like the Master, it will be a pleasant place, a glad retreat from the world, where the pure, sweet song of peace and love is sung, and the presence of God is enjoyed.

CARE FOR THE POOR: The members of the church should be careful to look after the poor. Though it is especially the duties of the deacons to relieve immediate needs of the poor it is the duty of every member of the church to be thoughtful in this direction, and to keep the deacons supplied with funds when there is need, and then give personal attention to the poor who may feel to be neglected. The Master was himself very tender toward the poor, and we cannot feel that he would at all approve our course if we neglected them.

TO BE LOVING AND KIND: The members of the church should be very loving and kind toward each other. They are brethren, and they should treat each other as members of one family. This will require that they be

forebearing, for there is none perfect. Should we require perfection in others, it would be more than we could give in return, and it would be very unkind of us. We should be forgiving, for we shall need to ask others to be forbearing and forgiving toward us. Jesus taught his disciples to pray to be forgiving as they forgave others.

SHOULD BEAR PERSONAL WRONG: We should make a distinct difference between bad treatment of ourselves by members and conduct which shows disrespect for the church, and is hurtful to its interests. We can afford to carry a great deal ourselves, but we must not sit by and see others tear down the home which has been established for all the children. The Saviour bore personal abuse silently, but when he went into the Temple and saw it being profaned, he drove out those who showed no respect for his Father's house. If we reverse this, and give a great deal of concern to what others may do to us, but show little interest as to what the church must suffer, we shall not be following the Master.

THE CHILDREN: The members of the church should encourage those who have a hope in Christ, to come to the church, if they receive the preaching of the cross gladly. Especially should this interest be shown toward their own children, the Lord having laid it upon his people to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They should use every endeavor to keep their children from hurtful associations with such things as will prejudice them against

the truth, and the true church. While they cannot regenerate their children, nor be the means of it, yet they should seek to do their whole duty by their children as regards the teaching of the word of God; and especially so when there is evidence that they have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

(Author Unknown)

Printed in Signs of the Times,
January, 1960

Sent to us by Elder Leonard Brammer
Editors

THE BOOK OF ESTHER
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO
CH. 7-VERSES 9-10

The two verses referred to above, read: "*And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.*"

The Lord willing, and desiring that he give me by the Holy Spirit, the understanding and knowledge to write some words that might be comforting to the Lord's people, I make this effort in much fear and trembling. I hope to be able to put in writing some of my thoughts concerning certain events that came to pass as recorded by the writer in the Book of Esther. I desire to make particular reference to Queen Esther, Mordecai and Haman, and the part they occupied in the narrative.

As we read in the 1st Chapter of Esther, we find that king Ahasuerus, who reigned from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, prepared a feast unto all his princes and his servants, and all the nobles before him. He showed the riches of his kingdom and the honor of his majesty many days, even a hundred and four score days (180). The decorations were all of fine linen, silver rings and pillars of marble. Much royal wine was in abundance to be served. At the height of the celebration, the king commanded that the Queen Vishti be brought before the king to shew her beauty for she was fair to look upon. But the queen refused to come and this angered the king, and he was very wroth. And because of this the king decreed that the honor of queen be given to another. The fact that the queen did not give honor to the king, he made a decree that all wives shall give honor to their husbands, both great and small. Here perhaps we may have a figure of the church (the bride of Christ), must give honor to the husband, the head of the church, Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now back to the text. After Vashti had been dethroned as queen, the king decreed that fair young virgins be brought to him for the purpose of choosing another queen to replace Vashti. And when the months of purification which was necessary for one of the virgins to become queen had been fulfilled, there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, who had been carried away from Jerusalem, and had become a leader of the Jews.

And he had taken Esther (his uncle's daughter) who he had brought up due to the death of her parents. She was fair and beautiful and Mordecai had taken her for his own daughter. During the reign of king Ahasuerus, the Jews were being persecuted, and the life of Mordecai, because he was the leader of the Jews, was sought. And after all the purification, Esther was chosen Queen over all others. And it is said the king loved Esther above all others and she obtained grace and favor in his sight. The queen had certified and made Mordecai, the leader among the Jews, who sat in the king's gate. And during those days, two of the chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, sought the king's life, but when Mordecai told the Queen, she ordered that they be hanged on a tree, and this accomplishment was carried out as ordered. The attempt during those days to destroy the Jews and their leader Mordecai, perhaps is figurative of the attempt to destroy the Lord Jesus and his followers in the grace dispensation. But all attempts have failed and always will, for our God is in complete control of all things both in heaven and in earth, and satan and all his cohorts will never be able to overthrow or thwart the purposes of the eternal God, who has declared the end from the beginning.

Now following the hanging of the two chamberlains, the king promoted Haman and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And all the king's servants that were in the gate bowed and revered Haman as the king had commanded. But there was

one that did not reverence him or bow down to him, and that was Mordecai, the leader of the Jews, whose lives were being sought by Haman. There was during the days of the prophets, and also in the grace dispensation, a people that God has called out and chosen, who will not bow down to the dictates of men.

Haman continued his assault on the Jews, particular Mordecai, and said unto King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all provinces of the kingdom. And their laws are diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to those that have the charge of the business" Esther 3:8-9. Letters were sent to all provinces to destroy, kill and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women. This effort to destroy the Jews, the chosen people of God, is also figurative of the effort in the grace dispensation to destroy spiritual Israel. You will recall King Herod made the attempt to take the life of the Lord and Saviour at his birth, but was hindered in this attempt, because God had determined and decreed before the world began that Joseph should take the baby from that country.

Haman continued in his efforts to take the live of Mordecai, who was the leader of the Jews, but they all failed. I believe we have here three types or shadows of things to come. Haman

figurative of Herod, who sought the life of the Son of God shortly after his birth. Mordecai figurative of Christ and the Jews figurative of Spiritual Israel under grace. But Haman's attempt to take the life of Mordecai failed, so also did Herod fail in his attempt to take the life of the Son of God. So when Herod ordered that all male children under the age of two should be killed, thinking surely that would remove the Lord by death, he was no longer there as Joseph had fled with him to Nazareth. There is so much contained in 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th chapters of Esther in connection with Haman's efforts to destroy the Jews and Mordecai, that it would not be expedient to try to pen them down in this writing. But in all efforts, the Lord always intervened so that his efforts failed, So in all ages of time, the Lord through his mighty power and control of all things, even the smallest to the greatest that we might deem the efforts, has kept them safe and secure in his arms.

In Esther, Ch. 5, at the banquet of wine that Queen Esther had prepared, the king and Haman being present, the king told Esther any petition she desired he would grant. Haman was invited to the feast, and he apparently took this as a great honor, probably thinking the Queen would assist in disposing of Mordecai. But when Haman saw Mordecai at the king's gate, he was full of indignation against him. But he held his temper, as the saying goes sometimes. We can see Haman "gloating" over the fact the queen had promoted him, and she did

not let any man come to the banquet of the king but himself. Yet he said all this availed him nothing because Mordecai was still sitting at the gate, and he thought the queen would not give the honor to Mordecai. So a suggestion was made by Haman's wife, Teresh, and his friends, that a gallows should be built for the purpose of hanging Mordecai. Continuing in the 6th chapter, we find that the king was told of what Mordecai had done in the death of Bigthania and Teresh in preventing them from taking the king's life. And the king desired to know what honor had been given to Mordecai for this act, and he was told that nothing had been done. At this time Haman was in the court to speak to the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows, and the king said let him come in. The king then asked Haman what should be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor? Now Haman thought the king had him (Haman) in mind to do this honor, and he said let royal apparel the king wore be brought to be given to the man the king was to honor. All these royal things to be brought by the king's most noble princes and array the man, ride him through the street and proclaiming before him. Then Haman who had thought he was to be the man so honored, was commanded to put the apparel on Mordecai and arrayed him on horseback through the street of the city. Then Haman in his wrath, hasted to his house mourning. And told his wife and all his friends what had befallen him. Then his wife and friends told Haman in these words: "If

Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, thou shall not prevail against him, but shall surely fall before him. It would appear now that Haman was beginning to see his downfall and that he would not be able to destroy Mordecai and the Jews.

Now Haman and the king came together to the banquet with Esther the queen. The king had previously told Esther he would grant whatever petition she desired. "Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: For we are sold, I and my people to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage. Then the king Ahasuerus answered unto Esther the queen, who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, the adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath, went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen, for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king." Esther 7: 2-7. The king then knew that Esther was telling the truth, and he ordered that Haman should be hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Thus was Mordecai's life saved, and the very one who had sought his destruction

and the Jews as well, was eliminated by death. We will reiterate here that all of man's efforts to eliminate the Lord's chosen people from the earth will always fail.

Following the death of Haman, as recorded in 8th chapter, Mordecai was given the ring Haman had and was made ruler over all the Jews. And was given authority to destroy all those who array themselves against the Jews. We continue to see here, Mordecai being a figure of Christ, who as God had the authority and power to destroy those who rise up in opposition to the chosen people of Jesus Christ, which is the church. Satan and all his followers, ministers and angels, will never be able to overthrow or consume the Church of Jesus Christ. She is kept by the power of God in all ages, and will so be kept until the end of this time world.

Farewell in the Lord, and please remember this poor sinner when at a throne of mercy.

Just a worm, saved by grace if
saved at all,
Robert L. Miles
1011 N. Nancy Terrace
Plant City, Florida 33566

For some reason I feel led to write something on the 8th Chapter of Revelations. I know unless the Lord guide my pen and direct my thought, this will amount to nothing, yea, less than nothing. For it is not in man who walketh to direct his steps. So may it please the Almighty God of the Universe, to so direct his steps. So may

it please the Almighty God of the Universe, to so direct, that this may bring a little comfort to some of his little ones.

"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."

There was silence for about 1/2 hour. I believe this is the silence before the storm, so to speak, a sort of hush of awe before the awful judgments about to come, sort of like the oppressive silence before the burst of battle.

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."

John saw the seven angels standing before the throne of God, to whom were given the seven trumpets. The seventh seal therefore, embraces these angels and their trumpets, and what they did in the following verses belong to this seal.

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne."

The scene reveals the altar of the tabernacle, a pattern made after heavenly things. This is the altar of sacrifice from which the coal was always taken to light the incense (Lev. 16:13). This angel receives the incense and offers it upon the golden altar. The incense is the prayers of the saints, these to reach the throne of God must be lighted from the altar of sacrifice, or by faith in the blood of the Lamb.

"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."

And the smoke rose before the throne, so the prayers of the saints in the name

of the crucified savior arise to God. The real significance of all this is in the terrible judgments about to follow, the prayers of the saints will come before God, and his care and providence will be over them.

"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake"

There were thunderings, lightning, and an earthquake. Fire is usually a symbol of suffering, which indicates that the judgments of God are about to fall on the earth. The earth in the sense used by God is the great Roman Empire, which embraced the civilized world. An earthquake, thunderings, etc. are indicative of the terrible scenes to follow when the angels sound their trumpets.

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

The first angel sounded. When the first trumpet is blown John saw a mighty cloud rush over the Earth. From it pour hail and fire mingled with blood. This falls upon the earth and a third part is scarred and blasted. The blood indicates the destruction of destroying armies. This verse implies a terrible judgement descending upon a third of the world known to John.

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood;

And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

A great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, again there is carnage and destruction. Before it was a third part of the earth, now it is a third part of the sea. The symbols imply that some mighty powers shall be turned upon the sea, and make it a scene of awful warfare and destruction.

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the foundations of waters;

There fell a great star from heaven, a great burning star falls upon a third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of the waters. A third part of the earth, a third part of the sea, now a third part of the rivers was subjected to judgments.

"And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

Star satan is called wormwood, that is, it is bitterness, because it will fill the world with bitter sorrow. A star is the symbol of a great leader, such a star as this, a blazing meteor, is a symbol of a leader who suddenly appears, rapidly does a terrible work, then disappears.

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

Now it is a third part of the sun, moon, and stars that are smitten, and darkness

follows. The sun is the symbol of a great ruler, and the moon and stars of inferior rulers. If the Roman emperor should be cast from power, his empire withdrawn, the consuls, senators, and great men who supported his power would be cast down, and a period of intellectual and moral darkness would follow. It would freely meet the symbolism.

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

This angel cried woe, woe, woe, because of some judgement yet to come, which would indicate these judgments from these seven angels were over.

I have written briefly of the symbols that are used in these few verses concerning this prophecy, now I will look to history to see if I can find anything that seems to answer these descriptions.

I will get the following information from the book, *THE FALL OF ROME*, written by E. Gibbon. I believe the destruction prophesied by the four great winds started about the year AD 400.

A people known as the Goths gathered out of the then unexplored north, and like a mighty torrent threw themselves like a mighty angry horde upon Rome.

Barbaric as the Indians of the desert, they left behind their march scarred, scorched, blackened, bloody, and desolate lands. Countries blooming like gardens were turned into treeless deserts. In AD 409 under Alaric, their king, they descended on Italy, which had not seen the face of a foreign ship for hundreds of years. Finally the armies gathered around the Imperial city. After a long

siege, the gates were opened, in the dead of the night, and the barbarians rushed in. For three days the terrible sack went on before they were glutted with blood and spoil. Then, their leader having been killed, they left, loaded with spoil.

The hail of war, the fire of burning towns and cities, mingled with the blood of slain defenders, the scorched and blackened lands denuded of their fruit trees, the grass trodden underfoot by the march of armies, all correspond surprisingly with the language of the Scripture. This I believe is a remarkable fulfillment of the prophecy that follows the first trumpet.

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

The second trumpet implies a warfare upon the sea. The Goths completed their work about AD 409. About ten years later another mighty horde of warriors was sweeping south. The principal tribe was called the Vandals. They rushed over Gaul, swept through Spain, leaped over the narrow Straits of Gibraltar, and took northern Africa from the Roman dominion. Then they threw themselves like a burning mountain upon the sea and filled it with fire and blood. In order that they might assail Rome on the seas, and carry their armies to the islands and to Italy, they built fleets and fought for mastery of the Mediterranean. For 600 years no ship hostile to Rome had disputed the mastery of the sea, but now it becomes the theater of war. Fleets meet in battle, the sea is reddened with the blood of the slain, the Roman ensign goes down

died in blood. The islands of the sea fall into the hands of the barbarians and, at last, nearly thirty years after the contest began, their fleet lands their armies in Italy, and they rush upon Rome. The city is besieged, falls, and for fourteen days a pitiless barbarian soldiery spare neither age or sex. The spoil gathered for eight hundred years, from a hundred conquered nations is carried away and loaded upon the Vandal fleets, and the blasted, scorched, pillaged capital is abandoned as unworthy to be held as a permanent possession. Surely these facts seem to fulfill the prophecy of the 2nd trumpet.

And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

The star, or blazing meteor, that fell from heaven does imply some mighty leader who suddenly appears and enters on some baleful work; was there such a leader? Before AD 440 the Romans knew nothing of the Hungarian nation. About that time there suddenly appeared as a meteor would flash in the sky, a warrior upon the banks of the Danube, with eight hundred thousand fighting men under his banner. They had come from the depths of Central Asia, through Russia, and now knocked at the river boundary of the Roman Empire. Fighting their way across the Danube, they rushed westward, crossed the river Rhine, and the river Marne, were met in conflict by the hosts of Rome. The historians tell us that the blood of slaughtered soldiers made the river run with blood, and that from one hundred and fifty thousand to three hundred thousand bodies of the dead attested the fury of the conflict. Then they deserted the river Rhine, turning

southward on the banks of the river Rhone, the armies met again in combat. Then descending from the Alps, the fierce warrior, on the banks of the River Po, fought for the mastery of Italy. Victorious, he marched southward to seize the imperial prize. Unable to fight longer, by rich bribes and priestly deputation Rome got him to depart. He then made Buda, on the river Danube, his capitol, and founded the Hungarian nation. When he died, his followers turned the waters of the Danube from its course, buried him in its bed, then let the river return to flow over the grave of their hero. Beneath the waters of the river Danube still lie the bones of the star called Wormwood, that fell upon the rivers. The trumpets have blown, three awful blows have been struck, and the weakened empire is ready to fall when the fourth trumpet sounds. I believe this has fulfilled the prophecy of the third trumpet.

“And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters;

and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.”

“And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.”

The fourth trumpet, the Goths struck about AD 409, the Vandals from the sea about AD 422, Attila upon the rivers about AD 440. Next came the final invasion of that great Roman Empire. About AD 476 Odoacer, king of Herule, a northern race,

seeing the apparent weakness of the falling empire, besieged and took the weakened city. The feeble emperor was hurled down, the Roman senate that had met for twelve hundred years, was driven from the senate chambers.

The mighty fabric of empire fell to the dust, and the great men were humbled never to rise again. Sun, moon, and stars, emperors, princes, and great men are smitten, lose their powers and cease to give light.

There now begins the period called by all historians the Dark Ages. The fall of Rome brought on this period, when intellectually and spiritually the day and night were darkened, when the minds of men were blinded, and when the church, falling gradually into apostasy, gave forth for ages only a feeble light.

“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!”

I have tried to show the Judgements God sent upon the earth, that was prophesied in this vision to John. Now we can see by this 13th verse that more is yet to come. Whither we see all this clearly or exactly as it was, there is one thing these revelations should surely show us. Of all the many and wonderful blessings which God in his loving kindness and mercy has showered upon us, there is one we should think of above all. That is we escaped many of these terrible judgements and tribulations. I hope I thank my Lord that I am living now in this age. May God bless this writing for whatever purpose he had me write it, I pray it may be a comfort in a small way to some of the brethren.

In bonds of love,
Frank C. Hunt

VOICES OF THE PAST

From Elder Lambert's book,
 "Tried In The Furnace."

PASSING UNDER THE ROD
 September, 1950



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

"And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." Ezekiel 20:37.

I received a request some time ago from W.A. Chandler, Jonesboro, Louisiana, to write upon the text of Scripture quoted above. I undertake to do so fully aware of my inability, trusting that God will grace us with His Spirit to illuminate the mind with spiritual meditations. I have found by sad experience that I cannot command the Spirit at my will.

We desire to consider first, the people to whom this is addressed, the "YOU" in the text. We find this addressed only to the house of Israel. God spake through the prophets in olden times to the Israelites - national Israel. These same words are now applicable to spiritual Israel, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." Spiritual Israel is now scattered in every nation, kindred, tongue and people throughout the earth. God is not speaking to every one of Adam's race, only to the Israelites. All the

Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments are addressed to God's children. They are the only ones who can receive them. You will note that all letters recorded in the New Testament are written to a people of certain characteristics. There is not a command, exhortation, invitation or promise recorded in the Bible without a character description attached thereto. I feel that I would be guilty of high treason before Almighty God should I attempt to apply any of the Scriptures as addressed to all of Adam's race. So, in this treatise I want the readers to consider that the "You" in the text applies to all who are included in the everlasting covenant, all those who shall finally be saved in heaven and immortal glory. Sometimes I think it may be boresome or monotonous to those who sit under the sound of my voice, or read my writings for me to stress the fact that all Scriptures contained in the Bible are written to God's people only.

Let us notice next, the "I" in the text. As stated above, it is God speaking. The One who created the heavens and the earth makes these assertions. The One who worked all things after the counsel of His own will is the author of these expressions. The One who doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth decreed these things. The One who said, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it," spake these

words. He that speaks and it is done, commands and it stand fast, made these declarations. He has spoken it, He will also do it; He has purposed it, He will also bring it to pass!

Jehovah says, "I will cause you to pass under the rod." What does He mean by this statement? What is the rod, anyway? When I think of a rod I am reminded of the adage, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." I think of the proverb, "He that spareth his rod hatheth his son." The Lord chasteneth and scourgeth every son that he receiveth according to Hebrew 12:6. When I think of a rod I think of a whip. I think that troubles, trials, temptations, afflictions, tribulations, and all things that sorely oppress God's children are the smartings of the rod. These things do not come about accidentally. They do not occur haphazardly because God causes you to pass under them. They are in your path and you cannot escape them. God has ordained them for your good and even though they are not good to you, they are good for you. Some people would have you believe that trouble is solely of the devil, but I am persuaded that it is a blessing of God. He says through the Psalmist, "I will be with him in trouble." I dare say that your brightest experience immediately followed your greatest distress. According to the Psalmist, He makes the clouds his chariot. It is in the darkest hours that He appears to His people as their deliverer. We would not appreciate the bond were it not for the rod. We would not appreciate the staff were it not for the rod. David said, "Thy rod

and thy staff they comfort me." The rod beats us down to lean upon the staff, Christ Jesus. The chastening rod of Almighty God causes us to know the filthiness of our own righteousness, and how destitute we are of ability thus fitting us to call upon Him. When we are given to trust in Him, our past troubles then become a comfort to us, for we learn that God used even these as means to bring us unto this trust in Him. Paul said, "We glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulations worketh patience; and patience experience," etc. Paul realized that these tribulations were necessary means that God used in bringing us into that hope that maketh not ashamed. The rod is not applied to us in order to punish us for our sins, because Christ paid the penalty. This penalty is not against those who are encouched in the covenant, for Jesus satisfied the law in our stead. The rod is applied to us in order to make right. It is applied to us to whip us into the right path. It beats pride out of us and makes us humble. The effect of the rod is that we learn obedience. Paul told the Hebrews that Jesus learned obedience by things he suffered. If Jesus was taught obedience by the things He suffered is it a terrible thing that we should learn obedience the same way? Then surely it is a wonderful blessing indeed that He causes you to pass under the rod!

The last portion of the text is "I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." You will notice that our Lord said, "I will bring you into the bond of the covenant," not into the covenant.

I think all God's children were in the covenant in eternity before time. They have always been embraced and included in the covenant, having been chosen in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world, but they must pass under the rod before they can embrace the covenant and come into its relationship. You were chosen into the covenant but you must be brought into the bond of the covenant by the power of Almighty God.

What is the bond of the covenant? Could it be that precious hope that is experienced by you? When hungry and thirsty, your soul fainted in you and you were without hope and felt hell would be your just doom; God was gracious to you, He restored your soul and spoke sweet peace to you. Could the bond be that personal stamp of mercy and grace that is imprinted in your heart? Could the bond be the fruits of the spirit that characterizes God's children such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance? Could it be the shalls and wills of Jehovah that makes the covenant sure and certain to all those embraced therein?

I like to think of the shalls and wills of Jehovah. It is expressed in this covenant that "I will be to them, a God, and they shall be to me a people." God says in Psalm 91, I will set him on high...He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." Jehovah promises, "I will put my laws into their

mind, and write them in their hearts." Space will not permit me to list the many shalls and wills of Jehovah that is now flooding my mind. Suffice it to say that there is not a single condition left for man to perform. Could the setting on high be the bond of the covenant? The rod brings us low and makes us to realize that we are in the miry pit, sinking down, seemingly, into perdition. All our feeble attempts sink us deeper and deeper. He comes to our rescue, takes us up out of the pit and sets our feet upon the rock, Christ Jesus. Is it not a setting on high to see Jesus as our Savior? Is it not an elevation to be raised from the fellowship of this world to the fellowship of the children of God? I well remember the joy experienced by me when the church received me into their fellowship. It is indeed a high place to be graced by the Spirit to sing praises unto Him, to pray to Him, to meditate upon His wonderful promises to the children of men, to write and preach His wonderful doctrine of love and grace! Could the bond of the covenant be the full fruition of it? Could it be heaven and immortal glory that awaits you who are kept by the power of God? Could it be the final fulfillment of all the obligations and vows expressed in the covenant that will be experienced in eternity after this time world?

I am persuaded that the bond of the covenant is the earnest of the inheritance that is experienced by God's children here in time. This foretaste of His love is sweet. The experiences of these many deliverances are wonder-

ful. The few moments spent in prayer are sacred. The joy of His fellowship is sublime. The tie that binds us together in sweet fellowship one with another is great. All His gifts are matchless. These fleeting moments of enjoyment make us yearn and look forward toward the prize of the high calling when we shall quit the walks of men and be received into the full fellowship of God and all His dear little children.

I submit these few columns over my signature to the readers of the Signs trusting that God will bless as He sees fit. May I add that I have been much concerned about this periodical. I feel it a high honor to be on the editorial staff because I feel that God has blessed it to the comfort of Zion for more than a century. Its writers are contending for the same things that the writers were in 1832. May God bless us to make an attempt to enlarge its circulation. God has blessed it to be the oldest and best periodical of its kind among us and I deem it worthy of our support.

Now may the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, be ours to grace us with a godly walk in this life, choosing our changes in this life, and making us submissive to His choice. May He comfort us across the chilly waters of death and finally receive us up into the better clime where no sin or shame shall be, is my prayer if not deceived.

Elder E.J. Lambert

CONTRIBUTIONS

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Mrs. Lovie A. Thompson, NC	10.00
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OBITUARIES

FANNIE MAE HARPER

March 25, 1896 - June 15, 1994



Fannie Mae (Parker) Harper, a member of Pleasant Hill Primitive Baptist Church since April 12, 1950 was called to her eternal home on June 15, 1994 at the age of 98.

She was a devout member of her church, stern in her belief, and de-

sired to hold steadfast to the principles and doctrine the Primitive Baptist had practiced and preached since she could remember. Though her mind and body had grown weary with age, she still had a desire to attend her meetings on fourth weekends, and did so with very few exceptions, last attending in March prior to her death in June.

She was graciously cared for at home by her son and daughter-in-law, Lester and Isabel Harper, until the last few weeks when the hospital and nursing home were required by her doctor. To her family, the church wishes to convey our sympathy and say to you "a job well done" in caring for your loved one in the confines of her home.

Her funeral was conducted at Johnson Funeral Home, Fairview Chapel, by her beloved pastor Elder Henry Jones assisted by Elder Lester Eason. Interment followed in Pineview Cemetery, Rocky Mount, N.C.

In addition to her son and his wife, she is survived by two grandchildren, John who resides in North Carolina and Frank of Wisconsin and two great grandchildren.

We at Pleasant Hill mourn her death as she has been taken from our midst but rejoice for her as we do have a sincere hope she is resting in the arms of the Saviour she so much liked to talk about.

Written at the request of Pleasant Hill Church in conference June, 1994.

J. Carroll Williams

HENRY VERNON JENKINS

H was appointed by Flat Swamp Church to write the obituary of Brother Henry Vernon Jenkins, who died March 13, 1994. He was born near Robersonville, N.C. on May 25, 1909, the son of Chalmers D. and Hettie Jenkins. He spent his entire life in this community, where he was a hard worker, a good neighbor, faithful husband, and loved father.

Brother Vernon was married to Mary Johnson on October 13, 1931. They were blessed with only one child, David, who was a very close and devoted son. Davis later married and they were blessed with only one child. Davis' wife, Betty Ann, was more like a daughter to Brother Vernon and Sister Mary. In their sickness, while Davis had to work, she did all she could to make their afflictions as easy as possible. Brother Vernon lived with his son for some time until his condition got so they could no longer take care of him, and he was put in a nursing home in Windsor, where he died.

Brother Vernon joined Flat Swamp Primitive Baptist Church on Friday before the first Sunday in September, 1970. His wife also joined that day, and they were baptized by Elder J.T. Prescott and Elder N.L. Ambrose. Brother Vernon was a very strong and faithful member, always willing to visit and go as messenger from his church. He and his wife made their home a place of rest for lots of visitors from far and near. Brother Vernon was ordained to deacon at Flat Swamp on

Saturday before the first Sunday in September, 1972. He made the church a good and dependable deacon.

I was exceptionally close to Brother Vernon as we lived near each other and were blessed to visit often. He did many things for me which were very special, and I will never forget. His wife, Sister Mary, died on January 7, 1982, and she and Brother Vernon were so close he grieved so much and just gradually felt he had nothing to live for. I visited him often after her death and hope I helped in some small way. I miss him as a brother deacon and as a true friend.

His funeral services were held by his pastor Elder Joe Sawyer at Biggs Funeral Home in Robersonville. He was laid to rest in Robersonville Cemetery where the flowers and friends showed how much he was loved.

We miss him very much, but feel he is at rest in that which the Lord had prepared for him and him for it.

Brother Vernon leaves to mourn his passing the one son, one brother and one sister. We of Flat Swamp extend our deepest sympathy to the family.

Done by the order of Conference Saturday before the first Sunday in June.

Hassel Allen, Committee
Elder Joe Sawyer, Moderator

SISTER ELSIE C. TURNER



At His appointed time God, in His mercy, saw cause to carry home the spirit of our beloved sister in Christ, Elsie Cox Turner, and thus bring to a close her earthly toils and suffering, at the age of 70.

Sister Turner was born on May 27, 1924 in Patrick County, Virginia, a daughter

of the late Charlie Cox and Sis. Nannie Hall Cox. At the age of 16 she was united in marriage to James Ervin Turner. Their union brought forth one son, J.D. Turner, who now lives in Scottsmeer, Florida.

On the third Saturday in April 1960 she related a lovely experience of Grace to Goblintown Church. She was received into fellowship and baptized the next day by the late Elder Bennie Clifton. For the remainder of her lifetime she was a loyal and faithful member who was truly blessed to manifest her faith by her works. She had a good report of all who knew her, both within and without the church. Her memory will long be cherished by all of us who knew and loved her for Christ's sake.

Following a long and very painful illness, Sister Turner died in the hospital at Martinsville, Va. on July 25, 1994. Her funeral service was conducted on July 28 at Collins Funeral Home Chapel by her pastor. She was laid to rest in the Cox Family Cemetery, just a short distance from Goblintown Church. There, she now sleeps the peaceful sleep of the redeemed, waiting for the appearing of her Blessed Redeemer.

In addition to her husband and son, Sister Turner was survived by three grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, one sister, Sister Addie C. Wright of Martinsville, and a goodly number of nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by six brothers and four sisters.

It was agreed that three copies of this memorial record be prepared: one for the church records, one for her family and one to be submitted to the Signs of the Times for publication.

Done by order of Goblintown Church in conference the 20th day of August 1994.

Elder John T. Wingfield, Moderator

Sister Lena Clark, Clerk

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